Naming Youth

the construction of the youth category

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

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Abstract

The youth category, in its modern form, has emerged under particular social and economic conditions, under the influence of particular social institutions, shaped by particular discourses. This thesis is an inquiry into the constitution of youth as a social category through an examination of these factors.

Through a review of the historical and sociological literature, the thesis establishes the conditions for the emergence of the modern concept of youth in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The evidence suggests that the youth category came into being as a result of changes in the industrial family, the industrial reforms which progressively excluded children and young people from the workforce, and the establishment of compulsory schooling—especially secondary schooling. Parallel with these developments, a variety of discourses about youth (or "adolescence") were generated, establishing the emergent category in scientific terms. G. Stanley Hall's theories of adolescence, developed around the turn of the century, were perhaps the most influential of these, casting adolescence as a universal stage in life characterised by social and psychological turmoil. In sociology, this theoretical frame has been the subject of longstanding debate. The thesis explores this debate, and attempts to establish a sociological view of the youth category in the light of the historical and sociological evidence. In these explorations, "youth" is established as a product of historical processes, a product of political economy and of scientific discourse.

The analysis is brought into the present through a study of how youth are represented in a high-circulation daily newspaper, The West Australian. Using standard media analysis techniques, the study examines the construction of language around youth, and the kinds of stories in which they appear in the newspaper, and finds a detailed discursive apparatus through which young people are classified as good or bad, passive (victim, child) or active (perpetrator, adult). These constructions vary with the institutional location of the news source, and with such factors as the gender and ethnicity of the subject, while continuing to be underwritten by orthodox discourses of adolescence. For its part, the newspaper overwhelmingly casts youth in a law and order frame, driven by the appetites of audiences and the economies of news production.

The study explores the differences as well as the continuities in the concept of youth employed in the patchwork of discourse that constitutes newspaper text. In these explorations, "youth" is established in the present as a contested category, the subject of competing discourses. Competing institutions and professions, in their interventions in the newspaper, try to secure a reading of the youth phenomenon which is consistent with their professional and political objectives.

The thesis is about the constitution of youth. Through the analysis of historical and contemporary discourse about youth, the thesis reveals how the subjection of this section of the adult population is achieved and maintained, how they are established as a pliable, coercible and economically dispensable population, and how the instruments of their governance are legitimated.
Contents

Declaration .............................................................................................................................. 3
Abstract ................................................................................................................................. 4
Contents ................................................................................................................................. 5
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................ 8

Part One: Approaches ........................................................................................................... 9

1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 10

2 The news .............................................................................................................................. 22
   The newspaper and its community ......................................................................................... 22
   *The West Australian* newspaper ....................................................................................... 33
   Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 36

3 Method ................................................................................................................................ 38
   Content analysis .................................................................................................................... 38
   Other hermeneutic approaches ............................................................................................. 42
   The research vehicle ............................................................................................................ 44
   Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 47

Part Two: the constitution of the youthful subject ............................................................... 48

4 Dividing practices: a brief history of youth .................................................................... 55

5 Practices of self-formation ................................................................................................. 73
   Self-formation and the "boys work" movement .................................................................. 73
   Self-formation, consumption and the teenage marketplace ................................................. 75

6 Scientific classification: the discourse of adolescence .................................................... 81
   Stanley Hall and the foundation of discourses of adolescence ......................................... 82
   Adolescence in psychological discourse ............................................................................ 86

7 Sociology and the discourse of adolescence ................................................................... 92
   The critique of the founding axioms ................................................................................... 95
   Sociological approaches to theorising youth .................................................................... 104
Conclusion.................................................................................................................. 118

8 Constructing youth theory ................................................................................. 120

What youth is not: benchmarks for a sociologically adequate concept of
"youth"..................................................................................................................... 124

Towards a theory of youth...................................................................................... 128

Conclusion and summary...................................................................................... 136

Part Three: The West Australian and the representation of youth ............... 138

9 The youth vocabulary ........................................................................................ 140

The lexicon............................................................................................................. 142

An annotated glossary ......................................................................................... 145

Over-lexicality: the proliferation of terms.......................................................... 149

The youth lexicon and the ideological landscape.............................................. 155

The construction of youth as Other................................................................... 158

Using the fine brush.............................................................................................. 163

Conclusion............................................................................................................. 169

10 Youth issues .................................................................................................... 171

The construction of a social issue........................................................................ 171

Issues in The West Australian.............................................................................. 174

Youth and crime .................................................................................................. 178

Graffiti.................................................................................................................. 187

Curfews ................................................................................................................ 191

Condoms............................................................................................................... 192

11 "Girls" and "youths" and the discourses of gender............................................ 197

Gender and the constitution of youth ................................................................. 201

Gender in the news................................................................................................ 204

Gender and language............................................................................................ 205

Gender and the roles in which young people appear......................................... 211

Conclusion............................................................................................................. 221

12 Discourses of the Aboriginal .......................................................................... 225

The frequency of Aboriginal reference............................................................... 226
The over-specification of crime ................................................................. 226
A racist newspaper? ............................................................................. 233
The sources of news ............................................................................ 236
Consequences ...................................................................................... 240
The newspaper, desire and the construction of the "Other": reflections .... 242

Part Four: problems, professions, and the representation of youth in

*The West Australian* ............................................................................ 246

13 Crime and the "juvenile" .................................................................... 249
    Police ................................................................................................. 250
    The courts ........................................................................................ 258
    The contest for the construction of the juvenile offender ................ 261
    The public ......................................................................................... 267
    Victims ............................................................................................. 269

14 The "student" and the school .............................................................. 278
    Under control ................................................................................... 279
    The school uniforms debate ............................................................ 284

15 Unemployment and the "young jobseeker" ......................................... 288

16 The youth sector and the "young person" ............................................ 297

Part Five: Concluding ............................................................................. 305

17 Reconstructing the youth category .................................................. 309
    Review: the vertical dimension ....................................................... 312
    The horizontal dimension ............................................................... 319
    Conclusion ....................................................................................... 321

Appendix .............................................................................................. 325
    The data base .................................................................................. 326

Bibliography ......................................................................................... 333
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Cora was on leave for a time, and, in her absence, Patricia Harris provided critical but encouraging support at a time when encouragement was just what I needed. Patricia remained involved in the project, providing both a sympathetic ear and careful analysis of what I was saying.

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Finally, Clea Brierley, who was not really interested in hearing me talk about the thesis at all (but listened anyway), provided the kind of distraction that kept me sane, saved me regularly from the cloister, and made the process liveable.

Notwithstanding all these contributions the responsibility for thesis, for better or worse, is mine.
Part One: Approaches
1 Introduction

Youth is an interesting subject, if the media air time afforded to the lives of young people is any indication. It certainly has been for me: I have been working with the youth question now for all my working life. There are many things that keep it interesting. For one, the youth question never seems to die off. Youth issues are always getting into the newspaper, governments are always trying to do something, or not do something, about the latest youth problem. Items from what is a finite but long list of contemporary youth issues circulate with that rather intriguing mix of novelty and predictability that is so characteristic of unstable things.

Youth is a problem, a puzzle. That, by itself, is interesting enough. But it seems to be a puzzle that never really gets solved. Sociologically speaking, part of the solution (or maybe part of the puzzle) is to do with the awareness that youth is not a natural category, but a socially constructed one. This is, of course, a contentious statement, but one which now commands a considerable consensus in youth studies and, with some significant qualifications, in the parallel, allied and competing discourse of adolescence. Once the problem is moved from the natural world to the human one, it throws up questions with much greater force. What forms does the category of youth take? Why has such a category come into existence, and why in this particular form?

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1 Even this, however, is not secure. There are (possibly unique) biological processes going on in adolescence, even after puberty has settled down. Although there is a consensus, at least in sociology, that these are not significant when compared with social constructions around youth, no-one can be really sure.
This thesis is motivated by questions such as these, by curiosity about the shape and substance of the youth category. The research on which it is based attempts to extract, from the various understandings about youth that are in current circulation, some kind of picture of the youth category and of its articulation with broader cultural, economic and political processes.

There are a wide range of places and processes in which the construction of youth happens on a daily basis. A study of the youth category could be located in the pronouncements of judges and magistrates in the Children's Court; in the development of government policy on "Employment, Education and Training"; in the rules of youth accommodation services; in the reports of social workers within the Department for Community Development; in the teenage movie genre or the range of early-evening soap operas (like Neighbours, Home and Away, Beverley Hills 90210) that centre around the lives of young people; or in the contents of adolescent psychology courses taught to trainee teachers.

Each of these sources is a cultural product, located within a social context, engaging in discourse about youth. Each of them represents a potentially rich archaeological site, a place to dig up youth material, to try to put together a picture of the place of youth in this society. This study could have been based around any of them, and all were considered as candidates for more intensive empirical inquiry.

A study such as this could also be based on the perceptions of young people themselves, on the way that they experience the matrix of control and permission that structures their lives, the modes of resistance and cooperation with which they manage "ways-of-being-youth". The study could have presented an opportunity for young people to speak of their condition, albeit through the double screen of academic discourse and a writer as a third party. However, the question embraced by the thesis is not really about young people. It is about the youth category, a set of concepts and structures that shape the conditions under which young people live. As such it is not something that is primarily
the work of young people themselves, but the work of officials, theoreticians, professionals, politicians. Young people have a particular perspective on this category - they have to live under its disciplines, and the facts of their lives feed back into their understanding of the category. But the facts of their lives are not their only source of knowledge about what "youth" means. Official discourses about youth are likely to be influential also in young people's own understanding of the youth category. Young people learn what it means to be a youth, a teenager, a student, not only through experience and personal adventure but also through the circulation of knowledges about youth, many of which leave some trace in the media.

This thesis is an exploration of how youth are constructed. Beginning from the understanding that youth and the problems associated with youth are a product of historically and culturally contingent ways of organising society, the thesis works through the available histories of the emergence of the youth category in industrial societies, and the central frames of theory that have attempted to put shape on the category and constitute it as science. The history of how the youth category got this far is important, and the thesis works carefully with a range of texts that describe the conditions of emergence of the youth category historically. Having established this historical and theoretical frame, the thesis pursues an intensive contemporary study of the ways in which the youth category is constructed through newspaper discourse: specifically, through the pages of Western Australia's only daily newspaper, The West Australian. Using a collection of clippings from The West Australian gathered over a two year period, discourses embodied in the newspaper are analysed in order to read back from the newspaper to the social context, the frameworks of discourse, the official voices, the common-sense understandings, that lie behind the representations of youth contained in its pages.

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2 For an advocate of this approach, see Gerbner 1985.
There are, as this literature on the media indicates, difficulties in working with newspapers as a primary research site. While a newspaper is a cultural artefact, while it is produced within a particular kind of society at a particular point of its history, it is not a mirror of society. The medium is itself thoroughly mediated. It is shaped and reshaped by the institutional practices of the proprietary organisation and of the journalist's profession which determine access and the codes of inclusion or exclusion, by the tastes of the "public" who buy, by advertisers who associate their product with the newspaper, by the objectives of news sources who provide the paper with the bulk of its copy, as well as the hand of the individual journalist. Indeed, the reshaping of discourse into the frame of the newspaper is what the game of journalism is about.

According to Ericson, Baranek and Chan, "journalism is a trade of rendering fact and making representations" (1987: 16). The journalists' task, among others, is to "reproduce the common sense out of the specialised knowledge of sources" (p17). They take the expert or interested discourse of commentators on a social issue or a problem population, and translate it so that an audience will be able to hear.

People who comment in the media regularly report high levels of dissatisfaction with the way that their material has ended up in print (Bell 1991:216ff, Grabowski and Wilson 1989). Analyses of the media thus often concentrate on establishing the nature of "bias" in the representation of material in the newspaper (Bell 1991). Such analysis is important: the news media are a central source of public information in modern societies, and the messages that they convey and the pictures they paint have social consequences for which the news media are accountable (Gerbner 1985:20). But the question of bias is not at the forefront of this study. The focus is not on whether *The West Australian* "accurately" represents young people, although some discussion along those lines will inevitably emerge. Rather, the study takes the newspaper text and reads from it an understanding of how young people are read by the newspaper. The study does not attempt to begin with what we know about some set of social facts, and try to measure or contrast the particular window on society afforded by the newspaper, and see if it matches up, or how it compares to other windows. As Edward Said suggests,
The things to look at are style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, not the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original.

1978:21

This dissertation is itself located at a particular point in a history of thinking about the youth category. For many years, in critical approaches to the youth question, theory has been dominated by the neo-Marxist approaches of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University (CCCS). The CCCS itself was working in a kind of theoretical interstitial space in theory, between the "culturalism" of Hoggart, Williams and E.P. Thompson, and the "structuralism" of Levi-Strauss, Lacan and Althusser, largely with the aid of various applications of theories of ideology derived from Gramsci (Hall 1986, see also Harris 1992). It was in this framework, or perhaps more accurately in the rather noisy silences that were left in this framework, that this project was originally conceived. In the past few years, however, the general project of Marxism has come under sustained attack from what is broadly referred to as post-structuralism, and approaches to youth have been caught up in this movement. In a debate which currently seems to be central\textsuperscript{3} in youth studies in Australia, Foucaultian perspectives have been pushed to the fore, displacing or attempting to displace the CCCS's kind of Gramscian/Althusserian Marxism (see White 1993).

Foucault's post-structuralist approach to understanding the emergence of social categories and the disciplines which constituted them have obvious application to the youth category, as Tait (1993) has argued. Until recently, youth studies had not really been aware of this potential. But even though this is quickly changing, a thorough Foucauldian kind of genealogical/archaeological study had not been done in this area. Foucault's work on madness, on prisons, on sexuality in particular, along with the subsequent work of people like Edward Said, appeared to offer potentially rich perspectives for analysing the youth question. The more I worked with this material,

\textsuperscript{3} I do not want to claim that it is in fact central. Its vividness to me is no doubt substantially due to me being a participant in the debate. Nevertheless, I am happy to have the debate stand as one of the contextual forces behind this study. A good argument is, after all, a lot of fun, and I am indebted to Gordon Tait in particular for playing so openly and cheerfully in this particular game (see White 1993).
the more the approaches of the post-structuralists and those of the CCCS seemed both compatible and complementary. I was biased in my assessment, having long held a great deal of respect for Stuart Hall's group, but it seemed to be both unnecessary and counterproductive to oust the work of the CCCS in the youth area and replace it with a poststructuralist successor when both approaches were so capable of providing rich and cogent explanations of the youth problem.

Consequently, I have tried to bring together both approaches in this study. The overt ethical stance of the CCCS\(^4\), the concern for justice and commitment to better ways of being human and being social, has remained an undercurrent. I have not embargoed the task of connecting local and particular events to broad social and economic processes. While the need to analyse particular social phenomena in their own particularity has been endorsed, the particular power of economic processes in the structure of social life has not been ignored. I have been happy to continue working with notions of structure as well as discourse, and, while the study is focused on texts, to embrace non-discursive elements in the constitution of youth as a social category. While interested in the operations of power at the margins, in the way that individual persons try to intervene in the social order by writing letters to the newspaper, for instance, the analysis is open also to notions of dominance and hegemony. In the theoretical elaborations of the dissertation, I try where possible to bring together the parallels in Foucault's writings and the CCCS's work, as well as the concepts of earlier interactionist and functionalist writers.

This might sound like trying to have one's cake and eat it too. In this case, I think that it is possible, if done with care. Others, happily, agree with me on this point - especially Best and Kellner, who argue (against a postmodernist catalogue of what can no longer be said) for a "multidimensional and multiperspectival critical theory":

\(^4\) It has often been noted that while Foucault appears often to disclaim a moral stance, one intrudes nevertheless (Hall 1986:47).
A whole tradition of modern theory...present[s] a model of theory that is non-scientific, fallibilistic, hermeneutical, and open to new historical conditions, theoretical perspectives, and political applications...

Just as individuals need cognitive maps of their cities to negotiate their spatial environment, they also need maps of their society to intelligently analyse, discuss, and intervene in social processes. For us, social theories provide mappings of contemporary society: its organisation; its constitutive social relations, practices, discourses, and institutions; its integrated and interdependent features; its conflictual and fragmenting features; and its structures of power and modes of oppression and domination.

A multidimensional critical theory stresses the relative autonomy of each dimension of society and is thus open to broad range of perspectives on the domains of social reality and how they are constituted and interact. A multiperspectival social theory views society from a multiplicity of perspectives.

1991: 257ff

Like the CCCS's own project, this thesis attempts to occupy an interstitial place in theory, but this time between Foucault and the CCCS. I have been helped by a perhaps unlikely source: the theologian and Old Testament scholar Brevard Childs, who was similarly trying to preserve the strength of systematic, theory-building approaches to his field while not only accommodating the deconstructive work of radical scholars but employing the richness of their insights to a more finely-grained understanding of the texts in front of him. The metaphor of "shaping", used extensively in my writing as a bridge between the architectural metaphors of structuralism and the language metaphors of post-structuralism, is his.

This is perhaps a good point to introduce some of my own motivations in working with the youth question. It is evident that I am not uncommitted here. As I have mentioned already, I have been involved in working with young people, and in thinking about their place in our society for many years.

I came to this study therefore with interests already developed, with experience as an advocate of young people and their rights, with perspectives on the way young people are dealt with in our society. The structure of "youth" places young people in an ambiguous position before many of the major institutions in our society, providing justification for discriminatory and often quite oppressive treatment of young people. While this is part of the experience of young people generally, it is especially so of
those who live under multiple discriminations: working class young people, especially non-working youth, young women, the poor, and above all, Aboriginal young people.

In some sociological traditions, the stance of the advocate is outside the limits of good sociological practice. According to positivist accounts, it impairs the position of the researcher as a "disinterested" and "objective" observer of things social, disabling and contaminating the research by the admission of subjective, value-based variables and vested interest. According to post-structuralist accounts, the advocate takes for herself or himself the ground of knowledge about the lives of the oppressed, and from that knowledge builds a basis of power. In the post-structuralist tradition, the researcher positions herself or himself as an agent, a middleman, constructing discourse ostensibly on behalf of the oppressed but, surely more fundamentally, in his or her own interest. So, the advocate yet again steals power from people already disregarded.

The positivist position has been argued at length in sociological circles, and I do not wish to elaborate the argument. My own stance is that I am a part of the social community which this study investigates, so am already inside the circle of my own study. Indeed, I am one of the authorised knowers the newspaper very occasionally quotes on youth matters. Objectivity, even if achievable in principle (which I do not accept) could be no more than a stance, a pretence, in my own case. Anyway, the examination of the meaning of the youth category, if it is to be done well, requires the exercise of intuitive, creative, subjective human qualities, and I do not believe the quality of my conclusions is compromised by the exercise of those qualities. I am expressly interested in meaning, and meaning is not delivered by the facts. This does not mean that anything goes, that the thesis is an exercise in dreaming. Choosing to tell this story about young people within the genre of a sociological work requires me to subject myself to the criteria for adequacy established by the sociological community for the production of knowledge, and I do so willingly, believing that the exercise of such discipline takes the narrative beyond the idiosyncrasy of the purely local or
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individual instance, and produces a quality of discourse which can take it into a wider circle of dialogue.

Foucault's post-structuralist position is suspicious of advocates' claim to speak for the underprivileged and organise on their behalf, believing that advocates should withdraw and allow such people to speak for themselves. Partly, this derives from Foucault's understanding of power as a reciprocal relation, in which the subordinated also exercise power. The more the techniques of power are exercised upon them, the more powerful they become. So, for example, young people at the moment are being subjected to an extraordinary range of processes directed at disciplining, training, subjecting the individual (or in Foucault's terms, the body) through extended schooling and other training. This training, designed to subject them and make them useful, at the same time makes young people more powerful, because this greater discipline and skill can be turned to uses for which it was not designed - namely, resistance - both within the school and outside it. Thus, power is not only repressive - Foucault never argues that power is not repressive (Sheridan 1980:170) - but also productive.

So young people have their own power. Advocates enter into the power relation as third parties and make a two-way power play into a three-way struggle (Sheridan 1980:221). In the process, advocates do not ignore their own interest, and a new power relation, between the young person and his/her advocate, is generated. Advocates generate their own languages, often not accessible to the client group, for describing their position and what should be done about them, how they should be treated. They develop knowledge about such people. They compete for the authority to be able to speak the truth about such people. As with all knowledges, all discourses, this knowledge and discourse means power.

Foucault presents a powerful challenge here to people like me. Should advocates vacate the field, and mind their own business? Should researchers stop researching, and theorists stop theorising, about youth? That is one option, and perhaps Foucault's
favoured one, although the ambivalence between this position and the implicit activism in his work has been noted (Lloyd 1993). That is also the force of his theory. Foucault is interested in theory that is useless, that does not tell us what the lives of groups of young people are like, nor the causes of young people's position, nor the nature of youth, nor the specific institutions (the "non-discursive formations") in which they live. He would be interested rather in exposing the discourses and practices by which young people are constituted as "youth", or as "homeless youth" or as "delinquents", in theory about theories of youth. He is not interested in improving their world for them. That is their job. The limit of his intervention is exposing the discourses that limit and chain them.

The problem for me in this is threefold. The first is that the options are not mutually exclusive. Exposing discursive practices can, and, I would argue, should, create conditions for more effective resistance. This is a position articulated within sociology certainly as far back as Becker (1966:24), arguably further back to Marx. Second, the "youth field" is not short of agents who are attempting to converge and galvanise elements of the field of power in ways that affect young people directly and oppressively. The crime-wave/moral panic/lock-them-up lobby is one of these. In August 1991, a Perth radio talk-back host organised and galvanised a large number of people who were angry about some incidents of youth violence into a mass rally demanding more brutal treatment for young people in general, which directly resulted in the notorious Crimes (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Sentencing Act in Western Australia. That is one example. The radio announcer didn't invent moral panic, and neither did he invent the anger. But he did change the field of power by giving it a voice and a focus. The generation and marketing of competing and less oppressive discourses, and the organisation of parallel points of resistance, even from third parties, seems to me to be obligatory in such a circumstance.

The third problem is that Foucault's interest in seeing power as a participatory and reciprocal relation in which no one party can be seen always and everywhere as "the
oppressor" and the other "the victim" leads him to underplay the sharp reality of power difference (Lloyd 1993). Young people do have power. But they have less power than Government Ministers. Researchers with PhDs have more power than young people, and usually less power than Government Ministers, but not, perhaps, always. The Commissioner for Human Rights, Brian Burdekin, has more power than I have, and has used it beautifully and persistently, especially against Government Ministers, in what he sees as the interest of young people. His interventions in the media in the period of this study on State Government provision for homeless young people, on police harassment of young people on the streets, on the Crimes (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Act, were all courageous and high profile. He may be wrong, and he may even be dangerous, but is less likely to be so than the Minister. Asking young people to fight their own battles is perhaps a bit hopeful and/or naive. This is especially so because they aren't young for long, and so just get good at it when it becomes someone else's battle.

This thesis is to be submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and this has power consequences. I am conscious of this as I write. It is also clear that the study, in its present form at least, is out of the reach of most young people and most of their advocates. But the thesis raises consistent doubts about the "natural" condition of young people. It sketches out the form of power relations under which they live, the ways in which common understandings of what young people are like restrict and inhibit their lives and confront them daily with petty and not so petty injustices. This knowledge is not only useful for the purposes of a PhD dissertation. Such knowledge can, and hopefully will (in direct and indirect ways, by me and others) be used to lever open the youth category and to put in question the power exercised over young people. Knowledge is power. To the extent that the knowledge generated by this study is useful, (and it is intended to be useful) it is intended to be useful not only to me, but to others involved in working for fairer arrangements for young people.

I have indicated that along with a review of the historical and sociological literature, the thesis works through the nature of the youth category by an analysis of newspaper text.
The assumption is that newspaper text is an indicator of social understandings. The next chapter explores some of the work around the connection of a newspaper to its society, attempting to describe the kind of site that a newspaper is. Partly, this is a theoretical task: there are several maps of the nature of newspapers that make the connection easier to see clearly. I have also interviewed the Editor of *The West Australian* in order to find out how he understands the particular case of this newspaper. Notwithstanding the complexity and indeterminacy of the relationship between a newspaper and its society, the evidence points to the usefulness of newspapers for studying the social relationships around youth and the terms under which young people live.
2 The news

The task in this chapter is to explore the nature of the relationship between the newspaper and the community which constitutes its market, its audience, its primary resource. I am not attempting to define the nature of the newspaper, and the nature of its relationship with the society in which it lives. Attempts to do so have generally not succeeded because of the complexity of the newspaper as an institution, and because it is subject to a multitude of changing and conflicting processes: a bit like the common cold, the media are never one thing, and there is never just one thing happening. Nevertheless, a number of useful observations have been made about the mass media and their role in society, about the news in particular, and about newspapers as a medium for discourse. Several of these perspectives are worth exploring.

The newspaper and its community

1. The newspaper as "a product of multiple hands"\(^5\)

Allan Bell's very useful text on the analysis of news works in some detail with the perspective of the newspaper as a collective enterprise (1991)\(^6\). In a newspaper, a range of voices are heard, almost never in their original form, having been subject to a series of edits, or what theologians call "redactions"(see especially Brevard Childs 1978). The production and processing of text goes through many hands, each adding, removing, juxtaposing, recombining and reshaping. Yet the final product is not a random

\(^5\) Bell 1991:8
\(^6\) Although it is worth noting that in Foucault's analysis of the author any text is a collective enterprise, the product of a community of discourse rather than the mind of a single human being (Foucault 1984b).
collection, but a work of some coherence. A newspaper is also, notwithstanding conflict and competition, a cooperative enterprise.

The major voices, generally agreed on by theorists but given differing weight, are the voices of the proprietor, the advertisers, the audience, the journalists, the sources, and the editors. Note that it is not necessary for a redactor to actually lift a pen or a telephone to influence the shape of the final text. Perceived audiences, advertisers and proprietors may never express an opinion on the shape of a news story. But those who write and edit will write and edit with a perception as to how a given treatment will be received, and will write accordingly, whether consciously or unconsciously (Bell 1991:77). So the shaping hand of the silent redactor is still significant.

Different approaches to the media have stressed different sets of participants in the process. Early studies, especially those between the wars and immediately after the Second World War, worked with notions of propaganda and brainwashing which assumed that the audience was a passive receptor of messages from an omnipotent media source - the so-called "silver bullet" theory (see Curran, Gurevitch and Woollacott 1982). The media produced messages which were absorbed directly into the bloodstream. Advertisers and proprietors were presumably the authors of the messages in the media. Some Marxist approaches have focused on the concentration of ownership of the mass media, arguing that newspapers are mere vehicles for the propagation of ruling class ideas, an instrument of hegemonic ruling class ideology (McQueen cited in Windschuttle 1988). In this view, the spotlight has been placed on the hand of the proprietor as the dominant editorial force.

Studies such as those of Baker (1980) and Bell (1984) stressed the hand of the editor in "gatekeeping": not only deciding what news is included and what excluded, but thereby establishing the environment of acceptable discourse within which journalists work. Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1988) have stressed the work of journalists in transforming discourse supplied by sources, and so draw attention not only to the hand of the
journalist but also of the originating source. Hall et al's *Policing the Crisis* also concentrated analysis on the institutional sources of media discourse and the dominance of such sources in the final product.

Audiences have also from time to time been the focus of attention, particularly in more recent theory. Approaches to the audience's hand in the shaping of news have ranged from arguments that newspapers give audiences what they want (the "free market" model in Windschuttle's 1988 summary) through to analyses of the way that audiences read and interpret the messages embodied in media (eg Hall 1980b; Morley 1980), and the practices employed by audiences in getting what they want from consumption of media (see Cunningham and Turner 1993: 267ff).

The upshot of this is that the number of hands involved in the production of a newspaper, especially over time, is very large. In terms of active redactors in the production of the text, there are a large number of journalists, a smaller but still significant number of chief reporters, editors and sub-editors, a large number of institutional sources, a large number of non-institutional correspondents and interviewees and people who write letters to the editor. “Silent” redactors include consumers buying newspapers, numbering around 250,000 per day for *The West Australian*, and three times this number reading the paper (Murray 1995)\(^7\). There are a large number of advertisers both private and corporate, and in the case of *The West*, a many owners (around 17,000) with no one shareholding amounting to more than six percent (Murray 1995). Putting this together, well over half of the total population of Western Australia are involved in collectively producing this composite text. The argument that there is an intimacy developed between *The West Australian* and the Western Australian people in this process seems well founded. From interviews with the Editor of the paper, it is clear that this intimacy is expressly sought by the journalists and editorial staff of *The West*.

Because of our position in the market, we see the need to try to cater for everybody in this community and over the whole state. So, I mean in terms of your project, I mean we - it would certainly be our aim to try to reflect the views of the whole of this society. We are not like a newspaper like the Age, for example, which targets itself at a particular socioeconomic part of its community; we actually try to cover it from A-Z.

\(^7\) According to the Editor of *The West Australian*, Paul Murray, the newspaper has the highest penetration rate of any newspaper in the world, reaching 700-800,000 readers per day in a State with a pouluation of 1.7 million (Murray 1995).
It cannot be argued that all these hands have equal shaping influence, nor that the newspaper is a collective enterprise in the democratic or anarchist sense. In some ways, this diffuse redactorial community strengthens the hand of key figures such as the Editor, who has a great deal of autonomy in determining the final shape of the paper. But in any one instance, or with any one issue, the power of any one of these hands may become dominant. The shaping process is dynamic and contingent, and identifying the dominant hands cannot be determined a priori. But the notion of a redactorial community does draw attention to one dimension of the relation between the newspaper and the social community in which it is produced and to which it seeks to communicate. It forms part of a picture which supports the assumption of a close relationship between news discourse and the discourses which shape this community's understanding of the youth phenomenon.

2. Structuralist approaches: the media and the structures of power
I mentioned above the analysis of institutional sources of media discourse by theorists like Stuart Hall and his colleagues, in Policing the Crisis, and Richard Ericson and his colleagues, in Visualising Deviance. In these studies, the focus is on the way that the power structure of society is reproduced in the artifacts of mass communication. The position taken in Policing the Crisis is that the media function as a vehicle for securing and maintaining an ideological consensus in the face of vastly differing material interests. This consensus is, however, not a true consensus in that it does not serve all interests equally but constructs the world in favour of the interests of the powerful. This hegemony is achieved through the dominance of the voice of institutional sources, a dominance established by the professional requirement that "media statements are,

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8 At the time of writing, this seemed assured. However, in March 1995 the Editor came close to being sacked by the Board for his highly critical coverage of the Liberal Government's failed bid to have Federal land rights legislation ruled unconstitutional. In the end, and after unanimous support at a meeting of staff from the newspaper, his dismissal was not proceeded with. At the point of final editing of the thesis, the matter was still too sensitive to allow the interview that I conducted with him in January 1995 to be published.
wherever possible, grounded in "objective" and "authoritative" statements from "accredited" sources" (Hall et al, 1978:58) and by the daily logistics of producing news copy, which favours sources which "generate a useful volume of reportable activity at regular intervals" (ibid:57)

These two aspects of news production - the practical pressures of constantly working against the clock and the professional demands of impartiality and objectivity - combine to produce a systematically structured over-accessing to the media of those in powerful and privileged institutional positions. The media thus tend, faithfully and impartially, to reproduce symbolically the existing structure of power in society's institutional order.

(Hall et al, 1978:58)

This structural bias in favour of dominant ideologies within the production of news is reinforced by the hands of other redactors also: especially those of advertisers and the newspaper's own proprietors.

This position has been criticised (Woollacott 1982:110, Young 1981, Windschuttle 1988:273) because it takes too little account of the redactoral hand of the audience, the buyers of newspapers. Audiences, especially working class audiences, are seen as passive and accepting of "the cultural maps of the social world" (Hall et al 1978:54) given by the newspapers. The very valid question is raised as to why working class people should accept these alien interpretations of the world as their own, why they should buy papers that present the world in a way that is so hostile to their interests. And further why, if the media are so thoroughly controlled by the interests of capital, events that discredit ruling class figures have, from time to time, been so enthusiastically pursued by newspapers. Windschuttle (1988:273) cites the Bottom of the Harbour Scheme, a major tax-evasion scheme in which several leading business figures were implicated, as one example.

Following Jock Young, Windschuttle argues that the hand of the audience is much more central than that allowed by the Birmingham group. Satisfying an audience is an essential and ongoing task for a newspaper, which must not only sell papers but convince its advertisers that their message is being delivered to their target audience. For a monopoly newspaper like *The West Australian* the audience needs to be as wide as
possible, because of the additional task of keeping enough of the market to prevent the emergence of a competing daily.

Satisfaction of an audience, argues Young, requires that the realities of their lives are expressed (Young, 1981). From within a neo-Marxist position, this reality includes - for working class readers - the daily experience of injustice, of contradiction between the claims of the economic system and what it delivers.

This is not to say that newspapers are therefore a forum for revolutionary ideology. Because of the weight of redactors which are supportive of the status quo, this experience of contradiction and injustice needs to be given voice, but shaped in ways that leave the basic social structure intact.

Young argues that

don dominant institutions have to deal with and play upon this (working class) culture, "confirming" only that part of it which is most supportive of the stability and "dislocating" any critical penetrations that have been achieved. This... is precisely the role of the media in their relationship to the working-class population - and because of their need to sell their commodities they are more prone to such influence than any other agency of social control.

(Young, in Windschuttle, 1988:277/8)

Hence, the newspaper, as an ideological product, stages the contradictions of the social system in ways that are not untrue to the experience of a broad (including working class) readership, but which take a cast that is supportive of dominant institutions and of the social status quo.

This is perhaps particularly true for The West Australian. As the only daily State-based newspaper in the market, it needs to accommodate a wide range of interests. And because of a long tradition of non-intervention on the part of proprietors, the redactoral hand of the proprietor is limited. Intervention by a campaigning proprietor would represent a significant source of distortion in the way that the newspaper reproduces the ideological landscape, as would a limited and sectional audience. More broadly, all that has been said of newspapers in general - the dominance of the views of "accredited
sources", the supportive stance of the paper towards major institutions and the system as a whole, the focus on contradiction, the confirmation of supportive aspects of working class ideology and the suppression of "critical penetrations" - remains true of *The West.*

The structuralist perspective sees society differently from the view that posited the newspaper as the product of a community of redactors. Nevertheless, while the perspective is different, there is no essential contradiction between the positions. In the picture painted by the structuralist approach, society is constituted by structures of power, like powerful social institutions, that embody and express deeper structures, like classes, which derive from the mode of production, the fundamental organising principle of the community in question. The ongoing dominance of these structures is achieved by a range of techniques, notably by the constant and authoritative communication of dominant ways of seeing the world, of dominant ideologies. The kind of intimacy established between a newspaper and its community, in this view, is to do with a correspondence of powerful forces. Dominant institutions constitute, and dominate, the social order. They also dominate discourse within the news, because of the insistence of the media on comment from elite or official sources. As a result of a complex set of practices, the newspaper takes a stance in which dominant ideologies are privileged, even though a wide range of views may be expressed. Because of this, it is possible to read the newspaper as a kind of social map, in which the dominant institutions in the field can be identified, and the ideologies they maintain and promote can be traced. Secondary or subordinate structures and ideologies also feature in the newspaper, and their struggle to be heard can also be mapped. The approach has been highly effective in works like the CCCS's *Policing the Crisis* and the Glasgow University Media Group's *Bad News* series, and its usefulness for a study such as this is obvious.

3. "Society" as a product of the media

A third view of the relationship between media and society sees society created and constituted by the media. This view has been expressed in different ways in a range of
contexts, with different views of society. It is commonplace, for example, to note the
influence of vernacular translations of the Bible in the sixteenth and seventeenth
centuries in the constitution of nation-states (eg Anderson 1983:43ff). In this example,
according to Anderson, a media artifact, the vernacular Bible, created a speech
community that it was possible to bound and govern - to nationalise. Nation-states are,
according to Anderson, "imagined communities".

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never
know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in
the minds of each lives the image of their communion.

Anderson 1983:15

Even more, a State such as Western Australia is an "imagined community". While the
means that constitute it in imagination are diverse, including the law, the manufacture of
its history, the spectacle of its sporting teams (especially in combat with "The East"), it
could well be argued that the most immediate and current force in the reproduction of
Western Australia as a community is The West Australian newspaper, especially as
many of these other means - the law, the State Government, the sporting spectacles -
become a part of imagination via their representation in the newspaper. Other media,
for example the electronic media, are also involved in this. But the orientation of all
other media is suspect: they are owned and controlled, or are suspected of being owned
and controlled, in the East.

From this perspective, then, the question of the degree to which The West Australian
represents Western Australian society does not arise. There is no Western Australian
society, or at least not this one, without The West Australian.

The notion that the media creates the society is not exclusive to Anderson. It is the
consequence of a range of critiques of the mass media from a range of perspectives
which describe, usually in pessimistic terms, the creation of "mass society" through the
operations of the "mass media" (see Bennett 1982b). Jean Baudrillard has made an
influential contribution to the conception of the relation between the media and society
in a series of recent works, notably Simulations and In the shadow of the silent
majorities (1983). In Baudrillard's view, through their anticipation of desire in the masses, through the constant reflection of the opinion of the masses back to the masses in opinion polls, through the elimination of will and agency in the constant circulation of statistics, through the incessant engorgement of information that no longer informs, through endless one-way "speech without response", the media produce a mass no longer capable of making distinctions, no longer capable of responding, no longer responsible.

Yet this is not a subordinated mass. Because it is unresponsive, it is ungovernable. As Mick Jagger would say, they can't get no reaction. So the nature of resistance in the masses is no longer organised protest, organised opposition, which can be coopted, suppressed, governed, but is silent, sullen, aimless, formless. The masses simply absorb information indiscriminately, reflect what opinion pollsters want to hear back at them, give nothing, absorb everything, and disappear into the mirror of these reflections and into the endless cycle of simulations (1994). Because of this ungovernability, Baudrillard argues, "the social" implodes. The structures, defined and given shape by resistance and alienation, flounder as both resistance and alienation disappear under the surfeit which is the mass media.

I think, actually, that Baudrillard is wrong. The newspaper texts collected for this thesis reveal an active public, anxious to intervene, to have their say, to comment, to communicate. These majorities, through talk-back radio, through letters to the editor, through the avenues of comment (such as in the role of victim) that individuals have are far from silent. The Rally for Justice, a major event in The West Australian during the collection period, is a paradigm example of that. What Baudrillard does lend his not inconsiderable weight to, however, is the idea of an intimacy between the media and a community⁹ in which the community is produced by the operations of the media. Not

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⁹ Though Baudrillard could not call it that. A community, presumably, communes. His term is "mass".
that the media produces a community as it would like, but that the community is produced nonetheless.

4. The media and the public sphere

Perhaps midway between the last two perspectives is the notion of the public sphere. Jurgen Habermas, in The structural transformation of the public sphere (1989) traces the emergence of a distinctly public sphere of life in the emergence of bourgeois society is the sixteenth century. A series of social developments which accompanied the rise of mercantilism contributed to the establishment of the public sphere: the institution of permanent markets; the demand, with the development of long-distance trade, for news; the separation of civil society and the state and the movement of economic production out of the household; the establishment of the secular state, which called a stratum of the bourgeois into a new awareness of itself as "the public of the now emerging sphere of public society"(1994:89). Habermas regards the public sphere positively, seeing in it the possibility for an order of democratic, rational debate which would serve liberatory ends, "a site governed neither by the intimacy of the family, the authority of the state, nor the exchange of the market, but by the 'public reason of private citizens'"(Peters 1993:542). However, Thompson reports Habermas as suggesting that the public sphere is currently in decline:

The public sphere of debating citizens had collapsed into a fragmented world of consumers who are enthralled by the media spectacles unfolding before them and manipulated by media techniques.

Thompson 1994

At this point, Habermas appears to go some way toward agreeing with Baudrillard, and his stance is at least as controversial (Thompson 1994). But leaving aside the question of whether the public sphere is in fact collapsing, or whether Habermas' hopes of a democratic and liberating reconstitution of the public sphere are reasonable (Peters 1993), what his analysis offers is a history of the emergence of a site which is not continuous with society, but is the critical place where debate, decision, change, opposition, consensus - in short, the whole constitution of "the social" - is formed (Habermas 1994:87). What is more, the mass media are central in the constitution of
this sphere, even in its small beginnings, and while Habermas is nervous about representative communication through the media, preferring face-to-face dialogue as a 'truer' mode of communication, the centrality of the media is unavoidable in complex societies (Thompson 1994:98, Peters 1993:566). As John Peters says, the scale of modern politics requires representation: assemblies of the whole are ruled out of the question by geography and transportation. The only 'place' that holds the whole process together is the 'no place' of the mass media, understood in the broadest sense. The mass media, as J.S. Mill might put it, are our Pnyx and Forum, for better or worse. We go there to see each other seeing each other. Mass communication is to moderns what assembly was to the ancients: that which gives a collective image of the collective.

1993:566.

From this perspective, then, although Western Australian society may not be constituted by The West Australian, the public sphere of Western Australian society is. In an analysis of the text of The West Australian, according to this view, we are analysing "the social" of Western Australian society, its public sphere.

I began this section speaking about the complexity and indeterminacy of the relationship between the newspaper and the society within which it lives and moves and has its being. This discussion has not tried to simplify any of this complexity. Each of the four perspectives discussed informs an understanding of the relationship between The West Australian newspaper and the Western Australian community. Each supports the validity of using newspapers as an indicator of the play of institutional forces around youth and the discourses they employ in the construction of youth, and is supported by the evidence covered in the thesis. The thesis supports the CCCS's sensitivity to the reality of domination, of a site where certain voices are heard louder, more often, and at greater length than others. This privilege is not offered at random, but is deeply structured by the forms of capitalism under which we live. The perspectives offered by Bell and also by Young and Windschuttle about the active audience and its attempt to speak in the press, its active decoding of media messages, in resistance to imposed ways of understanding phenomena also find support in this study, notwithstanding the audience's great vulnerability in areas where it has little independent information. The sometimes surprising openness of the media to the breadth of "public opinion" and
"public comment", and to the pursuit of rational and democratic discourse, supports the concepts of the public sphere presented by Habermas. Together, these perspectives point to the richness of a newspaper as a site for discovering how, in this society, youth is constituted as a social category.

These arguments are true for much of the mass media. However, there are ways in which *The West Australian* especially responds to the description of an intimate relationship with its community of reference.

**The West Australian newspaper**

*The West Australian* is a monopolistic daily newspaper which serves, through metropolitan and country editions, the whole of the Western Australian community. It is a newspaper of long standing - it was established in 1833, just four years after the founding of the colony.

By a combination of monopolistic practice and a careful sense of its market, *The West Australian* has been able to fight off several contenders for an alternative Western Australian daily newspaper, most recently the Holmes a' Court owned *Western Mail*. In the end, Robert Holmes a Court closed *The Western Mail* and bought *The West Australian*. The only other successful competitors in recent years have been owned by the same company which owns *The West Australian*. *The Daily News*, an afternoon paper of some longevity in the West Australian market though rarely really profitable in recent years, was such a case. Entrepreneurs who have wanted a newspaper as part of their portfolio have done so by buying ownership of *The West Australian* rather than travel the difficult road of starting a rival daily, especially since the *Western Mail* experience. Various suburban newspapers, delivered free, are currently in operation, but these concentrate on local news and local government politics. Many of these are also owned by the *West*, and publish weekly or bi-weekly rather than daily.
The only other significant daily on the Western Australian market is the News Limited (Murdoch)-owned national daily *The Australian*. While *The Australian* has a market, its readership does not compare with *The West Australian*, selling around 10,000 papers Monday to Friday compared with *The West's* 250,000. Although it is printed in Perth electronically, it is perceived as an Eastern States newspaper. News Limited also publishes Western Australia's only Sunday paper *The Sunday Times*, which is successful in its market niche (around 315,000 papers per week) mostly through a huge classified advertisement section. *The Sunday Times* presents from a more conservative ideological stance, and in a journalistic style that is a couple of steps closer to the tabloids. Again, however, its social impact does not compare with that of *The West*. The competition between *The Sunday Times* and *The West Australian* (Saturday's edition - *The West* does not publish a Sunday paper) is intense, but mostly for the classified advertising dollar rather than readership. *The West Australian* sells around 380,000 papers on a Saturday.

Maintaining this monopolistic position depends on a number of factors. The high cost of entry into the market is one. Covering other newspaper markets (like the suburban market) which could serve as a beachhead into the daily market, is another. But perhaps most importantly, a monopolistic parochial newspaper like *The West Australian* needs to be able to maintain the middle line. It needs to avoid alienating its potential audience, to avoid creating, by its own action or neglect, a market for an alternative daily newspaper which would be big enough to support itself and then to begin to compete with *The West* on its own ground.

*The West Australian* therefore walks a tightrope in the ongoing struggle for survival and dominance. While maintaining enough controversy to be interesting, it needs to continue to express the ideological mainstream of the West Australian market. Its needs to be conventional but not boring, opinionated but not radical, diverse but not divisive. Its political ideology, like the dominant political ideology of its milieu, is a mixture of
liberalism and conservatism. Prior to the last decade, the emphasis of *The West* was decidedly conservative, with sustained support of conservative voices and general opposition to voices from the Left. Consistent opposition to the Labor Party was one manifestation of this stance.

A shift in this balance towards the liberal end has been noticeable over the last few years, with a more even handed approach to the major political parties (all of which are, of course, liberal parties). For example, editorially, the newspaper supports the High Court's decision on the Mabo Aboriginal land rights case, although it has given generous column space to opponents of Mabo as well as supporters. The newspaper has, in different recent elections, advocated both the re-election and dismissal of Labor governments. This contrasts markedly with earlier decades, when editorial support for a Labor claim to power was unheard of. Indeed, there was probably a time, especially in the incumbency of Labor Premier Brian Burke (himself a former journalist), when the partnership between the newspaper and the Labor Government was cosy to the point of jeopardising its role as watchdog and critic of governments. Certainly, the newspaper came under severe criticism for its failure to expose the maladministration, and probable corruption, associated with the events now known as WA Inc (*The West Australian* 6/5/95: 4) *The West* maintains a cautiously critical stance towards the current (conservative) Liberal government of Richard Court.

*The West Australian's* monopoly position makes the paper particularly valuable as a site for social inquiry. For one thing, it removes to a substantial degree the need to cover a range of newspapers catering for specialist or sectional markets. There are no other metropolitan daily newspapers in the West Australian market, and *The West* seeks to maximise its audience by plying the main stream, including, within strict limits, a range of opposing voices, and by reassembling diverse discourses. There are other media - radio and television are critically important within the West Australian social and political framework, as they are elsewhere, but as a social institution concerned with the presentation of news, *The West Australian* has no equal. To pursue the archaeological
metaphor, in digging over *The West Australian* for understandings of the social construction of youth, we have found the town's only rubbish tip\(^{10}\).

**Conclusion**

Both the general theory on the relationship of the media to society, and the particular evidence afforded by my interview with the Editor of the *West Australian*\(^{11}\), validates the methodological assumption underlying this study - the assumption that the representation of youth in *The West Australian* is not merely idiosyncratic, not just a foible of a bunch of journalists sitting in a room, but that the structured communication inscribed in this newspaper is indicative of something wider, of wider structured communication about youth. The evidence indicates that it is likely that the contours of Western Australian society are mapped with some significant correspondence by the pages of *The West Australian* newspaper, allowing the construction of the youth category in Western Australia to be read off, with caution and caveat, from the construction of youth in *The West Australian*. However, filling in the substance of a claim of one to one correspondence between *The West Australian* and Western Australia would require another project, just as large as this. The relationship, as Eco has argued, is complex. What I actually have in my hands are newspaper clippings cut out from *The West Australian*. In the end, they must be read for what they are: selected, edited, highly processed pieces of text which claim to represent a certain state of affairs: accounts of events, reports of comment, variously edited letters. The study makes no greater claim than that the representations of youth offered in *The West Australian* are indicative of the broader social construction of youth, as *The West Australian* is a cultural product of a particular kind of society.

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\(^{10}\) This is not meant, of course, to be a comment on the quality of the newspaper, but on the usefulness of rubbish tips to archaeologists.

\(^{11}\) I originally intended to include the interview verbatim. However, in the months after the interview was conducted, the Editor was involved in a dispute with the Board of the newspaper over *The West’s* editorial stance on Aboriginal land rights. At the time of publication, the interview was too sensitive to go to print.
This study explores the representation of young people in *The West Australian*: who speaks about young people, how they speak about young people, about what sorts of issues, using what sort of language. This analysis is placed in a historical context, the history of the institution of the youth category, and in the context of previous sociological thinking about youth, and attempts to add to this global view some finer detail, some more localised understanding of the constitution of youth.
3 Method

Analysing newspaper text to get at an understanding of the way a community structures a social phenomenon has a long history, and techniques for opening up newspaper material are well established (Cunningham and Turner 1993: 203 ff). The methods employed in this study are conventional, and generally conventionally applied. As commentators like Cunningham and Turner suggest, the study uses a combination of different approaches, including quantitative content analysis methods and textual analysis.

The only unusual factor, perhaps, is that my own training in textual analysis was developed in the context of theological studies rather than in cultural studies or literature. While the literary-historical approaches of biblical criticism have much in common with secular disciplines, there are some peculiarities of biblical criticism that have been useful in the analysis of newspaper text. Like newspapers, the biblical documents are mostly composite in nature, a product of a community of authors and a multiplicity of editings rather than a single hand, and biblical criticism has developed a range of techniques to work with this reality.

Content analysis

Content analysis is one of the oldest and most frequently employed methods of media analysis. Its use in media analysis, notably with counts of column inches of coverage in political campaigns, was established in the last century. The technique developed to register and count ideological codes in the 1940's (Winston 1990:57). As a technique for the analysis of texts, its pedigree goes back much further in theological analysis of Biblical texts: word-studies involving the incidence of key words and their context have
been standard for several centuries, and Winston cites an early eighteenth century
content analysis of a Pietist hymnbook (1990: 56).

In media analysis, the use of content analysis was established especially in American
sociology as a primary technique "for the objective, replicable and quantitative
description of events" (Van Dijk 1985: 2). It forms the methodological basis for many
of the classics in media analysis, including the Glasgow University Media Group's Bad
News studies (1976, 1980), Stuart Hall et al's Policing the Crisis (1978) and
innumerable studies of media effects, crime waves and especially the incidence of
violence in the media.

At its simplest, content analysis involves counting how often certain elements appear in
the texts, and the relationship between different elements. While the elements to be
counted need to be selected by the analyst (conditioning rather heavily the claim to
objectivity made by early theorists) this form of analysis does provide a quantitative
measure by which media discourses can be isolated and identified. With the increasing
facility of computer-aided analysis, the analysis of a database of many thousands of
records can be achieved quickly and efficiently: on my personal computer, a count of
the incidence of a particular element across the two and a half thousand articles logged
takes about five seconds. As a result, despite criticism, the use of content analysis has
not declined, and, if used in partnership with other hermeneutic techniques, is able to
provide rich and valuable data on social phenomena and on the practice of the media
themselves (Winston 1990).

The major limitation of content analysis lies not so much in the technique, but in the
claims that are made for it. The claim of "objective, replicable and quantifiable
accounts of events" is difficult to sustain. Quantifiable and replicable content analysis
may be, but there are a number of points at which the hand of the analyst must take hold
if the study is to be meaningful.
The first and most obvious of these is in the decision of what is to be counted: in the design of the research a limited number of meaningful categories need to be constructed. This construction already excludes data, already embodies a contraction and simplification of the message. Decisions must then be made about how to classify a given item, and such decisions are often arbitrary and/or subjective (Winston 1990).

The classic case of this subjectivity is in the allocation of categories of valence - of positive, negative or neutral force - to media representations. Analyses which deal with stereotyping as a social phenomenon often find it necessary to deal with positive or negative representations in order to examine stigmatisation of a population. This raises difficult problems, because the portrayal of an act or description as negative or positive is heavily dependent on context and on the stance of the inquirer. "Car thief" may be a negative description to a car owner or police officer, but not to a street kid. Illegal behaviour or police violence may be negative in the press, but not in the movies. So who says, negative or positive?

The database for this study does not use categories of valence. Valence is not ignored in the study: discourses which name a young person as "sewage", or as "rock apes" require some comment. But the notion of stereotype is itself a conflation: images and frames for embracing young people are themselves complex and context-dependent, and the question of how young people are represented, who represents them thus, and perhaps why, are more useful questions than whether the representation is "negative" or "positive".

A major limitation of content analysis approaches is that interrogation of the resource, in this case the newspaper clippings file, is limited by the design of the database. The database, like a questionnaire, must be designed up front, and the design is determined and limited by the assumptions, hunches and curiosities of the researcher. Because the database is large, to go back and fill in for areas of inquiry that were not anticipated when the study was begun is expensive in terms of time. This problem can be reduced
by working extensively with the literature in order to identify likely areas of inquiry beforehand, and that is what I did. Another approach is to conduct a pilot study, over a shorter period, to trial the categories, and I did this too, for November 1991. Even with these safeguards, however, I found myself going back over the clippings file to do major database fill-ins on at least three occasions, and some categories, painstakingly filled, were not used in the final analysis at all. The vulnerability of database design means that a claim to "objectivity" cannot really be sustained.

Another major limitation of content analysis techniques lies in the relationship between the incidence of an element and its significance. For example, a three-centimetre column on a topic appearing on page forty seven is different to a full front-page spread, and three front page spreads count for more, or perhaps count differently, than a hundred articles in the back pages. There are quantitative techniques that can measure these factors of significance: for example, column-inches can be measured (as is often done in content analyses of media bias in election campaigns), and if the page number of an article is logged (as it was in this study) the average page number for an element can be determined. But significance is a complex phenomenon, often a result of combinations of subtle factors which cannot be adequately measured up front. In coverage of the Vietnam war, single pivotal photographs like the oft-published shot of a young girl, naked and burning with napalm and running towards the camera, arguably had more significance than yards of column inches of informed debate.

Finally, if the study is to be meaningful, some inference as to the significance of the data must be made (Winston 1990:58). While counting a particular feature may seem like an "objective" process, the exploration of what the "fact" of a high count for young people and crime might mean is a creative, and often intuitive process. A standard, and often unspoken inference is that the prevalence of a particular representation before an audience leads to the audience sharing the representation. So, in Theberge's Crooks, conmen and clowns: businessmen in TV entertainment which was the subject of Winston's critique, the inference was that the routine portrayal of businessmen in a
negative light on TV would lead to businessmen being perceived negatively in the community.

This, again, is a difficult thesis. As indicated above, audience negotiation with a received message is complex and difficult to determine with any kind of certainty (Cunningham and Turner 1993: 264-5). This study avoids making this kind of inference. I have argued that a diffuse though intimate relationship exists between messages embodied in the newspaper and the messages prevalent in the Western Australian community, and that messages circulate in the community through, among other things, this particular newspaper. I would not deny either that images presented routinely before an audience exercise an influence. But the idea that the composite figure of youth reconstructed through the ministrations of content analysis corresponds to the figure of youth pictured in the mind's eye of an undifferentiated "public" is difficult to sustain.

Content analysis, while it may not be able to fill the shoes of "objective science", is nevertheless able to provide us with a "map" of the terrain around the communication" (Winston 1990:58). It is able to do so more fully and reliably, however, if used in partnership with other more qualitative methods and with more general sociological discussion of the matters under study. This is essentially the approach taken here.

Other hermeneutic approaches

As I mentioned, part of the academic background to my interest in working with newspaper text comes not from sociology or cultural studies but from theological studies. Many of the skills and techniques used to break open the newspaper articles, including content analysis, have been adapted from the kind of literary analysis developed for theological inquiry into Biblical texts. The usefulness of these techniques should be no surprise: this study has in common with Biblical criticism the enterprise of
isolating ideological elements embedded in the text and developing commentary upon it.

In addition to content analysis, many of the hermeneutic techniques and forms of analysis developed or adapted in theological studies are immediately applicable to media work, especially in this field. Some of these are already in use within the discipline: for example, narrative theory, or form-criticism as it is known in theological studies, was developed from work by literary theorists in the nineteenth century and has been applied extensively to Biblical scholarship, especially through the work of Gunkel on the Old Testament. Narrative theory is increasingly being used by media theorists also (see Kozloff 1992). Other specific critical approaches that have been developed within biblical study under the general rubric of literary-historical criticism have been useful.

Source criticism has been one of these. In source criticism, the original sources for a composite text are identified using a range of indicators, both discursive and stylistic, and the ideological similarities and differences between different sources are analysed in order to give a richer understanding of the context and meaning of the text. In this way, a text which presents itself on the surface as a continuous piece of writing from the pen of a single author can be dismantled to expose the fragmentary discourses that are employed in its production. Closely connected with source criticism is the commentary on the ideological framework of the "author". In practice, in most pieces of text, and especially media text, several hands go into the shaping of the text before it reaches its final form. Each contribution to the process adds, deletes, discards or retains material, and each editorial decision is made within an ideological matrix. Redaction-criticism seeks to expose the layered editorial process by which a text or series of texts takes its final form, and then to identify and isolate the different ideological perspectives of different editorial, or "redactoral", hands.
More broadly, hermeneutic approaches seek to identify and bring out the depth and richness of meaning in the text. In part, this process is methodological, a matter of applying technique, of careful dissection of the text, knowing what to look for. The contributions of semiotic analysis, of feminist analyses and of Freudian perspectives have been especially important here. But seeing meaning in a text is also a subjective process, an art. The kind of reading that Roland Barthes does in *Mythologies* (1973) or Umberto Eco does in *Travels in Hyperreality* (1972) requires a sensitivity and sensibility to the text that could not be achieved by a surface reading of the immanent content of the message. This study aims to combine the "colder" techniques of content analysis of a large quantity of textual material with "warmer" hermeneutic analyses of individual pieces, and thereby to maximise the advantages and reduce the limitations of both.

The research vehicle

The essence of the research process was to collect a suitable store of newspaper text, which could then be analysed using the techniques discussed above.

The clippings collection

The process of data collection was relatively simple, if tedious. Every article in the general news pages of *The West Australian* (that is, the pages between the front page and the arts, magazine or business section) that made mention of young people in whatever form or capacity was clipped. It was then specifically the genre of *news* that was being explored\(^\text{12}\).

\(^{12}\) Young people feature routinely in magazine liftouts, as models in advertisements, as athletes in the sport pages. These categories of reporting do bear a relationship to the news: sport news is news, and magazine articles often bear a close relationship to current events. In addition, as editor Paul Murray pointed out in interview, sport often provides "positive" representations of youth, especially Aboriginal youth, to the point where such images are frequently used as "positive role models" for Aboriginal young people. This material, however, has not been included in this study.
Notwithstanding the comments made elsewhere about the conceptual inadequacy of dealing with youth as an age-range, the criterion for inclusion was the United Nations definition: subjects of the article had to be between twelve and twenty-five inclusive. The criterion is a conventional one, and has a number of advantages as such. It is practical and easy to work with. However, it is not something with which we can be content. Not only is the definition conceptually inadequate, but also (recognising that a boundary problem will always exist with a social category like this) the age-range criterion admitted subjects at the lower end of the range who were clearly seen as children, and subjects at the upper end who met all criteria for adulthood.

Originally, the intention was to clip for the five year period, 1987-1992. However, it soon became clear that the quantity of material generated would be enormous. Two options presented themselves: either to employ some sort of sampling procedure, or to reduce the collection period.

The period 1987-1992 had no particular significance, so it was decided that the best option was to shorten the collection period, rather than engaging in the complexities and discontinuities of sampling, and the risks of skewing that sampling techniques invariably have to overcome. Consequently, the period April 1990-March 1992 was chosen. Again, the choice was pragmatic rather than governed by events of interest in the newspapers during that time. Any period would have done. Coincidentally, the period encloses a major public debate on high speed car chases involving police and young people in stolen cars, especially involving accidents in which some other road user is killed.

The clippings were mounted on sheets of paper and filed chronologically in loose-leaf folders, one month to a folder. The folders were then checked for omissions. If there were no clippings for a given date, a note was made, and the newspapers corresponding to those dates were checked from the holdings at Reid Library, at the University of Western Australia (with the exception of dates that fell on a Sunday - *The West*
Australian doesn't publish a Sunday paper). These articles were then photocopied and added to the folders. In all this process yielded some 2,683 clippings, mounted on A4 paper, the date and page number inscribed thereon, and stored in loose-leaf envelope folders in a filing cabinet. The clippings were analysed for language used to describe the young person(s) in the article, for the issues or topics covered by the article, for the gender and ethnicity of the young person(s) who were the subject of the report, and for the source of the story or of commentary on the events described within it. Reference points like headline, page number, the genre of the article (general news feature, editorial, letters to the editor, etc) were also recorded. This data was logged into a database, which then facilitated both the quantitative treatment of these features and the quick retrieval of articles for more interpretive analysis. A discussion of database design and the criteria used to operationalise the database is included in the Appendices.

Opting for a close-to-complete collection for two years, rather than a sampled collection for a longer period, gives a view of newspaper representations of young people that is essentially synchronic. Partly this is the nature of news: a newspaper presents current positions on events and issues. Comparative historical work can of course be done in order to study the movement of the youth category through time. A Foucault-type historical study (Foucault 1961, 1979, 1984) of the emergence of youth discourse, and of its variants (like talk about "adolescents" and "teenagers") is an important part of the groundwork for a study such as this. But the youth news file itself, collected in the way that it has been collected for this work, offers us little in the way of primary materials for that kind of historical study. What the youth news file offers is a rich deposit of material on current understandings of youth and current discourses embracing them. The historical material is covered through the survey of secondary sources like Musgrove, Aries and Gillis, and Dyhouse and Springhall and Murdock & McCron. From the two sets of material, the secondary historical sources and the primary newspaper accounts, some account both of synchronic and diachronic elements in the constitution of the youth category is possible.
Conclusion

This study is all about trying to understand the youth category. In order to do so, it examines both the history of the emergence of the youth category and the structure of current representations of young people in *The West Australian* newspaper. The newspaper study uses the combination of clippings file and database to make the interplay of language, the discourse of institutional and other sources, the issue at stake, the intersection of categories like gender and race available for analysis. A range of different strategies are used to uncover the diverse meanings of "youth", and also the continuities of meaning, within these texts. The central methodological partnership in the study is the combination of content analysis with hermeneutic techniques. This partnership helps to make the most of the strengths, and to minimise the weaknesses and blind spots in each of these approaches used alone; to combine micro and macro sociological approaches; to bring both "cold" and "warm" ways of telling the story into play. The historical discussion relies on the evidence collected by historians like Musgrove, Gillis, Dyhouse and Kett, as well as the developing psychological and sociological literature on youth and adolescence, to understand how the youth category has come to be constituted so, and to uncover the elements of youth discourse that continue to employed in talk about youth. It is to this discussion that we now turn.
Part Two: the constitution of the youthful subject
The terms in which youth is understood in the pages of *The West Australian* do not have their origin, of course, in 1990 or even in 1833, when the newspaper was founded. The newspaper is dependent on a history of constructing youth which stretches back before its origins, and is continually informed by changes in the construction of youth that emerge in wider discourse. The same can be said of its dominant sources, particularly the professionals and experts who, by placing their understandings of youth issues and events in the political arena, seek to influence the course of action and understanding of the youth problem. Whether the commentator is a police officer for whom young people are an assumed source of trouble, or a parent wishing to defend his or her offspring against some slight or harsh judgement, or an academic working with a set of theories of behaviour, the understandings and practices that are implied in their commentary rely on concepts that have emerged over the last two centuries. The dominant issues that feature in the newspaper, the pressure points of community anxiety (like the threat of violence or disorder, unemployment, the adequacy and function of the school) likewise do not come from nowhere, but have their roots in a history of dealing with young people and in the practices of institutions charged with their control.

In any study of the representation of youth, a serious survey of the historical development of current conceptions would be important. In a study such as this, where the empirical data span only a short time period, it is especially necessary to establish a background of theory against which the foreground of newspaper discourse on youth is to be evaluated and analysed. This chapter seeks to present a brief account of youth discourse, including an account of the emergence of the modern understandings of youth and the major developments in youth theory.

The youth category is not the first to receive this kind of analysis. The work of Michel Foucault on madness and psychiatric discourses, crime and punishment and the development of prisons, has provided useful templates for the study of the processes under which a problem population is brought under discipline, how members of such populations are constituted in discourse and in specific institutional practices, and how
they are encouraged to see themselves "rightly", to cooperate in their normalisation.

While Foucault does not, in any extended way, apply himself to the problem of youth, the general framework of analysis developed in *Madness and Civilisation* (1961) and *Discipline and Punish* (1979) has obvious use in the understanding of the emergence of a social category which is so intimately connected with the process of training and the problem of government.

The central problem Foucault is addressing in these works is the problem of "the constitution of the subject" (Rabinow 1984: 7) What are the means by which human beings become subjects - in both senses of the word? How do they become self-conscious, acting beings, acting out of their self-consciousness, and how are they subordinated by processes of domination and control?¹³ It is in many respects consistent with the "social constructionist" thesis, which has been one of the poles of debate on the youth question since Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1939a). In this view, the emergence of the youth category (among others) is a product of specific social and historical forces, a product of culture. In Foucault and in most social constructionist theory, especially that associated with the Birmingham School in the 1970's, there is a consciousness that the process by which "youth" emerges as a social category in the West is not merely accidental, nor neutral, nor natural, but a product of the organisation of power¹⁴.

According to Paul Rabinow's useful summary (1984:8ff), this "history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" has three major movements.

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¹³ The question of youth is fascinating because it involves a double movement in this regard. Youth is not only constituted as youth, developing a self understanding of itself as youth and living under the regimes designed for its governance. Youth is also "transition", occupied with the "task" of becoming ... adult. It is a population that is not only constituted as a subject in its own right, but is itself the ground for the constitution of the generalised subject, the citizen.

¹⁴ This is, of course, a contested position. Youth does have some biological correlatives (puberty being the most obvious), and for many theorists, these are constitutive of the category: youth is a product of the biological changes which occur in adolescence.
The first is the operation of what Foucault calls "dividing practices". This involves the identification of a subject population, and some means for their isolation and special treatment. A series of knowledges and techniques are developed and employed to single out some sector of the population for special analysis. Thus, for example, in a long process involving more and more refined discriminations, the insane are diagnosed and culled out of a general vagabond population of petty thieves, migrants, prostitutes, people with chronic illnesses, ex-prisoners, the destitute, spendthrifts, homosexuals, blasphemers and others. Institutional responses are developed to meet the newly isolated "special needs" of the insane: asylums and mental hospitals are built to house them, and techniques for the containment, control and cure of the insane are established. These "dividing practices" are inextricably bound up with "the formation and increasingly sophisticated elaboration of the social sciences" and "the historical relationship of these modes of classification, control and containment to a distinctive tradition of humanitarian rhetoric on reform and progress" (ibid).

As the discussion below indicates, the emergence of the youth category in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century is charted by the establishment of a series of such dividing practices: segregation of the young within the workhouse, changing laws on the age of legal responsibility, the Factory Acts, establishment of the Borstals and reformatories, and the slow but inexorable extension of education across class and gender lines. The dominant account of such "reforms" is commonly couched in the language of "humanitarian rhetoric on reform and progress", and supported by a growing scientific literature on youth and adolescence.

The second movement in the constitution of the subject, according to Foucault, is scientific classification (Rabinow 1984:8). Related to dividing practices, and deeply implicated within them, the practice of scientific classification calls the subject into being, paradoxically, by constituting the subject as an object for study, embracing him or her within the fold of "the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of
sciences" (ibid). By claiming the status of sciences, these modes of inquiry claim the right to speak with authority, to constitute reality, to proclaim what is normal and what is aberrant, to diagnose, prescribe, judge, sentence. In each and every instance, the claim to knowledge is a claim to power, the fabrication of discourse a structure of containment and control.

Knowledge does not necessarily follow the path of gradual progress sometimes prescribed by the history of ideas, but can be the subject of abrupt and fundamental changes. In several studies, Foucault describes the transformations that have occurred in the discursive assembly around madness, for instance, or punishment, the discontinuities that are evident in the way that specific populations and problems are construed. Generally, he does not explore the correlation of these discursive shifts with transformations in the economy, in the mode of production, or in other physical features of the life of a people\(^\text{15}\), but the links are there to be made.

Thus, the history of youth in industrial societies is also a history of scientific inquiry into youth. In several of the useful summaries of the history of youth (eg Murdock &McCron 1976, Springhall 1983, Muncie 1983, Griffin 1993 and others) the history of the youth category is entwined with the history of youth science: the youth category and discourses about youth emerge together. Of particular interest here is the development of discourses of adolescence, which gather momentum through the nineteenth century until their establishment in the work of G.Stanley Hall in the early twentieth century, and the parallel and connected discourses of juvenile delinquency, which follow a similar trajectory\(^\text{16}\). In complex and mediated ways, these schemas of scientific

\(^{15}\) Foucault is concerned in particular to avoid the depiction of discourse as a mere reflection of economic processes, determined whether in the last instance or indeed in any instance by the mode of production. Open to the possibility that there may be multiple determinations going on, or no determinations at all, he often seeks to "bracket off" discourse from economic or political processes, as a way of avoiding the notion that discourse is a "reflection, no matte how sophisticatedly mediated, of something supposedly 'deeper' and more 'real'" (Rabinow 1984:10).

\(^{16}\) Ann Edwards argues in Regulation and Repression (1988) that the main discursive means of social control that have developed in the last two hundred years have been medical and judicio-legal discourses. The location of the discourse of adolescence in the quasi-medical (psychiatric/human development/biopsychological) field, and of juvenile delinquency in the judicio-legal field run parallel to this
classification find their way into the codes of institutions established for the control of young people; into popular understanding, where they shape, challenge, reinforce or coexist with existing understandings and popular discourse; and into the self understanding of members of the subject population itself.

This latter point is the third movement in the constitution of the subject\textsuperscript{17}. While human beings confined in institutions or otherwise segregated are not in control of much of what is happening to them, Foucault is also interested in the work that subject populations do to constitute themselves in the terms provided by the discursive practices that define them, in the processes of self-formation or "subjectification" in which the subject actively constructs a self-identity. In this movement, the subject is active and cooperative in the constitution of himself or herself as a subject (Rabinow 1984:11).

This movement is clearly also highly relevant to an understanding of the constitution of the youth category. The activity of youth groups and youth movements is wide open for such an analysis. The substantial literature on youth subcultures likewise relates specifically to this very question: how young people constitute themselves as "youth" or "adolescents" under conditions of domination and subjection, how young people learn how to be "teenagers", how the appellation "student" is worn by young people, and how they cooperate with the processes of institutionalisation, training and examination that determine their social being.

\textsuperscript{17} Processes of self-formation are perhaps better studied by observation of a subject population than by a method like newspaper analysis. Consequently, while some discussion of this movement is important, it is not a primary focus of the thesis. I have also reversed the order of self-formation and scientific classification in the discussion below. Rabinow sees processes of self-formation logically as the third movement in the constitution of the subject. Because this feature is dealt with here largely through the historical texts, it makes better structural sense to discuss self-formation second, in the context of dividing practices. This allows the last section, on scientific classification, to form the basis of a discussion about the development of youth theory and thence to the structure of discourse in the newspaper.
These three movements in the constitution of the subject - the establishment of "dividing practices", the practices of self-formation, the development of scientific discourses - then provide a useful framework for understanding the development of the youth category and of discourses about youth. The emergence of the youth category in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was, according to commentators like Aries, Gillis, Springhall and Griffin, a result of the dividing practices laid down by restriction on the employment of young people and the establishment of the school. Analyses of the self-formation of young people in response to these practices are embodied in the boys movement and other youth movements, as well as in the emergence of youth culture/subculture since World War II. Scientific discourses of adolescence and juvenile delinquency grew alongside these developments, crystallising into the sciences of youth and adolescence in the early twentieth century.
4 Dividing practices: a brief history of youth

The adolescent was invented at the same time as the steam engine. The principal architect of the latter was Watt in 1765, of the former Rousseau in 1762.

So Frank Musgrove begins his chapter on the historical development of adolescence, entitled "the invention of the adolescent" (1964:33-57) The date of origin is, of course, a contrivance: modern notions of youth emerged fitfully and gradually amidst the fractures and innovations of the industrial revolution. The notion of the "invention" or "discovery" of adolescence (employed also by Magarey 1978, Gillis 1974, Muncie 1983, Springhall 1983, Griffin 1993) serves rather to indicate that adolescence was one of those innovations: that a historical break occurs in the concept of youth around about this time. The timing of this break is interesting in that it coincides with the historical discontinuities (in Europe) Foucault imagines in the emergence of modern understandings of madness and in changing conceptions of discipline and punishment. It also coincides in a general way with the gradual transformation from feudalism to capitalism.

To speak of the "invention of adolescence" is not to say that there was no conception of youth, and no youth problematic before 1762. Natalie Zamon Davis (1971) has done extensive work on the behaviour of groups of apprentices in the preindustrial period, noting the concerns about rowdyism and public nuisance that such groups evoked. Pearson (1983) likewise discusses complaints about delinquency and misrule back to the
seventeenth century. Springhall (1983:21) notes the opinion of Shakespeare's shepherd in *The Winter's Tale*, that he

would that there were no age between sixteen and three and twenty, or that youth would sleep out the rest, for there is nothing in between but getting wenches with child, wronging the ancienity, stealing, fighting.

Keill (1964) cites Aristotle, writing in the fifth century BCE to similar effect, and compiles a further 900 pages of biography and autobiography to demonstrate the existence of adolescence across time and across cultures. Aries (1962) and Gillis (1974) both note developed and often intricate notions of stages of the life cycle - significantly featuring youth or adolescence - in mediaeval texts.

However, while conceptions of youth are not uncommon across societies, the content of such conceptions varies widely. So, for instance, while age-stage classifications appear frequently in mediaeval texts, the number of stages, the description of each stage, and the ages applying to each stage indicate no consistency. Aries, for example, cites a range of representations of the "ages of life", corresponding to templates based on numerology (so four stages, corresponding to the "number of man", and of the seasons and elements); the number of planets (so seven stages); or the signs of the zodiac (so twelve) (1962:18ff). The purpose and logic of such correspondences was to demonstrate the essential unity and connectedness of all elements of the physical world, including the human. *Le Grand Propitieire des tous choses*, a thirteenth century encyclopaedia, lists adolescence as its third age, after infancy and *peuritia*, or late childhood. It begins at fourteen, but its ending is more obscure. Different classical authorities cited by the text variously end the stage at twenty-one, twenty-eight, or thirty or thirty-five. The rule of seven (seven being the perfect number) is the principal determinant of the timing (Aries 1962:18-25).

These were not concepts that were in common usage at this time. The French translator of *Le Grand Propitieire* bemoans the difficulty of translation because French has only three terms at its disposal for translating the ages of life: childhood, youth and old age. Such terms were more about status than age: servants could wear the appellation "child"
into their fifties (as in "garçon" for a waiter), and it had little biological connotation. According to Aries, "people had no idea of what we call adolescence, and the idea was a long time taking shape" (1962:29). "Youth" referred to a much longer phase, to the prime of life, to the period between childhood and old age, to the age of vitality and productivity.

Conceptions of adolescence bearing the modern meanings emerged first in romantic notions of youth in literature, and in the idea of the conscript. In literature, in the genre of the Bildungsroman, the novel of youthful search and struggle and resolution, the figure of youth took on a heroic cast (Johnson 1993: 36ff). The pictures of a noble youth "secretly possessing new values capable of reviving an aged and sclerosed society" (Aries 1962:30) seem to have emerged first in Germany, with figures like Wagner's Siegfried (Aries suggests that Siegfried is "the first adolescent of modern times" (ibid)), Goethe's Werther, Schiller's Karl. This idea of "golden youth", and the representation of German youth movements in particular in that light, is influential in discourses of youth until the postwar period. It is formative in G. Stanley Hall's work, it figures in Mannheim's work on the problem of generations, it lies behind even the later work of Eisenstadt. It remains as one of the poles in the ambivalence of youth discourse in the present. The climactic passions exhibited in these romantic literary works engenders the notion of "storm and stress" (Sturm und Drang) which constitutes one of the core ingredients of the idea of adolescence.

Aries argues, however, that this notion was not active in France until the beginning of the twentieth century. There, the image of "shining youth" was used of the conscript: or, to put it more accurately, as an advertising ploy in conscription drives (1962:30). We note here, not for the first or the last time, that young women are not included in this kind of reshaping of the discursive lives of the young. While Aries (and Musgrove and Gillis, for that matter) gives very little data on how things were changing for young women in the eighteenth century, it seems clear that their journey takes a different path,
intersecting the pattern of discourse concerning young men much later and even then, only imperfectly.

Like Aries, Gillis describes a stage of youth in the preindustrial period significantly different from modern conceptions. Concentrating more on socio-economic than cultural data, and picking up a four-stage life span as typical, he suggests that

What they commonly called "youth" was a very long transition period, lasting from the point that the very young child first became somewhat independent of its family, usually about seven or eight, to the point of complete independence at marriage, ordinarily in the mid- or late twenties. Imprecise as youth's boundaries were, there being no universally recognised age-grading as in today's society, its sociology was relatively clear. Beginning at what seems to us to be a very young age, children began to separate from their families and to go to live in other households. By 14, a great majority would be living in a state of semidependence, either as servants in households, apprentices living in their masters' homes, or students boarding away from their families. It was precisely this detachment from family that gave preindustrial youth its peculiar structure and meaning...

Gillis 1974:2

What changes, then, in the social, economic and discursive fabric of European life, such that adolescence, this new stage of life, is "discovered"? The aetiology suggested by Aries and Gillis is complicated and drawn out, but they agree on its principal components: the change is engendered by economic changes, which have their institutional corollaries, both in law and in the breakdown of the mediaeval family; by demographic changes; and by the growth and extension of the school. These processes originate in the middle classes and are extended gradually and against considerable resistance to working classes and the poor. They apply first and foremost to young men, enveloping young women late and imperfectly.

The major institutional component of the preindustrial family, as writers like Gillis, Kett, and Pearson have described it, is the practice of "apprenticeship" or "service". Young people lived in the household of their "employer" until they could establish an independent household by marriage or inheritance, usually in the late twenties for men, late teens for women. This institution, established by law (young people without any
visible means of support could be forcibly placed into apprenticeship under Poor Law provisions) constituted the major "dividing practice" concerning youth in the preindustrial period, under which the young were kept dependent and subservient, and excluded from full membership of the commonwealth. It follows that the prerequisite for the emergence of modern concepts of youth is the erosion of this institution.

Gillis suggests (1974:70ff) that this happens on several fronts at once. Middle class families were the first to abandon the practice of "sending out" their children to live and work in others' households. The motivation was that the increasingly socially mobile and therefore status conscious middle classes had much to fear in the association of their offspring with servants, especially when the servants were (as was increasingly the case) "hired help". Increasingly, in the early nineteenth century, the children of the middle classes were being kept at home: girls until they married, boys until they went to university or some professional apprenticeship could be negotiated for them. But birth rates among the middle classes as well as others were still high, and places in the professions or in education expensive and scarce. There was therefore a chronic oversupply of candidates for too few positions. Both routes, education and apprenticeship, became open to abuse as unscrupulous masters took advantage of the demand for positions and used the young men entrusted to them either simply for cheap labour or as a source of profit from fees, prompting official inquiries into education both in Germany and England in the mid-nineteenth century. Education, locked into the classical form designed for the clergy and providing almost nothing in the area of technical education (for instance, subjects like mathematics and the sciences), offered no guarantee of employment in the small civil or professional labour market.

Faced with a crisis of unemployment among the educated young, and attendant moral panics around "bohemianism" and political rebellion in the 1830's and 1840's, (at least for young men), the middle classes increasingly began to exert control over their young. The major institution for achieving this was the school.
In the early to middle nineteenth century, this discipline was mostly applied to young men. At this point, although local private schools for girls existed, girls were still usually controlled within the patriarchal home, perhaps with a private tutor (Dyhouse 1981). Increasingly, however, towards the end of the nineteenth century, boarding schools for the daughters of the middle classes were also becoming popular. Numbers of young women were also graduating from university. In the 1890 census in the U.S. there were 342,000 young women in secondary school and 33,000 in college, but still around 1,000,000 young women between the ages of fifteen and twenty in the workforce (Hall 1905: 588).

The education of young women beyond elementary standard was a major area of controversy, however. Commentators feared that the disciplines of further education would spend women's essential energies, frustrating their true destiny of motherhood and leading to racial decrepitude. This belief was buttressed by a large literature on the relative fecundity of educated women as opposed to non-educated women, resulting in the argument that educated women were no longer doing their duty to the race, and leaving the task of reproducing the race to immigrant and poor women. The eugenic consequences of this were plain for everyone to see: the fitness of the species could be measured in part by its ability to breed, and educated women were not breeding (Hall 1905: 561ff). The political challenge of the feminist movement inflamed, rather than appeased, such sentiment.

Nevertheless, public schooling gradually extended its reach to women. Kett's study of adolescence in America records equal numbers of girls to boys in the lower grades of early nineteenth-century elementary schools, though numbers dropped radically once girls entered their teens (Kett 1977:20). However, teaching as a profession itself was rapidly emerging as an acceptable occupation for young women, and Kett records that by the end of the nineteenth century, girls outnumbered boys in the secondary schools because of the gateway to school teaching that secondary education provided (1977:129). In Australia, where secondary schooling developed late and fitfully, the
same route for young women was available through a kind of apprenticeship, especially under the monitor system.

However, in the mid-nineteenth century, the costs associated with extended schooling in a situation of continuing high fertility presented major problems. Gillis suggests that the strategy increasingly adopted by the middle classes was to limit family size, a strategy made possible in the late nineteenth century by decreased infant mortality resulting from improved medical attention. Primogeniture, the advantage given in inheritance to the first-born son, fell into disfavour as middle class families saw it as their responsibility to provide each of their (now fewer) children with "a start in life". According to J.E. Panton, writing in 1889, "no-one has the right to bring children into the world in the ranks of the upper middle class and do less" (quoted in Gillis 1974:99).

Reforms in the schools were demanded and achieved, as the role of the school in controlling a now extended period of dependence, in loco parentis, became critical. In effect, the reformed boarding school of the nineteenth century (which became the model for the establishment of schools more generally) was a total institution, guaranteeing the discipline of the bodies of the sons of the middle classes. This "dividing practice", this confinement of the bodies of young men in an institution dedicated to their control and training, was an essential component of the constitution of youth.

Whether a boy remained at home for his schooling or was sent away to a boarding institution was obviously less important to the European middle classes than were the social controls associated with that education. The universal result was a state of dependence longer than that experienced by the previous generation: in effect, the creation of a new stage of life corresponding to what we now call 'adolescence'.

Gillis 1974:102

Among the children of the working classes, the nineteenth century followed a different, but parallel history (Gillis 1974:61). With the growth of trade and the money economy in the early nineteenth century, masters began to realise that it was cheaper to pay wages than to meet the costs of dependents living under one's own roof. Outwork, often the half-way house between traditional household subsistence production and factory production, established a new kind of household, in which biological members of the
family were jointly involved in the production process (Gillis 1974:48). As the locus of production moved to the factory, this nuclear family production unit was often employed intact. The labour of children and young people continued to be important, or increased in importance, while remaining under the control of the father in the patriarchal family (Musgrove 1964:68). Factory manufacture, by the provision of an independent wage, offered opportunities for young people to establish independent, landless, households, and to enter into marriages of their own volition. The ability of older children to move out and establish independent households was limited only by their earnings, and the Factory Commissioners in England in 1842 reported that many fourteen year olds were independent in this way (Musgrove 1964:68). These social and economic changes were recognised in the law, which abolished compulsory apprenticeship in England in 1814, thus signalling the demise of the dominant technique for the control of youth in the preindustrial period (Musgrove 1964:66).

At the same time, the other main institutional base for mediaeval concepts of youth, the life of the journeyman, was increasingly broken down by the fragmentation of the guilds and the erosion of traditional practices of hospitality amongst members of the guilds; by the incursion of factory manufacture and the growth of new industries; by the growth of cities and urban migration. Increasingly, skilled workers were driven by unemployment and lack of opportunity to the cities, to factory work, to wage labour (Gillis 1974:51). Guild regulations requiring chastity of journeymen lost their authority, as guilds increasingly allowed married members. Gradually, there emerged a general convergence among different sectors of the working classes to the pattern of the industrial family of the nineteenth century (Gillis 1974:54/5).

The early period of mechanisation required the labour of children and young people in large numbers. However, as technology improved, labour inputs decreased, and a higher skill level was required of those workers that were employed. Increasingly, positions of skilled labour were monopolised by adult men, and while the unskilled labour of women and juveniles was still required, it became more dispensable.
(Musgrove 1964:70ff). Youth unemployment, and the attendant anxieties about social disorder, began to loom larger in the public consciousness (Magarey 1978).

Meanwhile, upper middle class social reformers began to intervene in the administration of government as it applied to the children of workers. Armed with recently-discovered discourses of the child that took a sentimental view of childhood (emphasising its "innocence" rather than the pre-Enlightenment view of its depravity and the need for strict discipline and hard work), "child savers" and industrial reformers began to agitate for government action to restrict the labour of children in the factories and the mines and to extend the privileges of education to them. The Factory Acts of 1833 in England required "that no child under the age of 9 was to be employed in cotton mills or factories and hours were to be limited to eight hours a day for those under 13 and twelve hours for those under 18. They also stated that factory owners should provide some elementary schooling...for their juvenile employees" (Muncie 1983:32)\(^\text{18}\).

For a long time, these measures were evaded or actively resisted both by employers and parents. Children's wages still represented an essential contribution to household income, and working families could still ill-afford to feed unproductive members (Magarey 1978:14). For employers, juvenile labour was still economic. And nineteenth century demographics suggests that the labour of juveniles was essential on a macro scale. Figures from Europe suggest an age pyramid with a very wide base: for example, in 1840 in Europe there were three people aged between fifteen and twenty-nine to every four aged over thirty. Forty eight percent of the large workforce employed by M'Connel and Kennedy in Manchester in 1816 were under eighteen (Musgrove 1964:66). In 1861, fifteen percent of workers in the British textile industry were under fifteen years old, and twelve percent in mining. School attendance was extensive rather than intensive, worked around the demands of industry whether urban/industrial or rural/agricultural for the labour of children and young people (Kett 1977:21).

\(^{18}\) Much of the concern of middle class inquirers was not so much the exploitation of the young as the decreased parental control which independent wages offered them (Musgrove 1964:67/8).
However, as the technological advances in manufacturing towards the end of the nineteenth century began to take root, juvenile unemployment became more and more of a concern, as the combined influence of the Factory Acts and changing work practices meant that a significant and growing number of young people were neither at work or school. In Manchester in 1862, the Education Aid Society found that over half those aged between three and twelve, and seventeen percent of those over twelve, were in this position (Musgrove 1964:76). With most working families needing both parents at work, "a growing number [of children] were thrown onto the streets to become vagrants or to engage in petty criminality" (Muncie 1983:32). "They are idling in the streets and wynds; tumbling about in the gutters; selling matches; running errands; working in tobacco shops, cared for by no man..." said James McCosh in 1867 in a paper to the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (Musgrove 1964:76).

The threat to public order caused by this street population gave rise to an increasing concern for juvenile delinquency. Magarey suggests that juvenile delinquency arose as a public issue increasingly from the 1830's through the mid-nineteenth century. In part, this was due to the activities of the "child savers" who, by their inquiries into the lives of the children of working class families, discovered activities which were normal to working class households and working class child-rearing practices but would have been regarded as neglectful, offensive and dangerous when exposed to the inquiring middle class gaze (Platt 1969). Activities such as drinking, gambling, precocious sex, the popular theatre, street football and general street presence, while being customary within working classes, scandalised a middle class audience\(^\text{19}\). Finch (1993) suggests that this new surveillance and control is also due to the increasing regulation of the street, which since mediaeval times had a multi-purpose function, used for market, for

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\(^{19}\) The scandalised middle class gaze did not end in the nineteenth century, and is responsible for a number of "moral panics" concerning the behaviour of young people since. Note Finch (1993), and especially Stratton's study of Bodgies and Wdigies for a further example of this (Stratton 1992, 1993) The latter paper is subtitled "Just working class kids doing working class things"
waste disposal, for the conduct of all kinds of business, for courtship, for recreation and games and for a place for children to play. With the growth in the availability of consumer goods, the street became a place for shopping and the transport of goods, a function with which many of the earlier uses were inconsistent. The various Police Acts of the mid-nineteenth century were significantly concerned with clearing the streets for the middle classes.

The media were also an important part of this gaze. Newspapers reported in often vivid terms the behaviour and threat of street gangs, and their murderous and unruly inclinations. The recurrence of "moral panics" surrounding street gangs in British urban centres from the mid-nineteenth century onwards is documented extensively by Pearson (1983).

In Australia, the economic history runs a little differently. The labour of children and young people was needed late into the nineteenth century: an economy based on the pastoral industry, with a sparse population, could not yet afford the luxury of an extended adolescence (Bessant 1993). Juvenile labour was even more necessary after the evacuation of the labour market caused by the gold rushes of the mid-nineteenth century, and while much rural youth labour was isolated and often closer to preindustrial patterns of "living in" for subsistence rather than wages (Facey 1981), the labour shortage often meant that good wages were to be had irrespective of age. It was not really until the 1890's depression that unemployment had a serious impact on concerns about juvenile delinquency.

However, unemployment was not the only cause for street presence and public concern. As in England, the independence of young people earning their own wages was as much a concern as youth unemployment. Where this was accompanied by enough leisure time in which to spend their hard-earned cash (as is true for seasonal work in a pastoral economy) "moral panics" around the street-presence of threatening young men and loose young women are never very far from newspaper headlines. From the 1870's on,
the newspapers and parliamentary debates abound with public scandals about the activities of "larrikins" in the streets of Australian cities, with their "profane and blasphemous language" (Finch 1993:77), their heckling of passers by, their obstruction of public streets, their unmentionable goings-on in dark alleyways, their "flash" dress, their sexuality, their paramilitary "gangland" style of organisation. Finch argues that much of this depiction was pure myth and supposition. While working class young people may have intensified behaviours that they knew were annoying or offensive to the middle classes as a form of resistance against those who were attempting to claim their "traditional socialising places in the public spaces of the street", "the moral panic about larrikins was not due to a change in the behaviour of working class youths but... a change in bourgeois notions of what the street was for" (Finch 1993:79).

Increasingly, in England and Australia as well as elsewhere, law and legal practice began to build in specific discourses for the young. In England, from 1829, a significant widening of the statutes was effected in order to give the newly formed Metropolitan Police powers to "clear the streets": the Vagrant Act, the Malicious Trespass Act, the Metropolitan Police Act. The latter gave police powers to apprehend all loose, idle and disorderly Persons whom he shall find disturbing the Public Peace, or whom he shall have just Cause to suspect of any evil Designs, and all persons whom he shall find between Sunset and the Hour of Eight in the Forenoon lying in any Highway, Yard, or other Place, or loitering therein, and not giving a satisfactory Account of themselves.

in Magarey 1978:21

The extension of the Act in 1839 included kite flying, attending unlicensed theatres, dog fights or cock fights, "playing any game to the Annoyance of the Inhabitants or Passers by", or making a slide in the ice or snow" (Magarey 1978:21) in the list of actionable offenses.

This net-widening led to significant increases in the rate of imprisonment of young people, and an increasing perception of the criminality of the young. More as a response to the pressure on numbers than any fundamental change in understandings of
the nature of youth, separate prisons for young people began to be devised: the Point Puer penal colony in 1837, the Parkhurst boys prison in 1838.

Practices of separation gave nineteenth century inquirers a captive and isolated object for observation and the construction of knowledge. The juvenile prisons began to be linked to changes in representations of young people, to changes in discourse. Largely as a result of observing the detrimental effect of imprisonment on the young, reformers began to argue for the necessity of treating young people differently to adults. Bourgeois conceptions of the innocence of childhood began "for the first time" to be extended to the children of the "perishing and dangerous classes", and the cause of their delinquency found in "a lack of moral and religious education (rather) than by any innate propensities for evil" (Muncie 1983:34). Legal argument began to reassert the innocence of childhood, and therefore the necessity of segregating young from adult convicts. The task for those who would reform the juvenile delinquent was to turn the delinquent back into a child. The commander of the Akbar, a reformatory ship, wrote that

the first great change which has to be affected ...is to make them 'boys'. They are too old, too knowing, too sharp, too much up in the ways of the world.  
in Muncie 1983:37

In discourse, then, we see a movement beginning among the middle classes and progressively extended to working class children. From an earlier time when, because of the doctrine of original sin, children were seen as prone to wickedness from birth and in need of discipline and control to subordinate the passions, by the mid-nineteenth century it is premature adulthood that is the problem. Precociousness, the continuity of adult and juvenile behaviour, was the source of vice to be eliminated. Pedagogy turned around from the opinion of, for instance, Locke, which decreed early introduction of the young into adult society, to measures which sought to delay adulthood as long as possible (Musgrove 1964:51ff). In explanations of the aetiology of crime, commentators began increasingly to talk about the problems of environment in childhood, including a too-early introduction into the adult world, rather than individual choice and responsibility, as classical theory had dictated (Muncie 1983:39).
With the increasing focus on environment and upbringing, new institutions were designed, institutions committed to the segregation of offenders and potential offenders from their social milieu and to their reshaping, to "reparenting" the children of the "perishing and dangerous classes" along bourgeois lines. On these principles, Mary Carpenter\(^{20}\), among other reformers of the mid-nineteenth century, established a number of "reformatories" (for offenders) and "industrial schools" (for potential offenders) the object of which was to "effectively return the delinquent and pre-delinquent to a true position of childhood" (Muncie 1983:38). Increasingly, such institutions came to be recognised and funded by the State, as in the Youth Offenders Act of 1854. By 1899, the imprisonment of juvenile offenders in the same prisons as adults was prohibited (Gillis 1974:156).

This "dividing practice", the establishment of separate institutions for juvenile offenders, was one stream in the development of the modern discourse of youth. By the end of the nineteenth century, secondary schools (in the shape of the English public schools and their imitations in the Australian colonies and elsewhere) had been in place for the children of the upper middle-class for some time: hence Gillis' contention that adolescence was an invention of the middle classes (1974:98, 115). A middle class secondary schooled population was sufficient to establish a discourse of adolescence, but young people of the working classes were not contained by it until well into the twentieth century: the discourse of adolescence was applied to them mainly in the context of the problem of delinquency (cf Burt 1925). As categories were increasingly blurred between offender and those "in need of care", between punishment and welfare, discourse began to capture all young people as potentially delinquent and in need of close supervision and control.

Because crime was believed to be generated from the conditions of working-class family life, these sections of youth were seen within a continuum of delinquency as pre-delinquent or near-delinquent. It was no longer necessary

\(^{20}\) Mary Carpenter was the author of the influential *Reformatory Schools, for the children of the dangerous and perishing classes, and for juvenile offenders*, published in 1851.
to have a criminal act to justify intervention and control. It was the failure of working class socialisation to nurture and discipline the child that was the root cause of what was seen as the "progressive career of the delinquent child".

Muncie 1983:40.

While intervention of this particular kind was concentrated on the working classes, the shaping of discourse about youth as delinquent fed back to envelop all young people through the early twentieth century. Middle class youth were generally beyond the reach of the reformatory, because the reach of the school had already established itself over them. It was not, however, supposed that delinquency belonged only to the poorer classes (Kett 1977:256), and by the end of the nineteenth century, "all young people at adolescence were to be considered potentially delinquent, a concept much more suitable to a democratic age" (Gillis 1974:172). This notion of all young people as potentially delinquent, as inherently untrustworthy and prone to trouble, marks another significant milestone in the establishment of youth discourse.

As the nineteenth century progressed, the middle-class solution to the youth problem was increasingly and coercively applied to the working classes. Compulsory, universal education (to the age of 13) was instituted in 1870 in Britain, and around the same time (1880 in New South Wales) in the various Australian colonies. At first, this set of practices, as it applied to the working class, only affected younger children, and even them only erratically, when schools could be provided and their labour spared. Over the age of thirteen, many young people were workers (Bessant 1993). Notions of age were still out of focus, as schools themselves as yet dealt often with students of all ages in one classroom, on an individual tuition basis (Barcan 1988:72). As in America (Kett 1977), elementary school and secondary school populations were not distinct, seven and seventeen year olds were in the same class, with no guarantee that the seventeen year old would be further advanced in his or her studies. It was some time before the class system, in which students were subdivided by age into grades, and therefore into age-peer groups, became the preferred method of teaching.
The age of compulsory education has been progressively raised in the twentieth century, first to fourteen, then to fifteen, and in Britain, to sixteen, largely in response to moral panics over the rate of juvenile crime or as a way of mopping up excess youth labour (Polk 1993, Lawson & Silver 1973:385)21. The expanding reach of elementary schools, larger schools, and the adoption of class methods of teaching progressively clarified age-cohorts: nine year olds studied with nine year olds, eleven year olds with eleven year olds. At the level of discourse, this division was accompanied by an increasing discrimination between different ages, a more elaborated and structured "age-system" (see Gesell 1956) that increased its reach with every extension of the school leaving age.

However, the real moment in the establishment of the division of adolescence was the secondary school. While schools had separated children and young people from adult life, secondary education separated youth from children. In Australia, some secondary, or "advanced" schooling was conducted within the elementary schools, which were accessible to the children of the disadvantaged, from the mid-nineteenth century, but the advanced subjects - Greek, Latin, and mathematics - were still mostly used only by the children of the middle classes (Barcan 1988:97). With individual exceptions, working class children, and indeed the children of rural landowners in Australia, left school early (Lawson & Silver 1973:384, Barcan 1988:98). As the twentieth century progressed, however, the school leaving age was progressively extended: to fourteen (in 1918 in England, 1916 in New South Wales, mostly in response to working class delinquency (Barcan 1988:199)) then to fifteen (1947 in England, 1941-1943 in New South Wales)22. Fees for secondary education were abolished in New South Wales in 1925 (Barcan 1988:208), ahead of Britain, which followed in 1944 (Roberts 1983:12), leading to a significant growth in the number of young people staying at school, especially in the groups which had been marginal to the secondary school experience -

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21 This appears to be true notwithstanding public rationalisation involving increased skilling of young people for a changing workforce.
22 The vehicle for the extension of the school leaving age in New South Wales was the Youth Welfare Act of 1940. As well as a general concern in the Australian states about delinquency, especially in the light of the absence of fathers during the war, the Act was calculated to remove young people from the workplace and so lessen post-war unemployment (Barcan 1988:224)
the working class, and young women. The establishment of secondary schools and the institutionalisation of working class young people within them was not finalised until the post-war period. Curiously, this was the point at which the new discourse of the "teenager" became established (Doherty 1988).

The compulsory school leaving age has remained at fifteen in Australia, although British authorities extended it to sixteen in 1972. However, since the late 1980's, the effective school leaving age has been increased to eighteen by a combination of inducements (like the payment of allowances) and penalties (increasing credentialism, preventing employment of young people without upper high school education). Although the policy justification given for this was to increase Australia's international competitiveness through a highly-educated workforce, the problem of legitimization associated with high levels of youth unemployment persisting since the 1970's recession was at least as important. With each policy move to increase the effective school leaving age, the length of time spent in adolescence increases.

The construction of youth in the modern sense is, then an effect of the secondary school. This has been illustrated in another context by a fascinating study conducted by John Peterson in a Choctaw community in America in the 1960's. Prior to the establishment of the high school in 1964, there was no recognised adolescent grouping in this cotton sharecropping economy.

Even before completing the local elementary school, Choctaw children became increasingly involved in the sharecropping economy. At an early age they began to take part in work during the planting and harvesting seasons. Gradually, as they got older, they became full-fledged members of the production unit. From this point to actual marriage was a short step. There was very little courtship. After marriage, the young couple lived with whatever production-unit household was convenient...

Peterson 1976:161

Things began to change radically, Peterson suggests, according to four major factors: the mechanisation of agriculture and the growth of factory employment; the introduction of cars and the subsequent increase in mobility and "deterioration in traditional family
life" (p164); access to the mass media, and thereby exposure to mainstream American representations of adolescence; and the completion of the Choctaw high school.

We have already noted economic changes in the Industrial Revolution as significant in the emergence of modern notions of adolescence: these were paralleled by the change in the Choctaw economy in the 1960's. However, it has been the high school, Peterson suggests, which has been most responsible for the emergence of an adolescent grouping where one did not exist before. The high school brought together young people from the different Choctaw communities, creating an age-stage - "in essence, creating an adolescent grouping" (Peterson 1976:162). The high school, by its interposition in the lives of young adults, effected a delay in marriage, an innovation which the parental generation did not understand or appreciate. The teachers, predominantly white, set about establishing mainstream adolescent cultural activities like dances and other social events. Although there was no "dating" tradition in the communities, one was starting to develop, again centred around the high school.

So the first movement in the constitution of a subject population is the establishment of dividing practices, by which a population becomes problematised, separated out from the undifferentiated mass, and institutions for their confinement are established. Over the last two centuries, the constitution of youth as adolescent has been achieved by a range of dividing practices: principally, the progressive exclusion of young people from the workforce through changes in industrial practice and the agency of the Factory Acts; the classification of young people as delinquent and their incorporation into reformatories and industrial schools; and the ever-extending reach of secondary schooling.
5 Practices of self-formation

As Rabinow notes (1984:11), there is no sharp line between dividing practices and processes of self-formation: the same institutions may achieve both objectives. Essentially, the distinction is an analytical one: practices of self-formation require the active participation of the individual in cooperating with his or her categorisation. Such cooperation is typically desired, sought after and rewarded by institutions of containment, but it cannot be assumed. The work of Willis (1970), Corrigan (1979) and Thomas (1980) regarding working class young people's resistance to the secondary school is but one example where the subject actively resists the project of the school in his or her self-formation.

Self-formation and the "boys work" movement

In dividing practices already discussed, many of them statutory institutions established in law, the objective of "making men into boys" was stated overtly by governing officials. Voluntary bodies concerned with the self-formation of young people as youth/adolescents also proliferated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Overwhelmingly, as I have noted already, this effort was directed at young men, the constitution of young women as youth being clearly subordinate to their constitution as women. The lives of young women were affected by these institutions, and parallel movements such as the Girls Brigade, Guides and the YWCA were established alongside the boys' organisations. But such organisations were less popular, more marginal, than the boys' organisations, and directed their practice, as the Female Factories had, essentially to the development of domesticity. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the lives of most young women (especially in the middle classes most affected by the construction of youth) were lives in waiting (Mugrove
Processes of self-improvement, of education, and of dress and deportment were directed at securing a suitable marriage and establishing the young woman as a worthy accessory for one's future husband. Musgrove argues that the monumental frustration engendered by blocked social roles and time-filling activities were a primary source of energy, among middle-class women, for the emerging first wave of feminism. Working class women were working already in domestic duties in their own families or in the households of others, married earlier than men and so experienced a much greater continuity of role.

The various boys' club movements have their origin in diverse places. Partly, Gillis argues, they lie in the traditions of youth stretching back into the preindustrial period, the craft fraternities and lodges. Partly, they lie in the child-saving movement and the Sunday School movements of the nineteenth century, designed to rescue the children of the poor from moral danger on the streets of the growing metropolis. Partly, according to Kett, they arise out of the increasing recognition in the Christian revivalist movement that young people were especially receptive to the evangelist's message, leading to an increasing focus on youth organisation in American denominational bodies (note especially the Christian Endeavour movement). Principally, the motivation of the boys movement was to capture the street boy, the youth not at school and not at work. The foremost organisation in this movement was the Boy Scouts, though the existence and influence of a panoply of organisations, from the Boys Brigade through to the Kibbo Kift Kindred, should not be ignored. The movement had wide influence across Western societies, though details varied between, say the German Wandervogel and Jugendverband and the English Boy Scouts (Gillis 1974). Millions of Boy Scouts were enrolled in Britain, the United States and Germany: in one year alone (1941), in the United States, the 4-H Club enrolled 1,380,000 young people (Kett 1977:251). Surveys in Britain taken in 1966 revealed that 44% of middle-class Englishmen had been Scouts at one time or another. The figures for working class boys had always been lower, despite the intentions of the movement, but even there, 25% of working class males had been members (Gillis 1974:147).
As there is no sharp line between dividing practices and self-formation, there is likewise no sharp line between self-formation and scientific classification. The boys work movement came armed with a particular view of the constitution of the adolescent. Heavily influenced by eugenics and the theory of G. Stanley Hall (Kett 1977:224) (see below), the vision was to foster the "natural" barbarism of the adolescent stage, focussing on the hardening of sinew and muscle by outdoor activities, drill and exercise, while typically containing activity within a framework provided by paramilitary organisation and a highly conservative form of patriotism. Centrally, the boys movement provided a way of being for adolescents of the early twentieth century which was constituted fundamentally differently from the construction of adulthood. It was a positive, primal, idealistic vision, a model of "shining youth", even if "conformist and ingenuous" (Kett 1977:266). It was especially a way of being for middle-class youth, and a means by which some working class boys could escape the opposite image of youth, the image of the juvenile delinquent (see Reicher and Emler 1986).

After 1945, the popularity of organisations like the Boy Scouts began to decline, and the median age of membership fell. In 1924 around half of members of the Boy Scouts of America were over 14: by 1967 this had fallen to around 20% (Kett 1977:266). The same trend was found in the youth clubs of the National Youth Service in Britain, where, unlike Australia and America, a state-sponsored movement was directed at organising and channeling the leisure time of young people. Increasingly, ways of being young were being provided by the entrepreneurs of the teenage marketplace.

Self-formation, consumption and the teenage marketplace

The term "teenager" flags a new development in public discourses about youth. Emerging in the period immediately after World War 2 in America, it signals a new self-consciousness about their status, and the expression of that different status in music,
clothes, and leisure pursuits: a creation, in leisure and cultural consumption, of a youthful "identity". As the *Dictionary of American Slang* writes:

The U.S. is the only country in the world having a word for members of this age group, and is the only country considering this age group as a separate identity whole influence, fads and fashions are worthy of discussion apart from the adult world. Before circa 1935 U.S. teenagers considered themselves as, and were considered, young adults and not a special group.

in Doherty 1988:44

Historian William Manchester has been quoted as saying that the term moved into the mainstream with a 1945 article in the *New York Times Magazine* (Doherty 1988:67).

Thus, the term belongs to a specific historic movement in the constitution of the subject. Doherty argues that the uniqueness is not just due to the unique "historico-cultural imprinting", to use Mannheim's phrase, of the generation born in the War, nor to the demographic phenomenon of the post-war baby boom that put large numbers of people in a single age cohort onto the world stage at the same time, nor just to the increasing affluence of that generation living in the "long boom".

What lent 1950's teenagers a sense of group identity both peculiarly intense and historically new was that their generational status, their social position as *teenagers*, was carefully nurtured and vigorously reinforced by the adult institutions around them. In the marketplace and the media, at home and at school, the teenager was counted a special animal requiring special handling...For the first time, the essentially private psychological and physical development of the American adolescent was accorded a dramatically public recognition. At once socially special and specially socialised, '50s teenagers experienced the same things together - through their assigned place in the burgeoning consumer economy, in the increasing uniformity of public school education ...and in national media that doted on their idiosyncrasies.

Doherty 1988:46

Surprisingly, business was slow to recognise the potential for profit offered by a burgeoning population of young people, with historically high levels of disposable income, in a market offering a new variety of consumer goods, from records to clothes to holidays to private transport (Doherty 1988:66). Significantly, this was because the dominant popular construction of youth was still that of the juvenile delinquent: postwar moral panics about juvenile crime were still fresh in the minds of the general
population. Styles favoured by young people therefore carried with them the smell of delinquency (Johnson 1993). Young people's tastes in music increasingly leant towards the black side of town, the voice of the Other, a trend that had been apparent since the 1920's fascination with jazz.

Initially, entrepreneurs sought to reverse this movement from the supply end. Movie houses refused to cater for the tastes of post-war young people, offering "family entertainment" instead. Radio stations tried to establish musical forms like the polka in order to displace emerging black rhythm and blues styles (Doherty 1988:56). But eventually, the failure of such moves, and the obvious dependence that media and fashion houses had on the disposable income of young people, led capital to accept the inevitable and market the kinds of goods that young tastes demanded.

Once the ice was broken, a flood of consumer items came onto the market especially for the young. While control never moved out of the hands of adults, and while continuous rearguard actions in favour of "decent" films, music and other cultural products were mounted, it became increasingly possible for teenagers to construct a teenage identity based on products bought in the teenage marketplace. The market was supplying symbolic goods enabling young people to construct themselves as teenagers.

Some commentators (eg Abrams 1959) have concluded from this link between the emergence of the teenage phenomenon and the availability of teenage consumer goods that the youth phenomenon has been created by entrepreneurs for the purpose of selling goods, or rather more gently, that youth is a consumption class. As the PTA Magazine wrote in 1956,

> The trouble with teenagers began when some smart salesman made a group of them in order to sell bobby sox.

in Doherty 1988:42

The relationship is more complex than this. Frequently, some cultural artifact, some symbolic good, is created or adopted by a group of young people as a symbol of shock or protest against the established order or some element of it, as a way to "win space"
(Smith 1981:240). Blue jeans, Dr. Martin's boots, safety pin jewellery, flowers, beads, dreadlocks, punk music, black music, hiphop and rap started this way. For some young people, the language of protest, anger, rebellion or revolt expresses what they feel, and styles are adopted, venues and products patronised. Youth Market entrepreneurs, by now ever alert for the "new sound" or the "new look" take up and market such styles not only to meet the existing market, the subcultural market, for such goods, but to recycle these symbolic goods into a wider, less alienated, more affluent market, often not only other young people but adults too. The symbolic content of such goods is then transformed in the shift of context.

Often, the marketing of such styles simply connotes Youth itself as an artifact to be bought and worn. Brando leather jackets become a symbol of rugged individualist masculinity. Plastic garbage bags become chic. Clothes, music, styles connote a radical edge, a self conscious Statement, but now isolated from political content and context. Malcolm X merchandising among young people who don't know who Malcolm X is and would not agree with him if they did, is a contemporary example. The face and the name become contentless expressions of anger and Rebellion23 of Edge24.

In this way, young people isolated from the originating context can appropriate a style that says Youth, or Freedom, or Rebellion, or the Other, and engage in the continuous self-formation of themselves as youth, distinct from the oldies who have only just learnt to understand and accept the style from three style shifts ago. Styles themselves have a short shelf life: the appropriation and commercialisation of symbols of radicalism ensures that the radical content is rapidly depreciated, transformed into the mundane. As a result, the teenage market is ever on the alert for the new sound, the new look, the new icon who is able to refresh the category. And groups of young people, living under objective conditions of oppression, continue to invent or adapt cultural artifacts to meet

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23 Or perhaps more accurately, the desire for freedom (Stratton 1993:88).
24 Reicher and Emler (1986) argue that young people choose between two polar identities, the delinquent youth and the ideal youth. Style is part of the repertoire of symbolic means by which such an identity might be established, or may also be a means for negotiating between the two poles.
their own needs, "to express and resolve, albeit magically, the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture" (in Hall et al 1976a:32).

While young people in countries like Britain and Australia did have their own styles (note especially the Teddy Boys in Britain), it does seem that the origin of the commercialised teenage style in the post-war period was America (Stratton 1993:88). Dorothy McKee (1994) recollects the year in which teenagerdom came to Glasgow. Bill Haley, rock'n'roll, and bobby sox all arrived the same summer, the summer of 1956. The season before, Glaswegian girls wore what their mothers wore, and listened to swing. The season after, teenage girls could be immediately distinguished from half a mile away, and listened to rock'n'roll. Styles came in two kinds for girls - full skirts with petticoats in bright colours for good girls, tight skirts with a slit up the back for bad girls. McKee, seventeen and working in a department store, saw the first shiploads of the new teenage fashions come into the store, and immediately saved up for an outfit. Her sister's husband, a dance instructor, learnt the dances from the new movies and did team demonstrations up and down Britain; McKee and her friends practiced the new dances in the lunch hour at work. In Australia, the situation was similar (cf. Johnson 1993:87ff): bodgies and widgies appropriated American styles in part as an expression of "freedom", identified with America partly because of the growing flood of American consumer goods, the individualism of American cultural icons, and the affluence of Americans in Australia, particularly American soldiers (Stratton 1993). Later subcultural styles reversed the flow across the Atlantic, including punk, glamrock and skinhead styles (Hebdige 1979).

Practices by which young people are involved in their own subjectification as youth are, of course, not limited to their involvement in youth organisations and their adoption of youthful styles, nor are these limited to the few sketchy examples described here. The self-formation of youth as students, or as delinquents, is arguably more central than either of these examples (Reicher and Emler 1986). However, they do serve to illustrate certain components of the process by which the constitution of youth as a subject is
achieved. Perhaps most interesting is the play between adult and youthful agency in the process. Kett (1977:211) notes that the single most universal feature of youth organisations in the early twentieth century is their adult leadership, although the development of leadership qualities among the boys is a prime objective. Likewise, in the consumption of youth style, the ownership and marketing of commodities of youth culture lies with adults. However, the genesis of the style often begins with small groups of young people working with small independent producers, and it is the sovereignty of the young consumer which will determine what will take off and when. That this process cannot be dictated by the parent generation is amply illustrated by the attempt to establish the polka as the new dance craze in 1956 (Doherty 1988:56), and the attempt to reinstate the Andy Hardy "family movie" in 1958 (ibid: 182-3).

Adult communities are often not passive in their approach to youthful styles either, reading the symbolism too directly as expressive of deviance, delinquency and sexual incontinence (Stratton 1993), and reacting to such styles with "moral panic" (Cohen 1980). The ambivalence of this process partly derives from the discourse of youth itself, which constitutes youth as inherently in turmoil and trouble. The image of trouble, of rebellion, of deviance or delinquency, is then a part of the self-formation, although it may be much more vivid in image than in affect: the goth dressed in black and bearing images of death may well feel quite good about life.

The reading of youthful expressions in terms of danger and deviance is, however, not surprising. The perception of youth as a locus of trouble is a major constituent of scientific knowledges about the young. It is to this dimension of the process of the constitution of youth as a subject that we now turn.
6 Scientific classification: the discourse of adolescence

The story of the development of youth theory has been told by several commentators on the youth question, including Murdock & McCron (1976), Springhall (1983), Muncie (1983), Roberts (1983), Brake (1980, 1985), Smith (1976, 1981, 1983, 1984), Atwater (1983), Muuss (1988), and Griffin (1993). Universally, the story begins with G. Stanley Hall, and the publication of his two volume work Adolescence: its psychology and its relations to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education in 1904. Muuss points to Hall as the "first psychologist to advance a psychology of adolescence in its own right" (1988:20) Steinberg considers Hall "the 'father' of the scientific study of adolescence" (1993:460). Atwater suggests that the "modern scientific study of adolescence began with...Hall" (1983:20)\textsuperscript{25}. While discourses of the life-span and of youth were by no means absent from the preindustrial and pre-twentieth century scene, Hall brings the subject "youth" under the control of scientific discourse, claiming the term "adolescent" to represent its new scientific status. In the process, the understanding of youth/adolescence is transformed from a category that is essentially social in character (to do with family, to do with economy, to do with status) to a category that is presented as an object for analysis and control. The publication of Hall's work may be seen as a historic moment in a discursive shift, which established a scientific discourse about youth, the scientific basis for the professional appropriation of the youth category (Murdock & McCron 1976:194, Springhall 1983:21, Smith 1983:7,

\textsuperscript{25} It is interesting to note this position of "father of the discipline". Foucault's essay "What is an author?" (in Rabinow, 1984) plays with this notion. Although the essay is programmatic rather than conclusive, he suggests that the existence of an author like Hall, a "founder of discursivity", is part of the formal structure of a discourse.
Developmental psychology became the scientific basis for regimes of youth regulation in the school, the reformatory, the modern family.

Stanley Hall and the foundation of discourses of adolescence

For Hall, and for a succession of theorists after him, the youth category was rooted in fundamental structures of the human, in biology. Youth referred to a condition of experience dictated by the body itself. In a fascinating marriage of Rousseau's philosophy of human nature and a Social Darwinist metaphysic, Hall argues for a materialist theory of the soul: a soul contained by genetic processes and evolutionary pressures stretching back beyond the life of the individual human. Such a theory, by making the psyche material, brings the soul unambiguously within the ambit of scientific inquiry, and allows a science of the soul to take into account its long evolutionary prehistory.

Psychology is then biology. For Hall, the body is a repository of all the experiences, changes and crises undergone throughout its evolutionary history. In some way, the lives of all the progenitors of a person are present, and are lived out, in some fashion, in the experience of that person. Hall calls into play here Galton's nineteenth century evolutionary doctrine of recapitulation, in which the biological development of the individual was thought to replay the development of the species. Several fragments of evidence were brought to support this theory: similarities between the human embryo and the embryo of other species, the existence of features like "gill slits" and "tails" on the developing human embryo, and so on. So, according to the theory, the human embryo first resembles a single-celled organism, then quickly develops into a multi-celled organism, then progressively different members of the evolutionary tree like the fish and the monkey become manifest until the foetus becomes recognisably human.
The dictum that "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny", that the development of the individual reproduces the development of the species, became the foundation also for Hall's developmental psychology. Hall's original contribution was to extend the theory to include the process of the mind. Mind is, for Hall "coextensive with life, at least animal life. Its most fundamental and primary expression may be characterised in Schopenhauer's phrase, "the will to live". Mind and life are one and inseparable. Soul is thus at bottom homogeneous and also continuous throughout the animal kingdom" (1905:63) The mind has therefore also been on the great journey of evolutionary history, and the experiences, emotions, losses, learnings and influences of that history have their impact on each individual psyche. The experiences of the amoeba, the insect, the fish, the monkey, the australopithecus, the savage and the barbarian are all there present, albeit mostly hidden, within each human, and make up the unconscious memory which, like Freud's subconscious, does not influence our behaviour less just because it is generally inaccessible to memory. For Hall, as for Freud, consciousness is only a tiny outcrop of the huge storehouse of experience and ability that makes up the racial past.

This theory constitutes what Hall calls "genetic psychology". Its translation into theories of the stages of human development formed the basis for his notion of adolescence. He suggests that at different times in the individual's history, different attributes, memories and skills become appropriate. Each stage of development has its affinity with some prior experience in the evolutionary drama, each human life recapitulates the course of its own evolutionary development. The infant corresponds to the animal; the child, with its hunting and shelter-building kind of play, corresponds to the cave-dweller; the adolescent corresponds to human life in the "barbarian" stage of human history (Atwater 1983:21). The adult constitutes Nature's latest, but probably not final, achievement: civilised, European man.  

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26 Hall prefigures later discourses on youth and adolescence by allocating separate chapters to discussion of black youth (chapter XVIII) and young women (chapter XVII). In doing so, he, like others, raises implicitly the question of the degree to which his analysis is specific to young men, and whether it applies at all to black youth and young women. A fuller discussion belongs is developed in later chapters, but
The adolescent is thus positioned at the threshold of emergent humanity. Hall's vision of youth is not dark, pessimistic or repressive. Rather, he allocates to them, for each new generation and for each individual, the noblest and most important of tasks, the task of the "leap from barbarism to civilisation" (Murdock & McCron 1976:194). The adolescent stage was, however, fraught with danger, as the naked brutality of barbarism was unsheathed, but also with great hope, as the emergent adolescent bore the fresh fires of civilisation and renewal into the decadence of a materialistic society (Hall 1905:75ff).

This developmental leap is critical. For Hall, the task of surmounting the barbarism of early adolescence and emerging into the flowering of a critical, intelligent, graceful humanity in early adulthood is a huge task, one achieved hesitantly, in fits and starts, as the individual "realises in a deeper sense the meaning of maturity and is protensive toward its higher plateau" (1905:72), and groping for ground, oscillates between gloom and garrulousness, sensitivity and cruelty, curiosity and apathy, conservatism and radicalism, wisdom and folly. Youth is thus a matter of profound ambivalence: youth is alternately, or even at the same time, saint and sinner, angel and ghoul, hope and despair\textsuperscript{27}.

This characterisation of youth has connections with eighteenth and nineteenth century romantic notions of youth, especially in literature. I have noted already the turbulent, passionate youth who figure in the work of Wagner, Goethe and Schiller, the notion that youth is especially subject to turmoil, to "Sturm und Drang". Hall picks up this term, and uses it to configure one of the central components of his psychology of youth. "Psychic life", he says, "is thus for a term greatly perturbed. When the youth takes the

\textsuperscript{27} The polarity in the identities available to young people, and in the discourses under which they are constructed (which is perhaps the same thing) is a recurring theme in writing about youth.
helm of his own being, he navigates a choppy sea. Thus it would appear in nature's economy he must strive, fight, and storm his way up, if he would break into the kingdom of man" (1905:89).

As is not uncommon with "founders of discursivity" (Foucault 1984), Hall's attempt to capture human behaviour within a Darwinist evolutionary discourse, while influential in his time\textsuperscript{28}, was not enduringly successful\textsuperscript{29}. His kind of Social Darwinism belonged to the nineteenth century, and was fast being left behind in favour of liberal doctrines of the ontological equality of human beings and the qualitative difference between human and non-human life. The core thesis, the phylogenetic origin of psychological development, was the subject of quick refutation (Gallatin 1975) and was never widely accepted among psychologists, although the ideas remained active in the influential eugenics movement well into the nineteen-fifties (Bessant 1991). Psychology as a discipline was increasingly turning to Freud and psychoanalysis, rather than biology, as its foundation. However, several important ideas within Hall's work took quick root and became a foundation on which others worked. In a nutshell, the foundation left by Hall

\textsuperscript{28} Especially in education, a profession specifically addressed by Hall, and the emerging social industry around youth, including the boys work movement (Kett 1977:220ff, 234ff)

\textsuperscript{29} Few of G. Stanley Hall's ideas about youth as a substantive category have been adopted by later theorists, and his work is now seldom read: *Adolescence: its psychology...* is not available in any Western Australian library. (See also Griffin 1993:17). Foucault argues that the mark of "founders of discursivity" like Hall is precisely that those who follow on may disagree with the founder of the discipline: founders of discursivity "have created a possibility for something other than their discourse, yet something belonging to what they founded" (Foucault in Rabinow 1984:114). The existence of such a founder of discursivity is to some extent then an indicator that a field of study, in this case adolescence, does constitute a discourse in Foucault's terms.

Foucault also notes the necessity for a theoretical pilgrimage back to the origin, even though the propositions advanced by the founder may no longer be accepted. In such a case, "one does not declare certain propositions in the work of these founders to be false: instead, when trying to seize the act of founding, one sets aside those statements that are not pertinent either because they are deemed inessential, or because they are considered "prehistoric" and derived from another type of discursivity. In other words, unlike the founding of a science, the initiation of a discursive practice does not participate in its later transformations." (Foucault in Rabinow 1984:116) This describes precisely the relationship between Hall and later workers within the discourse of youth/adolescence, whether working in psychological (eg Muuss, Atwater, Steinberg) or sociological (eg Murdock & McCron, Springhall, Roberts, Griffin) forms. Such a return "constitutes an effective and necessary task of transforming the discursive practice itself". Such an attempt is, of course, also the project of the present work.
was a concept of adolescence as a universal stage of human development, characterised by great struggle, in which the child metamorphoses into the civilised adult.

Three axioms embodied in this foundation have been the subject of continued debate within psychology and also within sociology, which entered the discursive contest with the anthropological work of Margaret Mead. The first is the notion that the life span is a series of discrete stages, each qualitatively different, through which human beings pass in immutable order (though the timing is variable), and that adolescence is such a stage. The second is that this stage is characterised by turmoil, by struggle, by Sturm und Drang. The third is that this stage is inherent within the human, and is thus universal across human societies. These three axioms have constituted the core of the discourse of adolescence, which has come to dominate the constitution of youth as a subject in professions like education, law and jurisprudence, social work and psychology. Within academia, the development of discourses of adolescence has principally taken place within the discipline of psychology, specifically developmental psychology. In sociology, while the discourse of adolescence has also been powerful, the terms of its constitution have been more fiercely contested (Marsland 1987:6).

Adolescence in psychological discourse

While the content of Hall's genetic psychology did not find an enduring place in theorisation about adolescence, the structure of his framework was wide open for the insertion of the increasingly influential categories of Freudian developmental theory. This approach, in which the progression of the individual from stage to stage was governed by psychosexual conflicts, was developed in a series of papers by Sigmund Freud in the 1920's and 1930's. In his schema, childhood was characterised by a series of conflicts, named after the primary erogenous zones of the infantile body. In late childhood, the psychosexual conflicts associated with biological development and the organisation of desire abated for a time, as the relatively well-adjusted, relatively peaceful "latency" period was established. This minor millenium was, however, only to
be disrupted even more forcefully by the charge of sexuality released in puberty. The
task of bringing this outbreak of animal instinct under the control of the ego was,
according to Freud, the major task of adolescence. Elaboration of this theory - Freud
had little to say about adolescence as such (Steinberg 1993:461) - was left to Anna
Freud and Peter Blos.

In their hands, the struggle of the ego to reassert its prerogatives was worked through in
some detail, Blos suggesting six phases within the adolescent period, each accompanied
by specific developmental tasks (Muuss 1988:86ff). However, the essential features of
the discourse remained. A view of human development as constituted by a series of
stages was shared by Freud and Hall, while the psychosexual stages of Freud were
substituted for the historical/evolutionary stages proposed by Hall. The perception of
adolescence as a period of Sturm und Drang was maintained: Freud's notion of turmoil
arising from the emergence of adult sexual urges in puberty substituting for Hall's
genetic/historical leap from barbarism to civilisation. And Freud, like Hall, believed
that adolescence was a universal feature of human development, conditioned and shaped
by environmental factors like parental influence and deprivation of various kinds, but
rooted in biology and in the upwellings of primal, instinctual forces.

Despite the influence of the cultural determinism of Margaret Mead and the rest of the
Boas school, adolescence continued to be seen overwhelmingly in biological terms until
well after the second World War. Partly because of the growth of sociology and its
application to the youth question (for example, Hollingshead's Elmstown's Youth), and
the impact of social constructionist approaches, discourses of youth began increasingly
to accommodate the social question. Friedenberg (1967:40) suggests a substantial shift
in discourses of adolescence during this time, including those located in psychology.
"Since Elmstown's Youth" he argues, "social science has tended strongly to consider
adolescence more in social and less in psychological terms... (while) the modification of
pure Freudian theory to take greater account of the social circumstances in which
growth occurs, as in the work of Erich Fromm, Harry Stack Sullivan, or Rollo May,
make it clear the psychology itself is capable of response to social change without any loss in its essential character and emphasis.

The shift was essentially an accommodation. The assaults both from within psychology and from within anthropology and sociology on the axioms of universality and of adolescent turmoil (discussed below) made some adjustment necessary. The paradigmatic case was that of Erik Erikson. Erikson's theory, built in part on extensive cross-cultural experience (Gallatin 1975) took the essential categories of the Freudian scheme, extended them and imbued them with social meaning, rather than intra-psychic, psychosexual significance. Like Freud, Erikson was a stage theorist, but saw development following what he called the "epigenetic principle". Borrowed from embryology, "this principle states that anything that grows has a ground plan, and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have risen to form a functioning whole" (Erikson 1968:92). Thus, while particular conflicts or struggles arise in particular stages of a human being's development, they are not absent from other stages. For example, the crisis of trust versus mistrust is apposite to the first stage of development, but issues of trust may arise at any stage of life. The particular outworking of each stage is also seen by Erikson as being culturally specific, while the stages themselves (trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, identity versus identity confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and integrity versus despair) are described broadly enough to accommodate at least some cross-cultural pressure, although they retain the liberal individualist assumption that "individuation" is a necessary and desirable thing.

Unlike most stage theorists, who regard the achievement of adulthood as the end state of human development, Erikson added three adult developmental stages to the five pre-adult stages adapted from Freud, now defined in social context. Adolescence is a midpoint in the process of development, and so, for Erikson, takes on pivotal significance. This pivotal work of adolescence had already been established by Hall,
albeit under another theoretical paradigm. Blos' work had similarly invested adolescence with critical significance, a point where the psychological work done in childhood was recapitulated in the individual's final drive towards individuation. Likewise adolescence, for Erikson, stands at the crossroads, or rather at the pivot point of the personality.

According to Erikson, each stage of development from infancy through to old age is characterised by a defining crisis. He does not intend to imply that this crisis is traumatic, or damaging. It may be, but often resolution occurs gradually, over years. What he means by "crisis" is "a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or the other, marshalling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation" (Erikson 1968:16). However, although defining crisis in this way avoids the empirical challenge that adolescence is not especially traumatic, the language of crisis, as in his landmark term "identity crisis" conveys trauma and turmoil, and has been consistently read that way in popular discourse (Erikson 1968:28-9).

Erikson himself maintains an ambiguity about adolescent trauma. He is a theorist of normal psychology, rather than psychopathology, and yet retains the Freudian principle that it is cracks in a crystal which reveal also the structure of uncracked crystals, that psychopathology reveals an "aggravation, an undue prolongation of, or a regression to, a normative crisis "belonging" to a particular stage of individual development" (1968:17). So while he acknowledges that adolescents generally have enough resources to resolve the crisis of their time without intervention or concern and indeed may not even be aware that they are doing so, he is forced to rely on outward turbulent behaviour for evidence and example of what should be, normally, an unremarkable revolution. And as is so often the case, commentators following or quoting him are rarely as careful as he.

In this way, Erikson is able to maintain a place within the discourse of adolescence while accommodating the most serious objections to the founding axioms of
universality and turmoil. A stage theorist, he nevertheless argues for the continuous latent presence of each crisis through the life-span. While claiming universality, the place he gives to the influence of social context means that the actual experience of each stage might vary widely cross-culturally. While disclaiming turbulence, he uses a language that communicates turmoil.

Other psychological theorists, like Harry Stack Sullivan and Albert Bandura, have made accommodations also, but have contradicted the founding axioms in such a way as to place them on the margins of discourses of adolescence. Sullivan refused to claim any universal application for his rather flexible stage theory, which was tied more to the individual's progression through changing social relationships, including those demanded by social institutions like the school, than to intra-psychic conflict (Muuss 1988:123). In addition, he saw development as continuous: his stages were socially defined and heuristic in nature (Muuss 1988:135), and emphasised positive forces in development, rather than trauma and conflict. Nowhere is this more evident than in his work on the peer group, which he sees as being essential to healthy development, and a necessary corrective to the often less than helpful idiosyncrasies of parental influence and upbringing. Bandura's insistence on development as a continuous process, a process of social learning, likewise places him on the margins of the discourse of adolescence.

Since its foundation around the turn of the century, the discourse of adolescence has moved through some internal shifts. The first was from an understanding of the subject based in Social Darwinism and eugenics, in theories of the race and of evolution, of primal energies, natural destinies and the threat of personal and racial degeneration. The wellspring of adolescence was the body itself, and the evolutionary, tribal history inscribed in it by the as-yet mysterious processes of genetics. The second movement was the understanding of adolescence based on internal psychosexual conflicts, on the battle of the ego to reassert its dominance over emergent instinctual drives. The third movement has been to allow the construction of adolescence within the social sphere,
and to recreate adolescence in the context of family, school and peer group and through the uncertain processes of socialization. Through these three movements, however, the central correlates of a discourse of adolescence as a universal stage of life characterised by turmoil have remained substantially unchanged.
7 Sociology and the discourse of adolescence

This account of scientific classification of youth turns now to the critiques of the three founding axioms established by Hall (stage theory, universalism, turmoil). Generally, the psychology of adolescence has developed on the foundations laid by Hall, and has achieved primacy in professional discourses about young people in medicine, law, education, social work and other fields. While many sociologists generally seem able to work with notions of adolescence without difficulty, it is still true to say that sociology's reaction to the emergent discourse of adolescence has been more cautious and critical. This different perspective is indicated by sociology's preference for the descriptor "youth" rather than "adolescence".

Work on the concept of adolescence within sociology has had a double movement. The first, a via negativa, has put in question the notions of adolescence and youth tumbling forth from the new subdiscipline of adolescent development/adolescent psychology\(^{30}\), and indeed from analyses of the youth phenomenon within sociology itself. Critiques from the Boas School relating to the cultural relativism of the youth category, the histories of the youth category developed from Musgrove and Aries onwards, and the political and ideological critiques mounted by Stuart Hall and others within the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University (CCCS) as well as empirical research (for example the thirty years of research by Daniel Offer and associates) on the assumptions underlying notions of adolescence have thrown the foundations of discourses of adolescence into doubt.

\(^{30}\) Though note that some writers within psychology (notably Harry Stack Sullivan) have been stridently critical of discourses of adolescence.
The discipline has generally not been too fazed by these critiques, however. Some accommodations have been made, but the progress of discourses of adolescence has basically gone on unhindered. If Foucault is right about the foundations of discursivity, the three "primary coordinates" of the foundation established by G. Stanley Hall - adolescence as a universal human phenomenon; adolescence as a period of *Sturm und Drang*; and adolescence as a "stage of life"-are not susceptible to proof or disproof. Within the discourse of adolescence, as Foucault suggested, these axioms are not available for refutation because the discourse of adolescence is constituted by them. Refutation of any one of these leads one to theoretically vacate the field: the adolescent disappears as a subject. As Marsland noted,

For the most part, conceptions of youth appear to be negative and critical, with young people viewed, as a category, mainly as a source of trouble. Where corrections to this negative stereotype are made, for example by recognition that it is only minorities of young people who are involved in deviant behaviour, this amendment of the initial error is made at the cost of losing any general conception of youth at all. Thus, at the level of public discourse and common-sense thinking, we have either a false negative concept of youth - or no coherent concept of youth at all. It is the business of social scientists to salvage from this confusion, on the basis of theoretical analysis and concrete research, a coherent and empirically justifiable concept and theory of youth.

Marsland 1987:5

Marsland here points the way to a second movement, a *via positiva* for sociologies of youth. Having determined that the dominant discourse of adolescence is flawed, at least in sociological terms, a number of theorists have tried to explain the youth phenomenon more adequately from within the ambit of sociological theory.

It has been a minority occupation. Much sociology around the youth question is unconscious of the theoretical problematic around youth and is content to work with

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31 Marsland goes on to praise rather enviously the work that psychology has done, since G. Stanley Hall, in establishing the psychology of adolescence, and calls for a similar effort in sociology. Although he accepts the empirical difficulties associated with *Sturm und Drang*, he seems to accept both universalism and stage theory, holding special respect for the work of Erik Erikson. This quickly drives him back into discussion of the problems of youth, even though he knows that problems are not especially characteristic of young people. The central dynamic in youth, he argues, is ambivalence, a notion which he directly attributes to Erikson, but which goes back to G.S. Hall.
Youth as a "given". Often, the literature sees youth as a victim population, subject to discriminatory practices which need exposure. This literature is theoretically informed by general left-liberal or socialist critiques of capitalism, but rarely turns the lens on the category itself. Other research is content to work descriptively with banks of statistics about youth unemployment, school refusal, homelessness, suicide, drug taking, delinquency, pregnancy and apathy without overt recourse to theory. Frequently, such work falls uncritically back on notions such as Sturm und Drang developed within the discourse of adolescence. Frequently, research simply adopts the bureaucratically convenient but theoretically meaningless age-range (12-25 years), again uncritically; or the common-sense concept of adolescence as a period of transition between childhood and adulthood (eg Poole and Goodnow 1990: for critique, see Buchanan 1993).

Once the discourse of adolescence is abandoned, theory moves in one of two directions. For some theorists, with the collapse of discourses of adolescence the adolescent becomes just another member of the social order, a member of a subsection of a population not especially problematic or deviant, interesting only because of the existence of institutions and discourses which constrain the young specifically and which impact on the experience of people captured by the category. The primary ground of youth studies becomes the study of these institutions and discourses, and of the forms of resistance and self-formation in which young people engage. For others, like Marsland, "youth" continues to be the object of study, and the task of sociologists is to develop a "coherent and empirically justifiable concept of youth" capable of structuring and containing the diverse phenomena observed in studies of young people.

This chapter is concerned with both the critique of the foundations of discourses of youth/adolescence, of the argument about what youth is not, the *via negativa*, and of the positive attempt to reconstitute a theory of youth within sociological discourse, the *via positiva*. There have been no accounts of youth within sociology that have commanded wide acceptance, and certainly nothing to compare with the developments in psychology. As such, while I have placed the discussion in the context of the analysis
of scientific classification, sociological discourses of youth have had a limited role in
the constitution of the youth category, and have certainly been less influential than those
of psychology. Arguably, the most influential sociological work has applied general
theory to particular youth problems rather than develop theory about youth as such. Most sociological effort has gone either into critique or description, rather than theoretical development, and this has been its strongest role.

The critique of the founding axioms

Axiom one: adolescence as a stage in the life-span

The first axiom, that human life is a series of discrete stages, has not attracted as much controversy as the other two, partly because it is implicit in the third axiom (the axiom of universality), where the focus of controversy has rested. Opponents of stage theory from within psychological discourse, like Bandura (1964) have argued that life is a continuous process, and that the periodisations that stage theorists like Gesell, Blos, Anna Freud, Sullivan, Piaget and Erikson put forward are necessarily arbitrary and culturally defined. The fact that agreement on the definition and timing of stages has not been achieved lends weight to this concern.

Significant also for an understanding of the adolescent stage is the fact that in many theories, there is no stage beyond adolescence. In Hall, Freud and Piaget, adolescence is not a penultimate stage. Unlike other stages in childhood, adolescence is open-ended. There is no "next stage" of adulthood. Adolescence is the becoming of adulthood. Grisso and Verling's survey of developmental literature on problem solving ability and vulnerability to social influence "concluded that there was no basis in that literature for distinguishing adolescents aged 15 and older from adults" (Melton 1983:100). It is

32 An example has been in the work of labelling theorists on the understanding of juvenile delinquency.
difficult to refrain from asking the question as to whether the stage should be called "adolescence", at least beyond what some writers (eg Sullivan) refer to as "early adolescence", the period involving the establishment of puberty.33

Axiom two: adolescence as a universal category

The second axiom is the question of the universality of the youth category. The origin of the reaction to Hall's biological determinism lies in Margaret Mead's work, though she does not problematise the category of youth or adolescence itself, and seems to have taken the adolescent category for granted: she continues to use the terminology and constructs of adolescence to refer to Arapesh who are young (eg 1939b:105). Her concerns lie elsewhere, and do not focus on the construction of the category itself: in Coming of Age, her concern is the question of adolescent turmoil, in Sex and Temperament, it lies with the cultural determination of gender. However, one of the societies that is studied in Sex and Temperament, the mountain dwelling Arapesh, apparently has no stage of life corresponding to "youth" or "adolescence" at all. Girls are married at about age six or seven to boys of about thirteen, who then take responsibility, progressively and with help, for their sustenance, for "growing them up" (1939b:79ff). At some time after the ceremony marking the girl's first menstruation, the marriage will be consummated, "without haste, without a due date to hurry them...with no-one to know or comment, in response to a situation in which they have lived comfortably for years in the knowledge that they belong to each other" (1939b:98).

Mead does not use this example to challenge the notion of adolescence itself. But the cultural relativism established by Mead and Ruth Benedict (1935) and the rest of the Boas school laid a foundation for calling into question the whole construction of youth. Others (eg Seig 1976:42-43, Conger 1979:7) were not slow to see the consequence of

33 Though note a persistent question (eg Keniston 1968, Klein 1990) about whether a further stage, youth, should be interposed between adolescence and adulthood

96
understanding the construction of youth in cultural terms for the youth category itself. The history of the youth category, discussed earlier in this work, was built on this sea-change in conceptions of the nature of youth. The ethnographic work of John Peterson and Victoria Burbank built in the same direction. The growing perception that youth/adolescence was not universal, that biology was not determinant of the phenomenon of adolescence, that youth was a social construct, led to a struggle for understanding of the general problematic. If youth was socially constructed, how were they so constructed, when, why, under what conditions, by whom, and to what effect?

Axiom three: adolescence as turmoil

The third axiom is that this stage is inevitably concerned with trouble, with turmoil, with Sturm und Drang. Some extended discussion of this debate might be apposite, given that trouble is one cornerstone of the representation of young people in the media.

Although the work of psychologists and sociologists following Hall tended to concentrate on the problematic aspects of young people's lives, there was significant debate about whether the "storm and stress" was inherently a part of growing up, or whether it was specific to particular societies, like, in this instance, the USA. Margaret Mead's foundational work Coming of Age in Samoa (1939a) claimed that Samoan young people in fact experienced very little in the way of "storm and stress", and that their transitions to adult status seemed to progress smoothly and without turmoil. Mead concluded that this example demonstrated a cultural origin for adolescent trauma: the "storm and stress" of American adolescence was not a recapitulation of a savage past, nor a product of a resurgent id, but a result of particular social practices. It indicated that America had to change in order to treat its young people more positively (Mead 1975:161ff)\textsuperscript{34}.

\textsuperscript{34} It is customary to note here the challenge presented to Mead's work by Derek Freeman's later research (1983). On various methodological grounds, and by comparison to Freeman's own data collected over a longer period with arguably greater intimacy with the culture, many of Mead's central propositions about the trouble-free nature of Samoan adolescence seem doubtful.

It is commonly acknowledged that much of Freeman's critique is sound. However, it came much too late to limit the influence of Mead's work, and her general thesis, while it may not have been proved in
But it was not part of Mead's thesis that young people were not distressed. Her argument was not against the enduring consensus about the plight of youth, but about discovering, or proving, that the source of the turmoil was cultural, to do with the way that adolescence was organised in America, rather than inherent and biological. Ruth Benedict, a colleague of Mead's, writes

In our own civilisation a whole library of psychological studies has emphasised the inevitable unrest of the period of puberty. It is in our tradition a physiological state as definitely characterised by domestic explosions and rebellion as typhoid is marked by fever. There is no question of the facts. They are common in America. The question is rather of their inevitability.

Benedict 1935:17

The presupposition of youth distress is not merely of historical interest: it forms the background to much sociological and media analysis on youth in the present also. The tragedy of young lives" forms the major theme, for example, for an influential report written under the auspices of the Commission for the Future. The report, Casualties of Change: the predicament of youth in Australia (Eckersley 1988) develops a position that sees young people already in social difficulty ("Youth, for all it has going for it, can be difficult, even at the best of times" (p4)) further placed in jeopardy by the rate of social and economic change in Australia in the late twentieth century. The report is interesting not only because of what it says about the social position of young people, but also because of the matters on which it remains silent, particularly where social indicators point to a decreasing level of social trauma: for example, the static or declining suicide rates among young women, and evidence pointing to a reduction in drug use among young people since about 1983.

In fact, there is a great deal of evidence to indicate that the lives of the vast majority of young people are not especially traumatic, that the teenage years, for many young people, are generally peaceable and pleasurable. However much this different view of

Samoa, has been established cross-culturally in a range of other studies (Muuss 1988:142). In place of Mead's cultural determinist approach, Freeman seeks to reinstitute from within anthropological discourse, a new biological theory identifying the adolescent stage with turmoil and trouble. However, while his specific critique has been widely accepted, his alternative theory has not.
the lives of young people may run against conventional wisdom, it is by no means a new thing. A rich and diverse stream of research, including that of Reuter (1937), Elkin and Westley (1955), Musgrove (1964), Offer and his collaborators (1968, 1969, 1972), Seig (1976), Roberts (1983), and Springhall (1983) have established a number of clear positions with respect to the youth population.

First, that although obvious biological changes occur in adolescence, and these must be adapted to (as those of pregnancy or midlife ageing or old age must also) the adaptation normally managed well by the young person (Offer and Offer 1972:63). The biological changes themselves are not especially predictive of trauma. One of the fascinating things about the standard framework of textbooks on adolescent development is the very narrow range of things to talk about from a biological point of view (c.f. Bancroft and Reinisch 1990). A massive corpus of research exists, for instance, on the psychological effects of early or late puberty (finding, incidentally, that girls do rather poorly, at least initially, out of early puberty because it makes them conspicuous and places them in the sexual marketplace, boys do rather well because it makes them bigger and stronger and better at sport). An extensive discussion is usually found about the chronology of biological maturation, including a section on the "secular trend" (the tendency of puberty to arrive earlier these days), and discussion of how people need to accept their new body shape. Apart from that, most textbooks then tend to swing to matters social: relationships with the family and school, and to the social problems identified with adolescence: eating disorders, risk-taking behaviour, drugs, delinquency and of course sex, especially dating and masturbation. It is hard anywhere to find any conclusive evidence of a significant direct effect of biology on behaviour, and detailed discussion of the impact of hormonal changes is hard to find even in those sources with a strong biological emphasis. There is significant research on how biological changes like growth or sexual maturity impact on an individual's social life, arising from changes in how he or she is treated socially, but straight biological flow-throughs are hard to isolate (Springhall 1983: 23).
Also, while the process of growing up involves an increasing differentiation from parents and independence from them, this rarely involves significant estrangement (Gallatin 1975:153). Overwhelmingly, young people say that they like their parents, that their parents are the first people they turn to when they need help.

The vast majority sampled still lived at home and said that their relationship with their parents was satisfactory, 95% getting on well with their mothers, 86% with their fathers. Adolescents in general do not approve of taking drugs, do not drink much alcohol, believe themselves responsible and, if they do get into trouble, turn mostly to Mum for advice.

Springhall 1983:34

This general picture has been confirmed repeatedly in research (Elkin and Westley 1955, Brittain 1963, Bandura 1964, Offer & Offer 1968, Offer 1969, Offer et al 1988, Douvan and Adelson 1969, see also Roberts 1983:37-38) Interestingly, the perception of parents and teachers is different. Springhall quotes a 1970's American survey in which "80% of American High School teachers questioned stated as their conviction that adolescence was a time of great emotional disturbance" (1983:33). Musgrove's work found that the adults in his survey were "far more hostile and critical in their attitudes to adolescents than were adolescents to adults" (1964:102)

The evidence does not support the notion that youth are rebellious and rejecting of the values of their parents. Writing in 1964, Musgrove notes that "the broad picture of contemporary youth is not of a population either actually or potentially deviant - or even particularly adventurous" (1964:21). Springhall (1983:34) cites a National Youth Survey which suggests that the youth under study are conservative in their social and political values, and that these values were a reflection of the attitudes of their parents. For example, "six in ten sampled favoured reinstatement of hanging for murder and the use of corporal punishment... ". One of the grounds for concern in Eckersley's own report was that young people did not differ significantly from their parents in their attitudes even to youth unemployment, and that their attitudes generally were more conservative than liberal (1988: 16). This constitutes an interesting paradox in Eckersley's analysis. In the presumption of a serious youth problem, even the evidence that young people constitute no threat to the established order at all is seen as
symptomatic of a deep malaise. He quotes with concern Sydney academic Jaqueline Goodnow's assessment that university students are working harder; they are less interested in politics. They are not alienated from the system at all. Ten years ago, they didn't want anything to do with politics. Now they are buckling down; they're extraordinarily conservative.

( ibid:15 )

Catch 22. Even if young people are not irresponsible, lazy, bohemian, or hedonistic, they still present a threat to the established order because they aren't misbehaving like they are supposed to.

Gallatin's survey of this issue comes to similar conclusions. She reports the finding of Lerner and associates, who found, in a series of attitude surveys, "that there was, in general, surprisingly little disagreement between the younger and the older generation on a wide variety of issues - except for sex" (1975:153). Even on this issue, "most adolescents appear to retain a degree of conservatism", and the researchers concluded that "contrary to popular adult stereotype, it appears reasonably clear that promiscuity is widely disapproved of by both adolescent boys and girls of all ages" (Mussen, Conger and Kagan 1969, cited in Gallatin 1975). Even in the 1960's and early 1970's, when youth rebellion and political action was perceived to be high, studies showed that the values of student activists were similar to those of their (largely liberal) parents, and that their activism was "simply putting into practice the values they had been brought up with" (Gallatin 1975:149; see Keniston 1968). In a slightly different key, Friedenburg (1967), convinced of the necessity of a period of adolescent turmoil for healthy adulthood, found evidence in the compliance of young people for a restrictive, repressive, coercive society.

Daniel Offer and his various collaborators have spent most of the last twenty years researching what he calls "normal youth". In a series of influential works (1968, 1969, 1970, 1988 and several others) Offer has campaigned, from a position within psychological and psychiatric discourse, against the notion that young people are
significantly more traumatised than other sectors of the population. He acknowledges that there are a number of challenges to be met during this time, but argues that the evidence suggests that generally, young people are up to the challenges, and meet them sensibly and without drama (cf Offer et al 1988: 110ff). Offer and Offer conclude:

Research on this group of normal adolescents does not validate psychologic conceptualisations of extreme turmoil characterising adolescent development...The nature of turmoil is not such as to be able to keep itself hidden from the world, while presenting a picture of flexibility and good control over reality.

...This being the case, we challenge the concept of great inner turmoil, swift mood swings, or other seemingly pathologic symptomatology as being a necessary part of adolescence. ...Interestingly, investigators who have spent most of their professional lives studying disturbed adolescents stress the importance of a period of turmoil for the developmental growth of the individual, while investigators who, like us, have studied normal adolescent populations find a minimal amount of turmoil displayed. ...We believe that the development of many adolescents can be better characterised by a concept of gradual shifts than by volcanic eruptions.

...Data on nonpatient populations suggest that adolescents can meet the requirements of emotional disengagement from internalised parental images and of pubertal growth spurts without displaying gross behavioural aberrations.


The point that Offer & Offer make about the institutional positioning of many of the theorists and commentators about youth is worth noting. The point is made elsewhere also: Roberts cites an early study by Reuter (1937), who suggested that the perception of adolescent storm and stress owed its life to the projection of theory about youth from disturbed or deviant minorities, the "atypical fraction" (Roberts 1983: 33). Musgrove's research, published in 1964, points in the same direction. Springhall asks "whether or not the whole idea of these years as a period of "storm and stress", or even as a distinctive stage in the life cycle, is in fact a 'myth' manufactured by psychiatrists and the mass media" (Springhall 1983:33) Daniel and Judith Offer's other psychological studies of non-clinical samples of young people and their attitudes, published through the late 1960's and early 1970's, raises the same question: whether the clinical setting (in psychological/psychiatric discourse) or the deviant or delinquent focus (in sociological work) produces an extrapolation of adolescent turmoil or rebellion or psychopathology to all young people. Psychological studies frequently rely on the notion that psychopathology is merely an extreme expression of normal disturbance and crisis.
(Ericson 1968: 17), sociological studies on the idea that the problems of the minority in difficulty are the "tip of the iceberg", indicative of much more deepseated and widespread trauma and dysfunction in the society as a whole (Eckersley 1988).

One of the first methodological problems to be solved in youth research is the problem of access. Because of the results of dividing practices, adult researchers do not have immediate access to young people, and usually depend on some institutional setting in which to conduct their research. If the institutional setting is such as to select either disturbed young people, or to elicit data from young people that reflects their dissatisfaction or unhappiness with the institutional context in which the researchers find them, the results may well reflect depression, rebellion, struggle. What the broad stream of research noted above indicates is that trauma is not representative of the lives of young people. Some young people, like others in other age groups, have a hard time of it. But in general, according to this stream of the literature, the kids are OK.

What is fascinating about this, however, is that despite the wealth of information to the contrary, and the length of time that it has been in circulation, the assumption that young people are in turmoil remains. The Commission for the Future report is not an isolated example. While writing this section, I heard Derek Llewellyn Jones (author of the popular Everywoman and Everyman books) on afternoon radio on the ABC talking about the "enormous problems" that young people have in coming to terms with their body shape, expressing deep concern about how young people will ever cope. The "myth of adolescent storm and stress", like some huge psychological-sociological Tyrannosaurus Rex, maintains an animated existence despite the evidence that it is long extinct35.

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35 This raises the tantalising question of why this should be so - why accounts of youth that portray them as disturbed or deviant should prevail over accounts that see the youth population in rather less jaundiced terms. The media are no doubt a part of the equation - deviance, tragedy and trouble are part of the cocktail for a popular (read successful) newspaper. But putting the blame on the media is a circular argument: it begs the question of why buyers of newspapers want to believe that young people are a danger or a threat, why they find this kind of news satisfying. The media may be in the equation, but they are not the independent variable. The appetite for bad news about youth requires other explanations.
Sociological approaches to theorising youth

Interestingly, recognising the analytical weaknesses of conventional understandings of youth and adolescence did not lead to a flurry of theoretical work by researchers and commentators working in the youth studies area. Research and writing mostly continued to work with existing concepts of the adolescent procession, or with common-sense notions of youth (Smith 1983). Serious sociological work on the "what is youth really then?" question was done, but in isolated pockets, and in response to localised contingencies like the concern with delinquency in the 1950's or the youth movements of the 1960's. No real tradition of youth theory is established on Mead's analysis, and it is not really until the work of the CCCS in the mid-1970's that one can really speak of a tradition in youth studies. In this section, I want to address some of the paths that sociologies of youth have gone down since Mead. It is an incomplete account, addressing only the literature which deals specifically with theories of youth, rather than the much broader literature which deals more discursively with youth phenomena.³⁶

For Mead and Benedict, as I have discussed, the existence of a discrete adolescent stage was dependent on dynamics within the culture. For Benedict, culturally-induced discontinuities in the development process, especially in the degree of social responsibility, in the adoption of dominant or submissive social status, in access to sexuality and sexual roles, create an age graded society (Muuss 1988:142ff). Mead's later work (1970) theorises the nature of the adolescent stage as a function of the rate of social change. Societies with high rates of social change ("prefigurative" societies), in which the world that young people inherit differs significantly from that of their parents, generate conflicts between generations that result in increased fragmentation and social isolation. Such societies are able to offer the young little in the way of social support

³⁶For a survey of the broader literature surrounding youth, see Griffin 1993.
and certainty, with resulting turmoil for the emergent generation and cultural and affective distance between generations.

Youth, generations and social change

A major stream of social knowledge in the interwar period worked with this problem, the "problem of generations". Karl Mannheim's influential essay of that title, first published in 1928, discussed a range of literature that looked to generational succession as the engine of social change, the forefront of the social dynamic. Ortega Y Gasset, for instance had argued that youth had supplanted the working class as the vehicle of social progress, and that generational succession had replaced the class struggle as the fundamental dynamic of change (Springhall 1983:22).

Similar theories have been advanced more recently with the work of Kenneth Keniston (1968). Keniston, a social psychologist working in the context of the student radicalism of the 1960's, argued that youth was a universal psycho-biological "stage of life" between adolescence and adulthood, characterised by "the tension between selfhood and the existing order" (Keniston 1968:3). In his view, this stage was something new, emerging only under the conditions of affluence prevalent in the "long boom" of the postwar period, which had allowed large numbers of young people to continue study and therefore, by delaying the discipline of economic necessity, to extend their psychological development. This new stage creates

on a mass scale, a "new" breed of people whose psychological development not only inclines them to be critics of our own society, but might even make them potential members or architects of a better one than ours.

Keniston 1968:3

Keniston, like a range of theorists from G.S. Hall onwards, had fashioned youth into a idealised figure, a bearer, as Hall had said, of the "fresh fires of renewal". Herbert Marcuse (1971), also working with student radicals in the late 1960's, held out similar hopes for the emerging generation. From a position within the emergent neo-Marxism of the time, Marcuse carried the dream of a cultural and political renewal borne by the

37 Selfhood, in Keniston's terms, meant individual freedom and the maximising of individual potential
nobility, innocence and energy of youth. This theme of an idealised, noble youth bringing in the new day of moral purification, whether in terms of equality, liberty and fraternity or some other position, is a recurring theme in writing about young people. No less than images of youth as delinquent, it is a construction of youth as the Other, a fantasy with its origins in the need of the constructor rather than in the reality of the constructed (Attwood 1992).

Slightly less idealistic, David Marsland shared the generational perspective, working a theory of generations into a kind of paraphrase of Marx's class analysis. He argued that society is significantly ordered by an "age-system" in which the young are in a subordinate and oppressed position, the "proletariat of the age system" (Marsland 1978: chapter 1). David Pyvis' 1992 study of the history of youth in Australia similarly argues that the youth phenomenon is constructed by the elder generation's attempts to control the "rising generation".

While Mannheim shared this interest in the generational approach, his discussion of generations came to different conclusions. Mannheim argued that the generational phenomenon existed because of the common experiences of a given cohort of people (what others have referred to as "historico-cultural imprinting" (Smith 1983:5)) which may - not necessarily will - give rise to a "new generation style, or...a new generation entelechy" (Mannheim 1957:309). Current popular sociological discourse about the "baby boomers" or the "Woodstock generation" or "Generation X" share this perception. For Mannheim, however, and unlike pop sociology, this may not just be a matter of young versus old, or a "Generation X". Different social groups have different experiences even of universal social experiences like the First World War, as, indeed, do different individuals of different personalities or dispositions (1957:316). He acknowledged that generational entelechies may impact on societies as one of several factors at particular points of their history, but argued that there is nothing inevitable about it.
All this indicates [is]...that the generation factor - which at the biological level operates with the uniformity of a natural law - becomes the most elusive one at the social and cultural level, where its effects can be ascertained only with great difficulty...

Mannheim 1957:320

Nevertheless, Mannheim is arguing, like Mead, that the youth phenomenon, in so far as it is significant, is a product of social change.

Conversely, Musgrove (1964) argued that the rate of social change is driven, among other things, by the treatment of the young, rather than vice versa.

in those societies in which the status of the adolescents and young adults (particularly the males) is high, change will tend to be slow...where their status is low, and their seniors can effectively block their access to adult statuses and impede their assumption of adult roles, then there is likely to be a predisposition to change, to social innovation and experimentation, to a ready response to the opportunities which may be offered by an alien, intrusive culture to follow alternative and quicker routes to power and importance.


The origin of adolescence is then, for Musgrove, not the rate of social change, but the practice of excluding young people from positions of power and importance. Often, the social force behind this, he argued, was demographic: decreasing mortality led to reduction in positions of political and economic power, and the older generation, in order to protect their own positions, have instituted controls of various kinds to artificially keep young people in economic and political dependence. The idea that youth or adolescence is constructed by processes of exclusion is one which gradually becomes more common in work around the youth question through into the 1960's and 1970's. Before we move to a discussion of this idea, some comments should be made about youth as defined in generational terms.

It is clear, as Mannheim argues, that being a product of a particular historical period, subject to certain widespread social forces like war or depression or nationalist uprisings or revolution can have a significant impact on people, and it is not unlikely that age, and the corresponding social and institutional location of the subject is a factor here.

Subjects are conscripted for war duty by age, leave home to tramp the roads in search of work by age, are enrolled at universities by age. However, Mannheim urges caution:
the degree of generational commonality is easy to overemphasise. There is also a
conceptual confusion between generational understandings of the youth problematic (ie
those concentrating on the relationship between social change and relations between
generations) and understandings which see youth as an age-status (Smith 1981:245).
The two views are conceptually distinct. A person passes through an age status, but not
a generation. And the two forces, age-status and generational location, may interact in
complex ways. Being young, and being born in the 1970's, have different but
connecting social consequences.

Youth, exclusion and power

The notion that the youth category owes its existence to processes of exclusion from
participation in the polity has its beginnings even in the work of structural functionalist
theorists like Talcott Parsons (1942) and S. N. Eisenstadt. Eisenstadt's From generation
1 to generation (1956) (probably the most developed functionalist analysis of the youth
question (Smith 1983: 2), argues that age differentiation and the existence of age grades
is a "universal, biologically conditioned (inescapable) fact" (1956:21) but that the social
organisation around age grades is culturally specific and functional for each society.
Because the youth category is natural and universal, it is uncontroversial, and only the
specific cultural organisation of youth (which he theorises in functionalist terms as
arising from the particular needs of non-kinship based "universalistic" societies) is of
interest. Eisenstadt is therefore specifically concerned with the social conditions for the
emergence of youth groupings, rather than the youth category as such.

Briefly, according to Eisenstadt, the role of age-groupings in universalistic societies is
to integrate familial structures with broader political and economic structures, a role
which has become necessary because kin-based and familial institutions have become
"private", divorced from economic and political functions and therefore at risk of social
disintegration. However, their efficacy in doing so depends on a number of
preconditions:
"(a) the extent of harmony between the values and orientations of age groups and the basic institutional norms and values of the social structure - compatibility which manifests itself in... smooth interaction with other generations, (b) the extent to which the identity evolved through participation in age groups is adequate for attaining full social status; and (c) the extent to which fully institutionalised roles are allocated to age groups"

Eisenstadt 1956:276/277

In other words, "youth" as a social structure is functional if the age grouping has clear economic, political and ceremonial roles. Eisenstadt argues that failure in any of these areas will result in deviant youth groupings, including unorganised or organised groups of delinquent youth, youth organisations of revolutionary movements and parties, and rebellious (cultural) youth movements such as the Wandervogel and other German youth movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Further, he suggests that the above prerequisites routinely do not obtain in modern societies: values are heterogeneous, youth groups do not guarantee adult accreditation, and youth groups have no clear social role. In other words, youth groups are excluded from economic and social participation. As a result, youth groups have routinely become deviant. However, in agreement with generational analyses, Eisenstadt argues that this deviance may "make youth groups one of the most important channels through which the numerous changes of modern societies takes place" (1956:323).

The theme of exclusion is taken up most clearly, however, in a 1971 essay written by Ann Seig. Seig argues that the discourse of adolescence dealt mostly with adolescence as a social problem, whilst defining it as a stage of physiological development. This definition does not explain adolescence, merely defines its boundaries. As a corrective, Seig proposes, and goes on to elaborate and defend, a definition of youth:

Adolescence is the period of development in human beings that begins when the individual feels that adult privileges are due him which are not being accorded him, and that ends when the full power and social status of the adult are accorded to the individual.


She discusses, from a crosscultural perspective, various societies in which adolescence occurs or does not occur, and in which adolescence is or is not seen as problematic. Adolescence is only indirectly related to puberty, she argues, and age, "while indicative in most cases, is not a truly relevant factor" (1976:40). Adolescence may be in place
until an individual is thirty five or beyond. The adolescent is not someone in the last stage of childhood, but "an adult who has not been accorded his rightful status" (1976:41). Adolescence is essentially a political state, arising from processes by which young people, though they are adults, are excluded from power - and the need for power, she argues, is a fundamental human need.

Youth and class: the contribution of the CCCS

Seig's formulation is fascinating, the more so because it is located within the discourse of adolescence, albeit as a heretical voice. But the question of power and the construction of adolescence had begun to be raised in other places too, especially within critical sociology. A critical and widely read contribution to this new focus was Sheila Allen's 1968 paper in Sociological Review. Allen shares Seig's understanding that youth is a social category structured by processes of exclusion. However, what she brings to the youth problematic is an analytic understanding of the significance of class, race and gender. Allen's paper questions the centrality that Eisenstadt gives to age groupings in the social structure, and, restating Mannheim's earlier objections, argues that social relationships have to be understood as part of a dynamic process, in which social situations are the consequence of structural contradictions operating at different levels and with different intensity.

Allen 1968:321

Social processes need to be understood in terms of the structural base of the society and for Allen, the structural base is centrally tied up with the ownership of the means of production, and the social position of subjects tied up with class. "Age relations" she argues, "are part of economic relations and the political and ideological structures in which they take place. It is not the relations between ages which explain change or stability in societies, but change in societies which explains relations between different ages" (1968:321).
Allen's article began a "New Wave" in the sociology of youth, at least in Britain (Smith 1981:239). It places the youth problematic in the context of a Marxist class analysis, and subordinates the question of age relations to questions of class and class struggle. In this environment, the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham University assumes central place. The work of the CCCS is of special interest here because as well as an interest in youth and youth subcultures, the Centre was intensely interested in the operations of the media.

The principal interest of the CCCS was analysis of youth subcultures. Against a sociological tradition reaching from Parsons' 1942 article through Eisenstadt's analysis of deviant age groupings through Coleman's work in The Adolescent Society (1961), commentators associated with the Centre challenged notions of a generalised youth culture, arguing for the primacy of class as the major predictor and structuring force in young people's lives, and for the continuity of experience between the young and adult members of a class. Further, the "theoretical elevation of age" as the "major stratifying factor in social life" masked other forms of social division such as class, marginalising class as a social dynamic and universalising age groupings. Such analysis was ideological sociology, shaping knowledge to hide the fundamental dynamic of society, to the advantage of the ruling classes (Hall et al 1976:17). At the polemical height of this debate, in a critique of Havighurst and Dreyer's textbook Youth, Stuart Hall and others declared that

We would argue, in the sense that it is aimed at here, that there can be no sociology of youth. Youth as a concept is unthinkable. Even youth as a social category does not make much empirical sense. Youth as a single, homogenous group does not exist: it is an artificial construction which runs in the face of the evidence of the social differences within generations... For different class based groups, "youth" occurs at different ages, has different meanings, happens in different institutional locations, is experienced through the use of different sets of cultural resources and has different consequences. The submersion of these real differences into a fictitious construction of youth as a biological or psychological stage of life is a poor achievement...

Hall et al 1976:19
In practice, the CCCS did work extensively with the youth category, and in more temperate moments, members recognised that age is an important factor in structuring the social situation of young people. Some experiences...are youth specific... It is not therefore a question of simply substituting class for age at the centre of analyses, but of examining the relations between class and age, and more particularly the way in which age acts as a mediation of class.

Murdock & McCron, in Smith 1981:247


The central theoretical interest in this was the interpretation of cultural forms, including subcultural forms, in terms of resistance to class domination. In these terms, youth subcultures arise as "negotiated solutions" to the imposition of discipline and to the contradictions between dominant ideology, the class-based ideologies of their parents, the ideologies arising from their different institutional location in the school, in apprenticeship, in training programmes, and the more specific local and personal ways of shaping their social world. In Clarke et al's analysis, subcultural styles "win space" for the young, allowing working class young people to modify, subvert or accommodate dominant ideologies without needing to reject them outright (Smith 1981:240ff). Phil Cohen's analysis of subcultures similarly represented the development of subcultural styles as an attempt "to express and resolve, albeit magically, the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture" (in Hall et al 1976:32). More recent

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38 Stan Cohen and Jock Young did not contribute to the definitive 1976 collection, and have taken a critical stance to the work of the CCCS in their 1981 book. However, although they may not have worked with the CCCS group, their work falls within the CCCS project and tradition.

39 See Harris (1992) for a survey of the school.
work by the school and former members of it has moved more thoroughly into media
analysis, and into dialogue with the post-structuralist work of theorists like Foucault and

Critiques of the CCCS have principally come from two directions. First, Marsland,
Smith and others argue that in rejecting youth as a social category, the CCCS threw the
baby out with the bathwater (Smith 1981; Marsland 1987:7). Partly, for Marsland, this
arises from a selective and polemical reading of the Centre's work: the quote from
Murdock & McCron above is much more representative of the main stream of the
CCCS's practice. But the focus on class, and the way that youth was mediated by class,
did lead in practice to a significant underdevelopment of the concept of youth itself.
The fullest understanding of the concept of youth, as opposed to youth subcultures, is
probably represented by Clarke et al's suggestion that youth is structured by the fact of
its different institutional location and experience (cf Smith 1981:242). More generally,
however, the CCCS has been much more eloquent on the subject of what youth is not
than on what it is.

Second, Angela McRobbie, Gordon Tait and others, in an interesting reversal of Hall et
al's critique of functionalist sociology and its focus on youth, have argued that the focus
on class renders other dimensions of the youth phenomenon invisible. Tait suggests that
the CCCS approach to youth subcultures is inadequate for understanding the complexity
and diversity of the youth phenomenon, because of its totalising and reductionist stance
and because of an inadequate understanding of the operation of power. He argues that
resistances cannot be aggregated and romanticised into a generalised, working
class opposition to the totalised power of the ruling classes. Forms of
resistance develop differentially, in response to specific modes of domination,
through diverse domains and situations

1993: 5

The problem, he suggests, is the totalising approach of Marxism as a paradigm, and he
notes other objections to the CCCS from within feminism which have argued that their
form of subcultural analysis, because of its focus on spectacular cultures which are
male-dominated, has once again rendered girls invisible. Tait argues instead for the
Application of post-structuralist theory - especially that of Foucault - to the youth problem, suggesting that the question that needs to be asked is

How have specific representations of youth been created and operationalised as artifacts of government, ...through the different mechanisms and knowledge associated with law enforcement...jurisprudence...career guidance, from psychology to medicine, from sociology to welfare and from demographics to marketing. Youth is centre of a multitude of regulatory practices and techniques associated with pedagogy, it is situated and interpreted in relation to the labour market and it is represented, defined and positioned through the use of particular types of reporting and styles of media coverage...It is these types of knowledge that locate youth, and more specifically "problem" youth (such as street kids) as both a locus of anxiety and an object of visibility. Each plays a part in positioning youth...within a web of government intelligibility - an intelligibility based not solely on humanitarianism and benevolence, but also on surveillance and political concern.

Tait 1993:5

Adolescence and sociology: the state of play in Australia

While most theoretical development in youth studies has come from Britain or America, research in Australia has also been interested in the conditions under which the youth category is constructed. A series of research projects from the 1950’s through to the 1980’s documented the intersection of the youth category with the social structures of home, family, school and workplace (cf Connell, W.F. et al 1957, 1975; Connell, RW. et al 1982; Dwyer, Wilson & Woock 1984). This research, located within a critical sociology of education, charted the social construction of the youth category, and the role of the school in its development and maintenance(see especially Connell, RW. et al 1982 ch 1). In their documentation of youth attitudes and behaviours, the challenge to the founding axioms of discourses of adolescence was grounded for the Australian context. Especially in R.W. Connell et al’s Making the difference and Dwyer, Wilson and Woock’s Confronting school and work, analysis of the construction of youth was articulated with structures of class and gender, parallelling similar research by the Birmingham group in the UK (eg Willis 1970). Rob White in particular has taken this youth/class analysis forward in several works in the 1990’s.

It was this focus on the articulation of the youth category with neo-Marxist analyses which sparked the debate around youth theory which culminated in the National
Clearinghouse for Youth Studies collection *Youth subcultures: history, theory and the Australian experience*. The collection exemplifies a live paradigm tension in the literature between the neo-marxist tradition, in which researchers were often trained and which offers significant political attraction, and the post-marxist and sometimes post-modern approaches, using Foucault generally as the point of departure (see White 1993). Theorists such as Rob White continue to work energetically within a Marxist paradigm, and people like Gordon Tait and Kerry Carrington work in the Foucaultian tradition, but many of the recent works in the field of youth studies involve some encounter with Foucaultian categories (sometimes merely a Foucaultian gloss - notably through the proliferation of the term "discourse") while the theoretical core remains a rather uncertain structuralism, usually Marxist in orientation. Griffin (1993) and Stratton (1992) are examples of this. There remains a broad awareness of the limitations of Marxist approaches, especially due to their totalising nature and imperialism, but at the same time a persistent conviction that whatever its limitations, Marxist theory has strength as an explanatory framework and as a basis for action.

The differences between post-structuralist and neo-Marxist approaches are significant. The concern of post-structuralism with the local and peripheral runs counter to Marxism's embrace of the total and universal. The dominant metaphor in which theorists work (Marxism and structure/architecture, post-structuralism and the text/document) produces differences both of form and substance in their work. But notwithstanding these differences, there are substantial similarities between the approach of the CCCS to the youth question and more recent Foucaultian approaches. One of these is the decentring of youth as an object of study in favour of the social processes by which youth is constituted as a social category.

Earlier this chapter, I discussed Foucault's analysis of the structure of discourse in terms of its foundations, and particularly the point that what happens when the founding axioms are refuted is that the object of study disappears. The adolescent then becomes just another member of the social order, a member of the adult population not especially
problematic or deviant, interesting only because of the existence of institutions and discourses which constrain the young specifically and which impact on the experience of people captured by the category and on their formation of themselves as subjects. Having escaped the discourse of adolescence by rejecting its founding axioms, the primary ground of youth studies becomes the study of these institutions and discourses, and of the forms of resistance and self-formation that young people engage in.

For the CCCS, in its work on youth subcultures, the point of entry was the forms of resistance and adaptation that young people generate in the process of living under governing practices of various kinds and in various locations, linked to an overall theory of government based on class analysis. In its wider work on the media (e.g., Hall et al. 1978), the CCCS was concerned with the processes by which such resistances fed back into policing, into the practices of containment and control, how discourses of youth continued to be generated in the public sphere in response to, for instance, moral panics or the construction of femininity. The assumption was of a continuity of state between young people and adults: in this sense, youth as a social category indeed did not make much sense. The interest was generally not with youth as a category, but with the forms of governmentality under which the category is created and contained.

Theorists within the Foucaultian tradition share this interest. Like the CCCS, the interest is not so much directed at the nature of youth but the forms of governmentality under which youth is created and contained, or as Tait put it, the question of "how specific representations of youth (have) been created and operationalised as artifacts of government, ...through the different mechanisms and knowledge associated with law enforcement...jurisprudence...career guidance, from psychology to medicine, from sociology to welfare and from demographics to marketing" (Tait 1993:5). Here, the interest is in the historical and ongoing practices under which youth, in its various contexts, inflections, and guises, continues to be constituted.
In both approaches, attention shifts from young people themselves to the conditions under which their social being, as youth or adolescents or teenagers or students or hooligans, is reproduced. Both Althusser, whose work lies behind many of the approaches of the CCCS, and Foucault, whose interests lie behind the work of Tait, are expressly interested in this problem. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", Althusser's much-quoted but programmatic essay on ideology, talks expressly about the way individuals are "interpellated", called into being as subjects and as particular kinds of subjects. This approach parallels Foucault's notion of the constitution of the subject through discourse. While Foucault would no doubt be uncomfortable with the totalising implications of Althusser's concept, there is a close connection between what the CCCS meant by "ideology" and what he means by "discourse" (Thompson 1986)\(^\text{40}\). The essential difference is that Althusser stays with a notion of "meaning in the service of power" which is located in the macro, in the large structures and global dynamics of societies. Foucault locates the practice of "meaning in the service of power" in the micro, in the fine, everyday, peripheral practices of social interaction\(^\text{41}\). Foucaultian perspectives are interested in how young people are constructed as youth, in descriptions of the techniques of governance that constitute young people and police their lives. Althusserian approaches are more interested in why they are constructed so, who are the agents of this construction, and where this construction locates young people in relation to other sets of social practices and to the overall society.

The work of reproduction is primarily the work of adults: a study of youth which rejects discourses of adolescence is therefore primarily the study of adults. To

\(^{40}\) At least, once the unhelpful ideology-as-mystification versus science-as-Truth formulation, obsolete since the reappropriation of Gramsci, is put aside. In this account, the concept of ideology is used in the sense of John Thompson's rather more useful definition, as "meaning in the service of power" (Thompson 1986).

\(^{41}\) Arguably, both theoretical directions are a reaction to the failure of Marxism in the confrontation with the events of May 1968. The reaction of both theorists is to aim for a more complex, finely grained, indeterminate approach in place of Marxism's brute categories. They head in different directions in search of this more detailed picture, however: Althusser to develop and embellish the categories of pre-May 1968 Marxism, and Foucault to abandon them.
Paraphrase Foucault's striking proclamation about psychiatry, adolescence is a monologue of adults about youth. The youth category is constructed by discourses and practices that lie outside the hands of young people, and even if the research subject happens to be young, the subject is created and constrained by adult social practices. "Transition" is not in the hands of young people, but is a process of removing or transforming constraints, an action of adults.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the construction of the youth category within sociology. It has been a directed inquiry: rather than a broad survey of the literature about youth, the inquiry has attempted to nose in a direction of thinking about the youth category that will help in understanding the particular representation of youth in the newspaper, which is the subject of the next Part of this work.

Along with the discussion of the constitution of youth as subject in earlier chapters, the discussion of sociological theory about youth provides a background for analysis of the newspaper texts collected in the study, and a theoretical platform from which to begin addressing the constitution of youth within the frame of newspaper discourse. As the discussion foreshadows, this analysis uses frameworks of discourse analysis as established by Michel Foucault projected into an encounter with categories established by Marxism. An assumption in this enterprise is that it is possible to walk in the tension between Foucault and Marx, that they hold significant things in common, that the differences between them, while considerable, are a) not fatal to such an enterprise and b) if used as alternative perspectives for understanding the youth category, are actively complementary (see Best and Kellner 1991: 264).

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42 "The monologue of Reason about madness" (Sheridan 1980: 14)
43 In such an environment, it is not surprising that Frank Musgrove (1964: ch 5) and John Springhall (1983: 34) observe that the concerns of teachers and parents about adolescent turmoil are much more strident than the perceptions of young people.
Generally, the research stays with the question of how the youth category is constructed in discourse, with the project of Foucault. Behind this overt analysis, however, the questions raised in earlier chapters about the social conditions under which youth takes shape and the interests served by the construction of youth continue to circle. And beyond the deconstruction of official discourse carried out in this section, the haunting question remains whether we can discern, amongst all the diversity in constructions of youth, some core which will enable us to frame and understand the youth category a little more adequately than the discourse of adolescence allows.
8 Constructing youth theory

Armed with these two sets of theories, the neo-Marxist and the post-structuralist, what we see when we look at youth is a range of diverse practices, discourses and institutions through which a youth category is formed, and in which people of a certain (young) profile are interpelled. In a sense, then, youth is a fiction, a fantasy: there is no such thing as youth, apart from the practices, discourses and institutions under whose light the flickering and inconstant figure of youth is formed.

But there is such a thing as youth. Under the light of those practices, discourses and institutions a figure is formed. That figure is an object: not a "real" object like a stone or a rabbit or a paperclip, but still something that can be given a name and whose properties can be described. It is not a singular figure: it is many-faceted, and it looks different depending how you look at it and under what light. But it also has a unity through which the different faces can be integrated. Beyond the analysis of the conditions under which the figure emerges, writers like G. Stanley Hall and Erik Erikson and Kenneth Keniston and Talcott Parsons and David Maunders and Ann Seig tried to give definition to it, to name it for what it is. Many of these writers thought that the figure under the lights was something real, rather than being constituted by the lights themselves, and I (and others) have argued that when you reach out to touch the figure, analytically speaking, there is nothing solid there. But once that is acknowledged, there is still the figure under the lights: the figure is still there.

The analysis of the practices, discourses and institutions - the lights - has been the strength of post-structuralist approaches. The analysis of the social and economic
conditions under which the lights are switched on and whose interests are served

hereby has been the strength of neo-Marxist approaches. But there needs to be added

an analysis of the figure under the lights\textsuperscript{44}, a definition, a statement of the rule under

which youth can be called youth. Or, in Marsland's words, an attempt to "salvage from

his confusion, on the basis of theoretical analysis and concrete research, a coherent and

empirically justifiable concept and theory of youth" (Marsland 1987:5). Youth has been

constructed, via certain means in certain interests and under certain conditions, but what

has it been constructed as?

What I am arguing here is for the need to re-constitute youth in discourse: specifically in

sociological discourse. This is not an uncontroversial enterprise. For one thing,

discourse is a device for control, and to fashion or refashion discourse about youth is to

build or rebuild regimes for their control. What makes it right for someone like me,

who is not youth, to construct such a regime?

The enterprise can be justified on several grounds. First, it is not as though discourses

about youth do not exist, as the survey of newspaper material shows. Youth is already

the subject of discourse. And while all discourses discipline and control, they do not all

do so in the same way. Mediaeval discourse about witches and post-war discourses

about the responsibilities of homemaking both disciplined and controlled the lives of

women, but under one you could get burnt at the stake. Getting burnt at the stake might

be preferable to a lifetime of housework, but that is not the point. So generating new

ways to see youth may produce a shift in the apparatus of control under which young

people live, and the change might be for the better.

\textsuperscript{44}This is not an argument for ethnography, for the study of what young people are really like, or at least what the young people under study seem to us to be really like. Ethnography is a valuable quest, as encounter with the richness of people's lives and of their responses and resistances to the conditions under which they live, and no less so with young people than with others. But the figure under the light is not a real person. It is an image, an embodiment of a category, an icon, with which the real (young) people have to negotiate and establish some kind of detente.
Second, as Foucault argues, power is not only repressive but also productive. This is an insight of great significance. Gramsci argued, using the frame of ideology and hegemony, that if people who live under inhuman, violent, oppressive regimes are to break free from the disciplines under which they live, alternative discourses about themselves and their condition must first be generated. Like other discourses, these alternative discourses (he was speaking of Marxism) also discipline the population. This discipline was both a necessary and desirable thing if change was to be effected. If the nature of the social relations under which people live remains unnamed, it remains unchallenged. If the people are not interpellated by alternative discourses, they remain a mass, unable to act "for themselves". Revolutions may or may not be a desirable thing, but they do not happen without the book and the song and the discipline (self-discipline?) of a people.

Another objection is that any attempt to talk about any "essence" of the concept of youth as a regression into grand theory. Grand theory manufactures a generalised object from the particularities of experience. Such theory is repressive of difference, and lends itself to totalitarian approaches to power. More to the point, it invents an object where there is no object, and thereby mistakes itself as science. So, for example, Tait has argued that

youth... does not constitute a unitary object. The concept of youth has been discontinuously constructed across a profusion of terrains and as such, it has neither a linear history nor a clearly demarcated present. ...it has been produced as a governmental object at the intersection of certain legal, educational, medical and psychological problematisations. These would include, for instance, debates over legal definitions of consent and criminal liability, changes in strategies regarding juvenile delinquency and concerns over venereal disease and public morality.

(1993c:45)

In this view, if we wished to speak of youth, there is no single thing, no "unitary object", of which to speak. The essence of youth in legal discourse is different from the

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45 These, I recognise, are ethical categories which I make no attempt to enlarge upon here. Implicit in them is a claim, contrary to some postmodernist approaches, of some privilege, some priority, some "rightness", for certain kinds of discourse: in this case a discourse about justice based on a reading of the Christian tradition.
essence of youth in educational discourse, which is different from the essence of youth in medical discourse. Instead of a lone figure under the lights, we have a crowd.

Notwithstanding the multiple sites and discourses in which youth is constructed, however, I would argue that a sort of coherent figure under the lights can be made out. The dimension of difference is there, to be sure, and this study applies itself enthusiastically to explorations of that difference. But amidst the difference there is an object still, a unity in difference. It is not a nonsense to speak of the youth category: youth is something with a name, and the name names something, in the same way that no two women's experience is the same, and yet it means something to be called a woman. A woman says something when she calls herself a woman, and a youth, in whatever context, from whatever other social group, says something when he or she calls themselves youth. What it means might be difficult to pin down in general, and easier to pin down in the particular and local instance, but it does mean something even in the general instance.

Finally, it might be argued that this enterprise forms part of an obsolete modernist project - the project of bringing the world under the discipline of scientific knowledge, under the order of Reason - which cannot be sustained in this postmodern world with its multiplicity of orders and its panoply of brightly-coloured surfaces. I would agree that Enlightenment narratives are only one way of telling the story about youth. I could equally, if I were able, compose a symphony, write a novel, weave a tapestry, preach a sermon, call upon a myth, enact a ritual about youth, and all (or none) of these might be true. But their different order of truth does not evacuate Reason of its own particular way of telling the story, nor the value of the particular disciplines on which Reason insists in the construction of narratives that come under its order. The order of Reason, and the project of constructing an integrated and whole picture of the world under its rule may be only one way of telling the story, and may have its price, but it is no less valuable for that. The postmodern world may legitimately deny Reason its imperialistic hold over the world, and its claim to absolute authority and universal application, but it
cannot deny it the right to tell a story in its own way and to claim the status of truth for its tale.

At this point, then, I want to engage with the task foreshadowed by David Marsland (1987:5): to "salvage from this confusion, on the basis of theoretical analysis and concrete research, a coherent and empirically justifiable concept and theory of youth". First, however, some threads need to be drawn together to lay a basis for trying such a task. The first stage in this process is to summarise what youth is not.

What youth is not: benchmarks for a sociologically adequate concept of "youth"

Although much of the literature, as we have noted, takes the youth category unproblematically, there is nevertheless a broad consensus of theorists who recognise the difficulties in the "concept and theory of youth". These theorists (eg Musgrove 1964; Allen 1968; Van Moorst 1983; Jefferson, Hall and Clarke 1976; Smith 1976, 1981, 1983; Roberts 1983; Springhall 1983/4; Hollis 1988; Family Policy Studies Centre 1988; Humphery 1989; White 1990; Buchanan 1992; Griffin 1993), in their critiques of the concept of youth, have tacitly laid down a series of hurdles that a successful sociological representation of youth must cross.

First, an age-range rule-of-thumb definition is not theoretically adequate. The theoretical problems with definitions of this sort are manifest. For one thing, they represent no discrete social category. Prima facie, a twelve year old has little in common with a twenty five year old. For another, such definitions have no analytic content. It is difficult to see exactly what is being referred to that sets this age range apart from others. And thirdly, there is a boundary problem. Life is not significantly
different for an eleven year old after that birthday, and the only difference for a twenty-six year old is that one no longer qualifies for inclusion in programmes that cater specifically for "Youth". Indeed, as Seig argues (1977), age may not be a "truly relevant factor" at all, except that age is one symbolic indicator of membership of certain social statuses.

It is also difficult to justify sociologically a notion of youth as a universal biological or psychological "stage in life". It is not a universal phenomenon: there are many cultures that exhibit no youth category, where there are adults, and children, but no youth as such, and youth as we understand it is a fairly recent phenomenon even within Western cultures. So youth is not characteristic of the human species. As such, a biological basis for the phenomenon cannot be sustained.

This is not to say that biological processes, and specifically puberty, are not important in the experience of young people. But the historical and cultural specificity of the youth category does mean that "puberty" and "youth" cannot be equated. Also, youth in the modern world and at various times in the pre-industrial world has extended significantly beyond the period of biological change, which has usually settled down by the time that young people are about fifteen. The two terms, puberty and youth, clearly therefore refer to different phenomena, and so should be separated at the conceptual level. Puberty impacts on youth, but is not continuous with it.

Suggestions that youth is a period of "storm and stress", of significant psychological trauma, cannot be sustained. They appear not to be consistent with the empirical evidence that most young people's lives are relatively trouble free, that they have good relationships with their parents, and do not experience significant turmoil. Many psychological attributes and disturbances frequently sheeted home to adolescence seem to belong to the human condition, rather than youth in particular. For example, it is debatable whether peer-group pressures are more significant for young people than, say, executives; whether the transition from school to work is more significant or traumatic
than the transition from full-time parenting to work; or whether the adolescent identity crisis is more significant than the mid-life identity crisis or the marriage-breakup identity crisis or the retirement identity crisis.

Within such a framework, many adolescent psychological characteristics appear to be more about predictable human responses to social conditions experienced by young people rather than anything special about adolescence. Here, the psychology of adolescence is susceptible to the fallacy of misplaced cause. For example, rebellion and resentment are predictable human reactions to relations of domination. If a large number of young people were experiencing significant conflict with their parents, this is much more likely to be due to being dominated than adolescence (cf Hollis 1988).

Nevertheless, certain combinations of experiences in our society are specific to young people, and young people, by virtue of their shorter lives, have a different range of psychological tools to deal with these experiences. They also have less power, and power itself is a crucial resource in dealing with life situations. As such, an adolescent psychology is legitimate not only to study in detail the specific experiences that young people have, and how they manage these experiences, but also to examine how their lack of experience, their lesser power, and their institutional location effects their management processes, and distinguishes them from the practice of older and younger people. But analysts of adolescence need to resist the temptation to universalise psychological data from studies of specific groups of young people in specific institutional settings, and a tendency to construe social phenomena that have an impact on young people (eg unemployment) as though they had a psychological origin.

In this sense, it is not so much the movement from dependence to independence that is at issue, or from child to adult, though these (along with institutional movements like the move from school to work) are often put forward as the content of the transition (eg Wilson & Wyn 1993). Independence is hard to define, is largely myth, and has historically been much more of a criterion for men than women. For most women this
tury, the transition has been from dependence to dependence (Buchanan 1993). The ques-
tion of the movement from child to adult begs the question of the social con-
struction of age categories, and presume that we know what a child or an adult is.

Youth is not a homogenised category. The experience of boys is different from that of girls, working class young people and middle class young people live different lives, and Aboriginal kids experience social institutions differently from white kids. Any sociology of youth must be able to accommodate this massive range in social experience and still come up smiling. Too often, sociologists have worked with a particular group of young people and extrapolated their findings across to all young people. This has been true both of the right and the left, of psychological studies and of sociological research. Parsons' sociology of youth based on middle class American high school students (Parsons 1942) was vulnerable to this, as was Keniston's typology based on student activists in the late 1960's (Keniston 1975), as well as recent studies for which "youth" becomes equated with working class youth, or even unemployed youth (eg White 1990). Even for those theorists who are explicitly conscious of this problem, there is a tendency to generalise from the experience of a favoured or accessible section of the youth population.

This criterion especially directs itself to the question of gender. The sociology of youth literature has an overwhelming male bias, to the point where the very word has a male connotation. To be coherent, a concept of youth must be competent to deal equally well with both halves of the population, all racial or cultural groupings. It must include the offspring of the rich and famous as well as those of the urban proletariat, as long as they fall within the definition.

Related to this is the recognition that youth is constituted differently in different contexts and under different discourses. A usable concept of youth needs to be able to embrace this diversity. For the same reason, a sociology of youth needs to engage with some humility. In many contexts, as Hall et al argued, age relations may not be the
"major stratifying factor in social life" (Jefferson, Hall & Clarke 1976). Given the acknowledgment from both ends of the sociological spectrum that a person's class position, gender, and often race are usually a more efficient predictor of their social circumstances than their age, a sociology of youth must not paint itself in too bright colours. There are other things going on.

However, age relations are not trivial. They are the basis, in combination with other factors, on which several thousand people in Australia are: homeless, (for example, by exclusion from public housing stock or private rental on account of their age); are imprisoned (for example, for statutory offences like being "in moral danger"); are denied work ("too young"); are paid low wages; are denied adequate income support; are exploited by employer and union alike; are disenfranchised; are raped; are harassed by police; are subject to summary arrest (as in the application of the Child Welfare Act in Western Australia to permit police to pick up young people and take them back to the station "until their parents can be found"); are institutionalised. An approach to a sociology of youth that defines the phenomenon out of existence does young people no service.

Towards a theory of youth

From the literature covered in this chapter, there is potential for going beyond an analysis of what youth is not, beyond deconstruction. There is potential, from the material discussed about dividing practices, about practices of self-formation, and about scientific classification, for establishing some coherent understanding of the youth category that will allow it to be worked with without resorting to discourses of adolescence. If some conclusions can be drawn about what youth is not, they can also be drawn about what youth is.
I am convinced, to begin with, that the existence or otherwise of a youth population is
determined, as Seig has argued, by practices of exclusion. Any community which
suspends social accreditation for its young past the age of biological adulthood will have
a youth population. Where such accreditation is suspended only for part of a
population, youth, as a category, will be manifest in that part, where it may not be for
other young people in the population as a whole. Thus, in some Aboriginal
communities, young males have a "youth", while young females do not (Burbank
1988:4-5). Young men may be the subject of an extended process of initiation, and
marriage may often be significantly delayed. Young women, on the other hand, would
typically be betrothed at birth to an older man, and married at or before puberty, often as
a second or third wife (Rose 1987)\textsuperscript{46}.

The adolescent category is interesting among social categories because of its transitory
nature. Youth may be, as Seig suggests, biologically adult persons suffering under (or
enjoying!) the suspension of adult status, but this is not a permanent condition. At some
point, a youth becomes an adult, but the social processes of accreditation are complex.
This complexity has a number of elements: the confused and partial nature of modern
rites of passage, the bewildering variety in ages at which legal responsibility is
conferred in such matters as criminal responsibility, sex (hetero and homosexual),
finances, contracts, leaving home, voting, the consumption of alcohol and the purchase
of tobacco, marriage, driving licenses and so on (Maas 1990, Poole & Goodnow 1990).

There is a strong case for arguing that the construction of youth in the modern sense is
an effect of the secondary school. This has been evident in the discussion of the school
as a dividing practice, and in the tracing of the history of the emergence of the youth
category, but it is illustrated also by crosscultural analyses such as John Peterson's 1976
study of developments in a Choctaw community in America in the 1960's, and

\textsuperscript{46} Discussions with Karen Mallard (Edith Cowan University) indicate that the achievement of
womanhood for young Aboriginal women is still earlier and more direct than for men even in urbanised
settings.
fragments such as Geoffrey Pearson's note that the peak age for offending in Britain rose from 15 years to 16 when the school leaving age was raised from 15 to 16 in 1972 (1983:224). Notwithstanding Tait's argument that youth is discontinuously constructed across a variety of sites, the secondary school appears to be determinant of the particular form of youth category with which we are blessed. In the varied landscape of youth discourse and discursive practice, the school looms large.

The economic circumstance which establishes both the opportunity and the motivation for the establishment and extension of secondary schooling is generally the existence of high levels of unemployment, especially youth unemployment, and the need for a more disciplined, more literate workforce. Typically, the social circumstance spearheading its introduction is widespread fear about juvenile delinquency.

The final condition for the emergence of the modern youth category is the establishment of discourses of adolescence as a stage of life characterised by trouble and trauma. Discourses of youth, of course, vary between societies; Seig (1976) gives several examples of societies where a youth category is present but is not regarded as troublesome, and little intervention is necessary. Such is not the case here. Discourses of trouble combine to justify differential treatment of young people, and professional and legislative intervention into their lives.

These conclusions are macro conclusions. While they have micro consequences, and while there are a multitude of micro stories about the particular ways in which youth is constituted in different sites, and while the means of coming to them has involved a serious engagement with Foucaultian approaches, the facility that the CCCS's kind of Althusserian/Gramscian structuralism has for pulling these separate strands together and constructing a basis for useful theoretical generalisations about youth cannot be ignored. There is time, in the second half of the thesis, to explore the particularities. At this point, the material that confronts me, the historical material, the crosscultural material, sociology's struggle or non-struggle to think through the youth problematic, calls for
generalisation, for macro theory. The general approach of the Birmingham School, which was specifically working to connect micro cultural phenomena into macro social processes, seems at this point the way to go.

The essential component of the CCCS's framework was a strong appreciation of the Gramscian insight of the power of belief, custom, ideas, values, assumptions - in eliciting an ideological "consensus", many features of which were framed in such a way that they prevented critical insight into the social condition that people were living under, and inhibited action for change. This perspective was then given a more concrete existence by the infusion of the kind of institutional analysis being carried on by theorists like Louis Althusser, Nicos Poulantzas and Manuel Castells. Especially through the work of Althusser, recognition was being given to the role of political and ideological institutions like the State, the family, the school and the media in helping to maintain an economic and social system which, because it was based on the exploitation of the majority, was inherently unstable. The role of dividing practices in the constitution of the subject again has a clear parallel with this form of analysis.

The particular insight that Althusser (1971) brought to the understanding of society was the recognition that although a society was driven by the economic system that was dominant within it, ideological and political systems were not merely accessories to the structures of exploitation within the economic sphere, but had a kind of independence, or in his celebrated phrase, were "relatively autonomous". The economic sphere might determine the overall system (the mode of production) and thus the general shape of the other spheres, but the political and ideological spheres are more than just appendages of the economic. The ideological and political spheres are "relatively autonomous" but the economic is "determinant in the last instance"\(^47\).

\(^47\) More recent critiques (eg Best and Kellner 1991), while not contesting the power of the economy, have questioned whether there are not sites and practices that are not only relatively autonomous of the economy, but are either independent, determined by non-economic processes, or themselves influence the shape of economic practices. Notwithstanding this, the theory of economic over-determination asks the question about connections between apparently independent cultural practices and the economic.
Because the CCCS was predominantly interested in *cultural* analysis, a combination of the approaches of Gramsci and Althusser (what Woollacott (1982:110) calls the "Gramsci-Althusser synthesis") brought about an express interest in the kinds of institutions that operated to bring about the kind of "consent" that was necessary for an inherently unstable system to be contained. Foremost in this was the group's analysis of the media (Hall et al 1978), sociologies of education (Corrigan 1979, Willis 1970, Murdock and McCron 1976) and subculture (Hall et al 1976, Hebdige 1979, Mungham 1 Pearson 1976, Cohen P 1972). Mostly, these analyses detailed how young people negotiated their way through the often conflicting ideologies with which they were bombarded (or invented themselves) every day.

Continually in focus was the fact that these were working class young people (mostly male), and the mix of accommodation and resistance settled on by young people, and the strategies developed to make the negotiation work, were specific to working class lads. Again, their youth, while clearly important, was not explicated at the theoretical level. For example, in Willis' classic, *Learning to Labour*, these young people were compelled to attend an evidently coercive ideological institution, the school, and their working-classness played an integral role in their experience within the institution and their trajectory both within it and on leaving. But the fact that it is young working class people who are legally so compelled, while adult working class people were not, was perhaps too obvious to be recognised as something in need of explication. And because the focus was on the differential experience of (certain) working class young people and other young people, the commonality that this experience of legal compulsion produces between young people could not be recognised.

imperatives of a society. This question constitutes one of the sources for Marxism's productivity in social science. As a heuristic device, its usefulness and incisiveness has not declined.
This legal compulsion to become subject within an ideological institution, set up by the State, with a curriculum and process developed largely around the needs of capital (Friedenberg 1967:72-3, Corrigan 1979), establishes a set of social relations that are for this period in the lives of people, determinative of their social position, even for young people who do not go to school. This determination is independently reinforced by other structures within society, including the legal system, including labour law, the family, and others. And these conditions are not only true for working class people, but for young people across classes\(^48\). In Australia, Britain, the United States, Germany, France, across the industrialised nations, young people are legally compelled to present themselves daily at a carceral institution in which they occupy a place structured in subordination.

These components of the social position of young people begin to merge into each other. The construction of a "youth" population developed historically out of a double movement in the needs of the economic system in the last century: as a result of the opportunity provided by the decreased labour requirement that followed automation and mechanisation, and the parallel and attendant need for an increasingly *educated and disciplined* workforce to serve the new industries. They were, and are, contained and controlled in a carceral, specifically pedagogical/ideological institution. Through the operation of discourses of adolescence, they are constructed as more or less irresponsible (Parsons 1942), prone to "storm and stress", a problem population. Notwithstanding their biological maturity, the efficacy of the hardware, so to speak, young people are excluded from the status of "adult", a status in which the agency of the subject is affirmed and which generally attracts the rights of citizenship. Accreditation as "adult" is obtained eventually through a complex and diffuse set of subsidiary accrediting statuses: the status of worker, of wife or husband, of soldier, of parent, of graduate, of householder, among others. In the theoretical terms provided by Althusser

\(^{48}\)This is not to say that young people's experience of such institutions is the same, that youth is a homogenous group. The standard story is that "middle class" young people do well out of the education system, and working class people do poorly.
Gramsci, youth takes on a kind of class position, but one located within the ideological sphere, rather than the economic. A definition of youth in these terms would run something like this.

**Youth:** a socially constructed ideological class, under which certain biologically adult members of a society, on the basis of their low relative age, are judged to have incompletely or inadequately assimilated the dominant ideologies of that society. Such people are then denied accreditation as full members of that society, and treated accordingly.

The ideological sphere thus appears central to an understanding of the youth category. Young people inhabit this sphere under relations of domination in which they are subordinate: they are subjected to processes of ideological imposition, often under legal or economic compulsion, and have very little control over those processes, or over the content of their training. When young people refuse, or are suspected of refusing or rejecting the dominant ideological standard, or behave in ways that suggest to the mainstream that they might be, often severe standards of control come into force, including institutionalisation, police harassment, and curfews. The newspaper provides a record of the debates and subsequent disciplinary methods which are brought to bear. Interestingly, the newspaper is also a critical institution within the ideological sphere.

A definition of youth as an adult population for whom ideological accreditation has been suspended redefines the field of youth studies a little. Rather than an inquiry into the nature of youth misbehaviour or trauma, the focus is shifted to look for slightly different things, and to take slightly different perspectives on them. In particular, studies of youth need to look carefully at the means of accreditation, the processes by which ideological accreditation is achieved and the terms under which, and for what groups of young people under what circumstances, it is withheld. Studies of youth need to understand the techniques of governance through which young people are kept in
subordinate positions. Studies of youth need to examine the means by which the terms of their subordination are extended in social policy and Government action.

This study attempts to move in this direction. By examining the discursive frames within which youth are held, the study provides some understanding of the techniques through which the subordination of young people is achieved and maintained. The mass media, including the newspaper, are an important forum for the circulation of these discursive frames and also for the political contest over the right to define a situation and to provide the means for its redress. The definition which I have proposed will hopefully prove useful in disentangling the various threads of youth discourse that lie within the columns of *The West Australian*, and make sense of the political contest represented there.

The definition has been framed within the theoretical categories of a basically Althusserian perspective. But the notion of youth as a population for whom ideological redaction has been suspended is translatable into other perspectives, and articulates with areas of inquiry where such perspectives have a special interest. Post-structuralists may not be happy with a description of youth as a class located in the ideological sphere, nor with notions of dominant ideology, but the inquiry into the means by which the constitution of youth as youth is achieved, and the techniques for the governmentality of young people through the ministrations of school, the media, the law is precisely the kind of work that Foucaultians call for. What the Althusser/Gramsci approach adds to the diffuse approach is the capacity to connect the disparate phenomena surrounding youth, and to connect them to other populations, other experiences, other situations, other sites, including the economic, and to provide formulae through which they can be understood together. What post-structuralist approaches bring to the enterprise is a capacity to analyse the fine texture of the constitution of youth. The kind of theory that Best and Kellner call for needs to measure up to this double requirement: to
recognise, [and be able to make sense of] the differentiation and fragmentation within modernity, while also providing a language that addresses its integrative and rationalising features.

1991:256ff

Concept of youth as a population from whom ideological accreditation is withheld looks like being useful in these terms.

Conclusion and summary

This discussion of the history of the emergence of the youth category in the modern world, and the constitution of youth in psychological and sociological discourse has indicated that youth as a sociological phenomenon is defined by their location in the ideological sphere, and conditioned by their involvement in and relationship to ideological institutions. The emergence, and extension of a youth category in capitalist societies has arisen out of the need for a more educated, more disciplined, more intellectually flexible workforce initiated by the higher demands of industrial and post-industrial production processes, and by the greater levels of repression necessary under industrial society. Under this regime, the accreditation of young people as full members of society is suspended until such time as they are considered ideologically safe. Legally, this happens at various times for various areas of activity (leaving home, having sex, getting married, taking out a loan, drinking alcohol, driving a car, going to prison, voting), although the upper age for legal adulthood is 18 years. Custom is more uncertain, and a person's status may be ambiguous long after legal adulthood has been confirmed, particularly if they are a student, are unemployed, or don't have "a real job". It is this suspended status that creates the conditions of oppression for young people, and is the source of the youth problematic.

So far I have dealt with broad social phenomena, historical and discursive developments across three continents and three centuries and as many academic disciplines. According toMurdoch and Golding (1979:212), this kind of background, this broad schema of analysis, is methodologically necessary if we are to make sense of the
"Frameworks of understanding within which news is constructed". It has been a heavily selective analysis, and much has been left out, much important detail ignored. But perhaps it suffices to establish the social context and the environment of discourse within which the production of news lives and moves and has its being.

It is to the analysis of the news that we now turn. Part Three attempts to examine, through the way this newspaper and its contributors talk about young people, some of the finer detail about the constitution of youth in this local, particular, and highly differentiated setting.
Part Three: *The West Australian* and the representation of youth
This Part of the study inquires into the way in which youth is constituted in discourse. The discursive landscape is not one-dimensional, and the interplay of discourse is often complex. Particularly striking is the diversity of discursive frames, and the even greater diversity in the linguistic apparatus available to commentators who wish to speak youth as a subject.

The first chapter in this section, chapter nine, deals with the language used to embrace youth in the newspaper. Chapter ten canvasses the range of sources featured in newspaper comment about youth, and the issues in which young people are implicated, itself an indicator of the points of tension in the construction of youth in this society. They reveal an active and contested discursive field in which different sources, through the mediation of the newspaper (which has its own interests and priorities), speak about youth. They indicate a competition for ground, for the priority of their particular institutional, professional or ideological discursive frames.

Chapters eleven and twelve work with the same material, but address articles that specify the gender or the race of the subject. The dimensions of the construction of language, the attribution of source, and the roles in which the subject is cast are analysed specifically for young men or young women (Chapter 11), and Aboriginal young people (Chapter 12).
9 The youth vocabulary

It's only words, and words are all I have, to take your heart away.

The Bee Gees

Rob McKenna was a miserable bastard and he knew it because he'd had a lot of
people point it out to him over the years and he saw no reason to disagree with
them except the obvious one which was that he liked disagreeing with people,
particularly people he disliked, which included at the last count, everybody...

It wasn't that he was naturally predisposed to be so surly, or at least he hoped
not. It was just the rain that got him down, always the rain.

It was raining now, just for a change.

It was a particular type of rain that he particularly disliked, particularly when
he was driving. He had a number for it. It was rain type 17.

He had read somewhere that the Eskimos had over two hundred different words
for snow, without which their conversation would probably have got very
monotonous. So they would distinguish between thick snow and thin snow,
light snow and heavy snow, sludgy snow, brittle snow, snow that came in
flurries, snow that came in drifts, snow that came in on the bottom of your
neighbour's boots all over your nice clean igloo floors, the snows of winter, the
snows of spring, the snows you remember from your childhood that were so
much better than any of your modern snow, fine snow, feathery snow, hill
snow, valley snow, snow that falls in the morning, snow that falls at night,
snow that falls all of a sudden just when you were going out fishing, and snow
that despite all your efforts to train them, the huskies have pissed on.

Rob McKenna had two hundred and thirty-one different types of rain entered in
his little book, and he didn't like any of them.

Adams 1986:467-8

*The West Australian* doesn't quite get to two hundred and thirty-one words for youth,
unless all the different variations of "young ________"\(^{49}\) or "(13)-year-old
__________"\(^{50}\) are included (in which case it gets there easily). But *The West
Australian*, over the two years of the study, does use over a hundred and forty different

\(^{49}\) Young pedestrian, young sales assistant
\(^{50}\) 16 year-old dancer, 14 year-old passenger
words to describe a person who is young. Some of these denote other things besides heir youth (like "criminal" or "tourist"), but around ninety of them specifically refer to young people\textsuperscript{51}, or are so frequently used of young people that they imply a young subject.

This chapter takes as its starting point the notion, expressed in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (see Trudgill 1983, Halliday 1975, Fowler 1991) that language has an intimate connection with the way that a speech community perceives a phenomenon. Fowler (1991 80ff), in his linguistic study of the press, argues that vocabulary provides a conceptual and cultural "map" of the social environment.

Vocabulary can be regarded as a representation of the world for a culture, the world as perceived according to the ideological needs of a culture. Like the map, it works first by segmentation by partitioning the material continuum of nature and the undifferentiated flux of thought into slices which answer to the interests of the community. Use of each term crystallizes and normalizes the essentially artificial slices which are cut out of the cake of the world. It is an elementary, but fundamental, task for the critical analyst to note, in the discourse s/he is studying, just what terms habitually occur, what segments of the society's world enjoy constant discursive attention.

The language employed about young people in the newspaper presents us with such a map. It is a particular kind of map, produced by and for a particular kind of community. The linguistic matrix is complex. Newspaper text is an amalgam of the discourse of journalists and of their sources, like courtroom discourse, scientific and conference reports, the speech of accident victims and victims of crime, it includes the contribution of a range of "ordinary" correspondents to the Letters to the Editor page, as well as the discourse of experts and officials, of "authorised knowers" (Ericson, Baranek and Chan 1987). It is a particular linguistic sample, the speech of a particular kind of community in which particular relations of power are being communicated, and so differs from other discursive contexts, particularly in the frequencies with which certain terms are used. It is a collection of public discourse: there are things that can and cannot be said.

\textsuperscript{51} This figure does not count separately compounds of the different variations of "young something-or other" (eg young apprentice electrician), "(something)-year-old" (eg 13 year old, 17 year old), "(something)-year-old- (something)" (19 year old model, 15 year old student), "teenage (something)"
in newspapers, and particular discourses that should and should not be employed, although traces of these "non-public" discourses will often appear in newspaper text. The Commissioner of Police speaks in a different code when he speaks about youth for the newspaper (presumably) than a code he might use when speaking to his own children. Certain voices are rarely allowed to speak, notably the voice of young people themselves, especially "criminal" young people. So the collection of news discourse contained in the Youth News file is not statistically "representative" of all language about young people, although it presents a large sample of language about youth from a range of discursive origins.

This chapter explores some of the features of this map. Some features, like the subtleties of the way that gender is represented; the shape given to Aboriginal youth and its place on the social map; the way that particular terms lie within the structure of particular discourses; and the way that the language of crime dominates the landscape are explored in more detail in other chapters. The central interest in this chapter is the rich vocabulary available for talk about youth. In it, I want to explore the meanings of words and how they are used, what words appear frequently and what words are rare, and try to explain the need for the prodigality of signification that the youth lexicon represents.

The lexicon

A list of the words employed to signify young people in the Youth News file appears below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth Specific (words that designate a young person)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Age) year old (something), (Age), (Age) year old, Adolescent, Apprentice, Boy, Child/children, Classmate, Delinquent, Girl, Girlfriend, Glue sniffer, Graffiti writers/artists, Hooligan, Hardcore repeat offender/repeat offender/hardcore offender/hardcore juvenile offender, Joyrider, Juvenile, Juvenile offender, Kid, Larrikin, Lout, Minor, Pupil, Recruit, Schoolboy, Schoolchild, Schoolgirl, Schoolleaver, Streetkid, Student councillor, Teenage (something), Teenager, Teen, Tomboy, Truant, Vandal, Yahoo, Yobbo, Young (the), Young adult, Young unemployed, Young lady,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Young West Australian/Australian, Young people, Young (something), Young man, Young woman, Young offender, Young mother, Youngster, Youth (s), Youth (plural), Yuppy.

Mostly used of youth: youth implied
Brother, Car thief, Daughter, Dropout, Graduate, High achiever, Jobseeker, Low achiever, Offender, Sibling, Sister, Son, Student, Unemployed, Thief, Protestor, Demonstrator, Attacker, Thug, Partygoer, Drinker, Convicted firebug, Bagsnatcher, Fan, Ratbag, Chimp, Arsonist, Drug user, Hitchhiker, Beauty Queen, Achiever, Fiancé, Degenerate, Neonazi, Skinhead, Sewage, Contestant, Heroin addict, Recidivist, Former head boy...

Other terms used: often used of young people, but also often used more generally
Passenger, Driver, Victim, Criminal, Killer, Man, Woman, Female, Male, (Occupation), People, Kidnapper, Escapee, Rapist, Dissident, Gunman, Refugee, Tourist, Father, Murder suspect, Jogger, Twin, Lesbian, Shooter, Nephew, Suspect, Witness, Psychotic inmate, Lover, Adult, Wife, Prisoner, Bloke, Heroin dealer, Patient, Murderer, Perpetrator, Motorcyclist...

Obviously, some of the terms are used often, some hardly at all. The relative frequency of different terms tells us a lot about how youth as a whole and different fractions of the youth population are represented, and how they are represented by different sources. For example, the collective frequency of terms connoting crime and the higher incidence of terms for young women which connote passivity are both significant and will be discussed in later chapters. The chart on the next page indicates the most common youth descriptors (used in ten or more articles) and their relative frequency.

These data call for analysis from two different perspectives. First, the cross-sectional view: the relative frequency of terms, and the significance of the appearance, or non-appearance, of particular constructions. Second, the topography of the vocabulary: the range of terms, their meaning and usage, and the reasons behind this exhorbitant proliferation of signifiers.
The youth vocabulary: number of articles using a given term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Number of articles</th>
<th>% of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenager</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young (s)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal age old (s)</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (collective)</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper age old (s)</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kid</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young offender</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offender</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile offender</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(occupation)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young man</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenage (s)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car thief</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngster</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang member</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young woman</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street kid</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leaver</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Australian</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home young</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolgirl</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat offender</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolboy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young mother</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the list below, what I have tried to do is establish the grades of meaning incorporated in the most common signifiers used of young people in the clippings collection. Terms acquire different connotations from the context in which they are used (terms routinely used of young people involved in crime eventually gain a criminal connotation) or the particular discourse of which they form a part. I tried to establish, based both on a careful reading of context and the quantitative data that the database provides, some aspects of the meaning and connotation that is communicated by different terms. The glossary form is not employed in order to make any claim of authoritative definition, nor to standardise usage, but as a way of representing the social map indicated by the vocabulary employed within the pages of The West Australian. Any meaning offered is, of course, a generalisation: the use of language is idiosyncratic, and it is not uncommon for words to be used in unorthodox contexts for effect.

It is sometimes possible to establish a clear valence, or negative/positive connotation, for a word. The allocation of valence does involve some methodological difficulties: as I have indicated already, a term like "car thief" may be negative or positive depending on where you stand. A sense of the valence of the term can usually been established by long reading of its usage in newspaper material, especially its frequency in particular contexts like crime or high achievement, but I have also used the technique of combining the term with a clearly negative adjective, and determining whether the resulting compound is oxymoronic, a contradiction in terms.

An annotated glossary

Youth (s): 681 articles. A clear difference in meaning should be noted between the use of "youth" as a singular noun (e.g. "A 16-year-old youth was today ...") and the collective noun ("unemployed youth", "the youth of the town" - see below). The word can also be used as an adjective (as in "youth suicide"), but as such terms do not actually refer to young people but to some other subject, this usage was not recorded in the database. The singular form is used heavily in association with crime - 71% of
articles that use the word "youth" are predominantly about crime. Youth in the singular is *never* used to refer to young women. "Youth" has therefore an overwhelmingly male, problematic, especially criminal, meaning. This is amplified when the singular noun is used in the plural (ie "youths") as the softer collective noun ("youth") is avoided.

**Student:** 529 articles. "Student" is the closest that this vocabulary gets to a normal, approved status for young people, a label under which young people can misbehave, or excel, or neither; can be active or passive, agents or victims. "Student" can be used of a young person who has committed an offence, where the offence is not deemed serious, where stigma is avoided. It can be used of a high achiever, or a victim of crime, or when discussing problems in the education system. However, it is used only infrequently in crime contexts: only 14% of articles using the term are principally about crime. By contrast, 32% of articles using "student" are predominantly about crime. It is not gender-specific. It is used slightly more often to refer to females than males.

The term defines young people in terms of a subordinate, but active, position in a powerful institution. It also excludes a significant number of young people who are not students. Unless they are working (in which case they become "young apprentice electricians" or something similar), they are denied access to this socially-approved signifier of social location.

"Student" is the most common term used for young people involved in political struggles: 57% of articles in which political involvement is an issue use the term.

**Teenagers:** 369 articles. **Teenage (something):** 91 articles. The dominant, but not exclusive, context of "teenager" emphasises innocence and "younerness". It may be used for young person as victim: of crime, or of some accident. It is used for young women, but does not attract a feminine connotation as such. This last factor also indicates, when used in relation to adults, the young person's subordinate position, and often as a corollary, the responsibility of the adult world for young people's living conditions. "Teen" seems to be an equivalent, though slightly more collective term, and from an American source. In its adjectival form, "teenager" can, and often is, still used negatively-eg "teenage killer". But in this example, it seems to be the juxtaposition of innocence and extreme violence that provides the hook.

**Young people:** 339 articles. "Young people" carries a mild positive valence, the positive "young" being balanced by the neutral "people". However, the term is often used in the context of youth problems by sources conscious of stigmatisation. It is used typically in the discourse of youth unemployment, or in discussion of the causes of crime, for example, where sources of the problem other than young people themselves are indicated. It also carries a slight connotation of the youth as citizen. "Young people" is the approved general form of address in social policy and welfare discourses. It is used in only 7% of articles in which police sources speak. I found only three articles in which the term came from the mouth of the police source.

**Young (something):** 250 articles. Usually has a positive valence, even when used with other negative or even stigmatising descriptors: "young unemployed" has a

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52 This connotation has been noted by others (see Scott 1984, Australian Centre for Independent Journalism 1992).

53 Except in one fascinating example of a young female car thief. See p207.
different valence to "unemployed youth, "young offenders" to "juvenile offenders", "young Aborigines" to "Aboriginal youths". This group of terms also includes the most positive of descriptors: those associated with patriotism and the nation. **Young Australians** (or "young West Australians") (43 articles) hold the loftiest of connotations, including the general public's ownership of and identification with them, and are typically used of high achievers, usually on the national or international scale, or with indignation, as when opposition parties speak of youth unemployment in ways that highlight the neglect of government parties (eg 17/2/92:15, 2/3/92:5). "Young adults", a rarer formulation, holds a similar value. The formula may also be used with a name: "young so and so", which is also a positive, approving form of address.

**Children**: 224 articles. Especially used of a young person's relation to parents, or where the young person's legal status (and the common legal status that young people have with children), gives the context. However, it is important to note that there is no discomfort evident in calling young people children in these texts. The "children and youth" construction, for example, does not occur. While the term is mostly used, without the parental context, up to about fourteen years of age, seventeen year olds can also be included in the category (16/3/92:17). The term emphasises the dependent and subordinate position of young peoples. It can be used, as the Human Rights Commission of Inquiry into youth homelessness did in *Our Homeless Children*, to emphasise the dependency of young people in order to highlight society's obligations to them, or, as in the curfew debate, to legitimate their detention.

**Juveniles**: 224 articles. **Juvenile offender**: 107 articles. Whatever its origins, this term now always refers to a young person involved in crime, with the emphasis on the individual behaviour and, to some extent, culpability. Ninety-nine percent of articles using "juvenile" are predominantly about crime. Of the others, the term "juvenile" is always used in a crime context. It is *never* used of young women in the singular. ("Under age" would be the equivalent for young women, carrying with it connotations of their sexual status before the law: see Carrington 1993:13ff) The word is typically a part of the discourse of the judicial system, particularly of the police but also of groups like the Crime Research Centre and sometimes the Youth Legal Service. Hence, it tends also to be used by journalists and others when events are reported from a "crime and punishment" perspective. The popular term "juvenile delinquent" is now rare, eclipsed in official discourse by "juvenile offender".

**Girl**: 210 articles. Used of young women, often as victims of crime, which is their most common role in the daily drama of the newspaper. The term carries a strong connotation of passive vulnerability. This primary meaning is amplified by the prefix "school" ie "schoolgirl" (34 articles). Where a young woman is a perpetrator of a crime, the term "young woman" (55 articles) or "woman" is used (63 articles). This partly because of the formal age classifications used in police discourse, where somebody over the age of 18 is legally adult. "Woman" is used only twice outside a crime or missing persons context. The other main term used specifically for young women is "daughter" (77 articles, see below). "Young mother" is used in 11 articles, four of them as a victim of crime. It denotes a socially approved but vulnerable role: in articles about violent crime, it underlines the violence of the offence. Note, however, that it is used once of a car thief. The juxtaposition of "young mother" and "car thief" confirms the "Otherness" of the subject.

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54 Except in one case of a US source, which uses "children and teenagers".
Boy: 168 articles. Used of young men, often in connection with a crime, but implying essential innocence or at least "youngness": indeed, unlike a "girl", a "boy" is rarely over sixteen. Also unlike a girl, a boy is an active agent. Again, this quality is amplified by the use of the term "schoolboy" (20 articles). "Boy" formulations are much rarer, proportionally, than "girl" formulations: 36% of articles identifying the subject as female use "girl" compared with only 14% of the male equivalent. Man (142 articles) is used of perpetrators of crime, especially violent crime, and has its origin within formal police discourse. It suggests responsibility, and in context, culpability for actions. Young man (92 articles) is more neutral in valence: in the articles collected, it is used along with "man" of perpetrators of crime, though with slightly less sinister connotations, for example of males in their late teens involved in drugs. It can be used of males involved in accidents, in doing good works, in discussion of suicides or health, or as victims of crime. A young man in his early teens involved in an accident, or in some other way a victim, would be referred to as a "boy".

Youth (collective noun): 137 articles. As well as referring to the male, criminal subject the term "youth" has application as a collective noun (the youth of this town, Aboriginal youth). The collective noun (youth as a population group) may be associated with any issue, but tends to emphasise the problematic nature of young people, as in "unemployed youth" or "homeless youth". "Youth" is used in articles in which unemployment is an issue at a rate more than three times the average. It appears in a third of articles in which homelessness is the main issue. The term belongs on the margins of official discourse, indicated by its disproportionate use in Letters to the Editor: 18% of articles employing the term are in the Letters page, while Letters account for only 10% of articles overall. Interestingly, articles often use "Aboriginal youths" even in positive contexts where the collective "youth" would usually be prescribed (eg, 21/8/90:3, 2/5/91:3, 19/4/91:11).

(Age)year old (something): 136 articles. (Examples: 16 year old classmate, 17 year old passenger, 17 year-old Langford apprentice electrician) This term generally is used to signify a young person's social connection, their place in the society or in the action. It is often their occupation that furnishes the noun, and has a similar function to "student" for people who are not students but are in the workforce. Typically, because of this connotation of work, responsibility and social connection, the term has a slight positive force, where "student" is neutral. However, it can also be used in reverse for an example like "16 year-old car thief" as though construing car stealing as the young person's occupation. Young people may also be referred to simply by their age ("( ) year old") (202 articles)

Kids: 118 articles. This popular colloquial term for young people does not distinguish between young people and children, but also avoids the identification of young people as children. It is commonly used of young people up to about 16 years old, is often the term of choice used by them of each other, and when used of them, is not stigmatising. Because of its colloquial status, "kids" is generally reported in direct speech, rather than the words of the journalist, and has the connotation of "normal young people like your offspring and mine". The derivative streetkids, used to refer to homeless young people (with a dominant connotation, and a condemnatory one, that they are homeless by choice) appears in 47 articles. Its usage is relatively recent, apparently emerging in police discourse in the mid-1980's.

Young offenders: 113 articles. Offenders: 109 articles. Clearly a part of the discourse of youth crime, especially with regard to the causes of youth crime and strategies for its prevention. As such, it is more the discourse of welfare professionals
than police (who use "juveniles" or "juvenile offenders", although when the Commissioner for Police speaks to a seminar on the aged of the exaggerated perception of youth crime, "offenders" is the word he uses (28/11/91:21). "Offenders" then speaks of young people who are involved in criminal activity, with the emphasis on their genesis in social processes rather than on individual fault. The prefix "young" also helps to moderate the negative association (see above).

Daughter (77 articles) or Son (80 articles): These terms, like some uses of "child", construct the subject in a subordinate role within the family. The context varies a great deal: a parent may be defending their offspring: around 40% of articles using these terms have a parent as a source, usually the dominant source. Given that there are around three times as many articles that identify the subject as male than those identifying the subject as female, the much higher frequency of the depiction of young women as daughters is also significant.

School leaver: 46 articles. Another part of the discourse of youth unemployment, "school leaver" connotes a hopeful, but vulnerable entrant into the labour market. An image of hatchlings comes to mind. Again, the term is not a stigmatising one, and places the blame for unemployment in a diffuse way on the labour market itself, or on government responsibility for its effective operation, rather than on young people. However, it is an individualising term, emphasising the individual victim of social processes. Again, it represents another instance of the attempt by unemployment officials to avoid stigmatising language when addressing unemployed young people.

Name: Young people can be referred to by name alone. This was not recorded in the database: it was recognised early that the naming or not naming was determined overwhelmingly by the provisions of the Child Welfare Act which make the public naming of minors charged with offences illegal. The unadorned name has no clear valence or other implication, though honorifics like Mr.______ can emphasise the adulthood of the subject.

Youngster: 67 articles. A generational term used by commentators sympathetic to the young, "youngster" implies a kindly, tolerant, somewhat patronising regard for a younger generation. It is positive in valence: "violent youngsters", for example, is oxymoronic.

Gang member: 55 articles. Although used infrequently, the identification of young people, especially young men, with "gang" behaviour is a persistent underlying story in the construction of young people.

Over-lexicality: the proliferation of terms

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55 This continues despite evidence that gangs, in the sense of an organised, internally cohesive criminal group are not typical of street-present groupings of young people. Aboutir and Warren (1994) argue, for example, that such groupings exist mostly for the purposes of socialisation, offend only incidentally, and are rarely involved in violent behaviour towards outsiders.
In the map of the social world that a youth lexicon gives us, the proliferation of quasi-
synonymous terms, or what Fowler calls "over-lexicalisation" (1991: 85,103) is a
significant feature. Fowler suggests that over-lexicality indicates "a particular
preoccupation or problem in the culture's discourse" (1991:85). Preoccupations and
problems provoke discursive activity, they encourage an effort to capture a social
phenomenon in discourse and to establish techniques for its control. As a corollary, the
existence of extensive talk about a particular phenomenon indicates that there is an
instability in the constitution of that phenomenon. It is clear that there is no cure for
something when there are a hundred cures for it.

Some of this proliferation of words is structural in origin, a product of the way
journalists speak. The shape of the newspaper narrative form itself proliferates
descriptors: the list of words used for youth indicates a tendency in newspaper discourse
to construct a "type" from a particular behaviour, to convert the verbal activity into a
noun form. This is typical of words denoting criminal behaviour, but is not exclusive to
them. Thus, a person convicted of lighting a fire is a "firebug" or an "arsonist". A
person involved in the death of another is a "killer". And so on with drug user or heroin
addict, jobseeker, escapee, rapist, suspect, witness, passenger, glue-sniffer, graffiti-
writer/artist, car thief, driver, hitchhiker. The subject is defined by his or her action,
becomes his or her action. This linguistic construction accounts for perhaps fifty entries
in the youth lexicon.

This way of constructing the subject seems to come from several places. At one level, it
is a narrative technique, one of the linguistic devices that journalists themselves use in
framing a story. The story requires an actor, who in the "morality play" of the
newspaper drama (cf Ericson, Baranek and Chan 1987:60f) needs to be objectified,
simplified, one dimensional, a hero or a villain (Kozloff 1992). So in the almost
serialised accounts of the villainy of Nicholas Meredith, convicted of manslaughter after
a drunken fight with an Asian taxi driver, Nicholas becomes in The West Australian a
"teenage killer" or "convicted killer", and an icon for senseless youth violence, racist
violence, violence against taxi-drivers, inadequate sentencing and recidivism.

Complicating details, like the fact that his best friend was Burmese, that the taxi driver was not driving a taxi at the time, that the courts determined that the death was accidental, are elided under the one-dimensional classification of "killer".

An origin may also lie within historic discourses of juvenile delinquency that focussed on the criminal "type". At its most extended in the Lombroso tradition and carried on in the eugenics movement (Bissant 1991, Tait 1993), social commentators argued that the behavioural propensities of young people could be read off the body itself. The frontispiece to Cyril Burt's classic The Young Delinquent (1925) carries the photographic "portrait of 'B.I.' (Aged 15 1/2)." The portrait is offered to the reader as an invitation to read the stigmata of juvenile delinquency on his face. The willingness to countenance the notion of a "type", in which the genetic legacy of criminal stock has found expression, is not absent from popular understandings of juvenile crime, finding expression in the description of young people as "degenerates" (16/11/91: 11) or "rock apes" (29/11/90: 24). Defining an offender in terms of behaviour, as a "killer" or a "car thief", characterises the person as a species apart, a different kind of human being, if a human being at all (note the use of "sewage" to describe young people involved in high speed chases (31/12/91: 11)). This way of constructing the subject appears both within popular discourse and within the language of police, although police are necessarily more constrained in their language, generally preferring constructions such as "potential offenders" to "louts and hooligans" (6/2/92: 4).

In contrast, over-lexicality arises also from avoidance mechanisms, from a certain delicacy: the attempt not to speak of a phenomenon, or not to speak of it in certain terms, whether because of social taboo or the fear that naming the deviance will call it into existence. Such strategies generate a cloud of euphemism around what cannot be directly named (Trudgill 1983:26ff). This is strongly related to the tension in youth discourse voiced most clearly by the "labelling theory" of interactionists like Lemert and Becker.
Labeling theory, through its impact on understandings of juvenile delinquency, has been highly influential in the construction of language about youth (Coventry and Polk 1985). For example, it is illegal in public discourses of criminality to name the offender under the provisions of the Child Welfare Act. A young offender, the most frequent role for young people in the news, must therefore be fixed by some term other than his or her name. News about crime, although it still predominantly uses "youth", also generates a range of minor terms to fill this need.

Authorities sensitive to the social consequences of secondary deviance are particularly concerned to avoid stigmatising language. It appears that authorities dealing with youth unemployment, for example, will avoid using the compound "unemployed youth", because both terms have a negative valence, constructing the subject as Other, as dangerous, and as morally suspect on account of their unemployment. They prefer the term "young unemployed", so that the positive term "young" is able to balance the negative "unemployed". A wider range of terms have developed around this social problem, widely thought to be the most insidious structural problem facing young people. Among these, "young jobseeker" actively constructs the subject as involved in looking for work, actively avoids any kind of suggestion that the subject is malingering or otherwise morally suspect56. Likewise, "school leaver" represents the subject as vulnerable, but vulnerable to a "natural" ecology, an environment in which they are the latest and least experienced of competitors in the job-market. In each of these constructions, the attention is focussed on the subject, and off the structural conditions which give rise to the youth unemployment phenomenon (cf Sweet 1988). Discourses of the criminal, however, show no trace of squeamishness in describing a suspect as an "unemployed youth".

56 Contrast this with the "dole bludger" construction which was employed in the early 1980's by the Fraser Government as a means for transferring responsibility for unemployment from the Government to young people themselves.
The proliferation of the youth vocabulary may arise also from the proliferation of discourses and knowledges about youth, such that different lexicons are used in different discursive contexts. The right to speak about the youth problem has not yet been successfully monopolised by any professional group, nor has the discursive ground been successfully captured. The discursive field is therefore still contested and unstable, and new constructions of youth continue to emerge. The location of specific terms in particular discourses is discussed more fully in subsequent chapters: for the moment, however, it will be interesting to work through a recent example, the example of the serious repeat offender construction, which emerged in late 1991.

Public concern about the treatment of young people with a long record of involvement in crime was a theme throughout the collection period. It took focus after a tragic accident in which it was revealed that

The 14-year-old driver of a stolen car involved in a crash which killed a pregnant woman and her one-year old son at Maylands on Christmas night has more than 200 Children's Court convictions.

The youth, a runaway from a juvenile offenders program, was being chased by police when the crash happened...

27/12/91: 1

The editorial four days later, "Juveniles who toy with death" spoke of a "hard core" of offenders who "seem to be almost a lost cause even in their early teens". The task of rehabilitation should, for such offenders be relegated in favour of "community protection" (31:12:91: 10).

The incident provoked an extended debate in the news, in editorials and in the Letters page. Increasingly, attempts to capture in discourse the category of person deemed responsible for this death and other high-profile events emerged. Police and other authorities had been saying for some time that a large number of offences were committed by a small number of offenders: the so called "hard core". In the days after this fatal accident, political authorities worked hard to frame a discursive category that would capture this group of offenders, who could then be subject to special treatment: namely, long mandatory sentences established under special legal constraints.
Reference to "repeat offenders" first appears in the database in April 1991. At first, the formulation is variable and uncertain: Police Minister Edwards is quoted using the colloquial "hard-core repeat offenders" on 24 April 1991. "Hard core offenders", "hard core repeat offenders", "repeat juvenile offenders" and "repeat offenders", as well as the established but technical "recidivist", are used alongside each other in the immediate aftermath of Christmas day. On January 6, Acting Premier (and ex-Police Minister) Taylor announced new legislation designed to apply only to "hard core juvenile offenders". The legislation used a legal innovation, a trigger mechanism in which a certain number of court appearances would trigger an offender's "repeat offender" status. The specific capture of this group in legislation was difficult, and anecdotal evidence points to a series of parleys between Ministers and Departments in the attempts to tie down a definition which would capture the serious/hard core/juvenile/repeat offender and no others. The editorial of 7/1/92 makes reference to this difficulty. The Bill, referred to in The West Australian as the Juvenile Crime Sentencing Bill, was released in late January and debated in Parliament on February 6. All through this period, the terms of the legislation, specifically the attempt to capture the target group, were a subject of fierce debate and continued amendment. However, by the time of the Parliamentary debate, both the legislation, now called the Crimes (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Sentencing Act, and the terminology ("repeat offender") were settled. "Repeat offender" is now an established part of the youth lexicon.

Over-lexicality may, as early ethnographic work indicated, arise from a need to represent a phenomenon with fine discrimination. In Spradley's classic study of the extensive lexicon used by skid-row itinerants of a place to sleep, command of the language could mean the difference between life and death (Spradley 1975). The same is true of the oft-cited sociolinguistic example, of which even The Hitchhiker's Guide to

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57 And ultimately ineffective. The trigger mechanism could be easily avoided by managing court appearance dates.
The Galaxy was aware, of the number of words that Eskimos have for snow (Trudgill 1983:26, Fowler 1991:29). Douglas Adams' example of the unfortunate and unwilling rain god, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, while empirically unsupported, is nevertheless sociologically valid.

The contention that the youth lexicon indicates a precise linguistic apparatus for describing young people leads to a question. What is it that is being discriminated? What conceptual grid is being laid over the events, issues and individuals that the newspaper reports? What are the axes along which they are placed?

The youth lexicon and the ideological landscape

Fragments of an understanding of this have already arisen in this discussion. It is, as Ericson, Baranak and Chan have suggested (1987) the business of newspapers to deal in deviance. But while the construction of youth as deviant is the major voice in the media, the dangers of this have been noted. Hence, a number of devices are employed to limit the damage. One is the establishment of alternative, "positive", safer identities: the young citizen, the young achiever, the young doer-of-good, the young entrepreneur. Awards are established for achievement in these areas, and articles based on these awards constitute a significant sub-genre in the newspaper. Another alternative identity is the construction of youth as victim, although this also has a labelling cost. Another device is the fine matrix of language that enables commentators to cast the degree of deviance imputed to the subject finely and precisely, to mitigate the degree of deviance or the degree of responsibility for deviant behaviour. In this way, for similar acts, a young person can be cast as monster or angel, object or subject, child or agent, by the discriminating use of words. They can be placed at the limit of social tolerance, and then pulled in just a fraction, or cast among the angels, but anointed with just a whiff of decadence or suspicion.
One dimension of this discrimination is then a scale of ambivalence around the question of virtue. The youth lexicon enables commentators to finely fix the moral grading of the young person in question. For example, "youth" in the singular communicates a vaguely sinister, and male, presence. "Young Australian" has the opposite valence: "vicious young Australian", for example, is an oxymoron. A young person involved in a crime can be described as a teenager/youngster/student, in which case the act will tend to be dismissed as a prank or a result of the excesses of youth, or a killer/ lout/ sewage/ yobbo/ hooligan/ delinquent/ juvenile, in which case the act will tend to be reviled, an act from Outside.

There is a polarity in this construction (see also Reicher and Emler 1986). While plateaux of description occur within the discursive landscape, while relatively neutral categories like "kid" and "young person" are available, discourse frequently allocates the subject to one pole or other of the scale of virtue/deviance. It is not that a given young person is at the same time angel and devil, saint and ghoul, as G.Stanley Hall understood ambivalence, although this construction is never really absent. Rather, a given young person is allocated either one identity or the other.

An indication of this is found in the use of the two dominant terms, "youth" and "student". While both terms have general usage,"youth (s)" has a strong association with crime, "student", a strong association with education\(^{58}\). The prevalence of these terms indicates the dominance of the two major institutional sites that impact on young people: the legal institutions, including police, the courts, and the reformatory; and the school. This is reinforced by the number of less-frequently used cognates for either term: "youth" is complemented by "juvenile", "offender", and their compounds, "criminal", "car thief", "gang member", "hooligan" and so on. "Student" is complemented by "schoolboy/schoolgirl/schoolchild", "classmate", "pupil", "graduate", as well as the deviant "low achiever", "dropout" and others.

\(^{58}\) See glossary.
I have argued in Part 1 that the constitution of youth as a subject emerged, in the
nineteenth century, in the establishment of these two sets of institutions, the reformatory
and the school, and in the dividing practices and discourses instituted under their roof.
The evidence from the data is that this construction finds shape in the contours of
newspaper discourse, that when the newspaper sees young people, especially young
men, it sees them predominantly in relation to these two sites. Other sites, like the
family, the workplace, the place of leisure, are less influential in the framing of youth in
the discourse of the newspaper, although the family remains central as a defining site for
young women, part of the ambivalence surrounding the relation of girls to the youth
category (see chapter 11).

This is not just a matter of identification by institutional location, of young people being
discursively located by reference to these social institutions. It corresponds also to
particular identities, particular ways of being young. The young person is defined in
terms of a constellation of discursive and other semiotic spotlights as one sort of youth
or another. Institutional location, as well as being one such spotlight, provides a set of
preconditions under which this constitution can occur. I have noted already how the
emergence of discourses of juvenile delinquency in the nineteenth century were
dependent on the "dividing practice" of the reformatory. Schools, reformatories,
juvenile prisons provide a location in which the young can be studied, and knowledges
about them can be developed. In turn, these knowledges inform the practice of the
institution and the constitution of the subject within it.

As well as corresponding to an institutional location, then, "youth" and "student"
correspond with the two major identities within which youth is constructed: the
delinquent and the model youth (Reicher and Emler 1986). The polarity of this is
important. The data indicate that even in the complexity of the lexicon, the overlap
between these categories is insignificant: youth are either good or bad, not both. Only
twenty three articles use both "youth" and "student". So the two categories are
generally mutually exclusive: the newspaper avoids speaking them in the same article. Although there is no formal contradiction in talking about a youth who is a student and who has committed a crime (indeed, newspaper discourse routinely records the occupation of subjects, and most young offenders would be students by occupation) some informal pressure prevents the subject from being constructed both as a student and as a youth. The concern that might attach to an individual young person relates to the dangers of slippage between these two categories, to the dangers of a fall from grace, to the model youth turning delinquent.

This polarity is typical of the construction of the Other. For example, Attwood (1992) points out the difference between the "good" Aborigine, the full-blood of the outback who is an honourable and gentle figure, and the "bad" Aborigine, the "half-caste" of the town, who has "lost his culture" and is now a stirrer, a ratbag, a degenerate. Likewise, Ann Summers' Damned Whores and God's Police (1975) and Jill Matthews' Good and Mad Women (1984) indicate a similar construction of the Otherness of women.

The construction of youth as Other

That youth are constructed as Other is not a new idea. Functionalist accounts of deviance pointed to the role of the deviant in defining the boundaries of the normal: "normals are unified and made a cohesive group by excluding "deviants" (Sargent 1987:217-18). From within a Marxist perspective, Van Moorst argued (1983) that "adults" have forged a collective identity through a discourse that sets them apart from "youth", in which change, transition, turbulence and irresponsibility both personal and political are quarantined in "youth", producing a life appropriate to "adults" which is settled, predictable, constant, responsible. However, the analysis has taken a stronger stance in the poststructuralist work of Edward Said (eg 1978). Taking up Said's approach in the context of colonialism in Australia, Bain Attwood suggests that the category of the "self" or the group is fashioned through the construction of an Other, which is outside and opposite, and that the making of an identity rests
on negating, repressing or excluding things antithetical to it. By creating such binary opposition (s), the heterogeneity and difference within the former category is displaced and so the unitary self or group is manufactured...Hence, Europeans have forged a collective identity through a discourse that sets them apart from non-Europeans, especially "the Aborigines". In particular, many European Australians have constructed Aborigines as the primordial or primitive other, a paradigm of originality and antiquity...

Attwood 1992:359

One of the things that the understanding of youth as Other adds to earlier accounts of deviance is that it is not only deviant identities that follow this pattern. While constructions of youth as Student may create deviant identities (as drug-using, bomb-throwing hippies), Student constructions frequently create youth as the impassioned, idealistic Other, intelligent, incisive, self-sacrificing, political but unsullied by the dirty business of party politics, naive, to be sure, but clear-sighted. This is the youth whose resurgence is celebrated in the work of Keniston (1971) and Marcuse (1972), and whose subsequent disappearance is bemoaned on the front cover of The Bulletin (24/7/1990), by Eckersley (1988) and Huppauf (1989; see also King and Rundle 1989). This is the youth who is named in these texts as a Young Australian. In these representations, so it seems, we are able to see the pure soul of the nation, and to construct for ourselves some hope for the future.

In these texts, however, the construction of youth as Youth(s), as delinquent, as deviant Other, is more common. In this construction, all youth(s) are seen as potentially delinquent, and all groups of youths as a potential danger, though young women are not included in the construction. This figure is particularly male, where the Student, the ideal Other, may be of either gender.

Consideration of the way in which these constructions operate, and from what sources they originate, must be speculative. Some of these dynamics are explored elsewhere in the study, particularly chapter 12. It does seem clear that the figure of youth-as-deviant serves to discipline youth-as-ideal: a warning, a negative example, to those who would

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59 The question of Aboriginal youth, and the particular dimensions of their construction, are developed in chapter 12**.

159
stray from the narrow path. As we have noticed already, the path between the two identities is short, slippery and downhill. However, the potential costs of stereotyping youth as violent, as deviant, as dangerous, as criminal are extensive, if secondary deviance is established in the subject, if young people see themselves also as deviant and dangerous and behave accordingly. In such a case, the objective of the suspension of adult status, ie the achievement of ideological assimilation, will be frustrated by the very means designed to achieve it.

For one thing, the youth of today are the workers, businesspeople, politicians, parents of tomorrow. An established deviant identity carried through into adulthood is likely to have long-term social costs. For another, many households have a youth or two. Too-successful constructions of youth as (deviant) Other faces the problem that there are large numbers of young people and, indeed, that I may have one in my loungeroom. A number of newspaper texts indicate that the public of The West Australian is conscious of these risks (eg 23/1/92: 26).

The construction of youth as (deviant) Other therefore needs to be restrained, and a tension maintained which allows/encourages young subjects to construct themselves within approved statuses, the statuses of (ideal) Other, or more rarely, of adulthood. Language is therefore, in part, constructed around this tension. Linguistic devices, such as the use of the adjective "young" to modify "unemployed", are generated so as to be able to pull the construction of youth back from the brink, to attempt to maintain the (deviant) Otherness of the subject always as provisional.

The amount of effort that goes into this retrieval varies with the subject and with the source. Sources are often happy to leave young Aboriginal people in the category of the deviant Other, unmitigated and unrestrained, while considerable effort may go into redeeming a young person "from a good home". Thus, Aboriginal young people are often called "youths" even in contexts where some less dark description would be expected (21/8/93:3; 2/5/91:3; 19/4/91:11). Different sources show different degrees of
inhibition in casting the subject stereotypically, depending on practices, ideologies, interests. But the apparatus is always available for use.

A related dimension is to do with the ambiguity of their position, especially in the degree of agency (or culpability, or independence) conferred on the subject. This is often established by a range of terms that indicate a young person's position on the child-adult scale, or that establish their degree of responsibility by reference to their position within an institution (for example, schoolboy versus student). The youth category continues to be ambiguous as well as ambivalent: a twenty-four year old may be described as a woman, a young woman, or a girl. While a thirteen year old will not be described as a man, nor a twenty-four year old, generally, as a boy, an eighteen year old may be described either way. This ambiguity is exploited by commentators who may wish to construe a subject as innocent/dependent on the one hand, or culpable/responsible on the other, as victim or as perpetrator, as social casualty or public enemy, as child or adult. The language is flexible enough to denote this without any overt commentary on events at all. The construction of youth as (deviant) Other can, by judicious use of the lexicon, be mitigated to indicate that though the subject is deviant or behaving deviantly, he or she is not responsible, is acting in ignorance or under the influence of factors (biological or social) beyond their control. The subject is thus pulled back from the threshold of the (deviant) Other by denying them agency.

This construction maintains the ambiguous social status of young people, a status in which their 'personhood' (Tait 1993c, Melton 1983) is always provisional in the flux between child and adult. Commentators on the youth category routinely describe this position as transitional, a position in which the subject is no longer child, but not yet adult. I argue that this position is more accurately one of suspended status, of delayed accreditation as a fully active and responsible agent. It is a construction which legitimises regimes of control over an increasingly large population which, I have argued, is biologically adult.
While there are some particular freedoms that youth status confers, classification as "youth" also exposes young people to exercises of power and control that would not be tolerated for citizens generally. Young people are more exposed to the harsh face of capitalism, and face it with less protection, than other sectors of the population. They are more heavily and brutally policed (Alder et al. 1992; White 1990, 1993), are subject to higher rates of unemployment (Sweet 1988), and more coercive welfare policies. They are under-unionised, and certain unions have deemed it legitimate to sell off the rights of young workers from time to time (Palmer 1990). Those under 18 cannot vote, and their rights before the law are uncertain and variable (Melton 1983). Most are coercively institutionalised within an education apparatus which, according to the newspapers, offers an irrelevant curriculum which is unable to meet the needs of a large minority (29/11/91:14, 24). In short, in the mix between coercive and persuasive operations of the system, they face a larger dose of coercion. And the proportion of people facing this classification as youth is being extended with the well-documented general extension of "adolescence".

The question arises then as to how this treatment is legitimised. In part, it is a function of the construction of young people in provisional terms, of indeterminate agency, of uncertain virtue, of suspended status, as non-citizens. Already established in law and polity for those under 18 years of age, discursive constructions of youth that are able to choose between youth as child and youth as Other, as alien, are useful in maintaining a pliable and coercible sector of the population, especially in a period of recession and profound economic change. The construction of young people as being unreliable, unsafe, and in need of control and protection is given empirical weight by the fact that young people are overrepresented in the kinds of crimes that affect other individuals at a personal level, and by the constant attention given in the newspapers to such events\(^\text{60}\). Young people become scapegoats for a social disorder which does not originate with

\(^{60}\) The causal question in this relationship - whether young people suffer suspended adult status because of their propensity to commit crimes (et cetera), or whether they commit crimes as a result of their suspended adult status - is rarely addressed.
them, but of which they become symbols, as victims and as vanguard. The generative structures of social disorder escape unscathed, or are dealt with only in generalities and forgotten.

Using the fine brush

These two axes, then, the axes of Virtue and Agency, of good/bad, active/passive, provide a grid on which the reading of a particular action by a particular young person can be mapped. For a given act, the subject can be constructed as good/active, bad/active, good/passive, bad/passive. The grid judges the actor in relation to the act, establishing whether the actor's lack of ideological assimilation is culpable, and whether the actor should therefore be excused or the weight of the coercive apparatus available should be brought to bear.

This use of language to categorise an action, a subject, an event, an issue, can be illustrated by comparing two articles, both from The West Australian on November 28 1990, both concerning young men who, while driving a car, hit another road user, resulting in the other person's death. There are some differences: one driver (p12) was driving a stolen car being pursued by police at the time; the other (p36) was presumably driving his own car, and his driving was impeded by an unrestrained pet in the car. He failed to stop after the accident, leaving the victim unattended on the side of the road. The other difference is that of the victim: the first driver killed a "single mother-of-two" and the second killed a "fourteen year old Jandakot boy".

The first (page 12) article carries the headline "Crown to appeal killer's sentence". The second headline (page 36) reads "Driver of death car blames his dog". In the page 12 article, the following descriptors are used: killer, 15-year-old car thief, youth, Girrawheen youth (Girrawheen is a public housing estate in the northern suburbs of Perth with a high Aboriginal population). The victim is described as a Carlisle mother,
and a single mother-of-two. In the page 36 article the subject is described as: driver of
death car, young driver, 17-year-old apprentice electrician, the driver, youth, 17-year-
old. The victim is described as a youngster, a 14-year-old Jandakot boy, and (reporting
the speech of his mother) her son and a decent young boy.

Ethically, the person in charge of the stolen car may have been more culpable, though
we would need more detail to be sure. But even if that is allowed, there is an
extraordinary difference in vocabulary used to describe the two young people. By
selective use of the vocabulary, the page 12 driver is constructed as a monster, while the
page 36 driver takes the face of a responsible young man, a worker, who was caught up
in an unfortunate accident and panicked.

I suggest that a great deal of the reason for constructing the difference in this example
lies in the mythology of high speed car chases which has developed largely through the
work of the media in Western Australia over the last few years. The page 12 driver is a
player in that drama, and that automatically casts him as a villain, as a monster.

The other significant point is the victim. Despite the fact that both deaths are accidental,
if culpable, the profile of the victim is an important link in the construction of the
perpetrator. The page 12 victim is a young mother of two. She is single, (and out at
3am, though this is not dwelt upon) and so her decency is mitigated slightly, but the fact
that as a single mother she leaves dependents behind compensates.

The page 36 victim is a youth. He emerges from the drama as innocent, but his
innocence needs to be established. In court, "the tearful mother of the dead
youngster...leapt to her feet" to defend his integrity, the article tells us. "Her son was
wearing his school uniform at the time and was a decent young boy". The issue is that
he was out on the street at 10pm on a weeknight, and by implication, shouldn't be. And
so he shares some blame for his own death. Her defence is addressed to the
prosecutor: he was decent, a schoolboy, not dressed in a black T shirt and jeans, but in
school uniform. He is a boy, a schoolboy even, and so is constructed as innocent and dependent. He is a youngster, and so perhaps playful, a little mischievous, but harmless. So in the end, the victim is acquitted, even though it was not he who was on trial. The consequence is, however, that the person responsible for his death is constructed from the positive end of the vocabulary, not the negative end. He did not kill a mother of two, he killed another young male, and so he is not a monster, he is just young. The page 12 driver is not allowed that dispensation.

It is important to recognise that designating a subject's position on the matrix of ambivalence and ambiguity is not a random process, nor one in which each subject is treated on his or her own merits. Structures of power, which construct the subject within frames of class, race, and gender as well as age and an assembly of other frames of discrimination are routinely employed to guide the construction of the subject in particular instances. We have briefly noted already the linguistic structures around gender, and the allocation of passive roles to young women. The discourse of the news is not blind either to class or race, particularly Aboriginality. The question of race, like that of gender, is structured and designated in particular ways in the newspaper, and deserves a chapter on its own. Because the newspaper generally avoids class indicators in its discourse, it is more difficult to examine the treatment of class systematically or quantitatively. However, there are some distinctive patterns of treatment of class origin which can be established by a study of some representative texts.

The first two articles, "Bizarre case of banditry" (3/10/90: 22) and "Deli robbery bizarre" (3/11/90: 40) relate to an incident in which a young person conducting an armed robbery of a delicatessen was overcome with remorse, gave the money back to his pursuer and, two days later, gave himself up to police. The newspaper describes him first as a "young delicatessen bandit", employing the valence modifier "young" to decrease the negative valence of the crime. Thereafter, apart from noting his occupation (salesman) the paper refers to him by his surname (Dawson) - except, curiously, that it
refers to him once as a former Christ Church Grammar student. The first article also says that "Dawson came from a good background and had no criminal record".

Armed robbery is a serious crime, and Dawson's case is unusual. However, it is clear that the journalist is actively rehabilitating him, constructing him as not-evil by the use of language and the reference to his family and the lack of prior convictions, by mitigating his crime as motivated by bad debts, by decreasing his responsibility by reporting that Dawson was "obviously acting in a state of deep depression". The terms "youth" or "man" are avoided, as are any victim statements. Unusually, but probably deservedly, Dawson avoids a jail sentence.

A clearer case of a middle-class subject who is on the wrong side of the moral fence is an 18 year-old who killed an American businessman after a homosexual encounter. He is described as a "former Wesley College student", and thereafter by his name (McDonald). The journalist notes that he was "the second in a family of three children", and a boarder at Wesley. The headmaster of Wesley is interviewed about his character. He was acquitted of murder, but found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to three years jail. The reference to his school and family background serve two functions: they establish his social status, and they humanise him. His class and background construct him as "decent", and therefore his act as aberrant, irrational, excusable. His lawyer, says the newspaper, told the court that "McDonald was plainly a boy who found himself totally out of his depth, could not cope in an adult world and so had lost his control". The description of him as a "boy" decreases his responsibility, the description of his background renders him not-evil. Again, "youth" and "man" are avoided.

Another example is of a victim of crime (30/7/90: 22). He is the target of an unprovoked attack by "this Aboriginal guy" (note that the racial indicator is in the mouth of the source, not the journalist). He is described as a student, a university student, a teenager, but mostly as Mr Parker (six times). The article spends three
paragraphs talking about how "his injuries almost prevented him taking part in a camp... with handicapped children".

A further case involves a court report of a twenty-year-old charged with trafficking in amphetamines (3/5/91: 19), again a serious crime. The paper refers to him as a university student" and blames his drug use on pressure from his studies and playing football. His footballing receives significant attention in the article. Beyond the reference to his student status, he is referred to by name. The judge concluded, in demanding him for a presentence report, that he "appeared to have potential to contribute to the community". The comment begs the question as to whether a brickie's labourer or a process worker would be seen as having the same potential.

Yet another example concerns a tragic incident in which a carload of young men were engaged in unruly behaviour in a Scarborough street. A resident threw a baseball bat at the car which went through the driver's window, hitting 17-year-old Ben Hackworthy in the head and causing significant head injury. This example, in which nobody was charged, provoked a debate in the Letters page of the newspaper around how the incident should be seen. The newspaper regarded the unruly behaviour (pulling rubbish bins behind the car) as a "prank" but calls the young men "youths". Interviews were conducted with other young people who were in the car, who were referred to as "youths" but also by their names, even first names. The police said that "the youths were merely skylarking and weren't 'your average street gang or criminals" but reported that they had had a number of phone calls supporting the action of the assailant (17/1/92:13). The incident is interesting because of the potential for constructing these young people as a gang: this option is expressly avoided, seemingly on the grounds of class61.

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61 This observation is also made by a correspondent to the newspaper who suggests that "No one would have described it as a harmless prank if those involved had been Aborigines or disadvantaged white youths" (18.1.92:11).
The final example, in "Death ends car-theft fun for boys" (19/12/90:15) concerns the death of a car thief. The example is particularly fascinating because car theft is the classic youth street crime of the period. The fact that it results in a death sharpens the edge further: it moves the case into a select number of highly visible incidents which received wide coverage in the media. But not this article: it surfaces on page fifteen, there are no victim statements, no court-case follow-up. The reason: the fact that, according to police, "most of the youngsters were from good homes with concerned parents who were shocked at their activities". The group had been involved in car-stealing and property theft for some time "apparently for fun", without malice. The "gang" construction is again avoided: the newspaper repeatedly calls them a "group", and says that "they were not organised but had come together through a suburban recreation centre". These young people are nowhere described as "youths", although one is described as a "16-year-old car thief": they are "teenagers", "boys", "17-year-old", "youngsters". This exceptional case infers that most incidents of car theft come from young people who steal for some reason other than fun, that they are part of an organised gang, that they come from bad homes, that their parents are not concerned about them and are aware of their activities.

In offering these examples, I assume that if the protagonists were working class, the treatment of them and their misdemeanours would have been different. This is, of course, a negative case: exactly similar cases involving working class young people are not available. They may also be indicating features of courtroom or police discourse, rather than media constructions as such, although these are the features of discourse that the newspaper sees fit to print. What is clear from these examples is that indicators of valence are cumulative, and that signs of high social status like previous attendance at a private school incline a reporter to construct the subject from the positive end of the scale. They, along with the analyses of chapter 11 and chapter 12 demonstrate that the shaping of "youth" in discourse is not carried on in an environment that is blind to structures like class and race and gender. As Hall and Jefferson have argued (1976b), youth is not a homogeneous category, there is no pristine concept of "youth". Young
people are also subject to the forces and fractures of class and race and gender, and are seen not only through the discursive apparatus of the youth category, but also through these other frames.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter, I quoted Roger Fowler's contention that the world is represented in language according to the ideological needs of a culture, and that this "linguistic partitioning of...nature" meets certain interests. The scope of the youth lexicon indicates also that the newspaper reflects a tension, "a preoccupation...in the culture's discourse" with young people (1991:80, 85).

The proliferation of terms is understandable in terms of a combination of factors: the general instability of the youth phenomenon, and the quest for its discursive capture; the characterisation of the young subject as a "type"; the calculated avoidance of stigma; the need to be able to place an event or a subject precisely in the crosshairs of Agency and Virtue. The youth lexicon derives its scope from all of these. Together, these factors contribute to a significant over-lexicality in constructions of youth, especially in the construction of the young person as criminal, which indicates the problematic nature of young people. This range of tensions, I have argued, derive from the anomaly of suspended ideological accreditation.

The contours of the youth lexicon reproduce this ambivalence in social attitudes to young people, served by language structures with the ability to convey fine shades of culpability or innocence, and precise mitigations of the good or evil nature of the young person concerned. In this way, youth can be alternately cast as "child", to be controlled, or as "adult", to be censured. The lexicon registers whether young people are "on track" or "off the rails" in the trajectories of accreditation. The vocabulary creates distinctive youth "types": the high achiever, the car thief, the gang member, the victim,
which correspond to constructions of youth as (deviant) Other or as (ideal) Other.

These devices are used to place young people in pigeonholes of constraint and regimes of governance, to legitimate control which ranges from church youth groups to compulsory education to police-patrolled curfews.
10 Youth issues

The construction of a social issue

There is, according to Howard Becker (1966), a process by which some social difficulty becomes translated into a matter for public concern, or in other words, the means by which a social problem becomes a social issue\(^{62}\). Social issues have a "natural history", a trajectory in which there are several identifiable stages.

The first is that someone notices a problem. This "noticing" is, for Becker, deeply political. Who notices? Why is this problem noticed when others, equally or more serious, are not? Second, the problem must be communicated to others, translated into the public sphere, moved (in Carl Wright Mills’ words) from a "private trouble" to a "public issue". Similar processes obtain here.

What kinds of people will the original definer of the problem be able to convince that his argument is sound? Who, on the contrary, will think his view foolish or mistaken? What tactics are most successful in winning support for the definition of a condition as a problem? What is the role of the mass media of communication - newspapers, magazines, radio and television - in promoting widespread concern with a problem, and how does a person who wishes to define a new social problem get access to them?

1966:12

This phase is the crucial movement from social problem to social issue. What happens with the problem depends on its success in moving into the public sphere, and in the nature and amount of momentum it enjoys.

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\(^{62}\) "Social problem" refers to some condition of difficulty, like poverty or industrial disease or unemployment, which may or may not be recognised as a difficulty by a "public", as a problem to be solved or otherwise addressed. "Social issue" refers to some state of affairs which is in the public sphere, the subject of debate and attempts at solution.
Once in the public sphere, once it has become an issue, the problem must be dealt with in some way by those public authorities or persons deemed responsible. There are a range of strategies which may be employed to deal with an issue, and here again the process is deeply political. Depending on whose interests are at stake, the issue may be downplayed or ignored, left to die down of its own accord, or it may be amplified and exaggerated. For example, public authorities may institute some non-action like an inquiry or report, or may take sudden, extreme and expensive action to remedy the problem.

If a problem is to achieve a lasting existence, Becker argues, it must become established institutionally, with an organisation delegated to take care of the problem. Citizens generally then lose interest in the problem. However, the personnel delegated to care for this problem (Becker does not argue that they solve the problem) quickly find that they have an interest in its maintenance.

Therefore, enforcement organisations, particularly when they are seeking funds, typically oscillate between two kinds of claims. First, they say that by reason of their efforts the problem they deal with is approaching solution. But, in the same breath, they say the problem is perhaps worse than ever (though through no fault of their own) and requires renewed and increased effort to keep it under control.

Becker 1963 in Becker 1966:13

As Becker indicates, the media are pivotal in the second stage of this process - the movement from private to public concern - which is the critical movement in the "natural history" of a social issue. Because of this pivotal position, most significant social issues about youth go through the hands of the media. By analysing which issues about youth feature in the newspaper, and the relative weight of each issue, it is possible to speak about the social contradictions around youth and the tensions in the organisations and institutions charged with their care.

The framework of analysis that Becker provides matches precisely the "natural history" of social problems with which the newspaper is concerned in the period of study: especially, the high speed chases issue which is discussed at several points in this thesis.
The movement from the originating condition - some isolated, though tragic, traffic accidents involving stolen cars, through circulation of the problem in the media, through debate about the problem, through to its institutionalisation in the Crimes (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Sentencing Act - is a textbook example of the process that Becker describes.

Becker's analysis, located as it is within symbolic interactionist perspectives, significantly predates poststructuralism and even the Marxist resurgence of the 1970's. Theorists are still, as he writes, convinced of the possibility of "objective" sociological work in which the researcher him/herself does not intrude, and in which the "assumptions made by interested parties" can be weighed against "the facts". Yet aside from this, the terms in which he speaks are entirely consistent with Foucaultian approaches to the youth question, especially his analysis of the emergence of professional discourse (what he calls professional "definitions of the problem"). What his analysis adds to such approaches is an awareness, though still highly generalised in his 1966 work, of the process by which discourse moves into the public sphere and there contests its ground, as well as a sensitivity to the originating "social problems" - the contradictions and tensions in the social order which break out from time to time onto the public field. He alerts us to the possibility of reading back from the issues that are at large in the public sphere to the interested parties that promulgate them and further to the social structures whose contradictions and failures generate social problems in the first place.

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63 The particular role of the media in this process has been analysed in Valerie Bristowe's 1992 Honours thesis and in Paul Sheiner's 1993 article in Meanjin.

64 This was, of course, a focus of Marxist approaches to social problems also. Whereas for functionalist sociologists social problems are a result of the failure of social structures, for Marxists, social problems arise from the success of those institutions, from the system working, not from its failure to work. Social systems predicated on exploitation and inequality were bound to create problems. The process of class struggle, in all its forms, throws up conflicts. Contradictions within social systems (what Foucaultians have described as the endemic failure of governmentality (Wickham and Hunt 1994 ch4)), within the mode of production, between different spheres of the mode of production, between concurrently existing modes of production, constitute another source of social problems. The role of the state in managing these problems was extensively analysed by writers like Claus Offe (1984) and Jurgen Habermas (1976).
Issues in *The West Australian*

A wide range of youth issues are canvassed in the newspaper over the period of the study. Unfortunately, because of the focus in the thesis on the construction of discourse, the analysis of social problems around youth will need to be brief and selective. Some issues, like school uniforms, truancy and unemployment are discussed in the context of professional discourses with which they are associated. The high speed chases issue, though a prime candidate for a special case study in social problems, has been well covered elsewhere (see Bristowe 1992; Sheiner 1993) and is the subject of at least two other postgraduate theses currently in preparation. While its dominance in the period cannot be left unremarked, I have concentrated on the construction of discourse around the issue rather than the progress of high speed chases as a social problem.

The issues raised in a given article were registered in the database, as I indicated earlier, so both quantitative and qualitative work could be done on the representations of youth in the newspaper. These data will be worked over in the analysis of the youth lexicon, and again in discussions of race and gender, and in the analysis of professional discourses. At this point, a broad description of the landscape of youth issues is worth doing. I intend also to spend a little time analysing the largest peak on the landscape, and two or three small hillocks which, despite their quantitative insignificance, give an interesting view of the landscape as a whole.

The charts on the next page illustrate the frequency with which certain issues arise in the clippings collection. The data were registered in two different ways: in the first (Figure 10.1), any issues that appeared in an article were logged. One article could therefore register several entries. Because of the large number of issues, only the forty most frequent issues are charted, though the raw scores for the others are provided in the table. The table is arranged in order of frequency, while the chart is organised
topographically, so to speak - the issues are grouped like with like. Read together, the issue headings tell their own story of the construction of youth.

In the second (Figure 10.2) only the dominant issue was logged for each article, and fewer, broader codes were used.

The most striking feature of the data in both Figure 10.1 and Figure 10.2 is the dominance of crime categories. If the frequency of articles on youth issues represents a kind of cultural or discursive landscape, the biggest mountain on the landscape is that of Crime. In Figure 10.1, nine out of the top ten issues in terms of frequency are associated with crime. Figure 10.2, using the "Broad Issue" scheme of classification, indicates that crime accounts for almost two out of every three articles in the collection: 1644 of the 2683 articles collected for the study.

The next largest category, health (which included such topics as AIDS, drug use and suicide) registered 242 articles. Homelessness was recorded as the dominant issue in only 36 of the articles in the study, despite significant interventions on the issue by the Human Rights Commission in this period. Unemployment, one of the most significant areas of debate in policy terms, was included in the Economic Issues category (along with youth wages, exploitation of young workers etc.). Only 145 articles were recorded as being primarily concerned with economic issues (see Figure 10.2). Figure 10.1 indicates that 121 of these were concerned with unemployment.

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65 Though it should be noted that the frequency of items on unemployment is not a true indication of how volatile the issue is. When articles on unemployment do appear, they appear towards the front of the paper. Because of the way that unemployment news becomes available to journalists - through quarterly releases of economic statistics, rather than daily briefings - there are fewer opportunities to report on unemployment than there are on crime.
Figure 10.2

The figure shows a pie chart with the main issue (unspecified) at the center. The chart is divided into various segments, including:

- Crime
- Health
- Mass violence
- Poor
- High achievement
- Homelessness
- Education
- Economic issues

The table below shows the frequency of each issue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>1644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass violence</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High achievement</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic issues</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table includes a row for "unknown" issue with the frequency of 613.
For Aboriginal young people, the focus on crime was even more emphatic. Eighty-seven percent of articles that identified young people as Aboriginal were primarily about crime. None were about homelessness, nor, at least outside the sports pages, about Aboriginal young people as high achievers. This feature is discussed more fully in chapter 12.

Youth and crime

There is nothing new in pointing out the link made in the news about young people and crime. The study confirms other research (Hall et al 1978, Cohen 1980, Pearson 1983, Scott 1984) in finding that the principal part played by young people in the daily drama of the newspaper is the role of the criminal. However, it is a phenomenon that requires some explanation. Attention needs to be paid to the dynamics that lead to the representation of young people, especially Aboriginal young people, as criminal, and to the effects of this on the place of young people in society.

One reason for the preponderance of crime categories might be that the newspaper is just reporting the facts, that young people are portrayed as criminal because they are. Young people are routinely overrepresented not only in newspaper accounts of crime but also in most indicators of criminal behaviour. The peak age of arrest for people charged with crimes against property is sixteen. Crimes against the person peak between nineteen and twenty-three (Eckersley 1988:12). These figures need to be read cautiously: for example, if young people are policed differently, (and they are) this is going to impact on arrest rates. But it is probably safe to suggest that young people offend at higher rates, at least in certain categories of crime like burglary and car theft, than other age groups. The categories of crime in which young people offend, as opposed to other categories like white-collar crime, are likely to be those with direct impact.
However, the number of young people arrested in any one year accounts for only a tiny proportion of the youth population: 96.3% of young people in Western Australia did not go to court in 1993 (Ferrante, Broadhurst and Loh 1994). Youth unemployment affects far more people (youth unemployment ran close to 30% for much of the period under study) and is arguably of much greater long-term concern not only in the broader population but in the minds of policy-makers, at least at Federal Government level. But in only 121 articles in the sample, or 4.5%, is unemployment an issue. Similar arguments could be made about homelessness, acknowledged in only 1.7% of articles. The prevalence of a particular category of youth news doesn't seem to have much to do with incidence.

The kinds of crime in which young people are involved do have a common impact. Victims of housebreaking or car theft are not rare. But research by the South Australian Crime Prevention Unit (1993) indicates that personal experience is not the most influential factor in perceptions about crime. Concern about crime comes overwhelmingly from the media, rather than from personal experience or the experience of friends or family. The veracity of media coverage may be established by the rather less frequent supporting instances of people's own experience, but the media seems to be the dominant force. The origin of the dominance of crime seems to lie in journalistic practice itself, in the way that journalists identify and collect news.

Journalists have a job to do, the job of creating news. Each day, within a rhythm of production in which the deadline is the sternest of taskmasters, they must gather discourse capable of being transformed into "news", and gather enough of it to fill the "newsholes", the spaces between the advertisements and other contents, for that day (Tiffen 1993:174). This process is not easy or straightforward. The process of deciding which fragments of discourse get into the newspaper from the oceans of talk that a

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66 In this study, 42.9% of subjects indicated that their fear of crime had increased during the past 12 months in response to the electronic media, 31.2% to the print media, and only 14.1% to the experience of themselves, their family or friends.
society produces every day relates to a complex set of criteria generally referred to as news values (Bell 1991:155ff). Some of these criteria are to do with the quality of the material itself: how intrinsically interesting (attracting, compelling) it is. On this score, crime news rates well. Market research for The West Australian indicates that crime and law and order news always takes either first or second spot of the index of most popular issues (Murray 1985).

Crime news scores repeatedly on the catalogues of news values provided by Galtung and Ruge (1965) or any number of other analyses of news media carried out since (eg Bell (1991); Anderson and Itule (1988); Tuchman (1978)). Using Bell's catalogue, crime news fits the criteria of negativity: it is concerned with conflict, with deviance, with damage and injury, sometimes death. Crime news works in terms of recency, of proximity, of unexpectedness, it can often be cast in terms of already-understood stereotypes (consonance), is usually clear-cut, so meets the test of unambiguity. It is at the same time both local and dramatic, familiar and exotic. Because petty crime is relatively commonplace, it meets criteria of relevance, and crime stories, because they involve individuals rather than faceless corporations, lend themselves to personalisation. There are no problems with the attribution of sources, nor with the facticity of accounts of events: crime news is subject to official processes which cover both of these criteria.

These catalogues of news values are essentially descriptive. While there are several such catalogues, substantiated analysis of why negativity, for example, sells newspapers is thinner on the ground (Bell 1991: 156). They tell us what kinds of things people are interested in, but they don't tell us why. Clearly, there is something about crime, and about the depiction of young people as criminal that connects with the audience of the newspaper, that gets the juices flowing.

67 Chapter 13** explores some possible such dynamics in the representation of Aboriginal young people.
The same question can be asked of other issues frequently reported on in the newspaper. Why the fascination with young people who use illegal drugs? Or are homeless? Why is the health of young people an issue? Why, indeed, is youth itself an issue, and youth issues always so live?

Answers to these questions can only be speculative in this study - I haven't asked audiences why they are interested in crime news, or why the figure of youth as criminal seems especially provocative. Some direction is given by Carl Wright Mills' assertion that social issues indicate some "contradiction" or "antagonism" in the social structure. Negativity is a quality of such contradictions or antagonisms. It is a forewarning of crisis, and we need to know about warnings. The use of certain drugs by young people indicates, for many people, a disillusionment, a malaise, an alienation of the young, which introduces uncertainties about the future, about the reliability of those into whose hands we bequeath what we have built. The exposure of young people to processes of unemployment or exploitation raises questions about the claims of institutional systems and of the system as a whole to deal fairly and justly, and exposes routine injustice at the heart of such systems. The imminence of danger as involved in high speed chases or violent house break-ins call for action, for protection, for self-defence.

I have argued that the status of youth itself involves a number of contradictions and tensions surrounding the delay of adult accreditation despite adult development. This set of tensions creates an anxiety on which almost any matter involving youth becomes a social issue.

This construction and the dividing practices associated with it place youth in a different institutional and cultural space. On the basis of this difference, the construction of youth is fortified by representing them as Other, a representation which creates a complex of fascinations and exoticisms around youth issues and youth culture.

68 Note Friedenberg's seminal article in Becker (1966) entitled "Adolescence as a social problem".
Finally, according to Marxist perspectives, capitalism is founded on a number of contradictions and tensions. The ongoing compliance of workers in an essentially unequal, exploitative and alienating relation is achieved, in part, by the resourcing of certain private luxury goods, like colour televisions and personal cars and sound equipment. The ownership or promise of ownership of these goods secures commitment to the relation and deters defection from it. The theft or destruction of these goods represents a threat to even that small stake, that minor payoff, that workers have been able to extract from a dehumanising system. In addition, it represents a worrying reminder that Order is held tentatively and provisionally, and that the other major payoff from the system, a relative peace and security, is also a fragile thing.

I would argue that tensions such as these provide the "hook" on which the interest of an audience, of a community, is caught. This anxiety is what gives hard news its bite and what makes material intrinsically "newsworthy". Youth news, and doubly youth crime news, has got it.

Newsworthiness is not only a quality of the story, however. A range of criteria for newsworthiness relate to the institutional needs of the news-making process, rather than intrinsic qualities of the story. Crime news scores well according to these values. One of these is periodicity. Events that correspond to the period of production, events that are completed within one day, have a much better chance of being reported than events that extend over a longer period. Crime reports have no problem here. Even if the crime itself has had a long history, the arrest and court process fall neatly into the newspaper's requirement for periodicity.

A second criterion is related to the quality of attribution raised above. Journalists rarely have the time for original research, to pursue the romantic image of the investigative journalist burrowing through the maze and mire of social and political events to secure the scoop or the scandal (Tuchman 1978, Tunstall 1971, Tiffen 1993). Most news
gathering relies on the regular outpourings of institutional sources geared to producing news, sources who are able to make time available for the generation of discourse which is suitable and available for transformation into news (Murray 1995, Ericson, Baranek and Chan 1987). News coming through such channels is inestimably cheaper to produce than news which requires a journalist to independently find a newsworthy event, to search out authoritative discourse about the event, and to create news text from scratch. Particular institutional sources volunteer news copy, in the form of press releases or conferences, or invitations to cover events. Sources may also be sought out for comment on issues placed in the public forum either by some other institutional source or by journalists themselves. By recording the sources of youth news indicated by an article, some idea of which sources dominate talk about youth in the newspaper may be gained.

The research design allowed both for the main source and other less prominent sources to be recorded: Figure 10.3, on the next page, gives an idea of the kinds of sources that speak most frequently in the newspaper about youth, and whether they make a primary contribution to the article, or make responsive or secondary comment.

A large number of voices speak in the newspaper about youth and matters effecting them. However, not all voices speak with equal volume or frequency. Access to the newspaper, as many commentators have noted (c.f. Hall 1979) is not equal, and the inequality is a structured phenomenon, not merely random. Figure 10.3 is dominated by three sources: the police, the courts and Government ministers or spokespersons. The courts were the primary source for 19% of news articles concerning young people across the 2683 articles collected. Police accounted for an additional 19%. Both significantly outweigh the voice of Government Ministers or departments. Government sources were primary sources in only 11% of the articles. When articles in which no source could be identified are excluded, police and courts together account for over 48% of primary sources for the news articles collected.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Principal comment</th>
<th>Other comment</th>
<th>% prior comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt. minister/senator</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public via letters to editor</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation, not specified</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report: research, publication</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overseas press agency</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lobby group</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher/academic official</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime victim</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth worker/youth organiser</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/therapy</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry: royal comment etc</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency services</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One might suspect some double-counting here, with police and courts commenting in the same articles. This is generally not the case. Police and courts were recorded as both providing comment in only 29 articles (police evidence in court having been counted still as a court source). What I found, however, arising from the relationship between police, courts and journalists, is one event being reported several times over a period of time. If an offence is reasonably newsworthy, the paper will run a report of the original event, sourced usually by police and with comment from the victim.

Another piece might run when a suspect is apprehended; another when they first appear in court; assuming they are remanded, another when they appear in court again; another when they are sentenced. This contributes to the quantity of crime news reported.

The frequency of reporting is self-reinforcing. The news value of continuity decrees that "once something is in the news, it tends to stay there" (Bell 1991:159). In addition, sources that produce worthy output only infrequently are much more difficult to collect news from than sources that regularly and predictably produce news copy. Authorised spokespersons are harder to contact, their authority is not well-established, they are less experienced and know less of the news organisation's requirements. In the case of the police and the courts, both are well acquainted with the media, and have a mutually reinforcing system for the predictable, therefore time-efficient and cheap, output of stories. Police forces have well-established media branches, which conduct daily press-conferences, informing journalists not only about crime events but also indicating which cases are to go to court, and therefore setting up the ideal news situation: the news event which journalists know about in advance.

Notwithstanding this facility, journalists are often restricted in their reporting of crime news because coverage could be seen to be prejudicial to a case about to come before the courts. Paradoxically, in the case of crime news involving young people, this barrier is removed, because of Child Welfare Act provisions which prohibit the naming of
young people alleged to have committed offences. If a defendant cannot be named, the report cannot be prejudicial. Journalists are therefore freer to report youth crime, and have more points at which to report, than is the case for adult crime.

On all these counts, youth crime scores. In both newsworthiness and access, youth crime news provides a cheap, easy, profitable source of news. As a result, according to media analysts, a close relationship develops between the media and police in which journalists are given privileged access to crime stories, and the police are given privileged access to the media. In comment during the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody, Commissioner Dodson heard evidence from a former journalist that "Police handed the media a big portion of their bread and butter". According to the journalist, "it was not uncommon for unedited police media releases to go into a newspaper", and "stories would not get printed if they were critical of police, who had regular meetings with editors and supplied many of the headlines" (10/5/91:33). Although details were disputed in the Commission, this evidence is supported by Grabowski and Wilson's (1989) research into links between the media and police. I have a notable example on file in which the police refuse to talk to a journalist who has been critical of their efforts in controlling the spread of amphetamines (28/12/91:3). Certainly, in the clippings collection, there is evidence of a relationship in which the newspaper gives police a privileged voice, and treads softly when police are criticised, although the newspaper does print stories critical of police, and increasingly so in the period under study.

The relationship between police and journalists is well-documented. However, the role of the courts in augmenting this relationship and in providing a further source for crime news has not been adequately recognised. The courts provide as many articles on youth news as the police in this study, and use of the courts as a source effectively doubles the amount of crime news reported. The cosy relationship between journalists and police (Roshco 1977, Grabowski and Wilson 1989) has not been predicated of journalists and
judges or magistrates. Rather, in this case, the simple economies of production appear to have more of an impact. Crime news is cheap to collect and easy to sell\textsuperscript{69}.

The next three issues to be discussed in this chapter, however, are not subject to this routine news collection process. The graffiti debate, the curfews debate, and the condoms debate have a broader origin in the social construction of the youth category itself.

Graffiti

The issue of graffiti first appears in the collection in April 1990 with a feature article containing an interview with Noel Buchanan, a "voluntary social worker", ex-journalist in Melbourne. The article is.headlined "Help is at hand for kids in search of graffiti fix", and centres around the decision by Buchanan to go full-time into his sub-culture youth work on a self-funded basis.

The article foreshadows a number of concerns that are common in the framing of youth issues. The article constructs graffiti work as "an addiction".

Thousands of kids are caught up in it. Several have died as a result. Mr Buchanan has come across some kids who are addicted to "bombing", or graffiti writing, like others are to heroin.

20/4/90: 9

This frame of addiction is common in the construction of youth issues. It has been employed frequently in representations of pinball machine playing, video games, Dungeons and Dragons, television watching, heavy metal music listening, skateboarding or surfing, or any number of other youth leisure pursuits, including any unorthodox drug use (Van Moorst 1980, 1981). It seems especially applicable as an explanation for the otherwise non-understandable activities of young people from

\textsuperscript{69} The costs down the line, the social costs, in terms of the impact on the lives and liberties of young people, are something else. This was essentially Commissioner Dodson's concern that this overemphasis on crime news fed the matrix of circumstances that gave rise to Black Deaths in Custody. This is discussed further in chapter 12. **
middle-class backgrounds, as is the case in this article and others (6/6/90: 7). It allows
the subject to be maintained as not inherently deviant by putting him or her under the
power of some dark force under which he or she has no real agency and little control.
Thus, victims of this addiction are "caught up in" this thing.

Overall, the framing of the graffiti issue in the newspaper takes two tracks, depending
on whether the artist is cast into the role of the Bildungsroman or the role of the deviant.
In the one, generally reserved for young people "from good homes", the construction of
addiction is used. Part of this construction is that it results in tragedy. The tale is told
of those who, through lack of watchfulness or the ubiquitous and solely adolescent
phenomenon of "peer pressure", sink deeper and deeper into the grip of this addiction
until tragedy ensues. The construction thus frames a morality play, a kind of "Rake's
Progress", so that those who are responsible for young people can read the signs and
protect their charges from falling into that state. In the article, Buchanan warns of the
complacency of authorities, who have "not yet woken up to the problem".

Later clippings in the collection make repeated references to deaths in the Eastern
States from the risk-taking behaviour, associated with the graffiti subculture, of "train
surfing". Western Australia has (unfortunately for the media?) not experienced any
such fatalities. The closest was the suicide of a graffiti artist, Hayden Kirby, who
stepped in front of a train because, according to newspaper accounts, he had been caught
spraying the train and was to be charged (9/6/90:39) With this death, the issue and the
question of the authorities' handling of the problem spilled into the public sphere
(15/6/90:7; 16/6/90:7; 20/6/90:10). However, Kirby wasn't train surfing, and the death
was a suicide. The event is therefore not available as the archetypal symbol of the sad
end of the graffiti artist, although other young people, it seems from newspaper
interviews (16/6/90:7), did mythologise him as a martyr of persecution by Westrail
authorities and by police.
The other dominant construction figures the graffiti artist as "vandal". The figure of the Vandal has a long history in fears about the fragility of civilisation, and in these texts takes on a wholly evil cast. The construction of graffiti artist as Vandal focuses on property damage\(^70\) but mere property damage is not enough to constitute a "folk devil", to use Cohen's (1980) phrase. A bigger picture, a greater threat, a more sinister evil is created. In "Young to help fight against graffiti"(27/12/90:56), these individuals are renamed "graffiti louts", and according to the article, "have evolved into colour gangs, which dress like Americans in baseball caps, Nike or Reebok shoes and are involved in other crimes". In April of 1991, a seminar held by Transperth was told incidents such as sexual assault, deaths, burglaries, vandalism and other serious crimes were linked to graffiti gangs and other gangs in the eastern states. Three aggravated sexual assaults in Melbourne were attributed to graffiti gangs and a youth had been charged with attempted murder. In some cases gangs bashed young children to take their designer shoes\(^71\).

(17/4/91:40).

In this construction, the deviance of the street artist is amplified by transforming a "crew" into a "gang", by identifying this sort of gang with all other gangs, and by conflating the evil of spraypainting public property with the evils of harassment, assault, rape and murder.

In the first construction (graffiti as an addiction) the artist is a victim. In the second (graffiti as the act of criminal gangs) the artist is a perpetrator, and we are all victims. In the news, arguments about appropriate action take on this dichotomy. In the first construction, the solution is seen as counselling, consultation, the employment of youth workers, the provision of legal spaces on which street artists can do their thing (20/6/90:45; 8/10/90:4; 28/11/90:24; 9/7/91:13; 13/12/91:40). In the second construction, the solution is increased surveillance, increased punitive action. The action pioneered by the state government of Victoria (2/10/90:45), followed soon after

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\(^{70}\) Victorian Transport Minister Peter Spyker, in announcing new laws to control graffiti artists, is quoted as saying that "The public is no longer prepared to tolerate the wanton destruction of its property"(2/10/90 45)

\(^{71}\) The prospect of these huge louts fitting into the shoes of young children did not, apparently, strike anyone as comical
by Western Australia, was to install surveillance cameras in trains and on train stations, to increase the number of railway security personnel, and to create three new offences in law, including the possession of spray cans or felt tipped pens intended for use in graffiti and the offence of aiding or abetting the causing of graffiti damage (2.10.90:45).

The dichotomy in the construction of youth noted in the last chapter** between youth as ideal and youth as deviant flows through consistently into representation, into discourse, and into governmental measures. It follows two central dynamics in the constitution of youth, one vertical, one horizontal, to which the thesis will return time and time again. The first is the dynamic around the suspension of accreditation, seen here in the establishment of graffiti, not as an act willed and chosen, not as the act of an agent, but as the act of a victim or a demon, of somebody driven. This is true both for the "graffiti artist" from the good home and the Vandal. Youth are persons who are (perhaps uniquely) vulnerable to this drivenness, who are unsafe.

The other dynamic is to do with how this vulnerability, this unreliability, is to be handled. The dichotomy between ideal youth and deviant youth is a device for organising the potential chaos of suspended status and for dealing with its outcomes. In this scenario, action is to be taken to redeem youth or to contain youth. The legal piece, the community arts project, is a means for their redemption. The sharpening of the repressive apparatus, the surveillance and the operation of the law is a means for their removal and containment.

Behind both of the poles, however, are the youth who are not spraying walls or trains at all. For such youth, the figures of the victim and the demon serve as warnings of the short and slippery slide off the rails which lead to accreditation, adulthood and citizenship, and an exhortation to conventionality.
In November 1990, according to newspaper reports (12/11/90:3), the town of Port Augusta in South Australia sought, by popular referendum, to impose a curfew on young people under the age of 16 after 10pm. The proposal was criticised by Western Australian Police Minister Graham Edwards on the grounds that it shifted parental responsibilities onto police, and was difficult to enforce. A range of other commentators including the South Australian Equal Opportunities Commission objected on the grounds that it was a violation of the civil rights of young people, and that it would "increase youth-police conflict" (13/11/90:53). An energetic, but short-lived debate followed. But while the curfew suggestion was not taken up as policy in Western Australia at that time, youth curfews were operating unofficially in Exmouth in WA and in certain towns in Queensland (12/11/90:3). The issue of young people's presence on the street has remained alive, and the unofficial curfew operations of Operation Sweep and Operation Family Values policing strategies have been the subject of more extended debate since 1992 (when the data collection for this study closed).

The debate in The West Australian in 1990 was undeveloped, with supporters of the plan constructing the problem in terms of "roaming, school age children", whose street-presence is clear evidence of parental neglect, and for whom the "police are our only caring alternative"(22/11/90:10). Outside the Letters page, support for curfews was limited to the executive deputy of police and justice in the Australian Capital Territory, who said that "it would help reduce juvenile crime"(13/11/90:53). However, the issue raises interesting questions about the construction of youth.

72 In these operations, all young people on the street in targetted areas were taken into custody and their parents telephoned to come and pick them up
There is an ambiguity, first of all, in the construction of youth, arising from their indeterminate status. Curfew policies are universally a technique for clearing the streets, a control mechanism. Curfews are also widely seen as a technique to be used in extremis only, because of the violations of civil rights that they involve. However, the ambiguity in the status of youth gives the opportunity for curfews targeting youth to be defended in terms of the protection of children in an unsafe environment. Secondly, while the issue of young people's civil liberties is invariably raised by youth advocates and human rights spokespeople, the claim that an action contravenes young people's human rights is never taken as definitive. Even the Civil Liberties Council president had no problem with the enforcement of curfews on "juveniles who committed crime", though he did not elaborate on how such persons were to be distinguished from the "innocent kids... out on their own at night" (12/11/90:3)\textsuperscript{73}.

One explanation of this is surely that young people are not civil. They are not citizens, they are not accredited, they are not subject either to the protection of the human rights charter in terms of the rights of children (for example, see the debate around the Crimes (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Sentencing Act) nor of the rights of citizens to free speech, assembly and movement. While adult, their status as adults is not conferred, is left suspended. The grounds on which the suspension is maintained is a judgement around their ideological assimilation.

Condoms

The AIDS pandemic has emerged as a considerable public health problem across the world. Isolated though Perth may be, it has not escaped the ravages of the HIV virus. Because of its mode of transmission (primarily through sexual contact, a delicate subject on which to speak publicly) and its alleged concentration in deviant populations (the

\textsuperscript{73} Note again the ambivalence, the horizontal dimension of the construction of youth, in this spokesperson's mind
The homosexual community and injecting drug users) significant tensions have surrounded public health measures to contain the spread of the disease.

The question of the education of young people about HIV/AIDS, and specifically about safe sex and the use of condoms, appeared three times in the clippings collection. The controversy centred around the refusal of Health Minister Keith Wilson, an ex-Anglican priest and practicing Catholic, to approve the release of an education campaign targeted at 16-24 year olds. In July 1991, the newspaper reported that the Health Department had a campaign ready to go which was vetoed by the Minister the night before its scheduled release. According to the newspaper, a second release, presumably suitably amended, was scheduled for October 1991. It was also delayed, as was a third in December 1991. The campaign was finally released in January 1992, with a focus on abstinence as a primary strategy for avoiding HIV infection.

According to reports in The West Australian, there were two ostensive grounds for blocking the campaign: first, that because condoms had a finite failure rate, the campaign could be exposing the Government to the possibility of legal action in the event of a failure; second, that "health campaigns which sanctioned their [condoms] use could promote casual sex"(10/7/91:3) or "promote promiscuous behaviour"(11/7/91:5). The newspaper's reports showed some cynicism about both of these grounds, and persistently suggested, using a range of strategies, that the delays and final shape of the campaign were a result of the personal religious and ethical stance of the Minister, despite denials by Cabinet colleagues including the Acting Premier\(^4\).

The condoms debate is one in which the newspaper clearly takes an active stance. Two separate Editorials (9/7/91; 12/7/91) and several features (eg 12/7/91:3, 11; 13/7/91; 16/12/91) were devoted to the issue. Most news articles about the issue were run in the first ten pages, including one front page article. Several letters to the editor were

\(^{4}\) The Minister himself refused to confirm or deny this. The Acting Premier, Ian Taylor, said that he was "absolutely certain that that the Minister had not been influenced by his Catholic beliefs"(11/7/91:5)
published - most supporting the stance of the Minister - across seven different issues of 
the paper. Editorially, the newspaper actively pursued comment critical of the decision 
of the Minister, and twice published feature articles critical of him, linking this decision 
fo other controversial positions, and so constructing a profile of the Minister which 
depicted him as rigid, fundamentalist, conservative and secretive. The newspaper also 
attempted to construct the decision as contradictory to the routine practice of the 
Government by running prominent articles about AIDS education in schools (12/3/91;3;
22/2/92:5). The argument of the newspaper and of the critics featured in its articles was 
that the public responsibilities of the Minister are being compromised by his private 
ideological stances, and that whatever the rights and wrongs of the issue, the fact was 
that many young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four are already 
sexually active, and need the requisite public health information. The West Australian 
also targetted the Minister's ostensive justification, the dangers of litigation, particularly 
in the period when he was refusing to release the reasons for the delay.

The case illustrates a fascinating dynamic. In the face of research information that 
indicated that up to eighty percent of young people in this age group were sexually 
active, the Minister, with the support of the Cabinet, chokes on a campaign that informs 
them about how to use condoms75 on the grounds that the promotion of condoms will 
encourage young people to become sexually active, and pushes through, against all 
public health advice, a campaign that encourages continence instead, with very little 
information on safe sex. A public health campaign is judged to be in contradiction to a 
moral/ideological agenda, and the public health campaign is actually changed, at great 
expense, into a moral campaign. The sticking point in the saga (for the Minister at 
least) is the necessity to avoid, at all costs, condoning the sexual activity of young 
people, even if it is known that young people are sexually active. The protection of their

75 According to leaked brochures featured in newspaper reports, the campaign actually encouraged long-
term monogamous relationships and/or the deferral of sexual activity(13/7/91)
Health is dispensable in favour of establishing the standpoint of the ideologically dominant position: that young people do not\(^\text{76}\) have sex.

The detail of this position is interesting. The logic seems to be that such campaigns officially accept that (at least some) young people are sexually active, and that an official admission of this kind might be construed as an official acceptance of the legitimacy of sexual activity between young people. Such an acceptance may influence more young people to become sexually active. The Minister did not accept the legitimacy of sexual activity between young people, and was not prepared to endorse messages that might be read in that way, nor was he prepared to be responsible for any increased sexual activity that might occur. So, the Minister proposed another campaign, which told young people that "It's OK to say no".

The position reflects a number of assumptions about the nature of youth held by the Minister and by a considerable section of the audience, if letters to the Editor are any indication. It implies that young people's decisions on whether to sleep with someone or not - and indeed, to do so casually and/or promiscuously - might be significantly affected by a campaign encouraging the use of condoms. It implies that such a decision is marginal enough, or (more probably) the subject vulnerable enough, to be swayed by gestures of implicit official approval or disapproval. So, on the assumption that young people should not be sexually active, or at least not promiscuous\(^\text{77}\), support needs to be given to young people in refusing the "peer pressure" of the sexually active, and official support of this kind, it is assumed, will also be effective.

Again, two sets of young people feature in this equation: those who are sexually active (and no distinction is made between those sexually active, engaging in casual sex, or promiscuous) and those who are not. The issue leaves aside the needs of those who are,

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\(^{76}\) In both its indicative sense (despite evidence to the contrary the Acting Premier simply said that he did not believe the figures(10/7/91 3)) and in the imperative sense

\(^{77}\) While promiscuity is put forward publicly as the "strong case", it appears that the weak case of discouraging any sexual activity outside marriage is what is really on the agenda
in favour of those who are not. The campaign "It's OK to say no" is not directed at those who have already said Yes, and their health, as opponents argue through the newspaper\textsuperscript{78}, is put in jeopardy by the Minister's decision. So it is the good youth who are to be saved, and the deviant left aside. The issue also raises the question of precisely who it is who is to say no. While the campaign evidently attempts to avoid gender roles (according to newspaper reports, the radio advertisements featured both a male and female voice saying "It's OK to say no", it cannot escape the cultural construction that it is good girls who say no. The campaign reinforces the cultural role of girls in policing the sexual appetites of young men (Carrington 1993).

The condom debate illustrates a central relation which has also been evident in the historical material on the emergence of the modern youth category. On one side, there is youth: driven by their primal urges, prisoners of their bodies, vulnerable, malleable, easily led, a putty-like product of peer pressures. On the other, the government: responsible for their ideological shaping, determined to hold the line and to not submit to "reality", as opponents put it, even at the potential cost of young people's lives. The government, using the ideological tools at its disposal, attempts to steer vulnerable youth through a hopefully sex-free adolescence to the destination of an accredited adult status in monogamous, life-long, heterosexual marriage.

\textsuperscript{78} Or as the newspaper argues through the opponents
11 "Girls" and "youths" and the discourses of gender

"If you were to walk up to the average man in the street, grab him by the arm and utter the word "adolescence", it is highly probable - assuming he refrains from punching you in the nose - that his associations to this term will include references to storm-and-stress, tension, rebellion, dependency conflicts, peer-group conformity, black leather jackets, and the like. If you abandoned your informal street corner experiment and consulted the professional and popular literature on the subject you would quickly become impressed with the prevalence of the belief that adolescence is, indeed, a unique and stormy developmental period.

The adolescent is presumably engaged in a struggle to emancipate himself from his parents. He, therefore, resists any dependence upon them for their guidance, approval or company, and rebels against any restriction or controls that they impose upon his behaviour. To facilitate the process of emancipation, he transfers his dependency to the peer group whose values are typically in conflict with those of his parent. (Bandura, 1964, p.224)

...this quotation...illustrates one of the most intractable problems faced by teenage girls. Adolescence is a masculine construct. All our images of the adolescent - those in the quotation above, the restless, searching youth, the Hamlet figure, the sower of wild oats, the tester of growing powers - these are masculine images.

Hudson 1984:34/5

Hudson here raises a central puzzle in the understanding of the youth category. Youth, as a concept, as a picture in the mind, as a frame of language, projects the figure of the male. The categories of adolescence are universal, applying equally to young women and young men, and yet description and analysis of the state of adolescence often appears to only have a male referent. Young women are included in the category, and yet are at the same time excluded by it. The youth category is like descriptions of youth gangs: the category is a gang of boys, with a few girls hanging off the edges (Griffin 1993, Campbell 1984). Young women's inhabitation of the youth category is ambiguous and marginal, surrounded by doubt.
So the category itself is fundamentally and deeply gendered. This genderedness is already struck in Adolescence, G. Stanley Hall's foundation work. Of late childhood, he writes:

The child revels in savagery and, if its tribal, predatory, hunting, fishing, fighting, roving, idle, playing proclivities could be indulged ... they could be conceivably be so organised as to be far more truly humanistic and liberal than all that the best modern school can provide.

Hall 1905: x

Of adolescence proper:

... the adolescent is neo-atavistic, and in him the later acquisitions of the race slowly become prepotent. Development is less gradual and more saltatory... The annual growth in height, weight and strength is increased and often doubled, and even more. Bones and muscles lead all other tissues, as if they vied with each other, and there is frequent flabbiness or tension as one or the other leads. Nature arms youth for conflict with all the resources at her command - speed, power of shoulder, biceps, back, leg, jaw, - strengthens and enlarges skull, thorax, hips, makes man aggressive and prepares woman's frame for maternity.

Hall 1905: xiii

He goes on to describe the various fault and diseases to which adolescents are prone, notably "hoodlumism, juvenile crime, and secret vice" (Hall 1905: xvi).

The object of Hall's inquiry, the figure in his mind as he writes, is male: huntingly, fishingly, fightingly, muscularly, masturbingly, delinquently male. And then he remembers that his category is also about young women, and just in time remembers to include them - but not so as to make any sense. His context is so thoroughly male that his reference to the development of women is made incongruous.

Later, he does write young women into his work, in chapters on menstruation and on the education of girls. In these chapters, he sees the lives and the destiny of women dominated by their reproductive function. In his calculus of fixed biological energies, he sees that the development of potentialities other than the reproductive one must involve costs to the primary function. If women exercise too much, especially while under the rule of the monthly period, their fundamental energies will be expended and they will be left weak, frail, infertile. If they squander their essential energies while young, if they read too much, study too much, think too much, a similar fate may be
Expected, leading to a frustrated destiny, childlessness, malaise, and an early death.

And while menstruating, not very much is too much.

Girls should do hardly any steady work for one year before and two after puberty. They can not work without peril for about one-fourth of the time, and should adjust themselves to this law of nature and plan to lie fallow about a quarter of the time. Teachers and others should not wait to be asked before excusing them from their task, but should command it without request...

We must not abet woman as a sex in rebelling against maternity, quarreling with the moon, or sacrifice wifehood to maidenhood. Instead of the ideal of becoming a self-supporting spinster, she ought to be married at twenty-five and plan to be.

Hall 1905:574,576

To do otherwise is to subvert ones own destiny, decreed by Nature, and to betray the Race by failing to replenish it with the best stock, for, "if the best abstain from childbearing, then the population is kept up by the lowest" (Hall 1905:576).

The education of girls should do whatever it can to nurture this destiny, both by enculturing the maternal and by the provision of regimes of fresh air and exercise, "regularity", good food, plenty of rest, more rest, and

at least one healthful, wise, large-souled, honorable, married and attractive man, and if possible, several of them. His very presence in an institution for young women gives poise, polarizes the soul, and gives wholesome but long-circuited tension at root no doubt sexual, but all unconsciously so.

Hall 1905: 645

Formal learning should concentrate on the biological, with zoology and the study of nature foremost. History is important, but with "the biographical element very prominent throughout, with plenty of stories of heroes of virtue, [and] acts of valour."

Religion is important, as it "will always hold as prominent a place in woman's life as politics does in man's", but "theology should be reduced to a minimum". Chemistry and physics should also be kept to a minimum ("the average girl has little love of sozzling and mussing with the elements"), though useful things like meteorology and geology are acceptable. A large focus of the curriculum should be the study of art, literature (in which "myth, poetry and drama should perhaps lead") and modern languages, though "Greek, Hebrew, and perhaps Latin languages should be entirely excluded". In philosophy, "metaphysics and epistemology should have the smallest, and logic the next least place". Domesticity, taught by practice and the laboratory method, is crucial, as is
The study of pedagogy, child care and maternity, in "the last year taught broadly" (Hall 1905:636ff).

The development of youth, in Hall's eyes, is a process to prepare them "to enter the kingdom of man well-equipped for man's highest work in the world" (1905:xvii).

Young women are not included in this destiny. Their role is to prepare themselves and their bodies for the surrender of their individual destinies to the destiny of their husband and the Race. As such, except in the fact that the surrender of girls is proleptic, and the actual surrender lies in the future, the position of girls is indistinguishable from that of women. While young men prepare for their engagement and mastery of the world, the destiny of young women lies within their bodies. "Nature... makes man aggressive, and prepares woman's body for maternity".

The marginality of women to the youth category is handled by Stanley Hall in three primary ways, all of which are entangled in his work. In the first, young women are simply invisible. Each paragraph in which youth is discussed is a paragraph about young men, and the categories in which youth is understood can only apply to them. In the second, in "and-now-we-turn-to-the-weather" fashion, the main stream of attention deals with boys, and young women are dealt with as a special case: a special chapter on girls is included in a volume dealing generically with youth. The third mode meshes with these other two. Here, young women are discussed, but their youth is actually irrelevant to the discussion. The discourses which constitute the frame for their governance are the same for them as for women in general, and the schemes of classification are about womanhood, not youth.

These three devices, established in Hall, are visible throughout the next ninety years of research and commentary about youth. Carol Gilligan's critique of theories of moral development, especially the work of Erikson and Marcia (Muuss 1988); Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber's critique of the CCCS and their approach to youth subcultures (McRobbie and Garber 1976); Carol Dyhouse's critique of the histories of
youth such as those by Kett, Musgrove and Gillis (Dyhouse 1981); Christine Griffin's and Jennifer Buchanan's surveys of youth theory in general and the notion of transition in particular (Griffin 1985, 1993; Buchanan 1992) have all drawn attention to the use of these devices across a range of authors and positions.

In the thesis so far I have tried (and it is still necessary to try) to work inclusively with the youth category, to discuss youth in its maleness and femaleness without privileging the male and sideling the female. The intention of this chapter is not to provide, parenthetically, a place in which the "special case" of girls is discussed, but as a place where the general observations about the construction of young women can be drawn together and made more visible. At the risk of repetition, what I want to do in this chapter is to review observations made in previous chapters, and try to integrate them.

The clippings collection makes available some interesting material on the intersection of youth and gender, including the way gender is expressed in language and in the kinds of stories in which young men or young women appear, and this deserves closer attention. And finally, I want to spend some time working with the puzzle of the connection between youth and gender indicated in the literature and confirmed in the news in The West Australian.

Gender and the constitution of youth

In chapter 4, I surveyed the history of the emergence of the youth category in the nineteenth century in correspondence with the dividing practices under which youth increasingly came to be constituted, and in chapter 5, the practices of self-formation which were increasingly developed in the twentieth century. The histories available, including those of Aries, Musgrove, Gillis, Springhall, Kett, and Dyhouse, indicate that the relatively unformed youth category in existence at the beginning of the nineteenth century was already deeply gendered. The experience of being sent away to serve in another house was common to young men and women, but the nature of service and the pathways to independence differed between the sexes. Young women and young men
were both frequently involved in domestic service, the men as stable-hands, 
gamekeepers, butlers, the women as cooks and maids. However, young men also had structured alternatives to service or trade: the opportunity of a craft, and the different trajectory of apprentice, journeyman, master. This career structure, according to Gillis, provided one origin of the restlessness, turbulence and traditions of misrule which informed emerging discourses of youth. It was not available to young women (Dyhouse 1981:82).

As the nineteenth century progressed the structure of the family changed. Increasingly, young people were kept at home rather than being sent away. For working class young people, this increasingly meant being involved with the rest of the family in the move to urban areas to work in factories. For the middle classes, it meant a gradual turn to education as the defining structure for young people. The pattern in the nineteenth century in Britain, mirrored elsewhere, was that the increasing spread of education was carried first by home tuition, then by small private schools, and finally by the reformed public schools, with State-run secondary schools emerging only in the twentieth century. This progression impacted earliest and most fully for boys. It was not until the late nineteenth century that colleges for girls became other than rare, and such institutions were still the subject of hot debate in the first decade of the twentieth century when Stanley Hall was writing. Generally, girls were kept at home and prepared for marriage, with such education as would most effectively serve that end, delivered either by mothers, private tutors, or private day schools (Dyhouse 1981: ch2) More extended education was a solution only if the marriage market failed.

The content of girls' education was always carefully shaped to deliver the subject as woman both for the middle classes and, as universal education emerged in the late nineteenth century, for the working classes also. Carol Dyhouse explores the extended debates in the late nineteenth century around elementary education, and specifically the protracted deliberations around needlework, plain or fancy, and the resourcing of cooking and infant care classes. Even after the establishment of compulsory schooling,
being absent from school in order to help one's mother was afforded a general legitimacy, and attendance was not as strictly enforced for girls as for boys (Dyhouse 1981: 102). Of special interest is the panic in Britain in the late nineteenth century around national fitness, which followed through also into Australian public policy, after a significant number of volunteers for active service in the Boer War failed fitness tests. The blame for this condition was laid squarely at the feet of women, and the solution was sought in "School Training for the Home Duties of Women" (Dyhouse 1981: 92ff).

The voluntary organisations of the early and middle twentieth centuries reflected a similar concern. Dyhouse tells about a range of voluntary associations which took on the role of helping girls negotiate the contradictions between their youth and their gender (see also Hudson 1984). The Girl's Friendly Society sought to "elevate, to fortify against, and to protect girls from 'temptation'" (1981:109). "Snowdrop Bands" were organised to protect factory girls from the dangers of financial independence, the corrupting influence of older factory women and the temptations afforded in the absence of an adult restraining hand, a condition in which "financial independence and sexual precocity go hand in hand" (1981: 113). Her account reports that girls were keen to get involved in the outdoors and adventure activities of the Boy Scouts, and had in fact organised themselves autonomously into troops of "Girl Scouts". Recognising demand, Baden Powell conscripted his sister into organising a parallel movement, specifying that training

has to be administered with great discrimination; you do not want to make tomboys of refined girls, yet you want to attract, and thus raise, the slum girl from the gutter. The main object is to give them all the ability to be better mothers and Guides to the next generation.

in Dyhouse 1981:110

Accordingly, the Guides were restructured, and patrol names like "Wildcats", "Foxes", and "Bears" were excised in favour of "Sunflowers", "Pimpernel" and "Lilies-of-the-valley". The President wrote in 1910 that

There is... no idea of making girls into poor imitations of Boy Scouts. Education will be on such lines only as will make the girls better housewives, more capable in all womanly arts, from cooking, washing and sick nursing to the training and management of children

in Dyhouse 1981:111
Such views now appear old-fashioned, and so they are. In the late twentieth century, the kind of essentialist arguments on which these discourses depended have fallen into disfavour, at least in the public sphere. Liberal discourses critical of the canons of organic conservatism have constructed education, for example, as a gender-neutral endeavour in which all students, male or female, compete on equal terms for the rewards that educational achievement offers. Yet the structures of gender continue to run through the youth category, as the literature cited above suggests, and the fundamentals of young women's inhabitation of the category remain essentially unchanged.

Gender in the news

The contours of the intersection of gender and youth are for the most part taken for granted in the newspaper. Young women and young men are constructed "naturally", the categories of gender applied unself-consciously by the commentators whose discourse appears in newspaper columns. In talk about youth, young women slide from exclusion to invisibility to defacto inclusion to centre stage and back, mostly without awareness of their problematic position in the category. The major exception to this is in discourses of education, where the claim of equality of opportunity, central to liberal doctrines of society, is at stake, and so the realities of gendered existence, and the consequences for equality, take on an unfamiliar visibility in discussions around young women and education. At the same time, in other frames, the assumptions of essentialist constructions of gender retain a dynamic currency, and even where sexual equality is the expressed value, the structures of language press a gendered stamp deep into discussions of issues affecting young people.

Young men appear in three times as many articles as young women do, reflecting the structures of invisibility and marginality for young women discussed above, but also the dominance of categories of trouble, especially crime, in which young men are cast. The
roles in which young women and men appear reflect a fundamental genderedness which clearly constitutes a powerful frame through which their youth is constituted, and the language through which they are constructed in those roles provides an intricate and closely-tooled means for shaping this genderedness.

Gender and language

A number of observations about the gendered use of language have already been made in chapter 9: in particular, the greater frequency of terms used of young women which connote passivity and vulnerability. These observations deserve a fuller treatment.

Figure 11.1 below depicts the way in which language is used differently for young women and young men. A number of features are immediately evident.

It is clear from the work done so far that the term youth itself carries an overwhelmingly male connotation. This is supported by the data: "youth", the singular form, is the most common term used for young men. It is used for them in more than twice as many articles as its nearest competitor; it is never used for young women. The collective form of the noun (as in "the youth of today") can include young women (in a candlelight vigil for the world's children, Lorena Tati "spoke on behalf of the youth of WA" (24/9/90:5)) but is only used when young men are included.

The singular form of "youth(s)" is used in five articles in which young women are identified, but in all of them, the reference is to the client group of a youth service, not the individuals in the article itself. There is one exception to the rule that young women are not referred to as "youths". It might be a mistake, but if so it is a significant one. In April 1990, a stolen car carrying six Aboriginal young people aged from twelve to sixteen crashed into another vehicle while being pursued by the police. Three of the young people and the driver of the other vehicle were killed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>female 356 articles</th>
<th>female percent</th>
<th>male 966 articles</th>
<th>male percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>61</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>9.7</td>
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<td>12.6</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>11.8</td>
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<td>3.9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young (x)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<td>58.7</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>17.4</td>
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<td>Legal year old</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman /Man</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.6</td>
<td>22</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(age/sex old (x))</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.6</td>
<td>29</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>Occupation</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young woman/man</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenage (x)</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<td>Daughter /Son</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang member</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street kid</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Australian</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>(the) young</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>Schoolgirl/Boy</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister / Brother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the young people killed was a woman. In commentary, journalist Tony Barrass describes the crash site as "the scene of Thursday's horrific accident which killed three youths" (7/4/90:7). As the individual subjects move out of direct focus, the femaleness of this person disappears - or, more accurately, in the retelling of the story, she becomes invisible, then male. One can almost hear the cognitive dissonance set up in the text: this person is a girl, so is passive and vulnerable, and yet she has participated in the stealing of a car which has killed someone and in which she herself has been killed. Oxymoronically, she is a **car thief**. The (unconscious) solution to this conflict appears to recast her as male: by the end of the story, she is a youth.

The naming of young men as "youths" bears close relationship to the dominance of criminal categories. Ninety percent of articles referring to "youths" are predominantly about crime\(^{79}\), and a further seven percent involve classes of action in which police are involved, like graffiti, riots and road accidents. The overwhelmingly male, criminal connotation of the term, mentioned several times already in this text, is inescapable. The corollary, that "youths" are criminal, is equally obvious. It will become even clearer when the roles in which young men appear are discussed.

While the dominant term used of young men is "youths", the dominant term used of young women is **girls**. The dominance of this category is greater even than the dominance of "youth" for young men: it is used three and a half times more frequently than the next largest term. In comparison, the use of "boy" is much rarer. "Girl" is used (proportionally) more than three times as often as "boy". "Schoolgirl", a term connoting even greater vulnerability than "girl", is used more than three and a half times as often as "schoolboy". This point has important implications.

\(^{79}\) Gender = male and descriptor = youth and dominant issue = crime as a percentage of descriptor = youth
Language presents women as an undifferentiated population relative to men. Where a youth is sixteen to eighteen on a strict reading and about thirteen to about twenty-two on a looser reading, a young woman is a girl perhaps always. There is no equivalent term to the sixteen to eighteen year old "youth" which can be applied to young women. "Girl" is applicable on a strict reading to a woman from birth until well into her twenties, and loosely well beyond that. At the same time, "girl" can be used across a number of contexts: of a young woman who is a high achiever, a missing person, a car thief, a drug addict. The categories of difference which seem to be necessary in speaking of young men do not appear to be necessary for young women. "Youths" is sometimes used of high achievers or of young men in "positive" roles, but such usage of the term is arguably inappropriate: a minor language mistake. Figure 11.1 indicates a wider range of terms available to be used for young men, and a greater frequency of minor terms in the range despite the domination of "youths".

While the language field for young women is by no means restricted to the use of this one term, its dominance is significant. If over-lexicality indicates the need for fine discrimination, arising from cultural tension or trouble, the less proliferated language code applied to young women may indicate that young women do not quite share the mantle of trouble that young men wear. This is supported by Figure 11.2, which indicates a relative absence of young women from active roles in categories of trouble. Young women are "easier": concern is expressed about them as victims, but not so much as the cause of trouble. The restless, searching, rebellious youth of the Bildungsroman is not a young woman. If "storm and stress" is the mark of the adolescent, either the storm and stress of young women is happening somewhere other than the newspaper, or the relationship of young women to the category "adolescent" is unclear.

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80 Such references are rare, and usually refer to Aboriginal young people.
This relates particularly to the representation of young people as delinquent. While young women do commit crimes, and some self-reporting studies indicate that the actual rate of offending might not be that much different between young men and young women (see Alder 1985), the construction of the criminal is not used of young women. The term "juvenile", either as noun or adjective, is used almost exclusively of young men. "Killer", "criminal", and "gang member" are not used at all of young women, and "car thief" and terms using "offender" only once. If young women are to be described in active roles, "woman" is often used: 68% of the articles in which "woman" is used are predominantly about crime.

The undifferentiated language code applied to young women, carried by the near-universal use of "girl", appears to present woman as continuous with child. Not only is the term "girl" inclusive of a child, but "child" as a term is used more frequently for young women than for young men. It is not only that women, by the use of "girl", are constructed as children: naive, vulnerable, subordinate, but also that children, by the use of "girl", are constructed as women: nurturing, serving, sacrificing, reproducing, subordinate. Implicated within this construction is the presentation of young women as passive, vulnerable. The kinds of issues through which young women appear in the newspaper carry a stronger message than the construction of language by itself, and fuller comment belongs in the discussion of these issues below, but nevertheless the structure of passivity is there to be read in the language, not only in the use of "girl" but also of the higher frequency of terms like "victim".

If language constructs young women as passive and vulnerable, it constructs young men as criminal and violent. Journalists have access to the criminal side of life generally through official institutions, notably the courts and the police, and here young men feature significantly. As Carrington argues, delinquency is masculine, and the

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81 Though the presence of young women in all other measures of crime, from arrest rates to court appearances to prison populations, is much lower than that of young men (see Alder 1985, Carrington 1993 18ff)
"masculinity of criminality" (1993:22; see also Johnson 1993:102) is a phenomenon requiring careful study. In the collection of texts for this study, the masculinity of criminality is reflected in the lexicon. There are more terms with a criminal connotation used for young men, and they are used more frequently. "Youth", "juvenile", "offender", "car thief", "gang member", "criminal", "street kid" and "killer", as well as a number of the rarer or more colloquial terms like "delinquent", "thug", "hooligan" and so on, are all used exclusively, or almost exclusively, of young men.

Two final observations should be made about language before I discuss the specific issues in which young men and young women appear.

The first is the significantly greater appearance of "daughter" than "son". "Daughter" accounts for over sixteen percent of articles about young women, while "son" is used in less than seven percent of articles about young men. While this in part reflects the role of young women as victims of father-daughter rape, three quarters of articles using "daughter" are not about this issue. In fact, the spread of topics for articles using "daughter" is quite wide: young women can be described as "daughters" across a range of contexts. For example, in "$250,000 to tempt girls into sciences" Premier Carmen Lawrence is quoted as saying that "the program would provide information to parents and their daughters on the options and opportunities available" (11/5/90:30). While this is seemingly an innocuous construction, it is noteworthy that the alternative "... information to young women and their parents" is not used. In "Boredom turned Suzy to aerosols" (9/6/90:3) Suzy speaks briefly in the article, but the major source of comment is her father, and his experience of finding out about her addiction. In "Crash shatters dreams", a 21 year-old young woman's fiance was killed by a stolen car. She and the parents of the young man issued a press statement, but even though her parents did not wish to speak to the media, their comments are solicited. The young man's parents do not speak outside the written press statement. In "Woman, 18, bludgeoned to death" (22/7/91:12) a murder victim is given a primary description as a "Victorian
policeman's daughter". The data are consistent with the subordinate position of young women within the patriarchal family.

The second observation concerns the greater use of "student" for young women. This connects with the debate in the period under study about the under-representation of young women in mathematics and science programmes, but also their significant representation in the newspaper as high achievers. This feature will be taken up more fully below.

Gender and the roles in which young people appear

Not only is the language through which young people are constructed fundamentally gendered, but the roles in which young people feature, and their construction within those roles, are likewise gender shaped: language and role provides a consistent frame from which young men and women emerge as gendered subjects. In role, young women appear as passive and vulnerable, and young men as criminal and violent.

Figure 11.2 below indicates how often specific issues arise in those articles in the collection which specify gender (male, or female, or both).

A number of things emerge. The first is the dominance of issues involving crime. This is true for young men and for young women: it is, in fact true for young people overall.

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82 "Role" is not used here in the theoretical sense, but in the theatrical. In the daily drama constructed by the news, the people featured in the stories are cast into particular (often pre-established) roles. Narrative theory explores this at some depth, but the use of the term in this section and elsewhere in the thesis is simple.

83 Gender = M (male) and Issue = HSC (high speed chases), for instance, or Gender = F and Issue = CSX (Crime sexual assault). Articles in which both young men and young women are mentioned are identified by Gender = B (both). This category is included in the table for reference purposes, but is not charted here, as it doesn't allow comparison of issue by gender without a manual search to identify which roles the men or women take in the article.
The degree to which crime is the most important issue varies with race and gender\textsuperscript{84}, but it is always the most frequent issue. What is different, and fundamentally different, is the role young men and young women take in articles about crime. Consistently, young women take passive roles, as victims, while young men are actively criminal.

In the content analysis, the most striking example of this is the category of sex crime: young person as victim\textsuperscript{85}. The category is the largest one for young women: in thirty percent of articles about young women they appear in the role of victim of sex crime. Young men are victims of sex crime in only three percent of articles concerning them. This extraordinary concentration of attention reveals not only a construction of young women as passive and vulnerable, but a focus on young women's bodies as a locus for concern.

It is not unusual, within the tabloid press at least, for the reporting of sex crime to have a voyeuristic, salacious quality. Generally, \textit{The West Australian} refrains from reporting sex crime in this way. The recounting of events is generally kept to an account of times, persons and places, rather than intimate details of the acts themselves. While spicier accounts would no doubt sell newspapers, \textit{The West Australian} does not pursue this line: its columns reflect a more protective interest in sex crime.

\textsuperscript{84} If we use the "main issue restricted code" field (ISS5), the proportion of articles to do with crime varies between 95\% for Aboriginal young men, and 45\% for young women. This includes articles in which young people are victims of crime if articles about sex crime are excluded, the proportion of articles to do with crime stays at 95\% for Aboriginal young men but drops to 24\% for young women. The number of articles registering both ethnicity and female gender is too small to offer meaningful quantitative results.

\textsuperscript{85} This category has been processed manually to offer more meaningful information. Because the classification used did not discriminate between the young person as perpetrator or victim of sex crime, those articles responding to Issue = CSX (sex crime) were looked at to see whether the young person was a perpetrator or a victim of the criminal act. This was especially important for articles in which both young women and young men were identified, to determine who was perpetrator and who was victim, or whether both were perpetrators of victims. Where Gender = B (both), one article concerned a young man as victim, one a young man as a witness of a sex crime, and the rest involved a male perpetrator and female victim.
### % of articles about females which deal with this issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Female 398 articles</th>
<th>Male 231 articles</th>
<th>Both 635 articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime all categories</td>
<td>161 (45.0%)</td>
<td>694 (71.7%)</td>
<td>50 (7.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime (m scataneous)</td>
<td>39 (10.3%)</td>
<td>331 (34.2%)</td>
<td>59 (9.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime prevention</td>
<td>4 (1.0%)</td>
<td>104 (10.7%)</td>
<td>7 (1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime prevention</td>
<td>6 (1.7%)</td>
<td>64 (6.7%)</td>
<td>11 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime causes</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>14 (1.5%)</td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime against householder</td>
<td>1 (0.3%)</td>
<td>30 (3.1%)</td>
<td>1 (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime: motor vehicles</td>
<td>8 (2.2%)</td>
<td>106 (10.6%)</td>
<td>21 (3.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High speed car chases</td>
<td>3 (0.8%)</td>
<td>85 (8.8%)</td>
<td>16 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime: young as victim</td>
<td>63 (17.6%)</td>
<td>97 (10.0%)</td>
<td>46 (7.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex crime: young as perpetrator</td>
<td>107 (29.9%)</td>
<td>29 (3.0%)</td>
<td>1 (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>5 (1.3%)</td>
<td>122 (12.6%)</td>
<td>22 (3.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public nuisance</td>
<td>3 (0.8%)</td>
<td>23 (2.4%)</td>
<td>4 (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>17 (4.7%)</td>
<td>58 (6.0%)</td>
<td>15 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policing practices</td>
<td>8 (2.2%)</td>
<td>80 (8.3%)</td>
<td>13 (2.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime: rights of offenders</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>25 (2.6%)</td>
<td>3 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights of young people</td>
<td>13 (3.6%)</td>
<td>34 (3.5%)</td>
<td>5 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>8 (2.2%)</td>
<td>16 (1.7%)</td>
<td>5 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>14 (3.9%)</td>
<td>14 (1.4%)</td>
<td>12 (1.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents</td>
<td>21 (5.9%)</td>
<td>54 (5.6%)</td>
<td>8 (1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor vehicle accidents</td>
<td>8 (2.2%)</td>
<td>25 (2.6%)</td>
<td>10 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in politics</td>
<td>9 (2.5%)</td>
<td>34 (3.5%)</td>
<td>9 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High achievement</td>
<td>30 (8.4%)</td>
<td>22 (2.3%)</td>
<td>11 (1.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>32 (8.9%)</td>
<td>22 (2.3%)</td>
<td>19 (3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth work as solution</td>
<td>3 (0.8%)</td>
<td>4 (0.4%)</td>
<td>3 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>7 (2.0%)</td>
<td>6 (0.6%)</td>
<td>7 (1.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>4 (1.1%)</td>
<td>26 (2.7%)</td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>4 (1.1%)</td>
<td>6 (0.6%)</td>
<td>3 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>3 (0.8%)</td>
<td>6 (0.6%)</td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people as workers</td>
<td>10 (2.8%)</td>
<td>6 (0.6%)</td>
<td>4 (0.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing person</td>
<td>30 (8.4%)</td>
<td>13 (1.3%)</td>
<td>1 (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>1 (0.3%)</td>
<td>7 (0.7%)</td>
<td>5 (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrations or riots</td>
<td>3 (0.8%)</td>
<td>18 (1.9%)</td>
<td>4 (0.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>2 (0.6%)</td>
<td>6 (0.6%)</td>
<td>1 (0.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>12 (1.2%)</td>
<td>6 (0.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse: sexual or other</td>
<td>7 (2.0%)</td>
<td>11 (1.1%)</td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk-taking behaviour</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>18 (1.9%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### % of articles about males which deal with this issue

Figure 11.2
Nevertheless, the fact that almost one in three articles about young women casts them as victims of sex crime hooks into the well-established position in the literature that the turning point of concern about young women is about their sexuality. The focus on sex crime incorporates this concern and blends it with the construction of young women as vulnerable.

The frequency with which young women are depicted as victims of rape feeds into regimes of discipline for young women in which they must take responsibility for male arousal in their presence, and must learn the techniques by which a fine balance of sexual attractiveness and availability is achieved: "feminine", but not "available". They must learn to establish a presence in the sexual market which attracts the prey but not the predator (see McRobbie 1981, Hudson A. 1983, Hudson B. 1984, Nava 1984, Carrington 1993: 29ff). Although the newspaper generally does not attribute blame to rape victims, there are texts in the collection which directly address young women's responsibility for the behaviour of males who would be rapists: for example, "Report links rape to sexy clothing" (25/11/91:42), which reports the opinions of psychiatrists.

Part of this discipline is the greater confinement of young women in the home, the greater restriction of their movements, the closer surveillance of their activities (Hudson 1981:10, Roberts 1983:60ff) and, for many women, a life structured around the chance of rape. This discipline is one of the forces behind the much greater access that boys have to youth leisure activities, the gendered presence of young people on the street, and the nature of the young women's involvement in youth groupings and in youth subcultures.

By contrast, in the sex crime: young person as perpetrator category, men dominate. Only one article registers a young woman as perpetrator (8/7/91:22). This is the pattern across crime categories in the database, which together involve a significant number of articles. In all categories involving crime in which young people feature in active roles the number of articles about young men is significant, and the number about young
women is miniscule. This is true for debates about crime punishment; the crime:causes and crime:prevention categories; policing practices; rights of offenders; high speed chases; crime: motor vehicles; and violence categories.

On the other hand, in all categories involving crime in which young people feature in passive or victim roles, young women dominate. As well as in the sex crime: young person as victim category, young women dominate in articles on the crime: young person as victim category, which relates to crimes other than sex crime, and articles about missing persons. The victim category is entirely consistent with the use of language around young women, a part of the construction of young women as passive and vulnerable.

This is not to say that young women do not appear as perpetrators of crime. The crime: miscellaneous category (which registers crimes which do not fall into the other more specific categories) is still significant for young women, with around eleven percent of articles concerned with this issue. However, what is interesting in these cases is the frequency with which, even in committing crime, young women are constructed as victims, as passive, as vulnerable. If a man is also involved in committing the crime, the young woman is often constructed as a victim or dupe. So, for example, in "Change your partner, SM tells accused" (21/11/90:47), "A Perth magistrate told a student yesterday she should think about finding a new boyfriend after her existing partner led her into trouble". Yet there is no evidence given in the article that the young woman concerned was under any coercion. Indeed, it was stated in evidence that the decision to commit the crime was made jointly, although the use of false identification was the man's idea.

In "Defendant told she was stupid" (26/6/91: 24) "A former receptionist was described by a Perth magistrate yesterday as naive and incredibly stupid for being influenced by a drug addict she had met only a month earlier." She had presented a forged prescription for benzodiazepines "to help a drug addict [also a woman] she had befriended". In
"Woman's night out all a blur" (8/10/91:36) a woman charged with attempting to solicit for prostitution "said she was too drunk to remember most of the evening... Mrs French warned Hollis that her drunken behaviour almost resulted in a misleading criminal record. She dismissed charges of loitering and fraud.

In "Drugged girl ordered to shoot nun" (27/5/91:7) a female member of a Shining Path guerilla group was ordered to shoot a nun in the head and followed those orders. The opening paragraph reads "A drugged teenage girl was forced by her terrorist leaders to shoot Sister Irene McCormack...". Sources for the account are tenuous, relying on witnesses of witnesses of witnesses. "One witness report says that a 15-year-old girl, who witnesses say was drugged, was handed a gun by her group leader and told to shoot the sister and four Peruvians. She shot them in the back of the head' Father Fitzgerald said." Despite this tenuousness, these sources are accepted, and, indeed, their account becomes the linchpin of the article, presumably because of the difficulty in contemplating a heinous violent act by a girl. The account explains the action by removing her agency, making her, like the nun, a passive victim of the event.

Generally, then, the roles in which young men and women are cast are consistent with the structures of language: young women are passive, vulnerable, and their "sexuality open to abuse and exploitation" (Hudson 1984:45), while young men are criminal and violent. There are, however, a couple of categories which complicate this otherwise straightforward picture.

The first is the high incidence of articles which deal with young women as high achievers. Over eight percent of articles about young women are about high achievement, ranging from the winning of awards in citizenship, to honours in education, to prizes awarded for entrepreneurial enterprise. The second, arguably linked to this, is the higher relative incidence of articles about education that concern young women.
I have argued at several points in this text that the construction of youth is subject to competing ideological and discursive pressures. Different professions vie for control of the ground by competing for the official acceptance of their discursive frame. But the chief underlying contestation seems to be between organic conservative ideological frameworks and liberal perspectives. Liberal perspectives, including a rejection of essentialism and notions of equal opportunity, seem to have achieved a kind of hegemony in public life, at least as expressed in the kind of discourse emanating from public institutions for public consumption in the newspaper. However, conservative notions retain a strong rearguard position, and are available for use in the popular voice by populist politicians, by media commentators such as talk-back hosts, or by other speakers.

This is the case with constructions of gender. A liberal democracy such as ours claims now to deliver equality of opportunity to men and women. Research (2/10/90:27) as well as experience (19/5/90:10) reported in the newspaper gives the lie to such claims. Young women live daily with regimes of constraint foreign to the experience of men. Pat Mahony, in *Schools for the boys* (1985) unpicks frame after frame of the organisation of the school, including the use of language, the structure of the curriculum, the politics of space, and the structures of harassment by male students, to paint a convincing picture of the continuing discrimination against girls despite the rhetoric of equal opportunity and equal access\(^\text{86}\).

*The West Australian* is not a neutral bystander in this tension between the rhetoric of liberal democracy and the gendered reality. In the articles featuring young women, the categories of *education* and *high achievement* articulate this tension. Below is a list of headlines which link young women and education.

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\(^{86}\) This reality does not escape public attention in "School sexism under study" (2/10/90 27) researcher Sue Willis said "teachers had successfully broken down official and obvious barriers hindering girl's career choices but were encountering the more difficult "subtle factors"
Hardest test is a seat in a TEE\textsuperscript{87} class
Girl disciplined in uniform row
New course to fill dental shortage
\$250,000 to tempt girls into sciences
Too much temptation
Pupils dread a bad TEE shot
Iruant worry for mother
School sexism under study
Students find sky's the limit
Girls have winning formula
Slippery says hello
Ballet and books
Classroom stocktake
PLC evicts boarders
Uni dream now a TEE nightmare
Student to blame

Degrees don't add up to a job
Students fear college closure
Bush school classes rely on the city
Students learn their rights
School project gives Katie a flying start
Navy rewards star student
Outback exchange a big hit
Travel alarms ring for students
Girls can succeed given the chance
Success stories used as a spur
Hey, girls, get a wild job
Time to remember for students
TEE results due within days
Christie goes back to school - with Mum
Women top class: professor
Its a double first for women graduates

In some of these articles, the gender of the subject is incidental to the action. More often it is precisely the pivot around which the article turns. Of those articles in which gender seems formative, two issues predominate: the high educational achievement of young women, and the under-representation of young women in the high-status and economically functional disciplines of science and mathematics.

The under-representation of young women in science and mathematics is dealt with as being problematic on two counts. The reluctance by girls to take these subjects is seen as restricting their career options, especially in economically rewarding careers, and

\textsuperscript{87} Tertiary Entrance Examination, the final secondary school examination in the Western Australian education system which provides the gateway to a university place. Or, as these articles show, not
contributing to the concentration of women in the services sector (2/10/90:27, 13/7/91:4). And the non-availability of this pool of potential talent is regarded as detrimental to the economy as a whole. In "$250,000 to tempt girls into sciences" (11/5/90:30) Premier Carmen Lawrence argues that "WA could never compete internationally if women did not realise their potential in the fields of science and technology". The problem is generally seen to be about encouragement, about available models, about attitude, rather than a problem with the construction of the feminine as such. In this category of articles, many of which are in the human-interest genre, the newspaper takes an active exhortatory role, allying itself with government, academic and business commentators on the subject.

While educational achievement is by no means the only context in which the success of young women is celebrated in the newspaper, it does account for many of the articles about young women as high achievers. Treatment of high achievers in the paper varies. Sometimes, but not often, the achievement of young women is dealt with as an anomaly, a rare event, a quirk (eg headline, 31/10/90:33). Even less often, the gender of the high achiever passes without comment, as if the equal success of young women is to be expected (eg 3/1/91:31). Usually, the example provides the proof that young women can achieve at the highest level within this system. The front-page story "It's a double first for women graduates" (20/3/93:1), reported that the top graduates in the engineering faculty at the University of WA were women. Professor Clyde of the faculty, commenting on the win, said that "Women can do better than men in science-based subjects if given the right encouragement" (20/3/93:3). In "Girls have winning formula", women won the state finals of the Titration Stakes Chemistry Competition, "Proving once and for all that girls do have what it takes to succeed at science...". The headline given to a letter to the editor from a young woman studying science at University reads "Girls can succeed: given the chance".

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88 With the exception of the report on Willis' work
The incorporation of high achievement into the constitution of young women in the newspaper does construct an active role for young women, a foil for the passive vulnerability that dominates their constitution in other categories of reporting. It is a particular kind of agency, a "good girl" role, a role actively constructed as functional for the economy. It is also not a youth role, but once again, a primary concentration on the changing role of women in the economy, a quest for these women to take on the challenge of science and technology, to widen their field of service. It is not as adolescents that these young women face the question of science, but as women, as participants in the liberal reconstruction of womanhood for the late twentieth century. And the new field of aspiration is technology, the handmaiden of capital.

Conclusion

The conclusion that the construction of youth is fundamentally gendered, and that young women are predominantly constructed as passive and vulnerable, and young men as violent and criminal, is well supported from the evidence. While this picture of young men is continuous with broader understandings of adolescence in terms of rebellion and trouble, the passive, childlike, vulnerable depiction of young women is not.

The fundamental question that any sociology of youth must attempt to address with respect to the question of gender is whether the youth category actually applies to women at all. Ours would by no means be the only culture that prescribes an adolescence for men but not for women: Burbank indicates, for example, that this is arguably the situation for many pre-contact Aboriginal societies (1988: 4-5).\(^9\)

Several factors to do with the construction of adolescence point in that direction. Formulations of the essence of adolescence, like "storm and stress", or "identity", or "transitions from dependence to independence" or "the tension between self and society"

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\(^9\) Also arguing, interestingly, that the establishment of female Aboriginal adolescence in remote communities is a function of the establishment of the school
embrace the male but only tentatively and ambiguously apply to the female. Customary descriptions of paradigmatic youth similarly are tailored for young men.

Yet there are a number of categories in which young women appear precisely as youth. Young women face the Tertiary Entrance Examination as a rite of passage (and it is constructed that way in the newspaper (25/7/90:6)) in the same way that men do. Teenage pregnancy, a common cause for alarm in the media generally if not in this collection (Griffin 1993:163-5) is an issue of youth. Eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia⁹⁰ (20/6/90:3, 7/11/91:53) are constructed directly through the frame of adolescence. Explanations of phenomena like Beatlemania and other pop idol adulation (see Johnson 1993: 108ff) bring together constructs of femininity and adolescence not as competing and contradictory discourses but as allies. Young women participate in youth problems like youth unemployment and homelessness, and do so as youth (4/10/91:9, 5/10/91:22, 17/1/92:7). Young women are not absent either from male-dominated categories like crime, truancy or drug use, and while often depicted passively and as children in such contexts, the active category of rebellious or wayward adolescence is available for their construction (eg 19/9/90:7). The dividing practice of the high school constructs young women as fully as it does young men.

But it does so differently for young women than for young men. Thus, while young women are subject to discourses of youth, they are always already subject to discourses of woman. Young men are also always already subject to discourses of masculinity, but the constitution of youth forms a much more continuous discourse with what is required from them as men (Willis 1970). The discourses of youth and the discourses of woman by no means always conflict, and either may be dominant in this context or that such that negotiating them is easy. But several commentators (Hudson 1984, Nava 1984, Griffin 1993, Buchanan 1992) have argued convincingly that contradiction between adolescence and femininity, and contradiction in the expectations that such discourses

⁹⁰ if not, yet, parallel male disorders like bodybuilding
place on young women, is common. Competing frames of subordination can result in the situation where "whatever we do, it's always wrong" (Hudson 1984:31).

It is possible then to treat young men more consistently as youth. The consistency is only relative: the contradictory and polar frames of adult and child, of agent or victim, of delinquent or ideal youth still apply. And the consistency may not work in their favour: a dominant frame of understanding which renders young men as violent and criminal can and does subject young men to harsher regimes of discipline and control.

In the case of young women, the apparatus of construction enables a looser hold on the youth category, with easier and more frequent slippage into the categories of womanhood, with its own internal frames - madonna and whore, child and adult, saint and devil, culture and nature - its own forms of Otherness. For young women, as well as the process of "development", there is always another tape running, another story being told. The regimes of discipline and control applied to them may not be as publicly brutal as street-level policing practices and secure institutions might be for young men, but the gentler disciplines of confinement within the home, surveillance of friends and pursuits and destinations, the management of the sexual body, are arguably more total and more repressive.

An adequate understanding of the youth category needs to be able to embrace this genderedness. If a sociology of youth is possible, it must be able to embrace young women, and its representation of the structures of power which construct and contain youth must be as live and real for the experience of young women as it is for young men.

The concept so far discussed in this thesis, in which youth is understood in terms of a delayed accreditation established on the ground of incomplete or inadequate ideological assimilation, does seem able to meet this requirement. Young men and young women share some criteria for the establishment of accreditation as adults, but in many
contexts, the terms on which accreditation occurs may be radically different for young men and for young women. Nevertheless, despite this difference, the state of suspended accreditation obtains for both, and social consequences flow from this suspended status for members of both sexes.

The complexity arises from the ways in which young women are treated as not youth at all. The fourteen-year-old model on the front cover of a fashion magazine, looking like a twenty-three year old, is perhaps an example of this. The extensive womanly duties of girls within the home compared with the much lower expectations of boys, now well-documented (Dyhouse 1981, Buchanan 1983) are another. This reality serves as a reminder of the fact that no young people are only "youth", that "youth" is never the only construction under which they live, but that other roles of worker, mother, father, wife, boyfriend, and other discourses, discourses of womanhood and of manhood, discourses of race, discourses of class and status, also frame their existence. The next chapter explores the consequences of this for one group of young people in Western Australia, few in number but writ large in the pages of the newspaper - Aboriginal young people.
12 Discourses of the Aboriginal

In Western Australia, the question of the representation of Aboriginal young people in the media has come under scrutiny in recent years. David Trigger argued in a 1990 paper that the news media offered a major source of information about Aboriginal people for the Western Australian public, and that the great majority of representations were negative in character, especially involving Aboriginal drunkenness and crime, and focussed heavily on themes of conflict rather than cooperation. Steve Mickler, in a 1992 study, focussed on the discourse of certain talk-back presenters on W.A. radio, suggesting that they routinely presented material on Aboriginal issues that was overtly biased and inflammatory. Trigger's 1992 paper also dealt extensively with talk-back radio.

The Regional Report of Inquiry into Underlying Issues in Western Australia of the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) (1991) devoted a full chapter to the treatment of Aboriginal people in the press. This study contained a historical analysis of press representations of Aboriginal people, and noted the growth in newspaper coverage of Aboriginal issues and events involving Aboriginal people since the 1960's and the increasing portrayal of Aboriginal people in a criminal frame. A case study for the Royal Commission into the audience effects of racist reporting, especially the now infamous front-page headline "Aboriginal gangs terrorise suburbs" which appeared in The West Australian on 28 February 1990, was conducted by David Trigger and Charles Waddell also in 1990. The Report suggested, as had Stuart Hall's British study Policing the Crisis (1978), a link between the presentation of black people as a threat to law and order and wider political and economic processes, in this case to
do with land rights, though noted a significant degree of confusion and contradiction in the way that *The West* presented Aboriginal issues.

### The frequency of Aboriginal reference

For this study, a direct ethnic reference was defined as an identification that could not be ambiguous. This included some photographic references, or instances where, for example, the young person was not identified as belonging to an ethnic group but his mother was. A direct racial reference occurred in 410 articles. Aboriginality formed the largest single group of these: 275 articles referred to the subject as Aboriginal. A further eighty-eight articles imply an Aboriginal identity for the subject by including such features as Aboriginal names, references to this person as Aboriginal in previous reporting, and probable Aboriginal identity from appearance or address. The next largest group was Asian, with twenty-nine articles giving direct ethnic reference. This result is consistent with, but more extreme than, Trigger's 1990 analysis in which Aboriginal references outnumbered Asian references four to one. In round figures, direct Aboriginal references crop up in about ten percent of articles about young people, and outnumber the next largest ethnic reference ten to one.

In *The West Australian's* reporting of youth therefore, race almost always means Aboriginal. This concern with whether the subject is or is not Aboriginal reflects an underlying but unstated notion that Aboriginality is part of an explanation, that by identifying the subject as Aboriginal we now know why an act was committed. There may be no consensus on the logic of this, no agreement as to what precisely it is in Aboriginality that makes sense of particular kinds of action, but an underlying consensus that the Aboriginal label makes such action knowable still holds.

### The over-specification of crime
In all of the studies noted above, the major news issue involving Aboriginal people is crime, although studies also note the frequency of reference to problems with alcohol, often in combination with crime. Trigger's 1990 study indicates that 16.6% of all articles in *The West Australian* in the years 1984 and 1989 mentioning Aboriginal people concern a criminal matter. According to Trigger and Waddell's study, quoted in the RCIADIC report,

75% of a sample (of Perth suburban dwellers) responded that the last stories they read in the newspaper, heard on the radio or watched on the television concerning Aborigines was a crime or violence item

p 710

This study confirms these general findings, but again finds that, for articles concerning Aboriginal youth, the results are more extreme. Figure 12.1 below uses a broad classification system to identify the main issue in articles about young people. It shows that *almost eighty-five percent of articles which refer to Aboriginal young people are principally about crime*. The next largest category, health, accounts for only five percent of articles, and over half of these are concerned with glue sniffing. No articles in the general news pages refer to Aboriginal young people as high achievers, though a survey including sports pages might have produced some references. None are principally about homelessness.

Figure 12.2, in which a range of issues can be recorded for a single article, again shows the dominance of crime categories for Aboriginal young people, even relative to the dominance of crime in the sample as a whole which has already been noted. Apart from crime categories, only risk-taking behaviour features in more than ten percent of articles. Only three articles deal with Aboriginal youth unemployment. An equivalent chart for the general collection is included as a control.

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91 Despite the probability that alcohol is much the preferred psychotropic drug of Aboriginal young people, as it is for the rest of the Australian population, and that large numbers of white kids also use volatile substances, glue sniffing takes on the status of an Aboriginal drug in the newspaper, substituting for the category 'drunk' used in accounts of Aboriginal adults.
Figure 12.2

What are articles featuring Aboriginal young people about?

Number of articles dealing with this issue

- Youth work as solution
- Crime: outback station solutions
- Crime: causes
- Crime: prevention
- Crime: punishment
- Crime: attack on household
- Crime: perpetrators
- Crime (miscellaneous)
- High speed car chases
- Crime: motor vehicles
- Crime: as victim
- Sex crime
- Crime: rights of offenders
- Policing practices
- Public nuisance
- Violence
- Rights of young people
- Disability
- Racism
- Abuse
- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Missing person
- Accidents
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Demonstrations or riots
- Involvement in politics
- High achievement
- Charitable works
- Suicide
- Health
- Drugs
- AIDS
- Morality
- Sex
- Exploitation of young people
- Young people as workers
- Unemployment
- Truancy
- Education

Number of

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<th>60</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>30</th>
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<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
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<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>Morality</td>
<td>86</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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The conclusions are inescapable. The news about Aboriginal young people is crime news. The newspaper is not interested in, or does not have access to, accounts of Aboriginal young people who are high achievers, or accounts of the homelessness or unemployment of Aboriginal young people.

The huge face of crime is particularly remarkable when we recognise the considerable external constraint that is imposed on reporting ethnicity in criminal matters. The RCIADIC notes that

Ethically, journalists are not supposed to identify the race or cultural-ethnic background of an alleged or proven criminal offender unless the fact is of necessary relevance to the story

p.726

The Report goes on to quote both the Journalists' Code of Ethics and the Australian Press Council's Statement of Principles to the same effect. In the period of the study, journalists were very aware of this constraint: The West Australian was defending an Australian Press Council complaint precisely on this issue arising from the "Aboriginal gangs terrorise suburbs" article mentioned above. A finding highly critical of the paper's editors was handed down at the end of 1990. The article had also been heavily criticised by other sections of the media (RCIADIC: 713).

Journalists do not ignore this constraint in the sample period\textsuperscript{92}. While this ethical responsibility may be evaded by such devices as calling for comment from the Aboriginal Legal Service or by identifying a lawyer as employed by them, in particular instances one can observe some quite strange constructions designed to avoid racial appellation (for example, the 9/9/91 article which describes a suspect as having a "dark complexion" when it is clear to those familiar with the Aboriginal community that he is Aboriginal).

\textsuperscript{92} With some exceptions Helen Winterton, the journalist responsible for the "Aboriginal gangs terrorise suburbs" article, manages in an article on 14 July 1990 to make reference to the Aboriginality of young people involved in a stabbing incident six times in six column-inches
This constraint on racial identification applies only to crime, and makes the high frequency of articles identifying Aboriginal young people with crime even more remarkable. Were this constraint not in place, one might only speculate as to the frequency of articles which both identify the subject as Aboriginal and as criminally involved. It is worth noting that 1648 articles in the total sample of articles about young people are principally about crime, and, given the astounding overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people in the criminal system, the number of articles identifying them with crime in those articles would no doubt be much higher if journalists were free to report Aboriginality.

Racial references are often in the discourse of sources rather than in the journalist's own writing, and while the journalist is not bound to reproduce them, the Press Council ruled in the above case that it was legitimate to do so. The RCIADIC raised the argument of journalists and editors that the racial identification of persons wanted by police might help with their arrest (p.724-5). Police spokespersons are the largest single source for articles which identify the subject as Aboriginal, accounting for over a quarter of articles (see Worksheet 4). The Commission raises two counter-arguments to this justification.

First, Aboriginality is often the only descriptive attribute stated, and appears to take the place of things such as height, build, clothing, hair colour, etc, which are otherwise commonly used. It is difficult to see how the mere stating of Aboriginality is sufficient to describe wanted offenders, as if the belief that alleged offenders are Aboriginal is all the person who may have information to give to police needs to know. The general effect of this however is to make Aboriginality synonymous with certain kinds of criminal behaviour.

The second problem is...the Aboriginality of alleged offenders is stated even though they had already been arrested.

There is also the third objection that racial descriptions other than Aboriginal are rarely given: they would be expected if the only interest was for identification of a suspect. Although one article does mention a "white Australian youth from Girrawheen" (10/4/90:7) this seems only to be done in order to enable the journalist to also specify the Aboriginality of his accomplices. A consequence of this is that the aura of
Aboriginality extends beyond the boundaries of those articles in which it explicitly mentioned, and becomes a background for all accounts of street crime. Part of the experience of entering data on the database was the recognition that, after a couple of hours at the keyboard, I had to resist the tendency to enter "Aboriginal" in the "ethnicity" column if the article was about street crime, even where it was not mentioned: it became a conditioned reflex, even for someone aware of the dynamic. Conversely, the aura of crime extends beyond the boundaries of articles in which it is explicitly mentioned, and becomes a background for all articles about of Aboriginal people. In the words of the Commission,

"The crimes become Aboriginal crimes, something one learns to recognise and comprehend in the pages of a newspaper, and something one learns to expect is behaviour characteristic of Aboriginal people."

p.725

This condition is amplified for Aboriginal people who are young. Young people in general already carry the suggestion of delinquency (64% of articles in the database are principally about crime): where the young person is Aboriginal, this is amplified significantly. Mitigating statuses which are available to the general youth population are generally not available, or not used, of Aboriginal young people. For example, if a young person appearing before the courts is described as a student or an apprentice or has some other approved social role, their deviance is mitigated: they appear more like one of "us", rather than a creature from the Outside. Only one article registers an Aboriginal young person's occupation, and only sixteen articles, or six percent, register an Aboriginal young person as a student, compared with twenty percent for the general sample. The use of language adds to this amplification: for example, sixty-six percent of articles indicating Aboriginality use the term "youth" which has an overwhelmingly male, criminal, connotation. This compares with only twenty percent of articles in the general sample. "Youth(s)" is used of Aboriginal young people in contexts where it would normally not be expected: for example, in an article that deals with the return of historic photographs to the Aboriginal community. According to the report, the community "plan[s] to use the photographs... to... make youths aware of the full-blood Aborigines they are descended from. The Aborigines will also tell the youths of past
relations who held prominent positions in society..." (30/7/90:39). A comparative chart of how language is used differently for Aboriginal young people (Figure 12.3) appears on the next page.

A racist newspaper?

The conclusion that the culture of Aboriginal people, and particularly Aboriginal young people, is constructed in the newspaper as a culture of crime seems inescapable from the evidence.

It may be that the construction of Aboriginality as criminal is part of a general racist ideological stance in the organisation, that *The West Australian* has a particular and polemical interest in painting Aboriginality with a criminal face. This is the clear conclusion that several studies, including those of Trigger (1991), Mickler (1992) and Taylor 1990 (cited in RCIADIC 1991:721) come to with regard to commercial talk-back radio. The position with *The West Australian* seems more complex and confused than this.

There is no doubt that *The West Australian* has not escaped the general racism that is part of the Australian cultural heritage. No organisation with a consistent anti-racist position could have allowed the "Aboriginal gangs terrorise suburbs" headline (28/2/90:1), nor the "Aborigines in half high-speed chases" (18/5/90:1) headline to be published, especially as front-page stories. Neither could it have collaborated with police in the illegal publication, also on the front page, of the names and photographs of four young Aboriginal escapees on 12 March 1991. However, the ideological position communicated in the newspaper as a whole is complex. *The West Australian* is caught in a mess of contradiction, confusion and helplessness with respect to its understanding of "the Aboriginal problem".
It is certainly not the case that The West Australian is anti-Aboriginal, nor unsympathetic to Aboriginal concerns, whatever the evidence of content analysis. This can be illustrated in a number of ways. Editor Paul Murray's own evidence stated that his own stance was pro-Aboriginal and pro-land rights (Murray 1995). Trigg's 1990 study of editorials for the first six months of 1984 indicates a "more considered stance that gives an impression of a balanced position on political issues concerning Aboriginal affairs" (p.19). The RCIADIC notes, with qualification, that feature articles in the paper are often in-depth and sympathetic to Aboriginal people (1991: 703). Even in its commentary on crime, the paper has generally looked for the sources of Aboriginal criminality in the history of dispossession, in poverty, and in racial discrimination (31/12/91:10). Recently, The West has been willing on several occasions to publish details of allegations of police brutality against Aborigines. Fifty-two articles, or nineteen percent of articles referring to Aboriginal young people carried material critical of police practices, including headlines such as "Youth tells of police bashing after car chase" (29/4/91:5), "Blacks victims of racist police: study" (19/5/92:3) and "Police 'flogged juveniles'" (19/3/92:3). This is significant given the extent to which newspapers are dependent on police for their bread and butter, and the tendency of journalists to identify with their sources (Grabowski and Wilson 1989, Roshco 1975:113-4). Such criticism of police is likely to be costly to a newspaper reliant on crime stories to fill the daily appetite for news, and The West Australian has come under considerable attack from police sources in recent years (eg 27/9/91:6).

It is also not the case, as it once was (Jennet, quoted in RCDIAC 1991: 706), that Aboriginal voices are silent in the news, that comment is not solicited for articles in which there is an Aboriginal interest. Non-government organisations (in this context, usually Aboriginal organisations such as the Aboriginal Legal Service) contributed comment in 20% of articles, second only in frequency to police sources. Young people are not generally asked for comment: Aboriginal young people comment in only eleven articles, but this is consistent with the general absence of youth comment in the news, especially in crime news.
The casting of Aboriginal young people as criminal cannot therefore be seen simply as a consequence of racial bias. Although such bias exists, it is part of a complex ideological landscape that the newspaper reproduces and re-presents in its columns. The view of the world in which the criminal is Aboriginal comes to the newspaper ready-made (RCDIAC 1991:727). As I argued in Chapter 10, a newspaper depends on regular institutional sources for its news, and foremost of these, with respect to young people, are the police and the courts.

The sources of news

The data concerning sources of news for Aboriginal young people are similar to that of the general population. As for the general sample, the database allowed both the dominant source and other less prominent sources to be recorded: charts of both sets of results appear in Figure 12.4 below.

Figure 12.4 indicates a clear picture: an overwhelming dominance of the police as sources for comment and news on youth issues. The police were the primary source for 21% of news articles concerning Aboriginal young people across the 275 articles collected, and offer comment in another 4%. Police sources significantly outweigh the voice of Government Ministers or departments (Government sources were primary sources in only 13% of the articles) and community organisations like the Aboriginal Legal Service. The courts offered a further staple source of news accounting for a further 9% of principal sources. When articles in which no source could be identified are excluded, police and the courts together account for over 33% of primary sources for the news articles collected.
While similarities exist, however, the picture for Aboriginal young people differs from that for the general population in a number of ways. The figure for police sources is significantly higher, probably indicating the frequency of Aboriginal reference in the original police discourse. The figure for courts is lower. This could indicate that while Aboriginal identification could be readily made by court reporters, it is often not, and as long as the speech of the judiciary or other participants in the process does not indicate Aboriginality, it is left unmentioned by the journalist. The higher relative frequency of comment by non-government organisations has already been noted. Inquiries provide a significant source for the Aboriginal sample: the coronial inquiry into the death of John Pat and the related Royal Commission of Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody supply a high proportion of these. Articles indicating Aboriginality generally come from fewer sources than those for the general population.

The discussion of news collection practices in Chapter 10 provided an explanation for the prevalence of crime news concerning the youth population as a whole. Crime is newsworthy, it is exotic, it arouses desire, and because of the accessibility of police and court sources, crime news provides a cheap, easy, profitable source of news. The costs down the line, the social costs, in terms of the impact on the lives and liberties of Aboriginal young people, are something else. This was essentially Commissioner Dodson's concern: that this overemphasis on crime news fed the matrix of circumstances that gave rise to Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

*The West Australian*'s focus on crime, then, is significantly structural and institutional in origin, arising from the natural rhythms of the production of news text. Its routine practices ensure a mass of volume of crime news. Because Aboriginal young people are institutionally overrepresented in the criminal and judicial system, this has the effect of concentrating discourse about Aboriginal young people into the subject of crime. The same processes relegate other Aboriginal news, other truth about Aboriginal people, to silence or to the quietest of background voices. Where broader issues of justice or poverty or land are raised, the are raised within this already existing, hugely dominant
frame of criminality. The volume of crime news creates a frame in which *The West Australian*, and, according to Trigger and Waddell (1990) and Palmer and Collard (1993), the audiences of *The West Australian*, learn to read Aboriginality and to understand what it means.

The newspaper, when it speaks in its own voice, is often genuinely interested in questions of justice and poverty and land. Generally, hard-line views communicated in the newspaper are those of its sources, rather than those of the newspaper itself. Increasingly, over perhaps the last five years, editorial comment has expressed views that are sympathetic to Aboriginal problems, concerned about the rate of Aboriginal imprisonment and the effect of crime control measures specifically on Aboriginal people, convinced of the origin of Aboriginal criminality in poverty, lack of education, dispossession, and general adverse social conditions (editorial, 31/12/91:10). This is true even in the emotional turmoil of writing about tragic events for which Aboriginal young people were to blame, such as the deaths of Mario Ambrosino (6/4/90:1) or Margaret and Shane Blurton (27/12/91:10) in collisions with stolen cars driven dangerously by Aboriginal young people. Unlike many of its most influential sources, the newspaper generally makes sense of Aboriginal crime within a liberal criminological discourse that focuses on prevention rather than punishment, and the social origins of crime rather than individual fault or inherent propensity, although the immediate focus of its analysis often rests with the immediate family and the responsibility of families to control young people.

Within this flux of frameworks for embracing Aboriginality, however, a fundamental truth remains. Whatever the causes (and *The West Australian* gives significant room to discussion of causes), whatever the solutions (and *The West Australian* also gives room to discussion of solutions), no matter how aware the newspaper is of routine injustice against Aboriginal people, no matter how sympathetic a treatment the issues are given, the fact is that the Aboriginal face in the newspaper is a criminal face. Aboriginality is constructed within the newspaper in discourses of criminality. In *The West Australian*,
Aboriginal culture, whatever its strengths, whatever its beauty, whatever its mitigation, is a culture of crime. Different explanations can be given for this, some sympathetic, some antagonistic, but the frame itself is not disputed, even by Aboriginal commentators (e.g. 14/5/90:13; 2/4/91:11; 12/7/91:7; 13/1/92:20). It is unthinkable that any commentator could say that they were not concerned about or interested in Aboriginal juvenile crime.

Consequences

I have generally avoided discussion of the social consequences of newspaper representations in this study, on the grounds that the study confines itself to the text rather than conducting audience surveys, and audience effects cannot be read off in a straightforward manner from the way a message is encoded. However, some comment, I believe, is justified here not only on my own perceptions of the way that Aboriginal young people are regarded in the Western Australian community but on the basis of (admittedly limited) research conducted by David Trigger and others as part of the background to the RCIADIC documents. In addition, there is considerable evidence of such consequences in the newspaper texts themselves.

It should not need to be said that the lives of Aboriginal people are not constituted by crime. While intervention by police and the courts is an experience that is not uncommon in Aboriginal families, and while Aboriginal young people in public places are rarely far from police inquiry, the daily lives of most Aboriginal people are constituted by other things - work, looking after children, sleep, housework, relationships, travel, study, going out, cooking food and eating it and clearing up afterwards. As Palmer and Collard argue (1993:22), police sources have indicated that only a small percentage, no more than a hundred Nyungar young people, engage in the kind of criminal life which is often assumed to be the Nyungar standard.
The construction as criminal raises difficulties for Aboriginal people in terms of the intensity of police surveillance and intervention; patterns of sentencing that incarcerate Aboriginal young people earlier and for longer than their white peers and makes access to parole less available; the climate of fear and suspicion that surrounds Aboriginal young people on the street; the flow-throughs of an assumption of potential criminality into prejudicial treatment in applying for jobs or in access denied to entertainments or hotels. The way that discourse leavens lived lives in this environment is pointedly expressed in the bumper sticker parody of the Community Policing cartoon character Constable Care: Constable Care says don't be black

My comments in this regard will be brief, a reflection on two stories written in The West Australian which give some evidence of the consequences of a dominant linkage between Aboriginality and crime in popular discourse. The first was reported in September 1991 (11/9/91:2). In this story, an Aboriginal young man in a country town was apprehended by an off-duty police officer, deprived of his liberty and assaulted because he was wearing expensive sunglasses. In fact, the young man was a top athlete, a surfer, and the glasses were part of a sponsorship deal. But the assumption of criminality was inescapable for the officer, who despite the most intensive of inquiries, could not be brought to believe that the glasses were obtained in any but a criminal manner. The only ground for this was the fact that the young man was Aboriginal. A series of similar stories through August and September of 1991\(^3\), are woven in The West Australian into a narrative in which extreme and violent intervention by police is practiced against totally innocent Aboriginal citizens because of a suspicion of criminal acts based only on the flimsiest of evidence - or on no evidence at all.

The second does not actually mention Aboriginal young people. It relates to an attempt by the Western Australian police force to respond to the "moral panic" about juvenile

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\(^3\) beginning with the apprehension of two Aboriginal actors by the para-military Tactical Response Group in August 1991
crime by a more intensive street policing practice. The intention was to decrease street crime, or at least the perception of risk of street crime, by "harassing potential offenders" (19/2/92:3). The phrase, as Human Rights Commissioner Brian Burdekin noted, raises chilling implications. The question, unacknowledged and unanswered by Acting Commissioner Zanetti in his polemic with Burdekin, is how police officers might know a "potential offender" when they saw one. "Potential offenders" do not declare themselves: they must be identified according to pre-existing schemas in the mind of a police officer. The logic is inescapable: a potential offender is a young person who is black.

The newspaper, desire and the construction of the "Other": reflections

I noted in the introduction to this chapter that the text reveals not only stories of the lives of others, but also the gaze of the narrator and the "imaginary community" (Anderson 1983) for which the narrator writes and which participates, in absentia, in the telling of the story. In their exploration of Aboriginalism, writers like Palmer and Collard (1993), Bain Attwood (1992), Marcia Langton (1993) and Stephen Muecke (1992a,b) push us to inquire into the mind of the narrator who constructs, as well as (or rather than) the object who is constructed. In a different context, Muecke urges the potential student of "Aboriginal Studies" to interrogate the desire to study the "Other", to inquire what satisfaction is to be gained from the encounter with the Aboriginal (Muecke 1992b).

The same question arises about reading newspapers. Newspaper text is constructed out of desire. The news organisation manufactures material which will connect with the desire of a people, who will then consume the images and stories and constructions offered for sale every time the newspaper hits the street or is thrown over a fence. The material is constructed in order to connect with this desire: that is its purpose, and a
newspaper succeeds or fails according to its success in making the connection. The appearance (particularly the regular appearance) of material in a newspaper, is indicative of features in the landscape of desire of an audience, or at least what newspaper producers believe will find a home in that landscape of desire. What can a reading of the text tell about what pleasure there is to be found in images of Aboriginal young people with a criminal face, or of young criminals with an Aboriginal face? What utility does the production of these representations offer?

Answers to these questions can only be tentative, subjective. While analysis of the texts can tell us something, the study of "uses and gratifications" in media studies tells us that such utility is unpredictable (Turner and Cunningham 1993). News may appear only as an incidental, and unwelcome, conveyance for desired products within the newspaper but outside the news. But the news is an important part of a commodity package which now includes classified advertisements, sports fixtures, literary and artistic criticism, comics, fashion, magazine sections, television guides - all designed to find and hold the largest audience possible. What the texts can tell us is what newspaper producers believe will satisfy desire, what headlines will seduce the news-stand browser.

In discussing the construction of the "traditional Aborigine" as Other, Bain Attwood observes that

the category of the "self" or the group is fashioned through the construction of an Other, which is outside and opposite, and that the making of an identity rests on negating, repressing or excluding things antithetical to it. By creating such binary opposition (s), the heterogenety and difference within the former category is displaced and so the unitary self or group is manufactured...Hence, Europeans have forged a collective identity through a discourse that sets them apart from non-Europeans, especially "the Aborigines". In particular, many European Australians have constructed Aborigines as the primordial or primitive other, a paradigm of originality and antiquity.

Attwood 1992:3

But it is not in this role that Aboriginal young people appear in the newspaper. The Aboriginal figure in the newspaper is a creature of the city, a figure of the street, a figure of the night. He is the one who climbs through the window at night, who enters your
home, and by entering, violates it. He is the one who appropriates your car, who steals with this car a "status symbol", this wordless declaration of position and prosperity in which you go about in public every day, who appropriates its meaning without doing a single day's work to acquire it, and who returns it spoiled. He, even she, is the one at whose hand nameless and irrational death may come, as the stolen car is driven irrationally, without regard for the rules, in a reckless flight from Order.

He is therefore no longer the personification of the landscape, against which we have to defend ourselves by our flight into Civilisation (Brady 1981). He is not the icon of antiquity, of a human unspoiled by Civilisation, a child of nature. He is a creature of Civilisation, of modernity, the irrational side of Reason, the shadow at the limit of the street light.

In this role, Aboriginal youth is essentially unknowable\textsuperscript{94}. Editorials of The West Australian, in their attempt to make rational comment, find some satisfaction in liberal criminological discourse. Journalists constructing news columns solicit opinion from experts in criminology and set them against the conservative, essentialist discourse of police and the rhetoric of fear of "victims of crime" in order to construct the "balanced reporting" required of them. But these rationalist discourses fail at the recognition of the irrationality of Aboriginal youth crime. Alston's vivid and derisive cartoon depicting a dressing-gowned and fatherly character running out of his front door to confront a gang of youths with jemmy-bars surrounding his car, and shouting "Stop... I'm a psychologist!!" (1/1/91:10) is a poignant expression of this failure. The 20,000 strong Rally for Justice (21/8/91:1), in all its fear, its anger, its grief and its helplessness, is another.

\textsuperscript{94} This is, of course, distinctive of the Other. The Other can not be known, and yet in all its irrationality, stands in for an explanation. Once it is known that a crime was committed by an Aboriginal youth, nothing more needs to be said, no motive needs to be known, no further explanation is required.
The construction of the criminal with the young Aboriginal face serves then to displace fear onto some other. There is cause for anxiety: surviving an alienated life depends on the thin padding of commodities, for which we have worked hard and which are fragile and easily lost in the inherently unstable economic system in which we live. Making a living, in a city designed around a piece of individual transport technology, depends on the technology being ready and working, and we are vulnerable. Suburbia means an isolated house unconnected, undefended and surrounded by darkness. Our lives are enclosed in the massive infrastructure of Civilisation, and yet Civilisation is a brittle veneer over chaos, and death, despite all our artifice, is always at our elbow.

These structures of insecurity do not originate with Aboriginal people. They are ours. By reading the criminal act in the pages of the newspaper we are able to taste our fear, but vicariously, from the safe distance of the voyeur. By ascribing it to youth, to Aboriginals, to Aboriginal youth, we are able to cast the nameless darkness in the form of an object unknowable and irrational, but already conquered. More importantly, we cast it outside ourselves. We are free to continue our lives in the knowledge that we, at least, are rational, lawful, peaceable, decent, hardworking, honest.

It is not a question then of the truth of the representation of Aboriginal young people in the newspaper. Aboriginal young people may or may not offend more than white young people, or more than middle class men. In the interrogation of the news, that question is almost irrelevant, for the representation of Aboriginal young people is not about Aboriginal young people. The construction of them as Other is not about them, it is about us.
Part Four: problems, professions, and the representation of youth in *The West Australian*
Part Three of the thesis, in the analysis of the construction of youth, pointed towards a political contest about how youth is to be constituted in the public sphere. Different authorities have different interests in the construction either of events or of individual young people, and the study examined the rich resource in language which is available to institutions and interested parties in their quest for command and closure in public understandings of youth and the incidents and issues which involve them. It is clear that an institutional location gives speakers a particular understanding of youth and ideas about what should be done with them, and often establishes goals about a professions' or institutions' own role in the control of the youth problem.

Part Four explores how speakers from different institutional or professional locations construct youth differently. In some cases, the struggle to make a construction stick is part of an open conflict, written in polemic. In some cases, it is more a question of a profession continuing to assert its prerogatives. Generally, however, the act of engaging with the newspaper is a political act, and the engagements themselves are highly structured.

It needs to be borne in mind that the sources analysed in this section speak through the newspaper. I do not have access to the original press statements or interview transcripts, and I have argued already that the newspaper is not a forum for the free exchange of ideas, but has its own interests and its own discursive frames, so these sources have been heavily processed. The nature of the news process is such that some elements of professional discourses are preserved in their representations in the newspaper, while some are masked, or subject to fragmentation in the process of their public consumption. Methodologically, this makes things a little difficult. Nevertheless, there are patterns and regularities in the way that particular groups speak in the newspaper that make it likely that many features are original, rather than a redactional effect of journalists' and editors' treatment. The absence of “adolescent” or “young person” from the speech of police officers or the almost exclusive use of “adolescent” by health professionals and experts is not a redactional feature.
The particularities of different professional representations of youth, mediated as they are, can be achieved by looking at the texts from several directions. The database registered several different features, including source, issue, language and genre. Who speaks, in which context and about which particular youth problem, using what language and in what mode of communication are all significant and connected in the construction of discourse around youth. In some cases, I have identified a source category such as police or youth worker, and read features of their representation of youth from the texts in which these sources speak. In others, I have identified an issue category like education, and used the debate around an issue to identify the representations of youth being used by professionals involved in the debate, or the fractures in professional discourses manifested by their exposure in the newspaper. Generally, the features identified as sources, issues and language correlate to provide a composite picture of the way that different groups speak of youth. Part Four explores some of these features.
13 Crime and the "juvenile"

A number of problems arise in the analysis of news about youth crime. The first is the sheer quantity of material: 1,648 of the articles on file are predominantly about crime. The second is the diversity of commentators on the subject, ranging from police to academics and visiting experts to government ministers to youth workers to community legal centres to offenders themselves. Within this range of comment there are commonalities but also marked discontinuities in the framing of discourse to deal with young people to whom criminal behaviour is attributed. This chapter deals with the dominant sources offering commentary on the issue of juvenile crime.

The discontinuities in the representation of youth reflect different institutional and professional positions, and are actively constructed as conflict (27/6/90:8). Crime is the most active and contested field in the landscape of youth issues, and the field where the failures of the quest for the government of youth are most publicly displayed. Conflicting ideological frameworks underlie the different attempts to achieve dominance in the construction of the problem of "juvenile crime", and surface in open debate in the letters to the editor, in debates around specific policy developments, in the positioning around issues like criticism of police and the rights of victims.

There are some commonalities. All commentators on youth crime use the term "juvenile", though for some, it is not the term of preference, and the precise usage of the term varies. Youth advocates, for example, avoid the doubly-negative "juvenile offender" and the use of "juvenile" as a singular noun. They will, however, use the term in various collective forms, including the non-specific plural "juveniles", and as an
adjective in terms like "juvenile crime". "Teenagers" is also used by most commentators, although it is not the term of preference for police. Analysis of its usage is complicated by the fact that it is one of the terms that journalists themselves use to make professional discourses more accessible\textsuperscript{95}.

The major professional discursive frames are discussed below.

### Police

Police discourse in the newspaper requires special attention, because police sources occupy a special place in the register of commentators on youth. Police sources are the most frequent of commentators in articles about young people, offering comment in one out of every four articles. Media researchers such as Grabosky and Wilson (1989) and Chibnall (1977) have argued that, as a result of the media's dependence on the police for news, a close relationship develops between media personnel and police, a relationship in which the police are dominant. I have already mentioned comment during the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody, where Commissioner Dodson heard evidence from a former journalist that "Police handed the media a big portion of their bread and butter". According to the journalist, "it was not uncommon for unedited police media releases to go into a newspaper", and that "stories would not get printed if they were critical of police, who had regular meetings with editors and supplied many of the headlines" \textit{(The West Australian 10/5/91:33)}.

According to Grabosky and Wilson, this relationship is managed by police sources to "assist the police in operational matters or improve the public's understanding of the police" (1989:36). The construction of youth within police discourse needs to be read in that light: as police sources present news on youth, they do so in order to construct a

\textsuperscript{95} Gaye McNamara, personal conversation, 7/9/94
public perception of the police. Youth is therefore always to some extent a foil, an object of police work, in which the action of police and the community's dependence on them is the primary message (5/10/94:1,2). Constructions of youth which portray them as a threat, as a danger, as a mob, enhance the profile of police and the regard in which they are held. Police are not concerned with the effects of labelling and stereotyping that dominate the liberal construction of the young subject. Police sources do not avoid "negative" constructions, they are unconcerned about gender inclusivity. The repeated use of doubly-negative and stigmatising terms like "juvenile offender" is common, and while police generally deal with the press in official discourse which avoids colloquialism, where comment moves into the informal register police are comfortable with terms like "thug" and "hooligan" (19/5/90:6). Police are sources in 82% of articles in which the explicitly criminal term "juvenile" is used.

Police sources rarely speak about youth as such. Police do not get into discussions about the nature of adolescence. Indeed, the discursive categories of "adolescence", which present the young subject as an object requiring explanation in psychological or medical terms, or "young people", which present the subject in social and political terms, are not used by police96. Explanation is offered about the perceived behaviour of young people, and the causes of such behaviour, but the explanations are generally to do with the failure of other, prior, policing practices like the family and the school which have resulted in the presence of young people within the beat of police: in public space, on the street, out at night. The school is not exempted from this, but the target of police criticism, even when the evident site of failure is the school, is most frequently the parents (5/9/90:3, 8/12/90:8, 19/6/91:5).

Youth is thus constructed as an object of policing practices. Police sources rarely attribute real agency or subjectivity to young people. Primarily, police are concerned

96 "Adolescence" was never used by police in the collection on file. "Young people" was used twice, once by the secretary of the Police Union in the incident cited above, the other in a comment by a police officer working as a youth worker regarding Blue Light Discos
with the public and external identification of young people: they are not concerned with their subjectivity, which is the job of other agencies like the family and the school or more generally, "the community" (29/11/90:10). Youth is a population to be controlled, and the role of the police is to act when the regular policing practices fail, and to place young people back within the ambit of the institutions of school and family (5/9/90:3). Police act in the breach, when the policing of other agencies breaks down.

The police truancy patrols, which stop and question young people abroad in the daytime, are one expression of this. While in the case of school truants this strategy has institutional support, their attempt to place young people back in carceral care founders on the problem of youth unemployment, an anomaly in the governance of young people that allows them to be legitimately out and about. The vast majority of young people stopped and questioned by truancy patrols have been unemployed (27/12/91:3). At the time of writing, a major police exercise is in operation in inner-city Perth, code-named "Operation Family Values", in which young people in public places who have not committed any offence and are under no suspicion of committing an offence are taken into custody, their parents telephoned and asked to come and pick them up. Effectively, the scheme amounts to a curfew on young people on inner-city streets.

Youth is not an undifferentiated object in the discourse of police, however: the categories of virtue and agency still apply, and the language attributed to police sources is highly gendered (20/3/92:5). Police operate with several different schemes of classification of the young.

One of these is the category of the criminal. Youth as criminal is defined by career: rapist, car thief, arsonist, thief, joy-rider, demonstrator, drug user, heroin addict, murderer, bag-snatcher; and within these categories, as professional or petty. Assessments are made of their ability, or, in police discourse, "resourcefulness" (20/6/90:3). Another is that of the criminal-at-large, the "escapee", the "suspect" or the "person wanted for police questioning". Here, the subject is classified in terms of their
potential for violence. He (women are not classified under this register) is "considered
dangerous" or "not considered dangerous", or "has a history of violence". In one
fascinating example (10/7/90:13), in which the subject was named publicly (and
illegally), these categories were stretched to embrace "may become violent" - a
classification about which the police and Department for Community Development\textsuperscript{97}
authorities disagreed. Here, arguably, the subject was constructed in the violent-
criminal category in order to justify the illegal publication of his name. He also
happened to be Aboriginal.

Formal police discourse also segments the youth population by age. Two sets of
categories operate here. In the first, a person under the age of eighteen is a juvenile;
over eighteen years they become an adult. This relates to legal categories: however the
discourse of the law uses "minor" (which police do not use at all in the collection on
file) rather than "juvenile". Note that "minor" carries no connotation other than a
person's status before the law, while "juvenile" carries a criminal connotation.

The more detailed formal apparatus divides youth into three brackets: up to sixteen
years, sixteen to eighteen\textsuperscript{98}, and over eighteen. A young person up to the age of sixteen
is a child/boy/girl; from sixteen to eighteen is a youth/girl; over eighteen is a
man/woman. Thus the curious formulation "19-year-old adult" (19/6/91: 5) is used to
distinguish the subject from 14-17 year old "youths" also involved in criminal activity
in the same article. 97% of articles in which "man" is used, and 79% of those using
"woman", were principally about crime or misadventure such as traffic accidents,
incidents in which police sources play central roles.

The sixteen to eighteen bracket is especially interesting here. Formal police discourse
only has a male-gendered word for a person in this category. There is no gender-free

\textsuperscript{97} The Government authority responsible for administering juvenile prisons
\textsuperscript{98} Though note that the lower age is flexible, and can go as low as fourteen
word, parallel to "child" or "adult", nor is there a female term. Young women are "girls" in formal police discourse up until the age of eighteen. The lexicon indicates a particular visibility for "youths", for young men in this age category, and a particular lack of differentiation, and perhaps visibility, for young women.

This construction of "youth" or "youths", a young male subject of police attention, is the most frequent signifier in the collection on file. Its dominance creates a clearer object amidst the complexity of police dealing with young people, an object of policing, an undifferentiated category which can be dealt with in ways that are less subject to the intrusion of the subjectivity of the person policed. "Youths" are universally and uncontroversially potential delinquents, categories of person into whose lives police should have unrestricted rights of intervention. Thus, Assistant Police Commissioner Zanetti, on two separate occasions, (19/5/90:6, 7/3/92:5) defended the police's decision to "stop, question and search any group of youths walking or driving in the early hours of the morning" or to "harass potential offenders" as part of a policy of getting "tough on Perth's hooligan element". The decision, having become public, is contested by human rights and youth sector spokespeople, but these sources do not use "youths" in their discourse. The police position is defended by the Police Minister on both occasions, who moves more strongly into colloquial language to put his position:

...it must seen that his hard line. is an attack on a group of hooligans who have no respect for law and order.

19/5/90:6

Regarding the dispute over the word "harass", the Minister believed the harassment meant targeting a group to protect the public and said: "Surely that's what police are about " he had asked the commissioner at the time to "put in place some strategies that were going to pull these young thugs on and provide some protection for the community"

6/3/92:4

The formal registers of police discourse, like those of other professions, are substantially modified in practice in the newspaper. While articles based on police discourse will generally mirror the formal categories, journalists will modify texts to make them accessible, "to translate the specialized knowledges and concerns of sources into the
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locations of the readership or audience" (Ericson, Baranek and Chan 1987:17), or because the formal categories run counter to popular meaning. The probably unmodified example of "nineteen year old adult", while accommodating police categories, is not a sensible construction. Police themselves will also modify their communication with the newspaper for the same reason. "Woman" thus may become "young woman" in the newspaper.

The informal register can be an important feature of the way police speak of young people in the paper. Police deal with young people in a range of contexts, and a discursive frame shifts as the context, and therefore the object of police attention, changes. The victim of crime, the accident victim, and the missing person are not subject to police attention in the same way as the offender, whether actual or "potential". They are not arrested, are not charged, and are constructed differently in discourse. Once outside the formality of the official police report, the language softens: fifteen year olds become "boys" again (3/6/90:12), an eighteen-year-old becomes a "teenager" (31/1/92:3), a murder victim who is a "man" in the formality of the initial report becomes a "nice young fellow" and a "nice bloke" once identified (17/11/90:9). Girls are addressed more consistently: their construction as "girls" is more homogenous, and ideologies of feminine passivity allow them to be constructed as victim, whether they be offenders or offended against.

This general picture of the construction of youth in police discourse can be usefully illustrated by reference to the way a local police officer talks about youth rowdiness at a holiday resort. In the article, "Police blame parents for rowdy youths" (8/12/90:8), the officer gives extended comment on the situation in the resort as he sees it, and his analysis of where the problem originates.

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99 See chapter 11

100 Moral panics about young people on holiday weekends at beach resorts are iconic (see Cohen 1972) What is unusual about this one is that there is no panic except for that of the police officer
Rottnest is a small island off the Perth coast and a popular beach resort, sleepy and laid-back in a kind of Australian adaptation of a Greek island. In the last few years, a local tradition of Misrule has developed where finishing students go to Rottnest when exams are over to squander the tension of exam week in drinking and carousing. The island is isolated from the mainland, accessible only by sea and air, and apart from official vehicles and delivery vehicles, there are no cars. Although the general tone of "Police blame parents for rowdy youths" is one of bemusement, the local police sergeant is angry. There are a number of points to his concern.

The major concern is that the young people are there alone, without parental supervision. "For the last three weeks, Sgt Turnor has dealt with teenagers fornicating on roadsides and on beaches, smoking cannabis, drinking under-age, drinking on reserves, drinking to excess, urinating in public, swearing and living in squalor". What is worse, this state of affairs seems to be condoned by parents, "many of them doctors and lawyers", who "pick up the keys to apartments for their under-age children and then left", apparently believing "the kids should be let loose to do what they please".

"Accusing the parents of not caring, Sgt Turnor said their negligence bordered on the illegal under the Child Welfare Act". Most holiday makers were under 18. "Many were as young as 14 or 15."

In this mayhem, accommodation was frequently overcrowded, with friends crashing, sleeping on the floor and on verandahs. "Units designed for five or six were often occupied by 30 students". Such overcrowding represents "a health hazard". "Some of those units are littered with chicken bones, beer cans, and one was covered in snotty tissues... Last weekend we had plumbers working on the sewerage system constantly to stop it packing up".

The young people also drink. The sergeant detailed bar sales for the weekends in question. The drinking led to other things.
"I worry most about the girls" Sgt Turnor said. "Some of them get so drunk they just don't know what they are doing, and most of the boys here are only interested in sex".

This construction omits the possibility that the girls are also only interested in sex, and the reverse possibility, that drunken boys might have sex which they regret later, is also not considered. It has been noted before in analyses of the disciplining of sex that it is the morality of women that must be policed (Carrington 1993:28), and this discourse is maintained here.

There are other problems with alcohol too. While "police admit that violence and sexual assault is uncommon" such problems include "loud music and voices, swearing and alcohol-induced behaviour such as dancing on unit roofs...theft was also a problem. Youths had broken into one unit for breakfast...stealing cornflakes and milk."

The sergeant is working in three language frames here. When speaking of the responsibilities of parents to police their sons and daughters, he uses the child/adult frame. When speaking of the sexual vulnerability of young women influenced by alcohol, he uses the boy/girl frame. When speaking of young men involved in illegalities, he uses "youth". 17 year old men are described at different points in the article as children, boys and youths. Young women are always called girls by the police officer in this example.

The tension in the article is that generally, apart from boisterousness, the young people are behaving rather well. There is little opportunity for the police to impose their rule in the absence of parents because the young people are not rioting, not fighting, not breaking things. There are no significant problems with violence or property offences. The manager of the Rottnest Island board, the authority responsible for managing the resort thought the young people were behaving "better than expected", although he "was concerned the youths did not spend their time more productively" and "was planning to introduce inter-varsity beach games such as cricket and volleyball next year".

Interviews with family groups revealed that they "appeared not to mind sharing
the island with the youngsters". The good sergeant is reduced to listing several categories of under-age drinking and breaches of health regulations as the basis for his protest.

The problem is that while their behaviour is nothing more than unruly, they are not being effectively policed by those institutions whose job it is to provide primary rule. The manager of the Board, while he doesn't share the sergeant's anger, sees this too, and wants to organise them into teams to play sports, seeing this as "more productive" than their current recreations, which primarily consist of sex, drugs and rock and roll. The primary institutions have neglected their duty, the wall of policing around young people has been breached, and the police, in the presence of the consent of parents, are impotent.

The courts

There are significant overlaps between the language of police and the language of the courts. This is not surprising: police are a major contributor to court proceedings, and frameworks prevailing in the courts would also be expected to have their impact on police who appear before them.

However, there are fundamental differences in the way that youth is constructed in the courtroom. The discourse of police is fashioned to identify offenders and bring them before the courts, or to construct a particular regime of order in public places. As such, it is not designed to inquire into the interior life of the individual, to interrogate their subjectivity. Youth is an object of policing practices, and their subjectivity is of interest only in the establishment of motive for the purposes of ascertaining guilt. Even in this case, the construction of youth (and especially Aboriginal youth) as Other and therefore unknowable means that inquiries into motive are often limited. Youth crimes are not necessarily assumed to be rational.
On the other hand, the discipline of the Children's Court, and through the court, the discourse of lawyers and judges and magistrates is precisely interested in the subjectivity of the young person who stands accused of an offence. It is not only a question of whether a law was broken, and whether the person before the bench was the one who broke it. Indeed, it often appears that this is a secondary matter: articles from the court routinely report that the suspect pleaded guilty. The process of the court requires a detailed interrogation of the offender's subjective state (through the representations of defence counsel where available, through the device of pre-sentencing reports supplied by Department for Community Development authorities, and through psychological or psychiatric reports) in order to establish the aetiology of the act, to determine the relationship between the offender and the act, to fix the offender and the offence on a grid for governance.

The axes of this grid again include agency (the extent to which the offender was a rational agent who chose his or her act) and virtue (the extent to which the offender is a good or bad person). The judgement on these questions is made by considering a number of factors.

Court discourse bears the knowledges, developed in discourses of juvenile delinquency, about the sociological influences on offending behaviour. Analyses of these factors have an overt role to play in the deliberation of the court. The failure of institutions like the family, the general influence of poverty, the existence of prior trauma (especially sexual abuse) turn down the volume knob on agency. A lawyer making representation for a 16 year old client (20/6/90:5) puts it this way.

Mr Richard Hewitt, a lawyer for one youth, said the gang seemed to have a will of its own. He said that with Aboriginal youths like the two, who had difficult family backgrounds and who lived in a particular area, their involvement in crime was like Newton's law of gravity: inevitable

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101 According to Bruce Mohen, Acting Project Officer of the Children's Court, only five percent of young people plead not guilty (interview, 14/9/94)
Defence attempts here to constitute the subject as a passive product of social forces. If the lawyer is able to make this construction stick, the degree of moral responsibility, of agency, and therefore of blame will be reduced. In court, this construction means that the offender will be given the benefit of time and whatever resources the court can provide to allow the play of social forces to change, providing that some hope of change can be offered. It will help if forces are already at work to reconstitute his social environment and to discipline his body. Chief among these is employment, though reconstitution of family is also important.

The other youth, who admitted about 40 offences, said he wanted to go to Darwin to live with an uncle who was a ranger in Kakadu national park. His lawyer, Mr Dave Singh, said the youth had a drinking problem and his family were all Christians who did not drink. They would also help the youth to get a job.

20/6/90:5

The court weighs the influence of social factors, weighs the options available to the court, weighs the effect of previous decisions in reshaping the subject before it, makes a judgement about the offender's will to cooperate in his or her self-formation. The court will then apply a mix of punitive and non-punitive techniques in order to reshape the subjectivity of the offender, to achieve his or her discipline.

The alternative is to construct the offender as a conscious, active and therefore culpable agent. So, in the trial of "Dannie Adam Wright, 17", the judge ruled that "the crime had been a deliberate and wanton act of destruction, committed while Wright was under the influence of alcohol and drugs" (28/4/90:30). Such a judgement may also be made if the offender has, over time, resisted the ministrations of the court and its agencies.

An Aboriginal youth with an "appalling" record of crimes since the age of 13 was given a stern lecture and then a long prison sentence by a Supreme Court Judge yesterday. Justice Murray said that while Shane Samuel Morrison's upbringing caused the court great distress the time had now come to accept responsibility for his actions.

Morrison, 19, had been shown leniency in the past but those days were now gone as he entered manhood, said the judge.

"Your history shows that very many efforts have been made in the courts to show you leniency and try to deal with you in ways which would demonstrate the risks you run from continuing to offend"

This had been done without sending Morrison to prison, said the judge. The time for doing it had now passed.
The judge made no order for parole, adding that Morrison had "thrown away" his chances in the past.

In another case in which a young man breaches parole, his lawyer argues that
...initially, he did not take his obligations as seriously as he might have. But now he was a very different young man.
Realising he was facing a term in Fremantle jail, he had stopped thumbing his nose at society and was taking responsibility for his actions.
Miss O'Neil submitted that Parry should be given one last chance...

In this case, the court determined that the goal of reshaping the subject to "take responsibility for his actions" had not succeeded, and sentenced Parry to three years in prison. The breach of parole was constituted by the offence of using obscene language to a police officer.

The contest for the construction of the juvenile offender

The construction of the young subject that sees him or her as a product of background, of social forces, versus the construction that sees the subject as acting from choice out of evil intent, is a matter for live dispute in the pages of the newspaper. Generally, this is phrased in terms of calls for "harsher sentences" or "get tough" approaches. Assistant Commissioner Zanetti called on the courts to take a firmer line with young criminals who were putting people's lives at risk.
"They will go before the courts and we'll be expecting those in the courts to do their job as we are expected to do"

One of the issues here is the toughness of sentences. Zanetti positions himself and the police force against the Children's Court, personalised in the form of its President, Judge Hal Jackson, nicknamed "no action Jackson" in police and popular discourse after controversial manslaughter sentences in the Nicholas Meredith case (14/6/90:15, 21/8/91:3). But the central issue here is not the toughness of sentences. It is the whole discourse of youth under which the different parties are operating. The contest over this reached its peak in the public crisis of August 1991 that found expression in the "Rally
for Justice", a mass demonstration involving about 20,000 people. The immediate spur to the organisation of the Rally was the eighteen month prison sentence handed out, again by Judge Hal Jackson, to an offender involved in a high speed chase which ended in the death of motorcyclist Neville Watson (26/7/91:9). The Opposition immediately called for the sentence to be appealed, and the Police Minister called the sentence "pathetic". According to Police Commissioner Bull, the sentence was not appealed because Judge Jackson had been precise and correct in his application of the law.

Mr Bull said the chief crown prosecutor had advised that the sentencing judge had followed all of the principles laid down by the appeals courts. There had been no mistake in law and the sentence was in line with previous sentences for like offences.

16/8/91:3

The rally and the ensuing debate concentrated on sentencing, and how the actions and persons of young offenders should be constituted. At its simplest, again, this was a demand for longer prison terms, and a perception that the courts were too lenient. The Rally demanded that judicial discretion be removed by the establishment of mandatory sentencing (21/8/91:3). This populist approach had been supported for some time by the Opposition (4/5/91:20). Opposition policy had earlier declared, in its argument for a reduction of the age of criminal responsibility for eighteen to sixteen\(^{102}\), that violent crime indicated adulthood.

Violent juveniles should be dealt with on the same basis and receive the same penalties as adults, Opposition justice spokesman Derrick Tomlinson said yesterday.

Mr Tomlinson said violent crimes tended to be more prevalent among offenders sixteen and over, while under that age they tended to steal and vandalise.

"An act of violence against any member of the community is an adult crime and should be dealt with in the courts as such," he said.

5/4/91:14

So, in commenting on car theft, the Leader of the Opposition attempted to redefine culpability in terms of the event itself, rather in the disposition of the offender.

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\(^{102}\) Though interestingly, in the debate around reform of laws on homosexuality and policies on youth homelessness, the Liberal Opposition argued strongly against sixteen as an age of responsibility. It is clear that this assumption of the age of adulthood relates only to crime. In a construction familiar to young people, you are adult only when you are paying, never when you are being paid.
In this construction, an act in which a stolen car is driven in a way that endangers life indicates adult agency. Therefore, a construction of youth in which the action of young people is overdetermined by social forces should make way for the assumption of individual, rational agency and therefore criminal responsibility. One of the formal demands of the Rally for Justice was "Adult punishments to be given for adult crimes" (21/8/91:3). The demand found expression in the slogan, written on a placard carried by high school students in the Rally, "Do the crime, pay the time" (20/8/91:15).

Judge Jackson had argued publicly against the Opposition's position when it was first announced.

Judge Jackson said the single most common characteristic of teenage boys coming before the courts was that they didn't have a caring natural father - a problem to which neither the police, courts nor prison system had the answers.

After going on to discuss other social origins for offending behaviour, like youth unemployment and the spread of drugs, Jackson concludes:

Many of the children who get into these situations have severe disadvantages. The offending is just a symptom of the problems and until the problems are addressed, nothing is going to change.

Judge Jackson's argument is not simply about the length of sentences. His response to the Liberal Party policy indicates that beyond the overt demand for longer sentences was a claim for a different frame of construction for youth crime. The two major dimensions of this were the incorporation of considerations of protection for the community from the behaviour of repeat offenders (of whom the young person involved in Neville Watson's death was one), and the statutory assumption of criminal responsibility for certain kinds of acts.

This dispute around the social origin of delinquency versus the individual responsibility of the offender has a long history in criminological discourse generally (Coventry & Polk 1985), though the situation of the juvenile delinquent has been a beach-head of resistance to positivist criminologies which see the origin of criminal acts only in the
will of the criminal. The Labor Government had expressed agreement with the former position in a number of documents and statements published throughout 1990 and 1991. In a statement replying to the Opposition announcement of April 1991, and headlined "More jail not the answer", the Premier Dr Carmen Lawrence argued entirely within the conventional liberal discourses of delinquency.

Premier Carmen Lawrence yesterday rejected calls for increased jail terms for car thieves, saying optional forms of punishment should be used.

"My understanding is there's a hard core of repeat offenders generally, not just in relation to car theft, and these are people who are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"These people need specialised attention. In some cases they need to be detained, especially where there are crimes of violence, but we need to be smarter and look at alternatives, which make their lives more normal..."

Dr Lawrence said there should be more emphasis on education and employment training in jails

24/4/91:14

However, Labor's position on the matter is not free of tension. In the same article, the Police Minister Graham Edwards' statement spins contradictory fragments, saying that he did not agree with mandatory penalties, but also arguing that "hard core repeat offenders had to be taken out of circulation for 12 to 18 months to be given proper rehabilitative support that was simply not possible in three or four months", and that "it was up to the Government to make available to the courts tough options which would provide a real penalty for hard-core offenders." In this article he is not overtly outside Premier Lawrence's line, and his proposals still carry the gloss of rehabilitation, but the traces of a different discursive position are already visible. "Tough", for example, is a key word in the reform agenda (see 4/1/92:13), contrasted with "soft" (see 7/2/92:6) which is used to characterise the incumbent discourse of disadvantage.

On Christmas Day 1991, another woman and child were killed in an accident involving a stolen car driven recklessly by a "repeat offender". A few days later, according to newspaper reports, some of the Labor men including Edwards, Deputy Premier Ian

103 Premier Carmen Lawrence has a doctorate in psychology
Taylor and influential backbenchers (including Balcatta MLA Nick Catania) were having a few beers in Taylor's backyard (6/2/92:4). The question of juvenile crime came up, and after that discussion, the public face of Labor discourse on crime changed, and the decisions on sentencing which were to become the Crimes (Serious Repeat Offenders) Sentencing Act were settled. Labor's position then embraced not only mandatory sentences, but also longer sentences, indefinite detention and the principle of community protection (2/1/92:3). Lawrence, the most powerful advocate of the conventional discourse of disadvantage, was in Italy on holidays. Public statements by Edwards on January 1 and Taylor on January 5, immediately prior to (and pre-empting) a Cabinet meeting on the issue, and a letter to Taylor from Nick Catania, circulated widely during the week, effectively ambushed the debate inside Cabinet. The fundamentals of the Act were announced, in the absence of the Premier, on January 7, and once announced, the legislative policy was irretrievable, given the weight of popular opinion in favour of discourses of the juvenile as criminally responsible. Lawrence, returning from Italy on the same day, was forced to defend the policy and the contradiction between the policy and her own stated position, in terms of a "special case" for car thieves. The legislation continued to be the subject of bitter debate within the Labor Party, involving public denunciations of the legislation by prominent backbenchers (18/2/92:8) and condemnation by the Party's State Executive (25/2/92:5).

Legislation can be seen as a negotiated solution to open conflict and its attendant threat of disorder, a solution constructed in discourse, imposing disciplines on a population. The panic around juvenile crime in 1991-92 exposed fundamental differences between police and the courts, between liberals and conservatives, between Labor Government and Liberal Opposition, between conservative (male?) and liberal forces in the Labor Party itself. The Crimes (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Sentencing Act 1992 attempted to negotiate a path through the competing claims of those who were arguing for a reconstitution of the way that youth and crime should be understood (particularly as applied to reckless driving in stolen cars) and those who continued to argue within the conventional frame of the courts and of mainstream criminology for the continuation
of principles recognising the deleterious effects of the labelling process and the social origin of youth crime. The legislation incorporated some of the positions of sources which argued for the culpability of young offenders, particularly the removal of judicial discretion by the imposition of mandatory sentencing, and the incorporation of sentencing principles that privileged consideration of "community protection" over "the best interests of the child" (or the practices of reshaping of the self through the disciplines imposed by the Children's Court). However, the fundamental frame of delinquency as a product of social forces, and for disciplinary practices with "welfare" as the controlling criterion, was not displaced. The legislation acted as "trumps", requiring that in certain circumstances the normal disciplines of the Court be overridden, while leaving its essential practices and discourses intact.

However, the legislation did not effectively quieten the conflict. The announcement of the legislation satisfied those who had argued for harsher sentences, mandatory sentencing, and the adoption of discourses of the criminal responsibility of youth, and by taking some of the noise out of the debate, resolved the immediate political crisis (7/1/92:6). But it provoked a significant protest from the judiciary and the legal profession, youth work and social work sources, human rights activists and the Left of the Labor Party itself. After significant amendment, the legislation was allowed to stand, but it remained in place probably only because of its ineffectiveness and the ease with which it could be avoided. In the debate in the pages of The West Australian, the contest over the construction of youth involved in criminal action was never fully resolved, the tension remains. Discourses of punishment and criminal responsibility continue to struggle with notions of social deprivation and disadvantage for control of the juvenile crime agenda and the disciplinary practices which attend it.
The public

The contest for dominance in discourses of the juvenile was not, as is clear from the above discussion, only a contest between professionals. The social problem of juvenile crime, and especially of reckless driving involving stolen cars, was an issue that caught a wide range of people. On the limited number of platforms where "non-authorised knowers", "ordinary people", commentators who have no status as representatives of organisations, are allowed to speak in the pages of the newspaper, there is also an active and voluble stream of speech produced.

This is sometimes described as "popular discourse". There is, of course, no such thing (Bourdieu 1991:90ff). Non-institutional understandings are informed by a mash of different languages, practices and institutions. While generally the central assumptions of discourses of adolescence may be shared, fragments of historical discourses like eugenics and Social Darwinism, romantic understandings of youth, the experience of youth across a range of institutional settings, including those of one's own family, as well as the representations offered by the media in its news bulletins, its drama, its movies and its documentaries are all present in public constructions of young people. What is common about such sources is not that they share a common, disciplined discourse, but only that they have no authorised status, and therefore "stand for" the "ordinary person", whose right to be heard depends on the force of argument or the articulation of "popular opinion", the felicitous expression of common anxiety, common sense, common wisdom, the voice of the people.

"Ordinary persons" are given a freedom of language beyond that allowed to representative sources and expert opinion, and to some extent, a greater freedom of expression, except that the inclusion of their speech in the newspaper depends on it serving the newspaper's interests. A range of terms is at their disposal, including, in popular understandings of crime and the role of young men in crime, terms like yobbo, yahoo, lout, hooligan, larrikin, thug (as well as degenerate, murderer, rock ape, sewage);
and more generally, youngster, kid, teenager, tomboy. In addition, such sources also have access to the frames of official discourse, and employ the codes of official discourse in their commentary, including such terms as "offender", "juvenile", and their compounds.

The popular register is, under certain circumstances, also available to sources other than the "ordinary person". In what is commonly known as tabloid journalism, the popular register can be used by the newspaper in its own voice as a way of establishing rapport with an audience, "consolidating a community", as Fowler (1991:40) puts it, by entering into a conversational register with the imagined audience (Hodge 1979). The *West Australian* generally eschews this form of communication, allowing the popular register only in the voice of its sources, in opinion columns, and in a limited way, in articles in the "human interest" genre. The popular register is not generally within the linguistic frame of the journalistic register known as "objective reporting", and to use it in hard news stories would be to represent the newspaper as a tabloid newspaper. This would undermine *The West Australian's* representation of itself as a "serious newspaper" (Mc Quail 1987), and would also open up the market for a competing paper of the "serious" kind104.

The popular register can also be used by official sources. While spokespersons for institutions usually stay within the disciplines of official discourse, they may use the popular register if speaking as a professional but not as a spokesperson. The speech of Government Ministers, for example, may change between a situation in which Government policy is indeterminate to a situation in which it is settled. In the former, they may well take a "voice of the people" stance in promoting a particular set of

104 Note that the strategy for survival adopted by now-defunct afternoon daily *The Daily News* was to move in the tabloid direction *The Sunday Times*, the only other State-wide paper, is much further along in that direction than *The West*. If there is any vulnerability in the market at present, it is probably to a tabloid competitor (Murray 1995)
constructions. Police Minister Edwards does this in the exchanges noted above. Other experts may attempt to establish rapport in the same way.

Non-official sources generally speak on the question of youth, and more particularly the construction of youth crime, as victims, as witnesses, or in Letters to the Editor. Witness accounts are rare in the collection on file, appearing in only eight articles. Victim accounts are much more frequent, and while they are still not common, have an impact beyond their numbers by virtue of their placement, accompanying photographs, and more evocative linguistic construction. Letters to the editor constitute a major source, ranking fourth in frequency behind police, courts and government. The structure of communication varies with these different roles, as the structure of interaction between the newspaper and the source is radically different in each case.

Victims

In the case of victims of crime and witnesses, the initiative lies with the newspaper. Journalists seek out the victim for comment, and structure the presentation in line with established codes. Routinely, for example, victim comment is accompanied by a photograph: three out of every five cases - three times as many as the general sample - carry a photograph. Photographic material ensures prominence in the newspaper also: almost half these articles are on page 3, two are on the front page, and only one fails to make it into the first ten pages of the paper. Victim stories evidently have high news value: if victims make themselves available in the right terms, The West Australian is, it seems, prepared to open its pages to them. The Blurton family's\textsuperscript{105} access to the news pages in the days around the Rally for Justice is the prime example of this. Incidentally, while victim articles are not common - victims comment in only 2% of articles on file - the treatment of the victim story, including the photograph and its prominence in the

\textsuperscript{105} Margaret and Shane Blurton were killed in the Christmas Even accident involving a high speed chase of a stolen car. Margaret's husband, Peter, has become a regular commentator on law and order issues.
paper, means that it has an impact far beyond that which its mere frequency would indicate. They form part of the jigsaw of discourse that constructs youth as criminal, as dangerous, in need of "tough measures".

The victim article is a highly constructed product. Where possible, the photograph is structured to emphasise the distressed nature of the victim, and to elicit emotion, sympathy, from the reader. If the victim is available for photograph, a shot of their injuries, or of a haunted or frightened expression, is sought. For example, Nigel Hanwell, a victim of an accident involving a stolen car (8/5/91:8), looks into the camera as he pulls back the covers of his hospital bed to reveal his bandages (see also 23/9/91:3). In "Youths victim lives in dread" (12/3/91:7), the victim, a woman, hunched over, peers through curtains into the eye of the camera. The shot could only have been posed, constructed and solicited by the journalist. In "Face of fear behind a suburban door" (13/11/91:1), an elderly woman, hand bandaged, "peers out from behind the door which she opened to a vicious attacker on Monday night"106. Sometimes, it is anger, rather than fear, that dominates the emotional scale of the article. So, in "I'll arm myself, swears bash victim" (1/5/91:3), "burly Kojonup farmer Colin Crawford", with sticking plaster over one eye, assumes a belligerent stance and expression.

If the victim is not available, close relatives are often solicited for comment and photograph, and posed in some expression of grief. Classically, they face the camera in a family group looking sad and holding a photograph of the victim, also facing the camera, as in "Family outraged at fine for death driver" (5/6/91:3) and "Dead man's family plead for witnesses" (24/1/92: 3).

The victim picture therefore requires the source to actively participate in their construction as a victim, which includes the construction of the perpetrator as villain.

106 In fact, she does not peer, and looks upset and downcast rather than frightened. The headline only partly succeeds in its attempt to reconstruct the photograph as a "face of fear".
Generally, their cooperation is secured in this enterprise, though the enthusiasm with which it is entered into varies (see the half-hearted baseball bat wielder in "Deli owner terrorised by thieves" (11/12/90:5)).

The victim story allows a greater voice to the journalist than other genres of news. The journalistic distinction between fact and opinion, scrupulously observed elsewhere, is not important in victim stories. So, in an account of an attack on a young woman,

The woman was scared out of her wits by threats of murder and rape when a vicious teenage gang armed with golf clubs and baseball bats raided her home before dawn in May. .

A week later, they subjected her to a terrifying ordeal by smashing their way into her house while she crouched terrified in darkness, trying to summon help on the phone.

6/7/90:6

Generally, crime victims speak little of their attackers, referring to them as "them".

With some exceptions, they recount the events, and it is the journalist who constructs the scene, and therefore the young subject. Several features of the construction of youth in the victim story are notable. The "gang" construction is one. Young people are described as a "gang" five times more often in crime victim stories than in the general sample, and where this construction does appear, it has particular impact, in line with the higher impact of crime victim stories themselves. Informal constructions such as "thug" are also allowed (1/10/91:5), especially in headlines. Where the perpetrator acts not in a "gang" but alone, the journalist attempts to construct him as manic, mindlessly violent, a monster.

In victim articles, then, victims offer an opportunity for the journalist to construct an image of youth rather than an opportunity for the voice of the victim to be heard. For its part, journalistic discourse in the genre of the victim article constructs youth as dangerous, violent, unpredictable, irrational, as Other. He is almost always young and
male\textsuperscript{107}, the strength of the attacker contrasting with the vulnerability of the victim. Where possible, the attacker is also cowardly. The rationality of the young perpetrator or of the act is never explained, the offender is never interviewed.

One of the most common criticisms of the mass media as cultural form is that they are uni-directional, that they are inevitably distorted as communication because they admit no dialogue (Thompson 1994). More recent approaches to theories of the audience have questioned this perception, emphasising the many ways in which audiences interact with the medium and negotiate the messages produced by it. There are also forms within the mass media, albeit limited, that do allow dialogue. In the press, the foremost of these is the Letters to the Editor page.

Letters to the Editor, of course, do not represent an undistorted, uncensored medium of communication. Many more letters are routinely received than are published, and those that are published do not in any sense form a "representative" sample. Letters are used to serve the interests of the newspaper, as part of a range of endeavours to capture an audience. To be published, letters must conform to those interests. For the audience, however, the Letters to the Editor facility represents an opportunity for intervention. The Letters page is a bullring, a marketplace, a site of the public. In the Letters page, citizens have an opportunity to enter the discursive contest, to attempt to shape the construction of events, issues or populations in the public mind, to influence policy and the direction of government. In the period represented by the clippings collection, youth is frequently the subject of such attempts: one article in ten is a letter to the editor. The letters deserve closer attention than is possible in this study, but some brief comments on the construction of the juvenile in popular discourse, as seen through the Letters page, should be made here.

\textsuperscript{107} The "young man" who attacked the woman in "Face of fear behind a suburban door" (13/11/91 1) mentioned above is, as it turns out, thirty years old
In Letters to the Editor, the use of language is broad and eclectic\textsuperscript{108}. However, despite its non-specific nature, language is not used carelessly. At a number of points, correspondents are acutely aware of the power of the name. For example:

I want to protest in the strongest possible way to the term "graffiti artist". The term should be "graffiti vandal".

20/6/90:10

or,

Our reticence to correctly name "joy-riders" as car thieves simply exacerbates the problem. These people are thieves and should be made to understand that the public holds them in contempt.

26/4/91:10

The range of terms is used often subtly and skillfully, sometimes blatantly, in accordance with the virtue/agency grid, to ascribe fine degrees of culpability and to shape the public response to events and issues in which young people are implicated. For example, the (over)use of "kids" in an article opposing the discourses articulated in the Rally for Justice:

...Are we really so out of perspective in this slide back to convict day justice and, in the case of the kids whom the mob wanted to flog, put in stocks and string up...

If your kids and mine had not been shown some love and care they could well have joined the ranks of those kids who steal cars and are forced into high speed chases by police, whom none of the mob mentioned. Those kids don't get a thrill during the chases, they experience panic and the police get the thrill. A collision occurs, the panic stricken kid runs for his life from a scene of injury or death. The police are hot on his trail.

3/9/91:10

The correspondents represented in the Letters page are often acutely aware of the discursive contests in play, and write with the aim of influencing the contest. The correspondent last quoted consciously intervenes in the debate over the construction of juvenile delinquency, overtly countering the construction of youth as Other by creating commonalities between the car thief and "your kids and mine", reinforcing the status of young people as children and as "victims of alcoholic parents, abuse and amphetamine

\textsuperscript{108} Apart, perhaps, from a greater tendency to use the plural "youth", used at a frequency about twice the average

273
dealers", pointing to the origin of crime in "an uncaring and abusive society".

Similarly, the Rev. Philip Hulbert argues

Young people are not born as juvenile offenders, they are trained from birth by a society whose principal driving forces appear to be greed, hedonism and the lust for power.

28/1/92:11

On the opposite side of the debate, in "Take a bow", the correspondent congratulates the "Government and the people of WA" for the enactment of the Crimes (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Sentencing Act.

You have taken the bull by the horns by promulgating severe penalties fit for the serious juvenile crimes recently perpetrated in Perth

To bring to book those responsible for these crimes, please try to have the relevant laws made retrospective

I would not for a moment condone my own children stealing cars for fun and killing innocent people and destroying their families.

11/2/92:11

Similarly,

Why are Aboriginal groups, among others, claiming that the ...legislation is racist because it discriminates against Aborigines?

It is a law for all - not just Aborigines. And it is to protect us all - not just whites - against the irresponsible actions of callous, uncaring louts whether they be Aboriginal or white.

We can choose to obey the law or we can choose to break it.

If we choose the latter course, then the law will deal with us and the penalty will be a direct consequence of our own actions.

19/2/92:10

The writer of "Give society a break" argues that

...It seems that when people wish to absolve themselves or others from being responsible for some action, they blame something or someone else.

"Society" seems to be the catchcry at the moment as people protect themselves in the face of damning evidence against them. In these days of rampant juvenile crime, "society" is once again to blame.

Curiously, the correspondent pulls back from attributing responsibility to young people.

Lets put the responsibility back where it belongs, on parents, who ultimately have the greatest impact on the development of our young people.

...To the few whose children behave in an unacceptable manner - you have only yourself to blame.

29/1/92:11

274
The attribution of blame to parents in this example takes a midpoint between the assumption of individual responsibility and the assumption of a social origin for criminal behaviour. Few commentators actually argue that criminal behaviour among the young is simply a result of evil intent or individual fault. Generally, a social origin is part of popular wisdom, except that the circle of social causation is limited to the immediate nuclear family (see also 31/12/91:11). Criminological discourse may be able to track correlations between poverty or social position and crime, or between school failure and crime, and these discourses do inform public debate about juvenile delinquency. But *policy* limits its attention to the family as a site for intervention and preventative policing (Carrington 1993). The causes of crime are therefore private, rather than public; psychological, rather than political or economic; personal, rather than systemic. It is noteworthy also that attribution of blame to the parents is not generally seen as inconsistent with calls for "tougher" sentences, which are generally justified in terms of community protection or the need to do "something" when "nothing else has worked" (1/2/92:11).

Public discourses on crime through the Letters page are allowed also to range wider than official positions will allow. For example, public comment on juvenile crime is able more effectively to construct the young offender as criminal, and as monster, by the use of language that would be inappropriate in the mouth of an official source. Attempts to combat discourses of disadvantage are made by discrediting its proponents as "do-gooders": well-meaning but naive persons who live in some privileged enclave, not in the "real world" (8/1/91:10, 12/3/92:10). Understandings of crime and the position of youth from within organic conservative ideological frames, marginalised within the liberal orthodoxy that clothes official communication, is given a voice, as in "Return to older values", which, in respect to the debate about high speed car chases, argues that

>This points the finger not at a juvenile who is, in reality, a hardened criminal who has been treated with the gloved hand instead of the mailed fist but at one of the hardest treated and most maligned body of workers in the community - the West Australian Police Force

>I fully appreciate that most juvenile offenders are victims of broken homes, maltreatment at home, boredom, and, owing to the depression, have little hope for the future.
We urgently need to introduce into any future youth program encouragement for a return to religion, restoration of family life such as we of an older generation used to know, proper censorship of television to remove the glorification of violence, and an urgent review of the Bail Act to adequately cover juvenile crime.

Solutions to crime include the pressing of young offenders into the Army (14/10/91:10) and the exaction of punishment on the body itself (14/10/91:10, 1/1/92:10). The example of Singapore, with its regimes of corporal punishment and heavy penalties for street crime, is often invoked as a solution to the perceived juvenile problem in Western Australia.

The history of discourses of youth indicates a series of shifts in the dominant frame within which the juvenile is understood. Foucault's classic *Discipline and punish* (1979) describes a shift in the economy of crime and punishment, from the eighteenth century on, from the body as the primary site of punishments, to a new regime where the site of punishment was the soul, the interior life of the subject, and techniques of punishment were developed to effect a hold on the soul and to fashion its reform. Yet the revolution was never clean, never total. In most regimes, punishments inscribed on the body remained well into the nineteenth century and beyond. When the dominant frame shifts, existing frames are not obliterated. They become more marginal, and some features may disappear altogether, but they are frequently retained in their marginal, or subterranean form.

Likewise popular discourse on the juvenile is complex and diverse, a shifting assemblage of frames rather than a single disciplined voice. Within popular representations, the voice of marginal or obsolete frames are there to be heard. Public officials will not speak of whipping or the birch or the stocks, the techniques of carnal punishment. But such discourse survives and may even be encouraged in the private world of the hearth. Emergence into the public sphere via Letters to the Editor may be seen as barbarous or ridiculous, but they are the vestiges of usurped discourses that have not, however, gone away.

31/12/91:11
The survival of these frames alongside modern discourses of the juvenile contributes to the complexity of the constitution of the subject. I have argued in Chapter 6 that the work of G. Stanley Hall stands at a crossroads between an understanding of youth as a function of the body itself, a corporal matter, and the constitution of youth in the psyche. Erik Erikson stands at another such junction: between the constitution of youth in the interiority of the psyche, and the constitution of youth as a product of social forces. This movement in discourses of youth, the progressive shift from the flesh to the mind to the society as the generative plasma within which "youth" takes form and shape, is mirrored in discourses of the juvenile. The larrikin debate in the late nineteenth century was framed in discourses of the body: commentators sought to describe and classify the larrikin physique, and to find within the forces of heredity the origins of their crime (Finch 1993). Sir Cyril Burt's classic *The Young Delinquent* (1925) also thought to find the biological tendrils of criminal stock in his young subjects, while seeking at the same time to uncover the psychological origins of criminal behaviour. Such discourses continue to survive, and to enter into the dominant debate between discourses of disadvantage and those of criminal responsibility.
The interior of the school is generally not visible to the public. Like other successful institutions, the conflicts and failures of education as a technology of governmentality, and the contradictions within and between its constitutive discourses are contained within the walls of educational establishments (Ericson, Baranek and Chan 1987: 20ff). As such, the school is generally not a site of disturbance, and, indeed, is looked upon to contain other youth populations for whom governmentality is failing. In the material on file, spillovers of conflict into the public arena occur at the intersections of educational techniques and those other institutions concerned with youth: between the prerogatives of the family and those of the school; between organic-conservative and liberal-democratic ideologies within the educational establishment, emerging in conflict between the school and the State; in the preservation of uniformity and discipline within the school and the requirement to "meet the needs" of "at-risk" students. In the process of this spillover and in the attempts to contain disputes exposed by them, a range of constructions of youth as student are opened up. In such cases, commentators on education issues include teachers (especially school principals), politicians and business sources.
Under control

While dwarfed by crime issues, education is a matter of some interest in the newspaper. attracting the third highest number of articles, after crime and health. What is significant about the contributions of speakers commenting on education in the newspaper, however, is the relative peace surrounding the question of the school. This can be demonstrated in several ways.

Compared with crime, the lexicon for speaking about education is more settled, less tense, less troubled. "Student" is established as the preferred term for speaking about young people in educational contexts, occurring in eighty percent of articles in which education is the main issue, though the use of "teenager" and "child" is also not infrequent at around fifteen percent. The next most frequent term is used in only seven percent of articles about education\textsuperscript{109}. "Youth", the signifier of trouble, is used in only three percent of education stories. Even "schoolboy" and "schoolgirl" are used as part of a crime victimology rather than in educational contexts. The over-lexicality surrounding crime contrasts with the settled lexicon surrounding education.

The genre in which education news appears also indicates a governmental technology that is under relative control, that is not subject to public breakout. Twenty three percent of articles about education, and 33% of articles in which teachers and education officials speak, are human interest stories rather than hard news, editorials, letters to the editor. This compares with three percent of crime stories, eleven percent of health stories, and nine percent of stories overall. Human interest stories are frequently good-news stories, and are generally uncontroversial.

Education stories also represent a forum in which young people are allowed to speak. Young people are a source in twelve percent of education stories, compared with three

\textsuperscript{109} The figures are similar if the focus is on teachers and education officials as sources rather than articles in which education is the main issue ("Student"=70%, "Teenager"=20%, "Child"=19%, next most frequent term "youth" at 10%)
percent of crime stories and six percent of articles overall, although half of these are in
the human interest genre.

These data support a perception of education as a governmental technology that is well
established and not generally subject to fundamental challenge, as processes for policing
the juvenile routinely are. The status of student is an approved status for young people,
and the student identity one in which often high levels of misuse are tolerated and
excused (8/12/90:8). Based on this success, the school is promoted as a technology for
the governance of classes of young people who are not considered to be adequately
governed: the juvenile, the unemployed and the Aboriginal (14/2/91:14; 15/2/92:35;

However, this does not mean that the educational apparatus always presents a smooth
surface to the public. Indeed, while breakout is not common, a number of events and
issues spill into the public arena via the pages of *The West Australian*. A discussion of
these issues is able to render some insight into the different frames through which the
Student and the School are to be understood.

Quantitatively, the biggest issue in the period was the failure by State Government
authorities to predict, and therefore to accommodate, a large increase in the number of
students wanting to enrol or re-enrol in senior secondary school courses. A number of
factors contributed to this: an increased number of mature-age students wanting to
complete high school, a higher general retention rate, and an unanticipated number of
failed students wanting to repeat their final year, all driven by high youth
unemployment rates, increasing credentialism in the job market, and Federal
Government income support incentives for students. The issue at stake was
Government efficiency and competence, rather than problems internal to the school
itself.
More fundamental in the structure of education as a governmental technology is the connection between the school and the economy, particularly the role of the school in training workers\textsuperscript{110}, the ability of the economy to deliver on the promise that successful education guarantees rewarding employment\textsuperscript{111}, and the tension within the school between democracy and the generation of elite levels of intellectual performance\textsuperscript{112}.

Of these, the dominant criticism, frequently delivered by business sources, is that students are inadequately trained for employment, especially in literacy and numeracy\textsuperscript{113}. The other major issue, often sourced to business but also to academics working in science and technology fields is that the interests and aspirations of the young, particularly the most able students among them, need to be actively reshaped away from humanities and service professions towards mathematics, science and technology, in order that economic interests be better served. A particular variant of this issue is the active reshaping of the aspirations of young women towards mathematics and science. This attempt was, during the survey period, the subject of funded government programmes\textsuperscript{114}, and the newspaper reported debate about the success or otherwise of the venture on several occasions, as well as individual incidents of women succeeding in these fields\textsuperscript{115}. Usually, such debate was not framed under discourses of economic efficiency, as was the general argument, but under democratic discourses of equity and human rights, of sexism and structural discrimination, which had at its object the greater representation of women in the supposedly more lucrative fields of science and technology.

\textsuperscript{110} 14/5/90 37, 21/7/90, 9/11/90 8, 7/12/90 25, 10/1/91 9, 16/5/91 23, 9/9/91 4
\textsuperscript{111} 14/2/91 3;
\textsuperscript{112} 3/4/90 20, 18/4/90 4
\textsuperscript{113} 10/1/91 9, 16/5/91 23
\textsuperscript{114} 11/5/90 30
\textsuperscript{115} 2/10/90 27, 29/10/90 39, 12/7/91 10, 20/3/92 1
The area of gender equity in the education of girls, however, was not just to do with science and maths. A broader agenda of reform is visible within policies and knowledges reported on in *The West Australian* showing the newspaper's awareness of the different shaping of education for girls, and the consequences for liberal democratic, meritocratic claims for the school. The newspaper takes an active supportive stance in its coverage of such issues, both in reporting criticism of sexism in schools (2/10/90:27) and its "positive" reporting on female high educational achievers, especially in non-traditional areas like engineering (20/3/92:1).

These areas represent tensions in the structure of the institutional apparatus and its articulation with the wider polity, and the reshaping of educational discourse under a programme of humanitarian reform to achieve certain governmental ends, including the articulation of the subject created within their walls with the subject required for the disciplines of industry. This is clearly an area where the interests of capital do make their mark in the construction of the subjectivity of young people. Business sources do not contribute frequently to the newspaper on youth issues: only two percent of articles cite a business source. However, they speak three times more often in the area of education than for the sample as a whole, and six times more often for education than for crime.

Further tensions are evident, however, *between* the subject and the institution. Two examples of this are the debate over school uniforms and the issue of truancy.

**Truancy** is constructed at the intersection of discourses of education and those of crime: roughly two thirds of articles about truancy are predominantly about crime. Control of the truant population is delegated to police rather than education authorities, and the focus is on crime prevention. Police patrols dedicated to this exercise are alternately called anti-theft patrols and truancy patrols (1/11/91:39)\(^{116}\). As such, discourse about

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\(^{116}\) This reinforces the effectiveness of the school as a technology of confinement and control
Truancy mostly occurs in the context of crime (and sometimes about the civil liberties of street-present young people) rather than education (21/6/90:14, 27/6/90:8). In articles that focus on educational issues around truancy, three major themes develop. The first is the origin of truancy in the disillusionment surrounding high levels of youth unemployment and the inability of the school to deliver on the promise that "if you work hard at school you'll get a good job" (1/9/90:8).

The second theme occurs at the intersection of the school and the family, and addresses the responsibility of parents to deliver the student into the hands of the school. Generally, in articles that address this issue, parents are excused: they were either ignorant of their offspring's truancy, or felt helpless in the face of incorrigibility. Nevertheless, two articles address schemes for the censure of parents of truanting children: one, "High school plan to punish parents" where the parent comes with the student to school and "shadows" him or her for two days (6/6/90:3), the other where police drop the child off at the parent's place of work, thereby embarrassing the parent in order to "make it as uncomfortable as possible for ...teenagers to wag school" (5/9/90:3). This connects with Carrington's discussion of the role of the school in policing families, in providing a source for recommendations of intervention by other policing authorities such as welfare departments (Carrington 1993).

The third theme addresses the failure of the school to meet the needs of its students, especially the "disadvantaged", "single parent and Aboriginal families" (1/11/91:11), and "low achievers" and others "at risk of educational and social failure" (29/11/91:1). This criticism does not originate within the education system itself, but surfaces most prominently in news about a report to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Youth Affairs by the State Offenders Committee on Young Offenders. As quoted in newspaper articles, the report is written within discourses of welfare and youth work,

117 The newspaper was responsible for constructing this policy as a "punishment" The venture was voluntary, and constructed by the principal as an exercise in consciousness-raising The headline was greeted with "dismay" by the principal of the high school concerned (11/6/90:10).
indicated by the use of "young people" as the primary signifier of youth as well as other discursive markers such as "alienation" and "marginalisation", although it claims "education experts" as a source for the comment within it. The primary concern again is with the criminal consequences of truancy, but there are broader concerns with the long term consequences of educational failure on poverty, and the need for attention to social policy gaps and the application of social policy solutions to the failure of the school to "meet the needs" of "at-risk" students adequately. In contrast, one principal, discussing the origin of the street-presence of students in punishment regimes which included suspension, urged the establishment of district suspension centres to contain suspended students. "In the old days" he said, "we could warn students with the cane. This proposal would cost the community a lot of money but it will have to address this problem sooner or later. The main thing is to keep the kids off the street" (3/10/90:8).

Like truancy, many of the debates and issues surrounding youth in the news are routine, arising from time to time out of unresolved contradictions in the institutions, ideologies and discourses under which young people are disciplined. The literacy debate, the annual throwing up of hands over the informal carnivals of misrule by graduating high school students, the pre-exam tension-and-stress articles, the post-exam congratulations for the winners of awards, and the gloom or anger surrounding the announcement of youth unemployment figures are regular visitors to the pages of the newspaper. The school uniforms debate is a rarer bird. The example on file, occurring in April 1990, is a particularly colourful specimen.

**The school uniforms debate**

The school uniforms debate occurs at the intersection of organic-conservative discourses of the school and liberal discourses of the state. The state forbids school authorities to make the wearing of uniforms compulsory, and specifically to punish students for the non-wearing of uniform (10/4/90:48) presumably as part of a doctrine of personal
liberty, a regard for the private nature of the body and its apparel. The school frequently perceives the uniform as an important technique for the construction of a particular kind of subjectivity in the student, a subordination of idiosyncratic tendencies to the interests of the whole, and the maintenance of a certain kind of discipline. In its broadest formulation, this discipline is called "maintaining standards". So the principal of a high school in a working class area was reported as saying that

    most state high schools were making a valiant attempt to maintain standards which would ...create a place where results would be achieved with a minimum of fuss and disturbance. You [the Minister for Education] are making it increasingly difficult for those of us who are attempting to reach a standard

17/4/90:3

This is echoed by the editorial of 19/4/90 in which the editor says that "not only does uniform dress help to maintain standards and discipline, it fosters a sense of belonging and school spirit among students" (p10). The content of the notion of "standards" is nowhere developed, though other contributors go on to put the case negatively, suggesting that the failure to enforce uniforms "fosters non compliance", does "little to encourage the adoption of a cooperative perspective" and interferes "with the development of self discipline" (19/4/90:10). One correspondent goes on to argue that

    Academic success at all levels of the education process is a product of self-regulation, parental values and the educative "climate" of a particular school...Unfortunately for some children in our public schools, self-control is severely lacking and the simple act of choosing appropriate school attire each day may contribute to the acquisition of more appropriate school behaviours. A preparedness for school begins at home and therefore the likelihood of impulsive non-productive action may be minimised in the classroom. The stand taken by principals should be applauded rather than criticised.

19/4/90:10

This is one of the few discussions of the philosophical principles justifying mandatory uniforms, and as it is a letter to the editor, the correspondent is institutionally anonymous. With one exception, despite evidence of widespread enforcement of uniforms, principals refuse to comment or to justify their stand, perhaps conscious of their vulnerability before the law, and of the vulnerability of discourse based in organic-conservative ideologies in a liberal-democratic public environment. Generally, the wearing of uniforms is justified in utilitarian terms: uniforms are "practical and economical" (10/4/90:48, 17/4/90:3). Certainly, those letters to the editor criticising
their stance focus on the imposition of order rather than the development of rational agency. One correspondent writes:

What are we preparing our young for? To automatically respond without question to the dictates of some sergeant major, or to think and act for themselves in a changing society?

21/4/90:10

What, indeed. The correspondent has identified a central tension within the education system about the constitution of the subject within its walls (and, indeed, within wider discourses on the constitution of the citizen) between liberal-democratic conceptions of the rational autonomous subject, with its inherent risks of ungovernability\(^{118}\), and more conservative discourses of order, duty and the interests of the whole.

The other point of conflict within this example, as in the issue of truancy, is the conflict between the prerogatives of parents and those of the school. Interestingly, the failure to send children to school in uniform is predominantly construed in terms of poverty rather than choice (10/4/90:48; 19/4/90:10; 30/4/90:4,14). One principal suggested that the non-wearing of uniform was an indicator of other problems, and cited surveillance over uniforms as a point of intervention with families over wider issues, including poverty (14/4/90:12). The possibility that non-compliance is an act of resistance to the governmentality of the school itself is avoided as a construction, or, if entertained, can only be understood as deviance.

One final intervention in the debate, however, should be mentioned. At the height of the debate, the executive director of the WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry "urged the State Government to give individual schools power to make uniforms compulsory". His primary concern was the articulation of the disciplines of the school and of the workplace, that the enforcement of uniform wearing in the school "were an important step in preparing students for the clothing restrictions of the business community" (17/4/90:3).

\(^{118}\) The "excess of democracy" argument put forward in some pluralist accounts
There is no more approved identity for youth than the "good student", and "student" generally is a signifier of approval. Students photographed as winners of awards, as charity fundraisers, as visitors to the city from remote communities, present a smiling and cheerful face to the world. In a circular fashion, the approval given to the youth-as-student, and the more punitive and invasive measures of discipline forged for the non-student, the truant, the delinquent, the Aboriginal, helps to reinforce the self-formation of young people as students, the utility of the school as a carceral institution, and the containment of young people within it.

At the same time, significant dispute remains about the product of the education system, about the subject which is to be created by the school. Organic conservative frames of discipline, obedience and pragmatic usefulness vie with liberal constructions of the free citizen, the individual, autonomous, critical subject. Institutional, political and professional alignments carry this ideological difference into dispute between the state and the school, between family and the school, and between the marketplace and the school.
15 Unemployment and the "young jobseeker"

Youth unemployment carries significant weight in the questions that surround the place of young people in society. While articles on youth unemployment are not as numerous as those about crime (121 articles in all, accounting for only five percent of articles in the collection), and while unemployment as an issue does not evoke the heat of passion that moral panics about crime do, newspaper coverage indicates an underlying importance that is belied by the relative infrequency of coverage. Youth unemployment frequently makes the front page (seven times in the sample of 121 articles), and almost half the articles occur in the first nine pages of the paper. The collection also indicates that it is a major issue for governments: government sources, opposition parties or parliament itself serve as source in 43% of articles about unemployment, commenting at a rate more than twice the average. The weight of the issue is indicated by the language of headlines, which frequently carry an atmosphere of dread and foreboding, using terms like "bleak", "loses faith", "slump", "tough times", "tragic", "dogged", "grim", "hard times", "blow", "hopeless times", "nightmare future". The figure of unemployed youth casts a long shadow and requires close governmental attention.

Youth unemployment, in this collection, is almost always seen as contingent on forces outside young people themselves. In newspaper articles on the matter, young people are constructed as innocent victims of economic forces, frequently sheeted home to failures in the government's management of the economy. A consensus on this is
maintained by journalists, by departmental spokespeople, by the community sector, and by politicians of both major political parties, at least in their public pronouncements.

This construction varies sharply with the frame employed by government at other times, notably the "dole bludger" campaign of the Fraser government in 1982/83 (21/8/90:2). Yet the underlying assumptions of the "dole bludger" campaign are not absent from public constructions of unemployed youth. For example, in the material on file, the 1990 Federal (Labor) budget included a cut in unemployment benefit for 18-20 year olds living at home from $105.15 per week to $69.20. As a policy move, it indicates that the government continues to regard individual motivation as a primary factor in youth unemployment, and an assumption that eighteen, nineteen and twenty year olds will continue to be dependent on their parents economically. While the construction of unemployed youth as victim of economic processes takes the high ground, an aetiology of individual lack is never far away.

The construction of youth as a victim of economic conditions takes a particular shape in the newspaper. In some ways it is the most consistently and carefully formed of the images around youth, and one in which the redactoral hand of the staff of the newspaper is most clear. The representation of unemployed youth has a number of components.

First, unemployed youth is constructed as a statistical artifact. Where articles on crime are often long on anecdote and short on statistical representations of the overall picture, the opposite is true for unemployment. The figure of unemployed youth is tooled by the blades of national economic statistics: the overall rate of unemployment, youth unemployment rates, the number of advertised job vacancies, regional variations in unemployment statistics, average length of unemployment for different age groups and different levels of qualification. Almost every article cites some statistical warrant. A

119 The cut, while it did not attract any sustained political opposition, was not endorsed by the newspaper the cartoon on the day, running the caption "And now we cross to the hostage crisis" in an allusion to the impending Gulf war, showed Prime Minister Keating dressed as a terrorist holding a knife at the throat of several vulnerable people, including an aged person and a young man with a "dole cheque" (22/8/90:10)
thirty percent youth unemployment rate in the period under study, and an applicants/advertised vacancies ratio of 340:1 (17/12/90:27) confirms the construction of youth as victim, a context within which individual stories of unemployment are to be read.

This picture is confirmed by the construction of these individual stories of unemployment within the frame of the victim/human interest story genre. The hard-statistics article, arising from some Government announcement, the release of a report, an Opposition attack, a new policy, is frequently paired with the soft victim story that humanises and earths the issue. Twelve percent of the articles on unemployment fit into the victim-story category.

The semiotics of the unemployment-victim story are similar to the crime-victim story. Photographs are an important part of the victim-story form: all unemployment-victim stories carry a photograph. Like crime-victims, unemployment-victims are required to actively cooperate with the journalist in the construction of themselves as victims. Like the crime-victim, the unemployment-victim looks into the eye of the camera, displaying the stigmata of his or her condition: typically, the sheaf of rejection slips from employers, the open "Employment" pages of the newspaper, the evidence of multiple job applications. The willingness to work, the condition of ascribed virtue and therefore innocence for the unemployed, is thus established. Frequently, the accompanying text carries the confession of the victim that he or she is "prepared to take on almost any job" (15/2/91:5).

The status of the young unemployed as victim is reflected in their construction in the lexicon. Except where link is made between unemployment and crime, the construction "unemployed youth", a doubly-negative stigmatising construction, is generally avoided in favour of terms like "young unemployed". "Jobseeker", the distinctive term of the category, overtly constructs the subject in virtue, embodying the assumption of conscientiousness in seeking work. "Young person", the distinctive de-stigmatising
term embraced by the youth sector, is frequently employed within this group of texts, as is the neutral but familiar "teenager". Other terms are also employed: student, graduate, youngster, ( ) year old. Terms including the positive modifier "young" occur at a rate almost twice the average.

The range of terms used in this group of texts is broad. Two sets of terms, however, indicate critical points of the construction of youth in unemployment, and are worth a more detailed look.

The first is "school leaver". The term again constructs the subject in innocence. However, it carries a particular implication which is part of the discourse of unemployment, especially as generated by government authorities. In this construction, while unemployed youth is a national product, the economic machine has to make do with material rendered frail, vulnerable and subject to fracture by a lack in its constitution. The subject lacks training. While the forces of international economics, beyond the control of unemployed youth, are not denied, the subject is urged to make him or herself more resilient, of finer stuff, by volunteering for additional training. Relative unemployment rates between the less trained and the more trained are harnessed in order to convince the subject and those responsible for his or her guidance of the efficacy of extended training. For governments, with whom the responsibility for economic crisis is believed to lie, this discourse defocuses the economic environment and refocuses the subject, regenerating an aetiology of unemployment within the subject him or herself. Youth are urged to stay on at school so that when economic recovery comes, they, like the ten wise virgins of the parable, will have their wicks trimmed and their lamps filled with oil (9/1/91:15).

This prescription is not accepted without doubt. The newspaper not infrequently runs victim stories where the subject is highly schooled: a university graduate, an apprentice, a graduate of a multitude of short training courses (15/2/91:5). Inadequacies within the training institutions, making it difficult to cope with this extra load are pointed out
In this context, an editorial raises the suspicion that
"Government calls for students to stay longer at school have more to do with the
political objective of keeping unemployment numbers down than with any heartfelt
commitment to lift Australian education standards" (2/7/91:10). Youth sector sources
point out the futility of endless training with no jobs at the end (29/6/91:40). As more
graduates are produced at each level, bigger unemployment figures creep higher and
higher on the education ladder, reinforcing this doubt (19/2/91:19). Particular sources
work to diminish the discourse of training, particularly Opposition spokespeople, who
have an interest in refocussing the youth unemployment debate on the economic
performance of the Government, and therefore reinforce the construction of youth as
victim, often by emphasising their virtue. In this context, the noble construction
"Young Australians" can be used to emphasise the Government's betrayal and neglect of
this honourable, loyal, patriotic population (2/11/91:11, 17/2/92:15).

This construction, the construction of "Young Australians", is connected to a frame that
constructs youth as the future, as "tomorrow's generation" (30/10/91:10; see also Pyvis
1991). The construction of youth as the future has a general sense, and can be positive
and hopeful, as politicians urge "tomorrow's generation" to get involved with politics
(24/5/90:7, 10/5/91:7), or awards laud the high achievements of "the next generation of
model designers" (23/8/90:7). Frequently, however, particularly from conservative
ideological standpoints, commentators express distrust about the rising generation. A
school principal argues that

Up to one third of our young teenagers can't roll with life's punches - they grow
up lacking an internal control needed to stay on course

Largely, he blames this on media exposure.

Each year they are bombarded with more news of crooked judges, questionable
governments, corrupt police, homosexual gym instructors, fornicating ministers
and peep-hole nursery school directors...

This is the first generation growing up with total media exposure (Informative
Age) and, for better or worse, so fast

Young people need to learn that you value only that which costs you
something today's youth did not have to pay a price for their freedom, for their
finances, for their family

3/12/90:10
Another correspondent, noting high levels of youth unemployment, argues that "National Service will save our youth".

We can no longer afford to ignore the option of a form of national service for all youths, to instil a sense of national pride and discipline...

It is far better for us all to support a form of national service than to be picking up the bill for vandalism, robbery, rape and pillage with which so many youths fill their day

At the same time we will be doing tomorrow's generation a favour.

30/10/91:10

Similarly,

The unsophisticated minds of Australian school students were being manipulated in a disgraceful and irresponsible way, Guildford Grammar School has been told

A former president of the WA Chamber of Commerce and World War II veteran, Peter Firkins, said at Guildford Grammar's speech night last week the threat of nuclear war and the teaching of peace studies were two examples of the sort of ideological nonsense that had been inflicted upon the minds of school children over the last two decades.

He said Australia had become a soft option society devoid of self-discipline and had sapped young people's confidence so much that many did not appear to have the will to stand up to the normal challenges of life.

Australia needed to get back to the basics of a civilised society, restore the family to its proper position in the community and reject the radical feminist movement's repudiation of the role of the mother and her children in the home.

11/12/91:45

The broader group of articles concerned with youth unemployment generally shares with these letters a pessimistic vision of "tomorrow's generation", but emphasising the social origin of youth's troubles rather than a lack of internal constitution, a lack of moral fibre. The feature liftout entitled "The lost generation" (19/2/91) is one example of this. Within this frame, commentators "are predicting a crisis among school-leavers when they realise they are moving into a society with no place for thousands of them".

The failure of Society to provide work or education places will, according to this way of seeing, result in widespread disaffection, leading to increased alienation and anomie and their consequences in crime, suicide, drug use, political apathy.

an expert on the future said yesterday that Soaring rates of suicide, drug abuse and crime, especially among young Australians, highlighted a worrying deterioration of society

Mr Eckersley quoted evidence that showed a new generation of young adults had reacted to massive change in society by trying to avoid it.
Modern industrial society was in a state of flux, marked by self-destructive recklessness and abandon, social withdrawal and self-centredness...

This construction of the problem bears close affinities with the conservative analysis of the problem of the rising generation. Where it differs, as we have noted before in discourses of education and of crime, is in the projection of the origin of trouble, and in the prescription of solutions. In conservative positions, increasingly peripheral within public debate about youth but nevertheless still powerful, the problem lies within the constitution of the individual, in moral fibre, in individual discipline, individual decision, individual responsibility. In prevailing public discourse, the problem lies in society and in the prevailing economic conditions under which unemployed young people become victims. These conditions are generally constructed as temporary, as a function of the skill in economic management of the incumbent government rather than a long term endemic feature of capitalism as an economic system. Paradoxically, in the focus on unemployed youth as victim, in the telling of stories of individual disillusionment, the economic system remains out of focus, and the structures of capitalism which create and maintain unemployment remain blurred and diffuse.

The problem of youth unemployment as represented in The West Australian is not, primarily, a problem of poverty^{120}. The problem is one of disillusionment, of loss of faith, of the erosion of discipline, that the "attitudes" so expensively inculcated by (among other things) years of schooling will be eroded. Solutions to youth unemployment lie not in the alleviation of their poverty: indeed, policy moves announced in the newspaper by the Federal government move in the opposite direction. Rather, discourses around youth unemployment circulate on the problem of the formation of the self. Social critics warn of the erosion of disciplines of the self in the absence of "employment, education and training". Government programmes focus on solutions of self-formation in which the subject continuously recreates him or herself as

^{120} Youth are generally not described as poor "Disadvantaged" or "at risk" is generally the description preferred for poor youth
a trained person or a person with discipline. The embrace of approval for unemployed young people is conditional on their ongoing confession of the willingness to work, verified by the penance of continuous job application.

Discourses of unemployment thus deal with youth primarily as an ideological object, a repository of attitudes, the subject of training. The campaign for higher school retention is in line with this, along with companion policies such as the design of government income support schemes to make unemployment the less eligible option and to increase the attractiveness of school, and the compulsory further training of long term unemployed. The carceration of the unemployed body in institutions of training bears uncomfortable connection with other national crises in other times. Pyvis (1991), for example, offers a fascinating account of the crises about national defence in the first two decades of this century in Australia (1991), in which authorities attempted to produce the right ideological subject through the discipline of the body, using technologies like compulsory military drill, on pain of imprisonment, for all Australian young men. In the case of unemployment, it is as yet only on pain of the withdrawal of the means of subsistence, but the template is disturbingly similar.

Youth is not dealt with as an economic category, either in terms of poverty or the waste of a labour power resource, although it is conceded that unemployment is a product of the international business cycle and of economic restructuring (though notwithstanding this, youth unemployment is not to be solved in the economic sphere but by training). Nor is unemployment a political problem, in the sense of concerns about rioting unemployed youth or the drafting of young people into revolutionary movements. Political, economic and ideological spheres are intimately connected, so it is never possible to isolate a social phenomenon in one sphere only. For example, the impact of high levels of unemployment on voter satisfaction is not irrelevant to the political process, and makes it even more important to get young people off the unemployment lists and onto the education and training lists. The population groups most affected, however, do not vote, so the impact is secondary and diffuse.
Overwhelmingly, youth unemployment is a problem in the *ideological* sphere. The school has, at great expense in both real and opportunity costs, constructed a subject available for the disciplines of industrial labour. The achievements of the school are threatened by the different regime of unemployed life, its disciplines at risk of fragmentation and dissolution in the differently-patterned day-night of the unemployed young. Thus, authorities encourage, cajole, coerce unemployed young people to resubmit themselves to an often endless round of training, by which their subjectivity, and therefore their availability not only for work but for further processes of governance is maintained. The alternative subjectivity of the "dole bludger" is, wherever possible, avoided in official discourse, in favour of a kinder structure of language more conducive to the endless recreation of the state of "work-readiness", and the work-ready subject who will "do anything within reason".
16 The youth sector and the "young person"

Alongside the major institutions concerned with the discipline and containment of youth such as the school, the police, the Children's Court, the juvenile "training centres" and the family, a loose aggregation of agencies and programmes exists, usually with some government funding, to "meet the needs" of specific populations of young people, variously described as "disadvantaged" or "at risk" youth. What such "target groups" of youth generally have in common is a weak connection to "mainstream" institutions, represented by statuses like "unemployed", "homeless", or "school refuser". The social expectation of such agencies is that they will be effective in restoring or strengthening the institutional connections of young people, or, in the event of their continued failure, to contain and discipline the young people with whom they are able to engage.

The field is diverse ideologically and structurally, ranging from agencies like the Aboriginal Legal Service to youth service or welfare arms of major church denominations through to small radical organisations, like the fundamentalist residential drug rehabilitation agency Teen Challenge, or maverick critics, like social worker Ron Bowman. However, from diverse origins, an orientation to a “field” and a kind of professional identity has emerged. Sources within this field were identified in the database either as a youth work source (YWK) or as a non-government organisation (ORG).
This chapter explores the frames that youth organisations employ in the way that they talk about youth and youth issues in the newspaper. The evidence suggests a tension between an attempt to deconstruct the dominant conception of youth as Other, and the fact that the material existence of such organisations depends on this construction being maintained. This tension results in the dominant construction within the field of youth as victim. of social processes, of “dysfunctional” families, of abuse, of harsh or incompetent social policy, of the economy.

In the “targetting” of “at-risk” youth, such agencies assemble in the field defined by the failure of "mainstream" institutions, or perhaps by the failure of individual young people to submit themselves effectively to the disciplines of mainstream institutions. This position is profoundly ambivalent: the agency attempts to engage a subject already alienated, and in order to discipline the subject, must develop knowledge of their alienation. The field is predictably fractured by the differential focus on the institution versus the individual subject as the locus of failure. The practice of engaging young people in this position gives professionals within these agencies intimate knowledge of the failure of both. This knowledge positions spokespeople within the youth sector as "authorised knowers" of a particular kind: not having expert, scientific knowledge so much as an intimacy with problems.

Their positioning in the public sphere as professionals and as commentators in the newspapers is marked by this ambivalence. The youth sector, assigned to engage a marginal population, is itself marginalised, by its adoption of discourses of social failure and its criticism of mainstream institutions. Assigned to normalise a problem population, agencies can themselves be held responsible for their disengagement: youth refuges, for example, are not infrequently held responsible for youth homelessness (31:10:90:35; 1/12/90:27), and youth advocacy centres for juvenile crime. The field itself is undisciplined (25/10/91:1), their position as professionals is provisional, contested and tentative, and the sector is kept on a short leash by the application of minimum short term government funding, increasingly allocated by competitive
tendering. The sector has some ability to mobilise comment through "peak organisations" like the West Australian Council of Social Service and the Youth Affairs Council through which "representative" discourse on the behalf of the sector can be generated, but such organisations are also government funded on the same tenous basis as the rest of the sector. This marginal status is indicated also by the high rate at which youth sector sources contribute secondary comment, rather than primary comment, on issues within the newspaper.

The position of the youth sector is therefore similar in structure to the position described by Pierre Bourdieu for the arts. Like the arts, the youth sector is an "anti-economy".

...like prophecy, especially the prophecy of misfortune, ...[it] demonstrates its authenticity by the fact that it brings in no income

1994:60

The youth sector stands, therefore, in a contradictory position before the newspaper. Their necessarily undisciplined and marginal role as the point of governance of an undisciplined and marginal population provides knowledge of the routine failures of governance, including maladministration, corruption, violence and ineffectiveness. At the same time, the youth sector is itself a technique of governance, itself lays claims to knowledge of the nature of youth and to the means of their normalisation, and has its own interests in its incursions into the public sphere. This double position results in the youth sector taking a number of different speaking positions in the newspaper. These speaking positions reflect and maintain an ambivalence about the youth category between the deconstruction of the category, particularly in its problematic manifestations, and the construction of problem youth as a victim of social processes. Five are analysed here.

First, youth organisations provide critical comment on proposed youth policy measures, pointing out areas of ineffectiveness or contradiction to accepted principles in the construction and control of youth. For example, the youth sector vehemently opposed the Crimes (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Sentencing Act (8/1/92:7), as ineffective, expensive, counterproductive and in contradiction to United Nations principles on the
rights of children. Youth workers were involved in publicising incidents of police violence against young people (9/3/92:15, 20/3/92:4, 27/8/90:7). Community organisations were among those who protested against the Minister for Health's decision to block the inclusion of information on condom use in Health Department publicity about AIDS (27/1/92:9). The sector criticised a cabinet reshuffle which subordinated the youth portfolio to the Ministry of the Family (7/2/91:4).

Second, the youth sector points to gaps in the governance of youth, areas where youth poverty or crime or self-destructive behaviour indicate that, in the case of certain groups of young people, the ordered society fails to live up to its promises. Headlines like "Eve struggles in the poverty trap" (13/6/90:7), "Glue sniffing out of control" (14/6/90:14), "Tackle rural drug abuse: group" (9/6/90:3), or "Exam pressure linked to suicides of young" (12/3/91:7) point to a wide range of such breaches: areas of concern, social issues, that indicate that all is not well.

Third, and connected with the last position, the youth sector provides access for the media to the world of the deviant. Police and courts perform this function to some extent, but in a controlled and second-hand fashion in which the deviant cannot themselves be interviewed. Providing that the journalist offers a sympathetic reading, youth organisations will allow direct access to young people with whom they are engaged, or to accounts of the deviant life. Typically, this provides a particular kind of sub-genre of the victim story, in which the State and its institutions is cast as aggressor, as perpetrator. "Deadly high leads to a life of misery" (30/6/90:6) is one example of this. "Kids on the razor's edge", and the accompanying article "Its wrecking my life, says Bugs" (29/1/91:9) is another. Such articles are not common, however. Although the youth sector does stand to gain from the moral panic generated by the deviant/victim story, it does so by exposing the individual deviant to the gaze of governing authorities, and therefore to the likelihood of more intensive application of repressive techniques of governance.
Bourdieu argues that the cultural field of the arts and literature is stratified according to two principles:

the heteronomous principle, favourable to those who dominate the field economically and politically [measured in this case by the granting of government funding and invitations to take up powerful advisory positions]
...and the autonomous principle (e.g. art for art's sake) which those of its advocates who are least endowed with specific capital tend to identify with degree of independence from the economy, seeing temporal failure as a sign of election and success as a sign of compromise.

1994:60

I have suggested above that his description applies to the youth sector as well. Publicity in which the youth is constructed as deviant/victim is useful in gaining status according to Bourdieu's "heteronomous principle". It may well result in the allocation of additional funding to engage and control the deviant, and has been the basis of public funding drives by youth organisations in the past. But the practice of identifying the individual deviant, or even of constructing youth as deviant or contributing to such construction, raises ethical questions within the sector, on the basis of the "autonomous" principle of the best interests of the client. It is one of the dynamics of fragmentation and contest within the youth sector itself: those agencies who are able to attract most funding and status are seen as the least worthy of it.

However, as for the arts, economic survival is an issue for the sector. This plays into the fourth speaking position of the sector, in which the sector advances its own techniques for the discipline of an undisciplined population. So, "Street kids find country living can be fun" (8/10/90:3). In "Hand in hand to steer the misguided", "Constable Julie Marshall and youth worker Geoffrey Napier are working hand in hand to stop young teenagers getting involved in crime" (10/8/91:37). "Basketball scores big in Cockburn", reducing local truanting and offending rates (2/5/91:3). They are helped by reinforcements from the East, as the"God Squad rides into W.A." (16/4/90:46). In "Artists gloss a bad image", youth workers work with local graffiti artists who are "encouraged to work in a structured and positive way in a controlled environment" (9/7/91:13). For Aboriginal young women, "Centre gives girls a start at real life" (17/1/92:34), and "Jobs put car thieves on road to success" (3/5/91:9).
The defensive side of this voice represents the fifth stance of the youth sector, in which agencies attempt to defend themselves against reductions in funding, or protests against funding not being received for worthwhile projects which would have produced effective results in the discipline of youth. Such reduction results in "Jobless hit by cuts to training" (28/9/90:7). "Refuges turn away hundreds" (4/10/91:9), as "Lack of cash limits scheme" (25/3/92:7). However, youth work, driven by the autonomous principle, often continues to press on in the face of such restriction: the "Cut in funds fails to halt youth work" (14/8/90:28), its successes continue to be "achieved with faith, dedicated staff and a shoe-string budget" (13/8/91:10).

The construction of youth within the sector is influenced by these tensions. The young people who constitute the object of youth sector attention, "at-risk" or "disadvantaged" youth, are constructed as passive victims of political and economic forces like consumerism, recession and unemployment. Abuse, particularly sexual abuse, is frequently mentioned as an aetiological factor in their ungovernability (20/8/91:10). Yet despite this construction of passivity, the sector, as in its hallmark lexical term "young people", also attempts to construct or reconstruct the subject as a subject, to deconstruct the constitution of youth as Other and reconstitute them as human, as part of the community, as Us. In "SW bush scheme gives young a cultural identity", Chris, a glue sniffer, now

inhales nothing but the clean air of the country and is working hard at proving he can earn an honest living...

When Fred joined the scheme social workers warned Mr Hill to be wary of the wild 17-year-old who had never lived in one spot for long and was suffering the nausea and migraines which accompany withdrawal from substance abuse

But Mr Hill found Fred to be a quiet, shy youngster who quickly settled into his new, secure lifestyle

As the oldest of the youths, Chris knows better than anyone how the scheme can help him and the others break old habits and prove they have something to offer society

"This is giving us a chance to show society that we're not the people it thinks we are," he said

"Some people think we're criminals - useless scum that should just be locked away. But if we just get the chance we can prove ourselves."
I look back on the stuff I did and it was stupid. I just hope to prove myself and get good grades and a good job."

26/12/91:9

The logic of the construction of youth as a victim of social processes leads in the same direction. The advancement of an aetiology for deviant youth behaviour in poverty and abuse makes such behaviour explicable, and makes the young people involved understandable and deserving of sympathy.

Such discourses interlock with techniques for the discipline of young people that involve substitution for primary institutions like "the home" and modes of relationship with sector professionals which will lead to the rebuilding of "self esteem", a quality of self-formation that, within youth sector discourse, enables the subject to be self-disciplined, self-nurturing, self-acting, self-sufficient. They are part of a complex and tension-filled position which at the same time aims to advocate for young people, protesting about infringements of their rights and speaking out about injustices of various kinds, and advocates for itself and its constitutive discourses as an appropriate vehicle for the discipline of youth "at risk".

The youth sector therefore makes use of images of youth as deviant and as victim, as well as at the same time attempting to deconstruct youth as Other. The portrayal of youth as deviant is necessary to convince a public of the severity of social failure, and of the urgency of intervention. The portrayal of youth as victim maintains a construction in which the problems of youth originate in the failures and injustices of social institutions, and the negation of regimes of discipline and punishment directed at the individual. The portrayal of youth as just a young person attempts to deflect the processes of demonisation which frequently involve discussion of the problems of youth in the public sphere. These contradictions are maintained in the context of a contradictory structural position, where the positioning of youth agencies at the point of failure of mainstream institutions gives them knowledge not only of the pathology of youth, but also (or rather) the pathology of the structures, and where their own survival
rests on a claim to reintegrate young people within the structures and to effectively govern them in the interim.
Part Five: Concluding.
The last few chapters have canvassed some of the dominant discursive frames within which youth is constituted in newspaper reports. There are many others: while elements of a discourse of youth may be shared across institutional sites, those speaking from the church, from Parliament, from trade unions, from local government, from different State and Federal Government departments, will each shape the category in different ways, to serve different interests. The few positions I have discussed are themselves arrayed in difference, projecting youth onto the screen of the newspaper in different shapes and colours. Many of these are antagonistic, involved in an active contest for command over the terms in which youth is to be understood and the disciplines which are to be authorised for their governance.

I mentioned in the opening section to this study that the newspaper collection offers a particular kind of deposit of discourse about youth. As Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1987) have argued, newspapers deal overwhelmingly with deviance, with the failure of governmentality in its various forms. The frequency with which categories of crime, of drugs, of sex, appear in the newspaper collection supports their view. Consequently, newspaper reports overwhelmingly deal with constructions in the breach, with events and issues where discipline has failed, rather than where the governmentality of youth has been achieved.

The discourses discussed in Part Four generally seek to cast youth is such a way as to make this failure explicable, and to repair the breach in the ordered society made manifest by their deviance. This enterprise may focus on the classes of young people who breach, or it might target the policing practices which have failed to contain them. In determining the proper focus for disciplinary action, primary decisions must be made about whether the young person or persons concerned are active subjects or passive victims. The discursive grid of agency and virtue, discussed in Part Three, is employed differently by different sources in order to close this question. Because deviance originates within the source of subjectivity itself, decisions must also be made about the
aetiology of their constitution as subjects, in order to prescribe the appropriate remedial action. Using frames developed through the history of the constitution of youth as subject, sources may ascribe the origin of subjectivity to the body, to the psyche, or to the social, and make prescriptions for the arrest of outbreaks of deviant behaviour on that basis.

Such outbreaks represent a minority phenomenon in the governance of youth. In the big picture, the institutions of school and family, and to a lesser extent the youth organisation, the church, and the sporting club, successfully contain and discipline the young people within their ambit. But while the potential trouble indicated by the axiom of adolescent turmoil is generally contained by these institutions, breaches of discipline and failures of governance provoke a running battle in the representation of youth in the newspaper. In the face of such a breach, agencies like the police, the courts, and the youth sector struggle for capture of the definition of the ungoverned and for the claim to knowledge of their condition.

Gordon Tait was quoted earlier arguing that

"youth does not constitute a unitary object. The concept of youth has been discontinuously constructed across a profusion of terrains and as such, it has neither a linear history nor a clearly demarcated present. ...it has been produced as a governmental object at the intersection of certain legal, educational, medical and psychological problematisations."

(1993c:45)

In general, the evidence put forward in Part Four supports this view. At least on the surface, the constitution of youth as a subject is diverse and contested. The history of the concept is far from linear, and discernible fragments of that history remain present within discourse carried in the newspaper. Different sources differently "produce" this "governmental object", invoking different discursive frames so to do.

Yet, I have argued, there is some underlying unity in the object that transcends this difference. There is something in the middle of this battlefield, a more or less discrete population around which techniques of governance swirl and bat. Despite the
difference, youth does take shape under the many hands of discourse, even if the shape is fluid and changing. Part Five reviews and brings together the suggestions that have been made so far in this study about how the shape of the youth category might be described, and explores the consequences of seeing young people as adult persons whose accreditation as adults has been withheld.
17 Reconstructing the youth category

"Youth" is usually seen as a natural stage in life, during which major physical and emotional development occurs. Many problems are attributed to this "natural" stage. But the age period of "youth" is arbitrary. Most societies do not have a prolonged transition between childhood and adulthood as we do, but a quick transition, often involving an initiation rite. Our concept of "youth" should be seen as ridiculously extended, artificially created rite that mystifies reality, rather than a natural development stage.

Thus "youth" problems are not inevitable, but one of our own making. Puberty is only a problem for a sexually repressed and hence easily exploited society, rather than a natural problem of youth.

Similarly, "identity formation" is a reflection of adult needs and myths. By treating young people as if they have identity problems, adults often create such problems. In reality, identity formation happens from birth to death. Personal development happens throughout life and does not stop in early adulthood.

Western society creates "youth" by isolating young people from adult social processes through extended schooling; exploiting them through a "youth culture" whose motivation is profit for companies, not culture for youth; and more recently by alienation through enforced unemployment, where youth and adult unemployed are kept apart.

We reify youth - take a mentally constructed notion and treat it as a fixed part of nature. This maintains a social structure based on individualised consumerism and profit making. The "youth market" is an important part of the economy, and the education system provides a workforce for industry, at the same time "minding" jobless young people.

By projecting onto "youth" all personality development, we maintain the idea that adults are unchanging. In the terms of the existentialist philosophy of Sartre, by relegating personal change to young people, and developing appropriate theories, we avoid the anguish of continually facing our own freedom to choose, and to develop.

In reifying youth, adult society creates many of the problems that youth face; most youth problems are not "natural".

Youth are treated as a homogeneous group, when in fact they are divided by class, gender, ethnicity and history. The consensual functionalist view of most youth work theory is an ahistorical ideology which supports the status quo. We need a political economy of youth, to look at the historical development of the concept of "youth" and the part it has played in social control, and to expose the exploitation of the "youth market".

(Van Moorst 1983:38/39)
So wrote Harry Van Moorst in a paper delivered to a National Workers With Youth Forum in Australia in 1983. The paper was a judgement and a call to arms which had reverberations across the country in the thinking of people who worked in the youth sector. I came across the paper again, after first reading it eight or ten years ago, as I was working through the process of writing this concluding chapter.

This study was not planned as a response to Van Moorst's challenge, though it could have been. I have not slotted the study into that genre of works titled or subtitled "A Political Economy of...", though perhaps I could have. The thesis has a different audience than Van Moorst's manifesto. It has the advantage of post-structuralism's critique of the committed and singular vision that Van Moorst and others have held, and of familiarity with the analytic approaches of Foucault and Said and others of their ilk. But my work in this thesis begins from the same point, and drives in the same direction as his polemic for youth workers. In my own imagination, at least, it has met Van Moorst's demand for theory that takes the social construction of the youth category seriously, that understands the history and the politics of the processes, that avoids dealing with youth as a homogenous population or their construction as an isolated phenomenon distinct from other social processes, other institutions, other structures. It has filled out some of the theoretical lacunae that Moorst, in his programmatic presentation, points towards. Behind my analysis, as his, is an ethical concern for the ways that this social construct that we call "youth" impacts on people, and for the crushing instruments of policy and policing that are supported and given legitimacy by it.

The study has not dealt with the other side of this story. I have not researched the ways in which young people negotiate this social construct and the different kinds of selves that it offers them; how they work it across the varied and irregular landscape of

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121 While the open possibilities of post-structuralist theory are to be celebrated, the loss of the committed, single vision of structuralist positions would be a significant loss. The effort of theorists like Zygmunt Bauman to preserve commitment in the face of the collapse of authorities is to be commended.
institutional contexts that their path crosses; how young people stack this construction against the other identities - gender, class, race and ethnicity, status, party, sexual desirability, geography, language group, personal history, family form, sexual identity, religious identification, nationality - which, along with their youth, shape and constrain their way of being, interpellate them, constitute them as a self, carve out ways of being-in-the-world. I have talked to young people about my ideas, and they have made sense to those I have talked to, but they have not spoken in the study.

This silence is a little dangerous. It could give the impression, as Van Moorst's manifesto does, that young people are passive, powerless, mute: plastic raw material stamped and battered and pressed into moulds under the discourse-machines of the social factory, and it is Our job to break the machines For Them.

I want to avoid that impression if I can. The research vehicle chosen for this study was not competent to deal with the matter of young people's response and resistance to the processes of the youth category. I chose newspapers as a site for study, and newspapers deal predominantly with the discourse of others. But that does not mean that young people have no response, that they are not active, through conformity, disruption, perversity and rebellion, in negotiating the disciplines of their classification. (The discussion of practices of self-formation in chapter five, all too briefly and selectively, was aimed at making this clear.) The agency of young people themselves was always going to be a walk-on part in the thesis given the focus of the study as a whole. That does not mean that the agency of young people only has a walk-on part in reality, in the social world outside these pages. But here, that experience can only really be pointed to, rather than captured. If the power/knowledge nexus is as insidious as Foucault argues, perhaps that is a good thing.

The intention of this chapter is not, however, to focus on what I haven't done. Even in a study as large as this, there is no shortage of things that have been left unsaid, literature left unread, questions left hanging. The task for now is to engage with what I have
managed to put into words. The theoretical reconstruction of the youth category which has been evolving fitfully through the pages of this thesis still needs to be rounded up and penned in, and this is the major objective of this chapter.

As I have indicated perhaps too many times, I have never been content with the deconstruction of the youth category, but have wanted to reconstruct an alternative understanding of the youth category and of the processes by which it has come to be constituted as such. Such a reconstitution is perhaps a risky endeavour - deconstruction is much safer - and it may be that the reconstruction that I have been working with is less useful to others than it has been for me in the job of making sense of youth. Nevertheless, this reconstruction is to my eyes at least valid: consistent with the evidence which has so powerfully undermined classic theories of youth based on Hall's original axioms of adolescence (but which continues somehow to be ignored); consistent with analyses of the historical emergence of the modern youth category; and able to key into a wide range of contemporary youth cultural phenomena and social issues. The other objective for this chapter is to explore, regretfully only programmatically, what an alternative constitution of the youth category might mean for practices like parenting, political enfranchisement, legal statuses, and labour market practices, and especially for the place where I do my work, for the practice of youth work.

Review: the vertical dimension

According to the account that I have offered in this study, youth is about ideological assimilation, and about the way that accreditation as adult, as citizen, as a member of the commonwealth, is withheld from certain otherwise adult members of a society on the assumption of their inadequate or incomplete assimilation of dominant ideologies, a judgement based on their low relative age.
The framework of theory behind this account is largely structuralist. This is appropriate: I have been interested not only in the representation of youth in the newspaper, but also the emergence of the youth category in history, the existence of the category cross-culturally, and its articulation with economic and political processes. Structuralist approaches are useful for such things. However, the framework is capable of being translated - I don't think that the account is closed epistemologically. Leslie Johnson, from a broadly post-structuralist position argues, for example, that the operation of psychological discourses in particular
delineated a series of developmental tasks involved in a "proper growing up" through which the young person would acquire a stable, coherent identity. Growing up entailed making a self in this form; adulthood was at the end of this process, as the individual learned to reconcile what was understood as the adolescent's "need" for autonomy with the demands of the social world.

1993:150

The kinds of ideas that I have put forward for a sociological theory of youth are sympathetic to Johnson's account of the self-formation of youth, being especially interested in the content of the "demands of the social world", and the corresponding limits to "making a self". Translating between her account and mine, it is primarily a particular kind of ideological self that is being constructed, and there are processes of domination in the construction of this self which make it rather less than an open choice. Youth is a construction of the self involving a project which is the construction of the self, an identity designed to build its own identity. The vehicle for the constitution of this construction is the space created by suspension of ideological accreditation, or what Talcott Parsons (1942), in another paradigm, called the moratorium on responsibility[^122].

The youth category is not universal: it is not present in some communities, and in some societies it is not part of the experience of some groups of people, like the poor, or women, even where the concept has currency for other groups. Some communities, apparently, assume that their young are competent once they have grown up, once biological maturity is attained. However, "youth" is not unique to twentieth century

[^122]: It is, however, only certain responsibilities in which a moratorium is granted, and only for some young people. Part of the contradiction surrounding youth is that some heavy responsibilities are laid down, but often without the necessary political and economic resources to negotiate them.
industrialised societies. Other kinds of societies also have a youth category, and communities in Europe in the medieval period were, with varying meanings and degrees of clarity, familiar with something called "youth" and even "adolescence". From a reading of the texts cited in this study, what seems to make the difference crossculturally as to whether a society does or does not have a youth category is to do with a process of assimilating the essential knowledges, stances, practices, of the accredited status of adult or citizen.

The process by which majority is conferred on the subject varies. In some places, majority is conferred by rite: some prime indicator of majority has been established, and when it is manifested, a rite de passage is enacted. Vestiges of this way of doing things survive in the celebration of twenty-first birthdays in Australia and elsewhere. Or majority is conferred by attrition, a function of time and of exposure to accredited roles or the various different paths through which accreditation can be achieved, however haltingly and partially. Or majority is conferred when the subject accepts a place in the social order that signifies majority: the status of soldier, of businessman, perhaps of parent. Through the middle of processes like these, youth is charged with the responsibility of making the kind of self that will be eligible for accreditation, of becoming creditable, ideologically safe, settled.

Our society incorporates all of these modes and none of them completely. Gradually, provisionally and unevenly, majority is granted across the terrains to be negotiated. The assumption of ideological incompetence or instability lingers, providing justifications for routine practices which withhold majority from young people while often denying them the protection of minority status - they pay as adults, and are paid as children. No clear point is established at which the rights of the responsible agent can be called upon. In Australia, young people can vote and drink alcohol and be conscripted into the army at eighteen, but are not paid adult wages or the adult rate of unemployment benefits until they are twenty-one. They can leave home at sixteen, but can't sign contracts until they are eighteen. Revealingly, claimants may be granted the "independent" rate for
study allowances in Australia if a) they are over twenty-two  b) have been in the workforce for three out of the last four years  c) can prove that they are homeless or d) have a child. Otherwise, the assumption of dependence on parents stands.

According to a body of opinion stretching from Margaret Mead through S. Eisenstadt and Ann Seig to Frank Maas, it is this ambiguity of status combined with the indeterminacy of the accreditation process that creates youth problems. Mead, Eisenstadt and Seig all argue that while many societies have a youth category, the category is by no means always problematic - and, for Eisenstadt, is positively functional. What makes the difference is whether accreditation is uncertain and provisional, or certain and assured. Maas (1990) argues strongly for the adoption of an absolute age of majority at which all legal statuses are unambiguously conferred, and to the extent that such an objective can be implemented, all social statuses as well. Below such an age, while young people may have no right, for example, to leave home or to adult wages, neither could they be required to pay adult fares on public transport or adult entry fees. Above this age, adult wages would be paid, welfare benefits could not discriminate, and parental income would not be assessed in means-tested allowances such as student grants. This approach illustrates the consequences of dealing with young people not as a special category of human being, locked into this unique and traumatic stage of development called "adolescence", but as an adult. An inexperienced adult, to be sure, but with the hardware fully installed and the full human range of capacities ready to go.

Some concession probably needs to be made to the inexperience of young people in some contexts, as it does to other groups, such as people reentering the workforce after long periods away, or newly arrived migrants. Notwithstanding that in some areas, young people are far more experienced than their elders, there are going to be areas where there are problems to be solved and decisions to be made in which experience is the prime resource, and where young people are inexperienced. Experience is a costly commodity, and it is prudent to establish social practices which allow young people to
gain experience relatively safely and without permanent injury. But it cannot be gained without pain and without making mistakes, and one's ability to learn from the experience of others is limited. The observation that young people undergoing difficult social relations frequently "grow out of" their problems, often understood in terms of the passing of the adolescent stage, might just be the result of learning from experience what works in social intercourse and what doesn't, what benefits accrue from different ways of being and what costs are entailed.

In this view, the task of guiding young people is a matter of trying to ensure that these new adults gain the experience they need to operate safely without incurring permanent and disabling physical, emotional or social damage. A provisional driving licence, in which new drivers whatever their age are limited in terms of the engine capacity of the vehicle or how fast they are allowed to drive, seems to me to be an illustration of sensible and appropriate responses to the realities of inexperience. There may also be justification for special provisions which protect young people from exploitation by those who would trade on their inexperience. There is a politics of experience in which the latest arrivals are especially vulnerable, and more open access to services which give information and advocate for inexperienced groups like young people or, for that matter, newly arrived migrants or the newly separated, seems a reasonable expectation.

In recent years, the Australian Council of Trade Unions has advocated the abolition of junior wages in favour of training wages. The move is a recognition that age is not of itself a relevant factor in determining productivity, but that experience is. In some occupations, the requisite experience can be gained quickly, in less than a day, and juniors may actually be more efficient than seniors in the execution of the tasks required. In such a situation, it seems unjust to discriminate against young people merely on the arbitrary fact of their age. It is noteworthy that while Australia now has a developed anti-discrimination legislative framework in place, in most States (and Western Australia, since 1993, is an exception) it does not protect youth from discrimination in employment, housing, or access to public places. Even in Western
Australia, because discrimination in employment has a legal basis in the establishment of age-specified industrial awards up to the age of twenty-one, discrimination on the basis of age is allowed for under twenty-one year-olds but not for those over that age (Equal Opportunities Commission Discrimination Enquiries).

The inequities involved in this position are clear. They raise the question as to why these areas of discrimination continue to be entertained in a society where removing formal and structural conditions which contradict the liberal claim of equal opportunity has been a priority in social policy over the last decade, and how continuing discrimination on the basis of age continues to be seen as legitimate.

Part of the answer to this question may be found in political economy, in the logic of the "reserve army of labour", in the convenience to policy-makers and employers of a population that is capable of the work of men and women, but which can be concurrently classified as child, and sent back to school. In the post-long boom environment of economic uncertainty and long-term high unemployment, it is useful indeed to have a flexible population which can flow backwards and forwards between the workforce (where low pay rates for this population continue to be instituted in law) and continuing schooling; a population which makes itself available for part-time and casual labour in response to the fluctuating fortunes of industry; which, in the event of economic exclusion carrying through to street-presence and perhaps petty crime, can be controlled by police without significant regard for due process or civil rights because of an ambiguous and uncertain legal status and the endorsement of communities fearful of "escalating juvenile crime"(see White 1989, 1990).

The discussion of dividing practices in chapter four indicates that the constitution of youth in terms which make young people so available didn't happen yesterday. Prior to this process, which itself took over a century to establish, youth, in its modern sense, did not exist. Alongside these dividing practices, the discourse of adolescence established a framework of understanding youth which established youth as a "stage in life"
characterised by turmoil, subject to extremes and extravagances, a stage where the winds of civilisation blew wildly and fitfully. The encarceration of youth within the school was first among a range of strategies dealing with their ideological unreadiness, turbulence, vulnerability, jeopardy. In one blow, the school cleans up the streets, gets unemployed young people off the books, disciplines the bodies of the young for industrial labour and the clock-on/clock-off day, and imparts useful knowledges and intellectual skill to meet the increasingly mental labour demands of industrial economies. Concurrently, discourses of adolescence deliver into the hands of legislators a coercible subject, a subject created unstable by Nature, and therefore simultaneously dangerous and malleable.

While they may be dominant, the disciplines of the school and the intonations of discourses of adolescence have not been the only hammers at work on the construction of youth. To quote Tait yet again, youth "has been discontinuously constructed across a profusion of terrains..."(1993c:45). This study has explored this landscape, finding the kind of variety and discontinuity that Tait would have predicted, but also some regularities in the landscape, some consistencies in form in the construction of youth that belies the kaleidoscope of discourses and representations.

The discussion of the dividing practices, the practices of self-formation, and the regimes of scientific classification establishes the vertical dimension of the constitution of youth: the relation between "youth" and adult, the configuration of youth as a product of power and the youth category as a function of the interests of the powerful. There is also a horizontal dimension, a dimension that discriminates between youth and between different representations of them. In this study this is traced through the architecture of the discourses represented in this parochial daily metropolitan newspaper, through which youth is fashioned, refashioned, shaped, contested.

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123 The range includes measures like compulsory military drilling, policing practices like "hooligan squads" or "larrkin squads", youth clubs and youth organisations, juvenile prisons or "training centres", and the vast apparatus of the "Employment, Education and Training" bureaucracy.
The horizontal dimension

The landscape of youth discourse has been extensively explored in Part Three of this study, and I do not propose to tax the reader by reproducing that discussion at any length here. But the consistencies, the regularities in form that I referred to a moment ago, need to be drawn together. There are a number of standard frames upon which the manifold discourses of youth embraced by a profession, an institution, a party, are constructed.

The first of these is the frame of the Other. This frame was not invented for youth - it is a standard device for classification and control. A range of writers have pointed to similar constructions in the containment of women, of colonised peoples, of Aboriginal people, many others. It has also been the template upon which many discourses of youth have been written, including the originating discourse of G. Stanley Hall. Youth are then presented as strange, as alien, as Them. Their difference, established in the discourse of adolescence by their different Nature, legitimates a pattern of dealing with them as aliens, as non-citizens. The courtesies of democracy are not extended to them. They are people to be spoken for, rather than to speak.

It is common in constructions of the Other that a polarity is established: good and mad women, damned whores and God's police, traditional and urbanised Aboriginals, the evolutionary degenerate and the noble savage. The evidence indicates that this is the case also for youth: students and youths, youngsters and delinquents, young Australians and louts and hooligans. A polarity exists between youth as ideal, as the future, as the bearers of the fresh fires of civilisation, and youth as delinquent, as degenerate, as urban wolves from whom we need to be protected.
The polarity is compromised by fine mitigations, however. As one problem is solved, another is invented. Faced with the problem that the construction of youth as delinquent also creates a way for youth to be, and that youth, as the next generation, are required to stock major institutions (which will govern the incumbents in their dotage), discourses of youth also create a fine palette of words capable of pulling the subject back, in fine degrees, from a deviant identity. The palette is versatile enough to pull back just a little, to cast just a little gloss on the subject's deviance, or to effect a major redemption. Whether the subject is consigned to the blackest of deviant identities, or rehabilitated as innocent but mistaken or misguided, is a political act and the subject of vigorous contest. It is an act produced in the matrix of other categories, other contests, in the struggles over gender, party, race, class, religious identification, sexual orientation and so on.

These two dimensions, the vertical and the horizontal (referred to elsewhere in this study as the axes of Agency and Virtue), construct the grid on which individual young people, the subjects of newspaper stories, are placed. The placement of events and individuals connects into a wider battle over the proper understanding of issues and problems in which young people are implicated, and the proper regimes of governance within which issues and problems are to be "addressed". Stakeholders dispute the placement of events and figures on the grid, marshalling the discursive apparatus at their disposal to construct events as the work of youths, youngsters, teenagers, schoolboys, young Australians, degenerates, hooligans, girls, juveniles or students, or as mere phenomena in which the subject is bystander or victim, passive and/or innocent. In many cases, the successful construction of youth in the discursive frame of a stakeholder delivers the social problem in question into the hands of the stakeholder for governance, along with the resources and the power needed to do the job, to "address the issue", to contain the population or sub-population in question.

124 The claim is rarely made that these regimes will solve problems. The discourse of social policy is directed as "addressing issues", not solving problems.
125 Though this mandate is not always solicited, or even welcome, as indicated by the reluctance of the Children's Court to take on the administration of the Crimes (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Act.
Thus, notwithstanding the "discontinuous construction" of youth across the discursive landscape, professional and popular speakers push a particular kind of youth onto the field, a figure shaped by discourse, which must then take its part in the game, must stride or stumble into the place appointed for it in the public sphere. The newspaper, along with other media, is the marketplace of the public sphere. In this place, youth is there to be seen dressed in the colours provided by others, appearing under the presumption of ideological questionability through which it has been called into being.

Conclusion

I have said that this study is not about young people, but about the youth category. The analysis has dealt largely with abstractions, with ideological structure and discourse. But real human beings live under the disciplines embodied in the constitution of a people as "youth". Not all of these are arduous: the license given to young people to have fun, to play, to experiment, is an enviable discipline. But many of them are, resulting in regimes under which young people are poorly paid, are denied civil rights including the right to political representation, the freedom of assembly and speech, freedom of movement. Under many jurisdictions, discrimination against young people on no other grounds than their age is not only allowed but encouraged.

I have constructed here a theoretical position which offers the basis for (yet) another discourse of youth. In this discourse, youth are developed, able human beings, as competent as any other grouping to take on the responsibilities of citizenship, but excluded from the common wealth under the presumption of ideological inadequacy. The theory directs the gaze away from young people, whose inherent competence can generally be assumed, to those mechanisms through which exclusion is achieved, to those social forces and social groupings at whose hands exclusion is secured and
maintained, and to the consequences of exclusion in the lives of young people themselves.

The discourse of youth developed here, like the discourse of adolescence, is not the work of young people. Despite my pretensions, I am no longer young - I realised with a little shock just yesterday that I am now twice as old as my younger students. I have tried, however, to deal with the youth problematic from a stance of advocacy, and to deal with the truth in such a way that values that I hold are honoured - values about the capacity for freedom among human people and about the need for human structures to be open to a kinder future. The theory enables young people to see themselves as able, as powerful, as people whose juvenile status is imposed rather than internal, as people with rights and whose rights are constantly violated. It encourages young people and their advocates to challenge orthodox provisions for youth, orthodox assumptions about their inadequacy, orthodox means for their control.

This way of seeing youth suggests that current social arrangements are not good enough, not just enough, not free enough. It attempts to expose the artifice of a concept of a universal stage of life, lived in turmoil, irresponsibility and unreliability, to dethrone it as "science", to expose it not only as a human creation but as a creation which is inconsistent with the evidence. The theory points towards an alternative way of being not only for young people but also for adults, in which learning and responsibility and the getting of wisdom is a constant process; in which instability, adventure, rebelliousness and revolt is not quarantined in the teenage years; in which the responsibility for work, for the generation of value and the meeting of needs, for contribution to the common wealth, for care and nurture and mutual support, falls across the ages.

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126 About which Jurgen Moltmann (1967, 1973, 1984a, 1984b) is perhaps the most articulate and elegant spokesperson
If such an understanding were to be suddenly adopted by those with the power to make it stick, young people would lose some things. This is a routine reality about liberation, whatever the origin of repression, whatever the population contained by it. It is the experience of colonised peoples, of women, of slaves. Adulthood is not a condition free of burdens. Arguably, more would be expected of young people under such a circumstance, especially in terms of responsibility before the law and the expectation of economic contribution. Adults would also gain some things - the opportunity to play, to experiment.

There could also be costs in terms of social stability, as criticism and rebellion is no longer quarantined in a group which has little power, via the ballotbox or via position in parties or institutions or other structures which aggregate and focus power, and becomes part of the life of people of all ages. It is useful to be able to quarantine dissent, and the usefulness of the construction might help make sense of the continued blindness to the stability and capacity of young people as a population, the studied ignorance of evidence which indicates that young people are not especially troubled, and the usefulness of the "moratorium on responsibility" itself.

However, the costs are high, and especially so for those young people cast under multiple discriminations. In the community in which I live, punitive legislation continues to be drafted and enacted under the threat of violent teenage gangs, tighter and tighter restrictions on young people's freedoms, via restrictive employment practices, discriminatory welfare payments, and eye-of-the-needle regulations regarding the payment of income support to young people leaving home. The day before I wrote this, the Juvenile Justice Act (the amended version of the Crimes (Serious and Repeat Offenders) Act) was passed by the Western Australian parliament, complete with its modified but still offensive provisions for mandatory sentencing, indeterminate sentences, and hard labour camps in the desert. Such measures are costly not only in terms of community resources, but also in terms of damage to the human spirit. They are especially so for Aboriginal young people.
This parochial newspaper, *The West Australian*, is partly responsible for this. But, in line with its charter, it delivers to the Western Australian community the news couched in familiar and acceptable frames, reproduces the authoritative voices of that community in its pages, bows to public pressure, reflects the ideologies of its audience. It is not passive in the process, and has a powerful role in amplifying the fear of youth and the perception of their deviance. But I do not think that the constructions of youth dominant in this community have their origin in the newspaper. The newspaper is a social product, and while media exposure is a necessary condition for reconstructing concepts of youth, it is not a sufficient one. Youth is constructed across a profusion of terrains, and action to open up the category needs to happen across a profusion of terrains.

This thesis is perhaps a small contribution to this openness. I hope, despite the limited readership available to works of this genre, that it will be useful eventually to young people and to their advocates who are interested in a life for young people and for others which is lived more on its own terms: a life with an expanding edge, in which transition, experiment, rebelliousness and unorthodoxy are part of a living repertoire, rather than a song we once knew.
Appendix
The data base

The clippings collection which provided the data for this study comprised a near-complete collection of articles from *The West Australian* which mentioned young people. The collection period was from April 1990 to March 1992, and included 2683 articles. This is, of course, too large a resource to hold in your head. The next stage of the project was to computerise the youth news file, for two purposes. The first was to provide a catalogue of clippings so that individual articles, or groups of articles on a given subject (like drugs) or combination of subjects (like drugs and high speed car chases) or exhibiting a particular feature (like an accompanying photo), could be found and isolated. A database allows quite complex selection processes like this to be done, working with several variables at a time. The second was to process the file so that it could be dealt with quantitatively - so that counts and percentages could be made of certain features and criteria, like the number of articles that deal with young women, or that deal with young Aboriginal people and crime.

Initially, the data was entered using Dbase 3+, a standard, though now old, database software package. Although quite powerful, and easily programmable, Dbase3+ is limited in the presentation of data, especially in graphic form. However, because it is an industry standard, Dbase files are easy to import into most of the newer spreadsheets and database packages available. In this case, the secondary data derived from counts on text-based fields in Dbase 3+ were entered into the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet package, and charts and tables generated from there.

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The structure of the database was as follows.
Headline
This field recorded the headline, rendered in capitals for ease of data entry and processing.

Date
This field registered the date of the newspaper. The articles in the file were filed by date, so date became the primary field.

Page
This field registered the page number on which the article was found. It is important to note, however that page numbers of articles can change with different editions of the newspaper.

Des1, Des2, Des3, Des4
These four fields recorded, in coded form, the lexical term used to describe or name the young person - e.g. YP (for young person), G (for girl), J (for juvenile) etc. Four fields were required because an article will usually use more than one such descriptor and may use up to eight or ten. Des4 was designed longer than the other descriptor fields so that, should more than four descriptors be used, the remaining descriptors could still be registered and retrieved. There is a full list of the descriptors and their codes in the Appendices.

Iss1, Iss2, Iss3, Iss4
These four fields recorded the issue at stake in the article. The issue was also entered in coded form - e.g. DRG (for drugs) C (for crime) CMV (for crime involving motor vehicles). Up to four different issues could be logged for each article. There is a full list of the issue codes in the Appendices.

Iss5 was developed later, as a way of simplifying searches across more than one variable (e.g. the number of articles involving young women and crime, or young women
and high achievement). Where Iss1-4 allow several issues to be registered for a single article, Iss5 listed the one dominant issue in the article from a broad issue list. Eight issue codes were allowed, namely,

- Crime,
- Education,
- Economic issues (including poverty, unemployment, exploitation and young people as workers)
- Homelessness and accommodation,
- Misadventure (including articles about young people having gone missing as well as accidents, including car accidents),
- Young people as citizens (a broad category including such things as young people involved in charity work, their involvement in politics and social change, and discussions of young people's role in society and its future),
- Health, and
- High achievement.

More specific information (for example, whether the Crime code in Iss5 referred to crime victims or crime perpetrators) could then be established by cross-referencing Iss5 to the other Issue fields.

**Gender**

This field registers whether the subjects are male (M), female (F), or if both (B) males and females are mentioned separately in the article.

**Ethnicity**

This field registers the recorded ethnic group of the subjects. This was the most difficult of the fields to operationalise. First, the ethnicity of one subject within an article may be indicated, but not of others. Second, Press Council principles of reporting require "identification of ... race to be justified on grounds of its relevance...". 

*(The West Australian, 1/12/90 p9)* The newspaper had been severely criticised for a
highly exaggerated front-page headline ("Aboriginal Gangs Terrorise Suburbs")
published on February 28 1990, just before the period of this study, which was the
subject of a Press Council complaint. Apparently as a result, the newspaper appeared to
be following the Press Council policy more carefully in this period than previously, so
ethnic appellation was often not overt. Certainly, the incidence of ethnic identification
in the period of the study contrasts significantly with David Trigger's study of the
representation of race and ethnicity in *The West Australian*, which surveys an earlier
period (Trigger, 1991). However, the ethnicity of a subject was often clear from their
name, if that had an ethnic origin. Chinese or Vietnamese names were especially
indicative here.

Ethnicity might also be reasonably inferred from a person's appearance if there was an
accompanying photo, or from other data given. The most evident of these was where a
comment was sought from an Aboriginal spokesperson or organisation - most frequently
the Aboriginal Legal Service. This clearly identifies the subject as Aboriginal. But
other kinds of racial indicators could also be used: the identification of a person as a
refugee or former refugee, for instance.

It is easy to see how there might be a range of often ambiguous indicators that might
indicate a person's ethnic background. The ambiguity is important: many of these
indicators depend on certain assumptions for ethnic identity to be read from them. For
instance, family name is an imperfect indicator: names can be changed, either by
custom, law or marriage. Appearances can be deceiving, especially in black and white
photographs: skin colour and other facial features vary enormously among people
identifying as Aboriginal, for instance.

While it is important to uncover these kinds of allusions in the qualitative, interpretive
work to be done on these texts, the database by its nature is less accommodating to
shades of grey: it works best with yes/no answers. For this reason, ethnicity was
initially identified in the database if the ethnic reference was unambiguous for a reader
without special knowledge. It became clear, however, that access to articles where the ethnicity of the subject was available to the reader but not expressly stated might be important for retrieval purposes. A separate field, Impeth (for implied ethnicity) was added later to the database, and an entry was made in cases where the evidence of race was indirect (clues, associations, names) and ambiguous.

Genre

This field was used to indicate the newspaper genre within which an article was written. Different discursive conventions apply to different genres, including structure, language, what kinds of information will be admitted or the structure of photographs. At the most obvious level, a cartoon is different from a letter to the editor.

The major genres identified were cartoon, column (indicating the opinion column, such as Brian Toohey's, or the regular "folksy" work of Len Findlay, or the politics/gossip column of John McGlue on "Inside Cover"), the commentary article (involving the self-conscious commentary by a journalist or guest commentator on some set of events), editorial, letters to the editor, features (the extended journalistic commentary routinely printed on page eleven, or the compilation of several articles under a header on a single topic), the human interest story, and general news story.

Some of these are genres clearly labelled as such by the newspaper itself: by their placement, heading, or other identification. Editorials, letters to the editor, cartoons and columns are clear examples of this. There is not, and cannot be, any disagreement about the genre of an item in these categories. Other items are more ambiguous, and a given item may combine features of two or more genres. For example, while human interest stories are often clearly human interest stories, the boundary between a human interest story and a general news story is often blurred. This is especially so in examples where the article is about a crime victim. In such cases, the literary form of the article may
conform to that of the human interest story\textsuperscript{127}, but there is something about the story - a certain seriousness of tone, a concern with the documentation of events and circumstances rather than human qualities of feeling and identification, which place the article towards the general news category. Or an item may exhibit some of the form characteristics of the human interest story, but omit others.

The boundary between general news and features is also sometimes difficult to mark. Essentially, a feature is a piece of extended journalism, where reportage of events and commentary on those events is combined. The page eleven features are clearly labelled as such. However, there is often a page or double page spread on a particular issue in which a number of articles, from a spread of genres, on a single topic are included under a header. In the database, the individual articles were identified by a combination of codes: e.g. "FHI" for a human interest story which occurs as part of a larger feature of this kind.

Source

Where possible, the source or sources of information for a story were recorded. Usually, identification of the source is not difficult, because an authoritative origin for information is part of the code that establishes legitimacy for a story (see Hall et al 1978, Ericson, Baranek and Chan 1987). The identification of sources establishes whom the media consider "authorised knowers" (ibid.) about youth, and where the newspaper's primary information comes from, and enables the discursive frames of these sources to be studied.

Three database fields, SRC\textsubscript{1}, SRC\textsubscript{2} and SRC\textsubscript{3}, were used for this information. They were ranked fields, with the primary source identified in the field SRC\textsubscript{1}, and other sources, used for supporting or contradictory comment, identified in SRC\textsubscript{2} and SRC\textsubscript{3}.

\textsuperscript{127} Human interest stories, for example, dispense with the "inverted pyramid" structure in which all the essential information is given in the first paragraph and background and context is progressively filled out (see Anderson and Itule 1988 95)
Occasionally more than three sources were indicated in an article. For these data, only the first three sources were recorded.

**Name**
This field indicated whether the young person concerned was named or not. This matter seems to have been overdetermined by Child Welfare Act requirements that children not be named in criminal proceedings, and that victims of sexual assault not be identified. While the category may be useful in tracking these kinds of articles, the use or otherwise of a name did not seem to carry any other significance.

**Photo**
This field indicated whether or not a photo was used. The only point of difficulty here was whether to include articles where a drawing or other illustration was used, but no photograph. I decided to include photographs only. While a study of the construction of news photographs involving youth may be useful, is was not developed extensively in this study except in the examination of the victim report.

**Classic**
At some point in the database, I needed to have a place where I could write comments or notes, or draw attention to articles of particular significance or richness. **CLASSIC** was the field used for this purpose.

**Byline**
The author of a particular article was recorded in this field. Of course, not all articles record the name of the author, and generally, only journalists on *The West Australian’s* own staff are acknowledged in this way. The interest in the author of an article, and differences in the discourse of different journalists, emerged while I was doing the data entry. This data was therefore only recorded for the last six months of the clippings file - from October 1991 onwards.
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357