Performance Anxiety:
An exploration of spectacle, spectatorship and moral panic
in the twenty-first century

by

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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 education institution

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Renée Newman-Storen
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Abstract

In the last decade there has been an explosion of new technologies that enable discourse, power and truth formations to be produced, contested and dispersed. As communication and information technologies continue to evolve, so too do the ways in which individuals construct identities and form communities. The notion of a moral panic is utilised to describe those critical moments in time and space when social norms are perceived to be under threat. I suggest that the complex interplay of spectacle, spectatorship and moral panic involved in such instances can be both conceptualised and interrogated as performance. This dissertation draws upon two distinct performance paradigms – one theoretical and the other practical – to inform a critical reading of three significant ‘social events’ of the last decade: the drug-trafficking trial of Australian woman Schapelle Corby in Indonesia in 2005, the end-of-life legal case focused on American woman Terri Schiavo, which culminated in 2005, and the race relations associated with the ‘Redfern riots’ which occurred in Sydney in 2004. Informed by a range of theoretical positions from Michel Foucault, Zygmunt Bauman, Giorgio Agamben, Judith Butler, Baz Kershaw, and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, this dissertation fleshes out contemporary understandings of mediatised spectacle and spectatorship, with the aim of revealing the ways in which they contribute to creating and sustaining moral panic. A critical finding of the dissertation is that through both subjectification and objectification processes the central players and the spectators become indivisible from the spectacle itself, thus maintaining the interweaving cycle of spectator, spectacle and moral panic. By exploring the ways in which people interpret and respond to social phenomena, the possibilities for performance and social theory can be extended.
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Life is a constant performance; we are audience and performer at the same time; everybody is an audience all the time

Introduction: In the beginning

The contemporary social and political landscapes of the Western world are a matrix of globalisation, media, technology and performance. As Jon McKenzie writes:

The spectacular development of performance concepts over the past half century, the movements of generalization in such divergent areas as technology, management, and culture, the patterns of joint performance challenges – all these suggest that the world is being challenged forth to perform – or else (2001: 158).

The acts of consumption and commodification, identity formation, the rituals within everyday life and communicative interaction are enactments of performance today. Taking guidance from Zygmunt Bauman, I argue that we are living in liquid modern times (2002; 2003; 2006) in which all kinds of performances are circulating.

Performative acts are intricately enmeshed within networks of discourse and power. I am interested in fleshing out three instances of spectacle where communities within this technologised performative landscape were propelled to question what the event meant for them. Ultimately, the task of this dissertation is to interrogate the role of discourse and power in relation to the notions of spectatorship, spectacle and moral panic in the twenty-first century.

Performance theorist Richard Schechner suggests that: “just about anything can be studied ‘as’ performance”. Something “is a performance when historical and social context, convention, usage, and tradition say it is” (2002: 30). Diana Taylor argues that:

To say something is a performance amounts to an ontological affirmation. ... On another level, performance also constitutes the methodological lens that enables scholars to analyse events as performance. Civic obedience, resistance, citizenship, gender, ethnicity, and sexual identity, for example, are rehearsed and performed daily in the public sphere. To understand these as performance suggests that performance also functions as an epistemology. Embodied
practice, along with and bound up with other cultural practices, offers a way of knowing (2003: 3).

The paradigm proposed by Taylor is a central point of inspiration for the conceptual framework of this dissertation. The performance of social iterability – the ways in which individuals and communities engage with and understand each other through repetitive performative acts – is a form of knowledge. I understand knowledge to be an assemblage of discourses that influence how we speak, act and think. To study this knowledge, to examine the performances of our daily lives, is to continually investigate the machinations of social life. Thus, I assume that not only can social phenomena – which include cyber technologies, social media and mediatised spectacles – be read as performance but that this is also a useful trope to use in investigating the larger issues relating to the contemporary subject within the globalised context.

To begin with, I draw from the aforementioned separate but interrelated components: the as and is of performance. The first component (chapters one to four) comprises a theoretical examination of the three social events mentioned above as performance. The second component (chapters five and six) transforms the notion that an enactment is a performance by locating these events in performance in the form of an original performance text that responds to each event. A bridging chapter (chapter six) links the theoretical analysis with the performance script. Ultimately, I explore the interplay between social and political discourses in the manifestation of moral panic in the age of information, mediatisation and mass consumerism. I do this via an examination of the specific circumstances surrounding these three events that were representative of perceived deviations from moral and social boundaries and in the process I explore notions of spectatorship, spectacle and subjectification.
In the beginning…

The three events examined were of great social and political significance for their audiences. The first is the trial of Australian woman Schapelle Corby, who was convicted of drug smuggling in 2005 in Indonesia. The second case is the legal debates surrounding American, Terri Schiavo, who died in 2005 after fifteen years in a Persistent Vegetative State (PVS). Finally I examine the representation of the race-based riots in the Sydney suburb of Redfern in 2004. I selected these cases because of a particular set of responses from audiences that led in different ways to a challenging of social normativity, which I believe indicates something greater about the capacity of the subject to interpret and respond to social phenomena.

In 2005, I – along with a vast array of Australians – observed the trial of Australian woman Schapelle Corby in Indonesia. As I was in the process of developing a thesis topic, this case struck me as an excellent example of the behaviour of contemporary media audiences and the role of spectacle and performance for these audiences. What interested me was not my personal deliberation over her guilt or innocence, but rather how the event accelerated into a spectacle. I realised that this spectacle was a perfect opportunity to apply performance theory to make sense of this kind of event. Thus, I decided to explore two additional events – one Australian (the Redfern riots that had occurred the previous year) and the other international (the Terri Schiavo case) – to see how moral panic played out in other instances. ¹

¹ It is important to note that the use of the term ‘riots’ is used throughout the dissertation because this was how the media tended to refer to the unrest.
As I proceeded, the depth and complexity of each case became more apparent. I began to realise that these three social events led to a perceived threat to morality or ‘public interest’; a moral panic. The furore over these three examples raised questions about the nature of mediatised representation, morality and power, leading me to ask what were the social, cultural and political issues that the audiences to these events faced that in some way contributed to the eruption of a moral panic? I was also compelled to investigate the different ways in which this moral panic played out in each case: these responses varied from virulent judgement to rapturous celebration and everything in between. These events provided an opportunity to examine the prevailing social, historical and political conditions in each context that led to the questioning of normative social values.

The consumerist imperative is enmeshed with the impact of globalisation and the evolution of technology. Within this context, there is a plethora of instances where mediatised events have influenced the nature and role of both spectacle and spectatorship. However, not only because of the constrictions of time and space in this dissertation, my investigative scope centres on those social events that at the time of their enactment had a significant impact on the surrounding social landscape. The influence of each event was different from the other, yet what struck me as fascinating were the similarities. I discovered that the cases were indicative of the changing nature and role of spectatorship. Bauman argues: “The way present-day society shapes its members is dictated first and foremost by the duty to play the role of the consumer. The norm our society holds up to its members is that of the ability and willingness to play it” (1998: 80). As individuals and communities, we are ‘judged’ by our capacity to perform to certain social norms and to consume anything and everything from objects to
sensations and experiences. I found that the shifting qualities of spectatorship are linked to the consumerist imperative and the evolving influence of mediatisation. Thus, I argue there is a need to address both spectacle and spectatorship in the consumerist and globalised context for contemporary media audiences. As my research progressed, I also began to understand that linked to the moral panic expressed by audiences associated with each event, were the objectification and subjectification processes of both the spectator and the individuals directly involved in the events. Thus, this dissertation became not only concerned with the investigation of these three social events specifically but also with the very nature of the subject and of spectacle in the twenty-first century.

Paul Levinson identifies ‘old media’ as print, radio and television, ‘new media’ as the Internet and ‘new new media’ as the types of recent technology that not only provides information but is a vehicle for the production of information by the user (2009: 1). Levinson also points out that many technologies defined as new new media were not available five years ago, which is particularly relevant considering that the case studies are based on events that took place five or more years ago. Throughout the dissertation, I refer to old media and new media only in order to avoid confusion for the reader and to acknowledge that many of the social networking devices that are so influential today were only beginning to be used at the time these events occurred. However, it is as equally important to point out that the predecessor of what might be known as ‘Twitter’ today, and other social media devices, was at the time of the case studies, the weblog (blog). I was continually faced with a prolific number of blogs, a wide spectrum of uses

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2 While I note the complexity of these issues I refer to the objectification and subjectification processes that determine how a person might be considered a socially acceptable subject or equally, rendered as an object.

3 It is important to note that the terms ‘performance’ and ‘spectacle’ are not treated in this dissertation as interchangeable but are rather considered as highly significant notions within cultural and social theory. Both terms are recognised as containing potent and contested meanings that are extremely useful in this context.
(with diverse backgrounds) and content that fluctuated between deliberately confrontational messages and engaging critical debate. Thus, I felt it was imperative to include as much of these commentaries as research as was possible. This is because not only did they provide key information about the cases but the blogs and their users were emblematic of the evolving nature of the spectatorship in the construction of modern media spectacle. At the conclusion of the dissertation, I bring the notion of moral panic up to date in relation to new new media.

In gathering information regarding the conditions of each event, I examined predominantly information from the media, including national and international periodicals (magazine and newspaper feature articles, editorials and letters to the editor), transcripts of Australian radio programs, and webcasts of Australian and international television programs.\(^4\) Newspapers evidenced were the *Gold Coast Bulletin* (Queensland), *Sunday Mail* (Queensland), *Courier Mail* (Queensland), *West Australian* (Western Australia), *Sunday Times* (Western Australia), *Herald Sun* (Victoria), *Daily Telegraph* (New South Wales) and *Sun-Herald* (New South Wales) in the tabloid format, while newspapers such as *The Australian* (New South Wales), *Sydney Morning Herald* (New South Wales) and *The Age* (Victoria) are in the broadsheet format. With both formats come different readerships influenced by class, gender, age and other demographic factors.

\(^4\) The majority of media material was accessed via the Factiva full text electronic database.
Supplementary material was located on the Internet. They included court proceedings, medical and coronial reports, parliamentary discourse, legislation, and published speeches by both politicians and interest groups. Other forms of commentary included popular biographies of key figures by journalists or autobiographies by the individuals themselves. However, as already mentioned, the main sources of internet commentaries were cyber conversations among ‘ordinary people’ on weblogs (hereafter ‘blogs’) and websites. It is important to note here that I draw from sources that might be considered shock-jock journalism with sensationalist and opinionated perspectives alongside critically informed engagements of each of the events presented in this dissertation. It is not that I do not differentiate between the two but rather that these divergent commentaries are in fact diverse sources enabling me to unpack the extent of the moral panic in each instance. These sources are interwoven throughout the case studies as spectatorial responses to the events and in the performance text as dialogue. In reference to the theoretical framing of the dissertation, I drew from disciplines including sociology, cultural studies, media studies, gender studies, philosophy, history and of course, performance studies.

Chapter one is a theoretical overview contextualising the mediatised and technologised landscape of the twenty-first century; I locate the three case studies within this context and the major theoretical points for the overall analysis. The contemporary phenomenon of the mass media means that not only is the media intricately linked to the performance

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5 The Internet can be traced back to studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) that suggested a network of computers could advance simultaneous communication. This proposal was taken up by the United States military investigating the potential for this kind of interaction in the event of an atomic attack. From here, the science industries joined the military in exploring the possibilities for enormous data collection, as well as advanced communication. What followed was the involvement of private enterprise and the Internet was launched by the mid nineteen-eighties. In the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries the Internet has become an integral and dynamic information network for most late capitalist Western societies.

6 There was no restricted time frame to the year of publication; anything that seemed of relevance to the case studies was included in data collection. Throughout the dissertation, the information from such sources as blogs and letters to the editor is reproduced in the original format including capitalisation and spelling.
of spectacle and spectatorship, but linked to the creation and proliferation of a moral panic.\(^7\) The media continually negotiate subject formation, spectatorship, discursive truths and power relations. Media organisations and media technologies are inseparable from the contemporary “performative society” (Kershaw 2003: 595), in terms of the consumption of sensations, subject formation and the social event as performance. Therefore, chapter one explores the nature of moral panic, and the role of the spectator and mediatised spectacle in responding to and sustaining this moral panic. I find that Michel Foucault’s work on discourse and power is particularly useful in unpacking the significance of mediatised performance events and the effect on individual and collective spectatorship. In this sense, I understand power to be informed by culturally encoded discourse, which as a body of knowledge, enables how we act, think, speak and understand things to be true (Foucault 1980). Thus, intricate networks of knowledge, discourse, power and mediated representations of truth are at work in each of these social events.

Foucault’s work often involved the exploration of certain fears regarding difference – whether concerning the body, criminality, sexuality, or difference of any kind – and it is this point that I find particularly useful in explicating the notion of moral panic and how it might be made manifest. In chapter one, I discuss the notion of discourse and power and briefly explore the reasons why I apply three Foucauldian concepts of the ‘panopticon’, ‘biopower’ and ‘heterotopia’ to the case studies. I conclude the chapter with further questions to be addressed throughout the dissertation on the nature of subjectification and objectification evident in all the cases.

\(^7\) Whilst I note that media discourse might operate within organisations, institutions and technologies, the ‘media’ are not to be misunderstood as a homogeneous entity.
In chapter two, the first case study, I apply the notion of the panopticon to the representation of Schapelle Corby. I explore how the figure of Corby is influenced by the surveillance of the media and public and inscribed by discourses of consumerism, gender, race and sexuality. I argue that this continual surveillance results in a spectacle that surrounds her: where the notion of surveillance and spectacle coexist. However, I question the success of this surveillance-as-spectacle by suggesting that Corby is capable of moving beyond the position of the subjugated object by deliberately manipulating her image, dress and behaviour. The question becomes how effective or sustained is Corby’s pursuit of agency.

In chapter three, I examine the Terri Schiavo case in relation to Foucault’s notion of ‘biopower’ (1980). The chapter explores mediatised statements, opinion pieces, and interest groups in their regulation of the ‘truth’ in relation to debates surrounding the right to life/death movements, specifically in the USA. This chapter draws upon the understanding that biopower is an institutional and discursive form of discipline surrounding the regulation and control of populations, of the subject and the value of life. In reference to the notion of biopower, Brad Evans suggests that: “the biopolitical specifically referred to the political strategization/technologization of life for its own productive betterment” (2010: 415). My argument is that the mediated representation of Schiavo, and what she came to mean for so many, overtook the situation of the actual incapacitated subject herself. Drawing from the work of Giorgio Agamben, I also argue that the discourse of biopower can lead to the celebration of some lives in opposition to the “states of exception” that render others as ‘bare life’ (1998: 159). Ultimately, the Schiavo case reveals the ambiguity of the subject/object relationship and the ubiquitous
nature of biopower as a system regulating the value of the subject in the new millennium.

In chapter four, I explore the Redfern riots in relation to the representation of the Other as criminal and animalistic. Importantly, I understand that the mediatised construction that occurred in the days after the riots might have led to an overshadowing of the causes of the unrest that took place in the inner city suburb of Sydney in 2004. However, while the riots can be read as a space of disruption, they can also be interpreted as an opportunity for the transgression of normative social order. A key concept for understanding this transgression is heterotopia – sites, events and situations that are liminal and ambiguous – as originally formulated by Foucault. Teresa Davis argues that: “Heterotopias have a mirror-like quality of reflecting, yet refracting, distorting and inverting images of space and time. It is utopian, yet questioning of the very utopia it reflects, reflecting both what are real places and what are imagined ones” (2010: 663). The riots’ contravention of social normativity and what I refer to as a ‘memorial of graffiti’, inspired a temporary but subversive heterotopic space where both real and imagined space were inverted and thus highlighted. Heterotopia is a useful concept for examining the tension between resistance and dispossession in reference to the issues surrounding the Redfern riots.

Chapters five and six explore the performative retelling of the three unique events. Chapter five, the performance, *Three Interrupted Lives*, is an original work utilising verbatim text and fictional dialogue. In one way, I endeavour to encourage a nuanced response to the events as opposed to a replication of the polarised judgements that existed for many spectators in the context of the original moral panic. In another way, as
I endeavour to represent moral panic itself, this polarisation of opinion needs to be present in the performance. Ultimately, the performance piece is concerned with the relationship between the performance and the spectator and with fleshing out the potential meaning of spectacle and spectatorship in the actual live performance event. Chapter six explores the function of performance as a form of social commentary by analysing relevant performance practitioners and performance theory in relation to particular choices in my writing and the risks taken in a performative representation of real life events. Following Diana Taylor’s assertion that performance is an “ontological affirmation” (2003: 3) of the act itself and Baz Kershaw’s description of contemporary performance as a “spectacle of deconstruction” (2003: 595), I argue that *Three Interrupted Lives* is an attempt at a meaningful expression of spectacle, moral panic, and mediatisation in the contemporary global arena.

It is important to realise that these cases studies were significant events at a particular point in (recent) history, shaped by specific social, political and historical conditions that indicated a much larger machination of discourse, power and normativity. Keeping these unique circumstances in mind, it becomes possible to investigate how spectatorship, spectacle and moral panic operate today. Thus, the conclusion to the dissertation is also a commentary on the technologies available since these events took place. I explore the changing media and technological landscape, particularly in reference to new new media, and question the impact of these evolving devices, networks and processes on the creation and propagation of moral panic.
Conclusions

I examine how an event can generate particular responses, the social and political issues that these responses raise and the nature of mediatisation, spectatorship, spectacle and subjectification in the twenty-first century. I explore how each component of these three events is interconnected – both producing and reinforcing discursive truths that reflect the larger machinations of society. I also ask what performance as a creative mode of critical inquiry can contribute to furthering this investigation. Such questions involve exploring the role of normalising strategies in the matrices of discourse and power, as well as fleshing out how moral panic is propagated within this context. In the postmodern instance where there is often no clear or absolute distinction between spectator and performer – where the spectator is increasingly actively engaged in the social phenomena they observe – I attempt to tease out the notions of subjectification and objectification and the nature of agency. Ultimately, I ask questions about how social performance is manifested in the Western globalised zeitgeist.
...the world is being challenged forth to perform – or else

(McKenzie 2001: 158).
Chapter one: The social event as performance

The task of this chapter is to demonstrate that spectatorship and spectacle are at times intertwined and this along with certain particular discursive conditions can manifest and facilitate moral panic. Contemporary mediatised spectacles that lead to moral panic are, in fact, microcosms of social normativity believed to be under threat because of the prevailing discursive conditions at the time. In this chapter I examine the key issues explored in the case studies, particularly the nature of a moral panic, by paying particular attention to the characteristics and function of the spectator in social performance, the consumption of an event (including the role of old and new media), and the nature of spectacle. I also explore important theories relevant to the specific analysis of moral panic in the instance of these three social events. Ultimately, I ask the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of mediatised social events and examine how possible social, political and historical conditions might contribute to the eruption of a moral panic.

Picturing the landscape

To examine the specifics of mediatised social events and the energised responses to them, I need to understand the evolving landscape from which the cases in question emerged and were supported. Thus, I must also explore the shifting and developing nature of subjectivity and spectatorship within this terrain. Zygmunt Bauman might question the capacity for the liquid modern subject to engage meaningfully through virtual proximity (2003: 63), however I argue that these events share an engaged and active spectatorship and through spectatorial observation and active participation, the events are transformed into a type of mediatised spectacle. Secondly, this spectacle produces a moral panic provoked by the relationship among the mainstream news media, new media and the spectator. Finally, the spectacle is in return sustained by the
level of intervention of the spectator and the influence of the moral panic. Thus, I explore the manifestation of these three social events to gain a greater understanding of larger issues concerning contemporary spectatorship and spectacle.

The contemporary global mass media is an identity-forming device, as well as a commercial commodity and communication medium. In this landscape, ‘reality’ is often positioned as spectacle, performed and consumed in a range of forms, including sensationalist film, television programs and Internet commentaries regarding the notoriety of celebrities and their lives. Mediatisation is also political where battles of both an ideological and a literal nature are waged in front of audiences influenced by, and participating in, a global exchange of information. The mass media, cyberspace and associated technologies are a necessary component of determining and maintaining power structures. However, the same vehicles that encourage political transparency can also be vehicles for the silencing of knowledge. Matrices of power (anywhere and everywhere) are intertwined with the ever evolving global mass media and associated technologies and both agency and the suppression of agency are located within this landscape. Globalisation and the consumerist culture have meant that the advent of new new media is enmeshed with identity and community formation. As Bauman contends: “the brute unquestionable fact is that one needs to be consumer first, before one can think of becoming anything in particular” (2001: 315). The intersection of the nature of power, the mass media as a communicative form of representation of this power and the processes of subjectification that occur within this mediatised dynamic are critical questions for this dissertation.

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8 Please note the challenge of the Internet organisation ‘Google’ to the Chinese government regarding their stringent censorship regulations in early 2010. Ultimately, in order to continue to operate in the Chinese market, Google relented to the censorship rules and allowed the Chinese government to continue to regulate online information that it considered sensitive.
Along with innovations in digital technology, the age of information is truly an era for mediatised and mediated technologies, where an individual’s reality can almost be produced and reproduced via new new media and social networking devices. The digital world is a fluid, ever evolving and transient place where identities and communities are formed. Continual innovations in technology have a direct impact on the nature of subjectivity, agency and, as I will argue, spectatorship. Tiziana Terranova suggests that: “[Every] cultural production or formation, any production of meaning, that is, is increasingly inseparable from the wider informational process that determine the spread of images and words, sounds and affects across a hyperconnected planet” (2004: 2). Meaning itself and the technologies and systems enabling meaning to be produced and received are increasingly hybrid, dispersed and ubiquitous. Similarly, cyber culture needs to be understood as heterogeneous and transitory, as does the make-up of identity formation and subjectivity within this terrain.

If an individual asserts his or her unique social and cultural specificities through such media, these technologies are intricately involved in the subjectification process in identity formation. It is as though the user of new media becomes ‘somebody’ through his or her engagement with these technologically mediated processes and thus also becomes a critical cog in the ‘mass’ machine. The subject responding to an event uses the event to individualise themselves, thus making and remaking themselves in a quasi-ontological process. The ‘mass’ of mass media facilitates the construction of networks and the building of communities. In other words, an individual is not only called into a particular kind of ‘being’ through their engagement with these media, but also in relation to others responding to these events. In addition to the formation of collectives
hegemony can exist in the ‘mass’ of mass mediatisation. ⁹ By this I mean that as the contemporary subject, and their communities, are constituted in and through such transitory technologies and processes so too does the digital world form its own type of hegemony. This interconnected relationship between subject formation, community creation and the hegemony of the mass media is integral to understanding how moral panics can exist today.

John Urry addresses the nature of mobility and human interaction in an environment of globalisation and virtual proximity when he argues:

[all] forms of social life involve striking combinations of proximity and distance, combinations that necessitate examination of the intersecting forms of physical, object, imaginative and virtual mobility that contingently and complexly link people in patterns of obligation, desire and commitment, increasingly over geographical distances of great length (2002: 256).

I found all three cases to be situated within a mediatised environment enabling this play between proximity and mobility for the contemporary media spectator. In turn, this relationship between proximity and mobility helps to create spectacle and facilitate moral panic. Thus, the media spectator, in his or her particular form of spectatorship aids in the constitution and maintenance of both spectacle and moral panic. The creation of spectatorship and readership and how perceptions of a deviation of social norms are created need to be addressed in all forms, including the occasions where mobility and proximity are questioned. In this sense, it also becomes important to examine spectatorship in relation to identity formation and the construction of communities. In addition, by exploring an ever evolving spectatorship, a fractious moral panic and the

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⁹ An interesting point comes when the transient individual constituted through their particular responses to an event, and through these technologies engages and responds to an event, is also then manifestly involved in creating and sustaining a form of hegemony. This is a complex tension that I think exists in a moral panic and one which can be evidenced throughout the case studies; that individuals exist within and outside the transient space of new media as well as helping the mass media to exist as hegemony.
complexities of subjectivity within the changing technologised world, I argue that I am also examining contemporary understandings of performance. As Kershaw elucidates:

> When mediatization is coupled to liberal democracy, and to a late-capitalism that insinuates the market at the heart of the social, performance becomes both ubiquitous and spectacular: politicians perform, shares perform, life-styles perform for each other in the streets as well as on the screens (2003: 605).

If everything is performed and every choice is a performance, we have everything to gain from trying to understand these enactments. The nature of spectatorship – which is forever adapting to the changing mediated landscape – the conditions of subjectivity and the processes of subjectification are located within the performances of the contemporary mediated and technologised milieu.

**Neoliberalism, choice and the moral absolute**

As the current economic and cultural landscape is determined largely through the proliferation of globalisation, it is critical that these three particular events are situated within this context. I define globalisation as the cultural, economic and technological expansion of hybrid interconnected global networks. Because of the divergence in life experiences within these networks, globalisation will have as many negative outcomes as it does positive ones and is therefore too difficult a phenomenon to declare succinctly as either good or bad. It is, nevertheless, a concept I utilise in addressing the economic and consumerist landscape of the early twenty-first century. Throughout this chapter, I use the term ‘neoliberalism’, which fundamentally positions most of the Western world as determined by a market-driven imperative that favours a consumerist desire over social benefit or need.
Daniel C. Hallin argues that the past few decades have seen the incorporation of social systems into the marketplace and suggests that the “mass media are among the most important of those social institutions which have been subject to ‘enclosure’ by the logic of the market in the Age of Neoliberalism” (2008: 43). According to Hallin, twentieth-century Western media bodies were influenced by social forces, such as political enterprise, trade unionism, and religion leading to a strong integration with the community (2008: 44). In the wake of neoliberalism, these systems became influenced by the marketplace – often juggling the dual role of objective commentator with an awareness of the influence of consumerism. The traditional role of old media as the bastion of the news now exists alongside the pseudo-journalism of the online blog and social networking devices. This type of commentary can often be emotive, opinion-based and aligned to political and/or religious factions. Thus, the mass media involve professional and amateur journalism that is both heavily reliant on the readership of their audience and the dynamics of the marketplace. The presence of both undoubtedly has an impact on the creation and sustaining of media-induced spectacles, as well as the changing nature and role of the contemporary media spectator who is no longer principally the observer of news but actively engaged with the production of it.

When Bauman argues that “[Ours] is a consumer society” (2001: 311), he is referring to the notion that Western society depends on its members being consumers and “first and foremost gatherers of sensations: they are the collectors of things only in a secondary and derivative sense” (1998: 83). ‘We’ are not only the collectors of things, but of lives, experiences and of course consumers of sensation. Globalisation has contributed enormously to this dependence on a transient consumerism. The perpetual new-ness of new media plays into understandings of identity formation and human connectivity
through notions of hybridity, pluralism and fluidity. On the level of social performance, our televisions, webcams and Twitter pages continually create and reinforce the performance of both the extraordinary and the mundane. Thus, there is an interconnection between the consumption of sensations and liquid modernity. Bauman suggests that:

Today’s industry is geared increasingly to the production of attractions and temptations. And it is in the nature of attractions that they tempt and seduce only as long as they beckon from that far-away which we call the future, while temptation cannot survive for long the surrender of the tempted – just as desire never survives satisfaction (1998: 78).

The market-place is not interested in a finite meeting of need but in the continuation and furthering of consumption. The very consumption of this desire is evident in each of these instances of moral panic. For Corby, there is a desire to consume her presumed ‘innocence’ as a white, heterosexual woman. In the Schiavo case the moral panic existed through the consumption of a spectacle that continually questioned the limits of an individual’s life and liberty. The Redfern riots involved the consumption of Otherness. Ultimately, all three cases involved the intricately related desire for, and consumption of, fear. This is a point that I believe is inherent in any example of a moral panic.

The relationship between desire and consumption is also linked to the means in which a moral panic is created and sustained. In these cases it is through the technologies of old and new media. What does the ‘new’ of new media mean? Is it the technology that makes it new or is it that the word ‘new’ gives an edge to a product that consumers deem desirable? Kelli Fuery contends that the ‘new’ in new media is not only reflective of innovations in technology but also that the consumer wants to be sold something that is indicative of a sense of the unknown, of something they have never seen or had
before. Fuery argues: “Who speaks for whom? Who is New Media ‘new’ for? Invested in these questions is the search for the means by which we, as subjects, are managed and controlled by power relations – for truth” (2009: 7-8). Contestations over truth formations are imperative to each case study and overall, to mediatised spectacle and moral panic in general. What happens when new media is attached to an aesthetic sensibility? Is this kind of creative practice remade as inherently more dynamic and meaningful because of its association with new-ness? If the ideological and discursive origins of these technologies are to be understood, these become necessary questions. I argue that this questioning involves an examination of the very nature of the user and thus of contemporary spectatorship.

Truth, power and discursive functions existing throughout the interweaving exchanges between event and spectator are critical points for examination throughout this dissertation. Conceptually they are also instrumental in unpacking contemporary mediatised spectacles and other forms of mediated performance. Fuery contends that, “[In] our contemporary visual culture of new media we witness what can be called a sublime attraction to images – we are both repulsed and compelled by them as they form part of us, we form part of them” (2009: 112). For Fuery, the contemporary obsession with visual culture and new media – or contemporary mediated social performances as I would situate them – is a ‘scopophilic’ gaze. In common with many cultural and media theorists, she utilises psychoanalysis, particularly in relation to the distinction between looking and browsing social phenomena. Although this distinction is interesting and no doubt very useful, I am more concerned with the relationship between the looking subject and looked-upon object, rather than with applying a psychoanalytic method to this analysis. I would like to add that this notion of the looking subject and the looked-upon object is inextricably linked to the visual culture
enmeshed with mediatisation and thus also, the constitution of contemporary moral panics. Questions I might ask of the subject/object relationship in this context might include the following: Does the object – in this sense the event and the subjects within the event – change in the process of being looked at? Does the subjectivity of the spectator – the one looking – change in the process of looking and does s/he inadvertently become a performer? What is at play in the negotiation of real and non-real and of looking and being looked at? I refer throughout this dissertation to the active spectator. This individual is directly engaged with the event by responding to it through old and new media and thus, instrumental in the continuation of the spectacle and the mobilisation of moral panic. As these events examined were on the cusp of what Levinson refers to as new new media (cyber technologies involving social networking), which are so prolific today, the nature of spectatorship must therefore be understood to shift again. In reference to an early form of reality television Jean Baudrillard explains that:

In this ‘truth’ experiment, it is neither a question of secrecy nor of perversion, but of a kind of thrill of the real, or of an aesthetics of the hyperreal, a thrill of vertiginous and phony exactitude, a thrill of alienation and of magnification, of distortion in scale, of excessive transparency all at the same time (1983: 50).

It could be argued that a “truth experiment” is also the case of the scopophilic consumer, an intensity of observation integral to the contemporary mass media, and the notion of the ‘hyperreal’ in postmodernity. I argue that the intense love of looking that is prevalent in the Western culture of consumerism (assisted by the global mass media) has produced an ambiguous interactivity between subject and object. The spectator is actively involved in the communication and representation of whatever it is they are interacting with and, as a result, they, and sometimes the object of the gaze, are changed. The voyeurism that comes with scopophilia is a kind of hyperreal exchange through the pleasure and pain of observing anything from banality to extremes of
suffering and/or ecstasy. Baudrillard argues that: “What society seeks through production, and overproduction, is the restoration of the real which escapes it” (1983: 44). Consumerism and voyeurism, coupled with the interactivity of new media, cyber technologies/cyber communities, along with the rest of the global mass media (television, print, radio etc.), have led to an evolving and ambiguous terrain where the ‘real’ is continually questioned. Thus, spectatorship, subjectification and the implications of social phenomena in this context need to be unpacked.

Limitless choice and the relative mobility of capital can provoke action without thought or regard for the real consequences of these decisions. Bauman suggests that there was a transformation from pre-modern times (where religion provided moral guidance), to modernity (where a set of rules regulated moral and ethical behaviour), and to a post-modernity (where uncertainty is the only certainty). He argues that: “Moral life is a life of continuous uncertainty” (Bauman 1995: 3). Is there a role for morality if postmodern uncertainty is directly influenced by an excess of choice? Clearly, most choices made in the commercial sense are not of the moral kind nor, in a world of endless choice, is this situation the experience of more than a privileged few. However, what happens when, within this Western landscape of unlimited choice, individuals and communities make concrete moral demands? What happens when excessive consumption and the diffusive and fluid landscape of cyber connectivity actually encourages moral absolutism? This is where I locate the social phenomenon of a moral panic in relation to these case studies.

Bauman also makes it clear that there is an “uncertainty and ambient fear that saturate contemporary life” and that “the maintenance of a steady volume of anxiety and apprehension turns into a major and indispensable factor in the self-reproduction of
political and economic institutions” (1998: 130). It is my argument that anxiety exists at any given time in contemporary society, which is indelibly linked to the consumption of sensations, the endless fascination with things/people/events, and the love of looking. However, at certain times and in certain places, the interchange of media and technology within an interconnected discursive field leads to a particular kind of ‘social anxiety’. This social phenomenon occurs, when the interconnected matrix of spectator and spectacle, continually responding and informing each other, leads to a perception that social normativity is under threat. The next section of this chapter will explore further the nature of a moral panic in this context.

Moral panic: A discursive negotiation

E. Ann Kaplan argues that contemporary media audiences have three forms of response to trauma (2008: 3-24). The first is what she refers to as a “vicarious trauma”, where the audience becomes temporarily stimulated by the event. The second is an “empty empathy”, where the spectator is unable to be moved by the event at all (Kaplan 2008: 4). The third response is where the event stimulates the spectator to become a witness to the event: to be ethically motivated to respond and resolve the trauma (Kaplan 2008: 4). Kaplan writes that the global mass media provide a continual stream of information about the horrors of war, terror and catastrophe: “images of trauma bombard us daily” (2008: 3). She goes on to question what the impact of this might be: “[If] it is true that we are surrounded by spectacles of individual suffering, what effect is this having on the millions of people consuming these images” (2008: 4). I argue that one such effect is the construction of a moral panic.
The notion of a moral panic is the most significant element in reading these particular social events as performance. Another concept particularly useful, and stemming from moral panic theory in this instance, is the term ‘social anxiety’. Social anxiety is a recognised term for a psychological condition, sometimes also known as social phobia or moral panic disorder, whereby the sufferer can experience extreme (cognitive, physiological and behavioural) distress, to various degrees, in social situations: “Social anxiety is a specific form of stress centering on social situations” (Reilly and Rudd, 2009: 227). I recognise that surrounding the term ‘social anxiety’ is a large body of work, including studies associated with trauma studies, psychology, psychoanalysis, political, social and cultural theory. It is critical that I point out that I am not using the term ‘social anxiety’ as a psychological condition but rather through creative license analyse the ‘anxieties’ of spectators at a particular point in time responding to specific circumstances of a unique spectacle.

I have borrowed the exact terminology – ‘social anxiety’ – from a quotation by Chas Critcher: “a central issue for moral panic analysis is why the public apparently exhibits a predisposition to panic. The answer given is social anxiety” (2003: 147, italics added). In reference to Critcher’s quote, the concept ‘social anxiety is used as a departure point only. Certain factors regarding community concern, hostility, community consensus, dis-proportionality and volatility are considered critical elements in identifying a moral panic and to varying degrees were apparent in each event. However, moral panic theory often requires a systematic and structured approach to its analysis and the events in question did not entirely meet this formulation. In this sense, as I am not conducting a thorough sociological analysis of the events in order to ascertain whether each were

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10 For more information regarding moral panic theory, see: (Critcher 2003), (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 1994) and (Cohen 1980). For interesting and more recent commentaries on fear and panic as a social phenomenon see: (Pile and Keith 1997), (Johansson 2000) and (Bauman 2006).
truly indicative of a moral panic it is best to only acknowledge that they have certain characteristics of a moral panic. What is useful in the term ‘social anxiety’ is the sense of a general unease in society relating to the issues to what might have been at some stage a frantic moral panic or perhaps of one to come. It is this perception of a deviation from social normativity that is inherent in a moral panic, and how I understand ‘social anxiety’ to mean in this context. Thus, ‘social anxiety’ or moral panic is quite obviously not common to all social events but rather is something that I interpret as being shared by these three particular events. In reference to the cultural context of moral panic, John Springhall argues:

The role of individuals, pressure groups and bureaucratic agencies, often involved in a complex and shifting pattern of alliances, supports interest group interpretations of ‘moral panics’ and social crusades, but only within an historical climate of underlying fears and social anxiety (1998: 3).

Increasingly used to describe many social phenomena whereby a community is propelled into debate surrounding a social or moral issue, mediatised moral panics are as varied as they are complex. Angela McRobbie and Sarah L. Thornton argue: “[Used] by politicians to orchestrate consent, by business to promote sales in certain niche markets, and by media to make home and social affairs newsworthy, moral panics are constructed on a daily basis” (1995: 560). Rather than understanding a moral panic as either an individual experience or socially measurable phenomenon, I understand it to be a discursive negotiation between the event and its spectatorship manifesting at any level of society but largely proliferated by the global mass media. A moral panic is created when the representation of an event and the subjects within it are interpreted as somehow dangerous to the moral and social order. Therefore, a moral panic is completely and inevitably a product of discourse and power. This final point is fundamental to the theoretical framework of each case study.
Foucault suggests that the role of theory is not to be considered as a ‘system’ but rather as an ‘instrument’: “a logic of the specificity of power relations and the struggles around them” (1980: 145). The study of discourse as theory and the related institutions and techniques of power are fundamental to the exploration of the social and political conditions surrounding the creation and proliferation of moral panic in these three particular cases. Following Foucault, I understand discourse to exist in multiple forms – developing and regulating knowledge by influencing and informing the subject. Foucault refers to discourse as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (1972: 49). What we say, the conditions that enable us to speak and the impacts of our statements exist within a discursive field that is contextual, contingent and determined by socio-historical factors.

Discourse is also productive: it helps shape how a subject behaves, understands themselves and how they form communities. The speaking, moving, representational subject of Schapelle Corby, the group of subjects that formed the ‘rioters’ and the incapacitated body of Terri Schiavo are produced and maintained by an interconnection of discourses. Likewise, the active spectators to these events are also discursively constructed. This argument suggests that everyone is surrounded and informed by discourse. Riki Wilchins succinctly writes that discourse is “a discussion that society has with itself” (2004: 59). These three events are emblematic of the notion that discourse is a dialogue that society has with its own systems, rules and truths.¹¹ Discourse is both the source and the product of a moral panic.

¹¹ The term ‘society’ is used here in direct reference to the Wilchins’ quotation and not as a categorical summation of what ‘society’ is or pertains to be. With regard to the social events, it is problematic to define ‘society’ particularly in relation to the fact that audiences to each event were widely diverse and dispersed.
The primary discourse in each case is that of the media. Media discourse is heterogeneous in the dispersal of information and systems of social categorisation through diverse institutions, organisations and technologies. For example, a tabloid magazine will present information differently from a scientific journal and again differently from a television news program. In this sense, discourse is knowledge and knowledge is filtered through divergent and yet interconnected systems. In this communication process, knowledge can be interpreted as truth, particularly in the news. This knowledge-as-truth is an extremely important element of the normalising process of discourse and is therefore, crucial to the examination of the events. A significant amount of material regarding this knowledge-as-truth has been sourced from new media and communication technologies. As outlined in the introduction, I utilise blogs, which raise interesting questions about the notion of truth in relation to online networks as sites for a fluid transference of information between bloggers/commentators and the role of blogs in creating online communities. I examine discourse and power relating to the production, representation and reception of a contested truth-as-knowledge and the notion of the subject formed and informed by this truth formation, within the global mass media environment.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that divisions in power and labour operate in hierarchies largely because of shifting and often inequitable matrices of economic growth, development and globalisation: “global divisions are the results and the objects of power struggles” (2004: 165). Just as discourse and power exist together in a complex interplay of knowledge formation on a global level, so too does a hierarchical

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12 For an interesting examination of information and communication technologies such as blogs, contemporary new media theorists and ‘social networking’ see: (Hui Kyong Chun and Keenan 2006), (Giannachi 2007), (Fuery 2009) and (Levinson 2009).

13 The question concerning online communities and identity formation through new media technologies raises a similar question: what role does the blogger play in extending the moral panic when they join a like-minded social collective? I address such questions throughout the dissertation.
matrix of power and discourse operate specifically within these social events. Each of the case studies illustrates examples where many discourses interact. However, at certain times one discourse will assume a hierarchy over the others (such as discourses of media, race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, science, legal, political and consumerism). What is interesting to examine is how, when and why hierarchies shift and certain discourses take precedence over others.

According to Foucault, multiple discourses interact with and inform one another in a process referred to as “discursive formations” (1972: 31-41). Thus, legal discourse might intersect with racial discourse, or media discourse with sexuality, and so on. As Foucault clearly argues, “we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse … but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies” (1980: 100). Together, the hierarchy and interplay of discourse build an interconnected network of knowledge, truths and power relations.

Discourse is knowledge understood as truth. What is interesting about examining these events and the resulting moral panic is how discourse as truth comes to be understood. Foucault contends that:

I do not question discourse about their silently intended meanings, but about the fact and the conditions of their manifest appearance; not about the content which may conceal, but about the transformations which have effected; not about the sense preserved within them like a perpetual origin, but about the field where they coexist, reside and disappear (1991 (1978): 60).

Discourse is not an innate truth waiting to be revealed. Rather, it is inside, throughout and all around each enactment and statement. In this sense, I explore the conditions that
enable a discourse to be normalised into a truth formation. I am interested in what and how truths are produced, proliferated, represented and most importantly normalised, as Foucault contends: “[We] are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth” (1980: 93). A moral panic is the result of a perceived threat to normalised discourse. To explore the discursive conditions of moral panics is also to explore the make-up of spectatorship and spectacle, without which this ‘social anxiety’, in this context, would not or could not exist. Thus, throughout the dissertation I investigate what discourses are at play at what stage and for what reason. These discursive conditions are bound up with notions of power.

Power, like discourse, helps form the subjects at the core of each event and the spectator’s response, because as Foucault argues: “[In] a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body” (1980: 93). Likewise, power is instrumental in the construction of both the elements that make a moral panic and the notion of ‘social anxiety’ in the context of these case studies. Both the strategies of discourse and power are not only fundamental to these events, but also to the nature of subject formation and the operations of society in general. According to Foucault, this is because: “the phenomenon of the social body is the effect not of a consensus but of the materiality of power operating on the very bodies of individuals” (1980: 55). In this context, the enunciation of power is critical to understanding the everyday performance of discourse and the ways in which power is inscribed on the bodies – both physical and social – of the participating subjects.
Examining power is not only about investigating dominant power structures but also about exploring the ways in which power produces subjects, how it operates, whom it sustains and how it is made manifest. Foucault argues that power “needs to be considered as a productive network that runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression” (2000: 120). In this sense, it is extremely important to emphasise that power is not only the exertion of control of one subject over another but rather the many power relations that exist in society and in the constitution of the subject. Vikki Bell suggests that the subject is trained to behave in a particular way and that “the folding of power into the body is therefore and simultaneously an objectification and a subjectification” (2007: 15). To examine power is to explore its impacts on the constitution, regulation and productivity of the subject in relation to society’s dominant discourses. In such a case, power both enables and disables, produces and constrains: “power produces; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (Foucault 1977: 194). Just as the subject is objectified by being the object of power’s production, so too, is the subject formed and sustained through these matrices of power. This concept of mutual subjectification and objectification situates the nature and function of discourse and power as critical to the construction of a moral panic.

The conditions of a moral panic

The concept of moral panic relies on the idea that an individual and a community are responding to an ambiguous threat that manifests itself through a social event. The event and its heightened response do not need definitive categorisation to be considered significant or relevant. Cottle’s analysis of media events – events which stimulate intense media interest – involves “the added qualification that such cases also appear to
tap into deep-seated conflicts that normally remain subterranean” (2006: 419). At times this anxiety results in a heightened moral debate that polarises the spectators. At other times it leads to a silencing or censoring of the primary subject in the event and the reinforcement of the dominant discourse. In this sense, a moral panic exposes what is not necessarily transparent in everyday life: a critical juncture where moral boundaries are perceived to be threatened.

The particular events in question, provoked by operations of power and discourse that are both, at times, ‘subterranean’ and transparent, unequivocally stimulated anxiety. In turn this anxiety incited, at times, not only a cause for moral absolutes but also the denial of the socio-historical circumstances of the event. In some instances, this anxiety only manifested as a sense, or an attitude, in the spectators. However, in other instances, there are some very real and tangible outcomes to the moral panic. This can be seen in the introduction of government legislation in the USA in response to the Terri Schiavo case, and the supposed anthrax attack on the Indonesian embassy that was largely seen as a response to the spectacle surrounding Schapelle Corby. The often bigoted statements made by the media and public in the immediate aftermath of the Redfern riots were certainly vitriolic responses that overshadowed the tragic circumstances of riots. In this sense, even though there were parliamentary and police enquiries in to the riots at a later stage the initial moral panic was fuelled by an insidious anxiety about Aboriginal people. It is important to note that a moral panic is a temporary phenomenon and not evident in all social events or media spectacles. What distinguishes each of these three events is the presence of an underlying fear of a breakdown in normative values.
The mass media – whether that involves old, new or new new media – enable collectives to form in support of or in opposition to the social and political issues brought into question by the event. In the context of the three social events discussed here, the media facilitate these responses by extending beyond the reach of the individual spectator and appealing to the desires of specific interest groups, contributing to the polarisation of responses. The media enact discursive mechanisms that Critcher has described as “agenda setting” (2003: 136-137). This can be seen particularly in the case of Terri Schiavo in relation to the interest groups of the right-to-life/death campaigns, associated political bodies and religious factions. In the Corby case there was definitely a sense that Corby was a successful marketable commodity in the tabloid journalism arena. The commentaries that were reported in the media after the Redfern riots varied according to conservative news websites, tabloid media and the internet and news forums more open to critical debate. The media is structured, informed and maintained by networks of power, and in the pursuit of capital, can exploit a perceived desire for truth. As previously discussed, this notion of truth, particularly in relation to discourse and power, is crucial to the entire study.

Stanley Cohen suggests that the media organisations act as “agents of moral indignation” (1980: 16). Even if this action does not involve a conscious manipulation of the truth, certain media representations “can be sufficient to generate concern, anxiety, indignation or panic” (Cohen 1980: 16). On the other hand, a blog is also an interesting forum in which individuals can comment, judge, and question an event. Often a blog can be an engaging and useful forum in which to share knowledge. As diverse as blogs can be, they are devices for identity and community formation and thus blogs are a crucial forum in which moral panics are proliferated. What has emerged as a
dynamic democratic tool for debate has also led to the materialisation of new media for interest groups lobbying for particular ideologies and the uncensored declarations of individual opinion. The consumerist imperative for media organisations and technologies is thus also at play in the media’s interest in the continuation of this social unease. Thus, fleshing out how audience responses are facilitated is critical to understanding how the media are able to capitalise on, and mobilise, a community experiencing a moral panic.

The very nature of reality and the discursive conditions that help shape our understanding of truth are influenced by the organisations, technologies and processes of old and new media. In the situation where an event has led to the polarisation of an audience and where particular understandings of normativity are questioned, the ideologies and belief systems of individuals and communities are often challenged or reinforced. Baudrillard argues that: “[When] the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity” (1983: 12-13). How reality (or what discursive knowledge may influence our understanding of truth and reality) is played out through media determines the extent, proliferation and impact of a mediatised spectacle. To learn more about performance in the twenty-first century is to explore what is said about the event, how it is said, what is left unsaid, who speaks and the socio-historical conditions of each statement.

To summarise, the case studies are informed by, but not limited to, moral panic theory wherein I argue that the moral panic surrounding each event is propagated by the discursive conditions of the event. Certain characteristics of a moral panic, while
difficult to quantify are, I argue, apparent in each case presented here. If there can be any certainty, it is that the conditions of a moral panic can be as ambiguous as the performance that it is a part of and that it is the ‘social anxiety’ as I see it in these circumstances that sets these events apart from other media-induced events; a sense of panic was provoked by an attentive and active audience enmeshed in a complex network of discourse, power and notions of truth. It is here that I now turn to unpacking the nature of the contemporary media spectator and their role in sustaining a moral panic.

The response: Active and diffuse spectatorship

The audiences to a social event consist of the media as an institution and the public as individuals and interest groups. Guy Debord argues that the spectator is a passive observer to the spectacle (1994: 22-23). Hans-Thies Lehmann also supports Debord in suggesting that the proliferation of spectacle and mediatisation can lead to an “erosion of the act of communication” and an inactivity of the spectator, particularly in response to violence and ‘terror’:

[Thus] the continual presentation of bodies that are abused, injured, killed through isolated (real or fictive) catastrophes creates a radical distance for passive viewing: the bond between perception and action, receiving message and ‘answerability’, is dissolved (Lehmann 2006: 184).

I argue that in this context spectatorial responses to these events are, in fact, acts of intervention in the performance and that the notion of the spectator as active is critical to understanding what distinguishes them from other media events. They are not necessarily self-critical or self-referential but are directly implicated in the continuation of the spectacle through their actions. Whether it is in the form of a letter, a blog or a newspaper article, the making of a statement situates the spectator in the performance.
Thus, I utilise the term the ‘active spectator’ throughout this dissertation because of the dual role of observation and action. The desire to observe and then engage in the event is intricately related to the matrices of discourse and power that inform and constitute truth formations. What the active spectator wants and needs to believe, how they operate and what knowledge they produce exists within this matrix.

A consumer society relies on participants reiteratively and continually consuming anything and everything. The operations of a consumerist society are evident in each event not only because of the presence of mass media, digital technologies or the active participation of its consumers, but also because for a consumer society to thrive the consumer must want to consume: “consumers seek actively to be seduced” (Bauman 2001: 315). The active spectators in each event want to participate in the spectacle, even if it is to criticise it. Nevertheless, it is precisely the spectator’s participation that composes the spectacle. In this sense, this notion of consumption moves well beyond a need to survive or beyond a need to consume ‘things’, toward a need to consume experiences, and, as argued earlier, to consume sensation. To extend this proposition further, I suggest that active spectators to the three social events, deliberately or otherwise, consume another kind of sensation. The Corby case compelled many to comment on how the case made them feel. The Schiavo case mobilised members of the right-to-life/death movements. The Redfern riots sparked controversy over notions of criminality and to some extent produced vitriolic responses that were highly prejudicial. So not only do contemporary consumers consume through necessity but also through a double desire to consume sensation and the sensation of consumption and thus also feel compelled, in their widely heterogeneous opinions, to consume whole events.
The active spectator continually enacts aspects of themselves by identifying with and through the consumer society. Roland Munro points out: “It is through their engagement with goods, artefacts and symbols, that people create social realities and display their identity or express their sense of belonging” (2001: 6-7). By commenting on the circumstances of the event, a spectator articulates this belonging as a way of identifying or positioning himself or herself in relation to it. In reference to the mass media and identity formation, Melanie Stewart Millar writes: “through television, film, advertisements, social interaction, the spoken and written word – even the structure of language itself – we learn to make sense of our lives” (2000: 24). Understanding the notion that consumption informs this sense of belonging is integral to understanding the conditions of contemporary spectatorship. Similarly, not only is the active spectator able to identify themselves in relation to the event but they are also able to negotiate a role to play in the surrounding performance. If the spectator did not actively intervene and thus contribute to the outcome of the event, the spectacle itself would not have taken place or perhaps not to the same extent. This intervention is not only instrumental in each social event examined, but is also reflective of the larger global interconnected communication paradigm.

A vast proportion of spectators’ responses examined originated in the form of a weblog (blog). Axel Bruns and Joanne Jacobs define the blogosphere as the:

[totality] of all blogs and the communicative intercast between them through linking, commentary and trackbacks, is perhaps unique in its structure as a distributed, decentred, fluctuating, ad hoc, network of individual Websites that interrelate, interact, and (occasionally) intercreate with one another (2006: 5).

This interconnection indicates the enormous potential for the building of communities and networks that blogs and other social networking sites enable. In this context these
technologies facilitate both the subjectification of the individual subject and the formation of networks of like-minded people with a significant interest in expressing their views and judgment on certain situations. As Bruns and Jacobs explain: “By personalizing content, blogs go beyond a purely informative role and provide a platform for debate, deliberations, and the expression of personal identity in relation to the rest of the (blogging) world” (2006: 5). Thus, one can see how the stimulation, propagation and continuation of a moral panic can be enabled within such media. Bruns and Jacobs suggest further that:

[in] a time of redefining our value systems, of competing belief frameworks, and of global threats, bloggers have the chance to question their understanding of issues, engage in discussion, present their ideas, seek out approval for their notions, and grasp some sense of purpose, order, and hope (2006: 5).

Social networking sites bring people together, activate ideologies and mobilise collectives. The active spectator inscribes himself or herself on to the landscape by being an active and compelled consumer, and as a result, they become something. Like all spectators, they are a consumer of sensations and a producer of meaning in the manner and way in which they interpret what spectacle comes to mean for them. In this sense, the contemporary spectator to mediatised spectacle is both consumer and producer. The subjectification process in constituting the spectator is not only crucial in understanding the construction of moral panics and the mobilisation of communities, but also in questioning the nature of media induced spectacles in general.

Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst suggest that the contemporary media audience is ‘diffused’ and that through the advent of mass media this audience is immersed in performance: “the world is constituted as an event, as a performance; the objects, events and people which constitute the world are made to perform for those
watching or gazing” (1998: 78 original emphasis). By this account, the diffused audience involves a spectator who both consumes and contributes to the mass media spectacle and that, “we are audience and performer at the same time; everybody is an audience all the time” (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998: 73). In the global media, the distinction between performer and spectator is blurred. The subject at the heart of the mediatised spectacle is also simultaneously performer and spectator. As a result of the active spectator contributing to the spectacle, the subjects involved in the event become both the observed and, at times, the observer of the spectacle surrounding them. In this sense the active spectator and the subject of the event are “simultaneously watchers and being watched” (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998: 75). The case studies in this dissertation examine this transaction and the ambiguities between the spectator and performer: the watching become watched when the watched watch back. These slippages of the spectator and performer distinction are situated within a fluid performance matrix of globalisation, technology and the media. This reading lends itself to support Kershaw’s position that a nuanced understanding of the subject within the contemporary mediatised spectacle would be helpful in exploring the nature of subject formation, agency and globalisation:

Because if it is the case that the social itself has become a spectacle, if we are really – or even hyper-really – in the society of the spectacle, how might we best understand what it is to be commonly human in a world that now constitutes the subject through such powerful paradoxes? (2003: 594).

The “commonly human” in this context is not an essential unified experience but instead a question regarding the ethical capacity of the subject. Kershaw asks whether it is still possible to make brave decisions in a choice-loaded consumerist landscape and whether in the society of the spectacle there is space for a real and tangible fight against oppression. He refers to “spectacles of deconstruction” as performances that are able to explore critically global cultural phenomenon, so that we may self-consciously “always
see ourselves looking” (Kershaw 2003: 606), a notion that I fully explore in chapter six. The ambiguities surrounding the spectator/performer divide and the gaze, which is produced therein, need to be acknowledged if the significance of these three particular events is to be properly explored. I will now examine how this spectatorship influences the event itself.

**Spectacle in action**

Lehmann argues that in the current environment, spectacle is prolific and that the “totality of the spectacle is the ‘theatricalization’ of all areas of social life” (2006: 183).

This section will firstly explore the broad theoretical terrain surrounding the notion of contemporary spectacle, drawing on the writings of Douglas Kellner, Daniel Dayan, Elihu Katz, Debord, Baudrillard and particularly Kershaw and secondly establish where my analysis differs from these theorists and, finally, which elements of spectacle are useful in examining the case studies.

Debord suggests that the “whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacle* (1994: 12). Utilising Debord’s platform on the society of the spectacle could be useful in examining the case studies in many regards particularly in relation to his analysis of spectacle and commodification (1994: 31) and his assertion that “reality erupts within the spectacle, and the spectacle is real” (1994: 14). However, a central premise to his argument is that all that “once was directly lived has become mere representation” (1994: 12). I argue that rather than subscribing to this idea that mediatised spectacles have been *reduced* to the level of “mere representation”, the events described here are approached as
culturally and theoretically significant because they provoke issues and questions about the very nature of representation itself. Similarly, the premise by Marshall McLuhan that the “medium is the message” – the form of communication rather than the content that is critical to understanding the impact of media in society – could be utilised in this study (McLuhan 1994). However, like that of Debord’s passive spectator, these case studies indicate that the medium is only one element to the constitution of a moral panic and that the message is crucial to the reception of a social event and in turn the creation and proliferation of a moral panic. What make these events stand out are the extent of the spectacle and the role of the spectator within the event’s representation. Thus, the spectacle cannot be reduced to “mere representation”, or the importance of the medium over the message, when the notion of representation itself means so much.

The role that the media plays in facilitating a spectacle cannot be underestimated particularly in relation to how the representation of an event is channelled for particular purposes. Stuart Hall argues that media forums are structured to prioritise events that are considered newsworthy and that this decision involves a complex power struggle: “The media define for the majority of the population what significant events are taking place, but, also, they offer powerful interpretations of how to understand these events” (1978: 57). In this sense, there is a tension between truth formations, what is considered newsworthy and the imperatives of particular media organisations and their readership. Douglas Kellner argues that media-constituted spectacles are a common and prolific practice in contemporary contexts. He believes that: “spectacle itself is becoming one of the organizing principles of the economy, polity, society, and everyday life” (2005: 23). Kellner identifies ‘megaspectacle’ as an event that results in the media industries consumption of an event on a large scale (2005: 25). He uses the examples of the marriage and death of Princess Diana, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and
the 2000 election battle in the United States of America between Al Gore and George W. Bush as “defining events of their era” (Kellner 2005: 24). The three events examined here are not megaspectacles by this definition. Nevertheless, the elements of an event that make it a spectacle are what interest the media. In turn, it is the media interest that generates or compounds the spectacle and assists in the constitution of a moral panic.

It is Kellner’s argument about the link between spectacles and fear that is of particular interest. He believes that media spectacles “provide articulations of salient hopes and fears, fantasies and obsessions, and experiences of the present” (2003: 27). A critical component of each of these three case studies is the consumption of this notion of desire and fear: the observing and consuming public extend the social event and propagate a moral panic because they are fundamentally engaged with the event itself. In this sense the event is emblematic of a concern on a global scale. Kellner goes on to argue that exploring the role, nature and impact of media spectacles allows us to grasp better “the defining characteristics, novelties, and conflicts of the contemporary era” (2003: 27). The flow between the media, the public and their “experiences of the present” (Kellner 2003: 27) is evident in each of the case studies examined in the dissertation but is ultimately characteristic of the larger social phenomenon of the social event as spectacle, and thus also as performance.

According to Dayan and Katz, a media event is something that takes precedence over a regular media broadcast, because of a live telecast, such as a ceremonial ritual for a popular individual, for example, a coronation or a royal wedding (1994: 8). The 2009 inauguration of President Barack Obama would certainly be considered a ceremonial media event. Alternatively, they argue, a media event might also be a ‘celebration’ or
consensus, of the hegemonic forces that exist in the society of the day (Dayan and Katz 1994: 8). In many ways, the national and live televised verdict of Schapelle Corby’s trial to Australian viewers suggests that it was a media event, by this definition. I argue that the media representation of Corby also involved the “celebration”, or reinforcement, of the normative structures surrounding gender, race and sexuality for both Corby and her audience. A media event might also rely on the polarisation of opinion. The extraordinary media attention surrounding the case of Terri Schiavo, particularly during the thirteen days leading up to her death, can also be read as a media event. Yet this event was based upon the notion of “conflict” (Cottle 2006: 419). In this instance, the media event not only lasted for longer than one broadcast but also the media interest and the overall event triggered remarkably varied and disparate opinions from the participating spectators. Simon Cottle suggests that conflict events are “singled out precisely because such events involve deep conflictive undercurrents, whether those of ‘race’, class or gender” (2006: 419). Thus, a media event is not only defined by heightened media interest or the celebration and reinforcement of normativity, but also by the ideological divergence that it has the potential to provoke.

The case studies explore a multitude of interconnected discourses that are either reinforced or transgressed by the spectator’s intervention. It is useful to understand contemporary mediatised spectacle in reference to Anthony Lambert’s definition of a visual event as “a relationship of and between histories, technologies, powers, meanings, actions and ramifications” (2008: 239-240). Kellner also mentions something similar when he argues that: “Media spectacles also put on display the politics of representation, encoding current problematics of gender, race, and class” (2003: 27). I
identify disjunctive instances where operations of power are reinforced or challenged by
the event and its participants.

Kershaw suggests that spectacle once understood to refer to large-scale events is now
understood to include a “miniaturization of spectacle” (2003: 596), where digital
technologies and surveillance strategies have enabled a spectacle to be reached by
millions at “the click of a mouse” (2003: 604). The connection between globalisation,
technology and the media has enabled this miniaturisation to occur and with it, Kershaw
suggests, a “performative society” has evolved (2003: 595). He writes that there are four
main types of spectacle in the performative society: “spectacles of domination”,
“spectacles of resistance”, “spectacles of contradiction” and “spectacles of
deconstruction” (2003: 595). Although these concepts do not constitute the primary
theoretical frame used in the dissertation, at various points the case studies reflect these
categories. The intervention of government and politics is evident in all three cases and
thus the concept of spectacles of domination is a relevant point of departure. Likewise,
there are elements of a spectacle of both resistance and contradiction in the moments of
transgression that occur in each case. Spectacles of deconstruction – “spectacles that
displace the nature of the ‘real’” (Kershaw 2003: 595) – are particularly relevant to the
performance Three Interrupted Lives (chapter five) and the commentary in chapter six.
Drawing from these sentiments, I argue that performance can be utilised to explore, and
deconstruct, social crisis both through a theoretical engagement and in performance
practice.

These theories of spectacle are useful in examining the location, condition and impact of
the social events, particularly because of the acknowledgement of the role and nature of
the contemporary spectator. Kershaw’s understanding of the profuse interconnections of capitalism, digitisation and the mass media together situates performance as everywhere and all the time: “performance becomes both ubiquitous and spectacular” (2003: 605). Kershaw refers to one definition of spectacle as a person or thing that is exhibited, and thus objectified, by a ‘curiosity’ or ‘contempt’ (2003: 593). In this reading, a spectacle is enacted through particular aspects of the audience responses. This is a particularly useful definition, not in the sense that curiosity and contempt are the only possible responses, but that the subject/s are exhibited and objectified by a heightened level of fascination within each social event. This notion, along with Kershaw’s suggestion that the proliferation of global media through the propagation of a consumerist imperative (2003: 605), is the most practical frame to use in questioning the nature and impact of the three social events. Theories of consumerism linked to subjectification and objectification processes link with Baudrillard’s notion of hyperreality in that the spectacle questions what is real:

The very definition of the real becomes: that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction. ... At the limit of this process of reproducibility, the real is not only what can be reproduced, but that which is always already reproduced. The hyperreal (1983: 146; original emphasis).

These particular events pushed the limits of the real in how the truths of each event were discussed, observed and consumed in perpetual reproduction of spectacle. The fascination these events provoked – the curious and the contemptuous nature of spectacle (Kershaw 2003: 593) – along with the role of active spectatorship, influences this hyperreality. It is important to explore these processes to gain a better understanding of the relationships among discourse, power and the resulting moral panic that is present in each of these events. This dissertation does this, predominantly by examining the specific socio-historical context that underpins a moral panic seen in each event. In each instance there is a theoretical paradigm – the panopticon, biopower
and heterotopia – that is particularly relevant in unpacking the conditions which triggered this sense of panic.

**Unpacking the panopticon, biopower and heterotopia**

Foucault suggests that a study of power should confront the “strategies, the networks, the mechanisms, all those techniques by which a decision is accepted and by which that decision could not but be taken in the way that it was” (1988: 104). Throughout this study, I explore the techniques, systems, and mechanisms of power and discourse associated with each case. I do this through three theoretical devices: the ‘panopticon’, ‘biopower’ and ‘heterotopia’. The panopticon refers to the system of ‘observation’ where the few see many and through this gaze act as a disciplinary force, biopower is a similar discourse enacting the control and administration of the body, populations and the subject within their community, while heterotopia on the other hand refers to alternative spaces to normative society. These theories can be evidenced in all three case studies however I have found that they are directly applicable and particularly useful to specific cases: the panopticon in the Corby case, biopower to the Terri Schiavo case and heterotopia to the Redfern riots. Each notion can be considered at different times operational as discourse, immersed within structures of power, while ultimately useful conceptually in understanding the circumstances surrounding contemporary mediatised moral panics.

The revolutionary design of the eighteenth-century panopticon subjected the object of observation to continual surveillance. This observation inevitably led to a self-modification of his/her behaviour out of fear of this perpetual ‘gaze’ and hence the
production of the “docile body” (Foucault 1977: 136). Foucault argues that this point in
Western history indicated a “synaptic regime of power, a regime of its exercise *within*
the social body, rather than *from above* it” (1980: 39). Rather than the sovereign
exercising power from above, the populace regulated itself through an understanding
that power was a system of surveillance that was all-encompassing. For Foucault, the
panopticon was an assemblage of techniques of power: “By the term ‘Panopticism’, I
have in mind an ensemble of mechanisms brought into play in all the clusters of
procedures of power” (1980: 71). In this sense, not only does the notion of the
panopticon continually encourage self-regulation as a mode of discipline but also the
object of the gaze is subjected to classification, normalisation and examination. In short,
the panopticon produces objects from its subjects. The reason why I find the panopticon
useful is that the media and public, in each event and to various degrees, operate in a
similar way: the media and the spectatorial gaze exhibit, objectify, and normalise the
primary subjects.

The panopticon is a *productive* operation. It produces disciplined and compliant “docile bodies” within a system of prevailing “normalizing judgement” (Foucault 1977:136,
177). This judgement is quite simply the discourses that determine whether or not a
subject is considered socially acceptable. I argue that not only do these three social
events present situations where the mass media observe, categorise and normalise
through discourse, but also that the subjects involved are both objectified and
subjectified through this process. In other words, the nature of the spectacle in each
event determines that the subject is both acted upon and active within discourse. The
compliance of the subject and the reinforcement of normalising judgement are crucial to
the success of the panopticon. With this acquiescence comes a “docile body” where the
body and subject are objectified: “a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Foucault 1977: 136). Like the panopticon, the docile body is also productive in that the individual obeys and reinforces the prevailing social hierarchies and structures of power. Kershaw writes of the coercive significance of the panopticon:

For the panopticon may be taken as a paradigm of all the disciplinary systems in society where thought and practice are most firmly wedded to each other in an attempt to engender ethical conformity in the hearts of the resistant or delinquent, to bring the disaffected subject to society’s heel by eliminating autonomy and reforming the ‘self’ (1999:131).

The docile body submits to normalisation which encourages homogeneity and what Foucault refers to as “the shading of individual difference” (1977: 184). The ‘norm’ standardises according to similarities, whilst also classifying the subject according to difference. Thus, the panopticon, like the entire regime of the disciplinary system – the penitentiary system, the military, the school system, or (as I argue) the mass media – produces objects that conform to a ‘norm’ reflective of the prevailing social conditions. Hardt and Negri describe the eighteenth-century era of disciplinary power as that which “rules in effect by structuring the parameters and limits of thought and practice, sanctioning and prescribing normal and/or deviant behaviours” (2000: 23). One set of these social conditions mentioned earlier supports this use of a classification system that appropriates difference and identifies ‘deviance’ or Otherness. Judith Butler applies the Foucauldian notion of power and discourse to the performativity of gender and sexuality, arguing that failure to perform to a “heterosexual imperative” is a socially punishable action (1993: 2). Thus, failure to perform to this normative standard disrupts the status quo. Both the reinforcement of and failure to reinforce the norm is the performance of power. I argue that the media as an instance of panoptic surveillance are both successful and unsuccessful in producing docile bodies in each case.
Baudrillard suggests that the era of the panopticon has ended because of the mediation of hyperreality – causing an ambiguous relationship between active and passive subjects. He argues that we are “witnessing the end of perspective and panoptic space”, whilst also arguing that we are “no longer in the society of the spectacle” because there is no tangible medium in which to create spectacle (Baudrillard 1983: 54). The prolific nature of new media interrelated with consumerism and globalisation supports Baudrillard’s conceptualisation of hyperreality (1983: 125). Bauman also suggests that through the nature of global media and cyber technologies, as products of what he refers to as ‘liquid modernity’, the age of the panopticon is over (2002: 11):

What mattered in Panopticon was that the people in charge were assumed always to ‘be there’, nearby, in the controlling tower. What matters in post-Panoptical power-relations is that the people operating the levers of power on which the fate of the less volatile partners in the relationship depends can at any moment escape beyond reach – into sheer inaccessibility (2002: 11).

Liquid modernity has thrown into question any concrete relationship between subject and object, the watching and the watched. Similarly, Thomas Mathieson suggests that global media have in fact contributed to a synoptic system in conjunction with the panoptic whereby the many are able to observe the few (2006: 43). In a way, this concept subverts Foucault’s understanding of the separation of spectacle and surveillance. I argue, however, that contemporary media technologies, systems and modalities allow for spectacle within a unique and heightened moral panic to be understood as a form of surveillance. In this sense, the contemporary social spectacle, can in fact, be the continual exchange of knowledge between subjects mediated by the global media, producing a focus not dissimilar to a disciplinary force. This conceptualisation is predominantly applied to the Schapelle Corby case by arguing that the mass media, including the ambiguous and transient nature of new media, can at times be a powerful force of disciplinary observation.
Global media and the continually evolving information and communication technologies (ICT) produce self-awareness. This self-awareness is in both the user of the technology and also often in the object of the gaze. In chapter two, I argue that this self-awareness can lead to an adaptation of the object’s behaviour in response to the observation. Whether on reality television, on a cyber forum, or being monitored on CCTV, the subject/object is the observed panoptic object, often quite aware of their observation. Hardt and Negri suggest that disciplinary power, like that which Foucault described, was almost entirely at work in the implementation of capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (2000: 23). They also suggest that the disciplinary era has transformed into the “society of control”:

We should understand the society of control, in contrast, as that society (which develops at the far edge of modernity and opens toward the postmodern) in which mechanisms of command become ever more ‘democratic’, ever more immanent to the social field, distributed through the brains and bodies of the citizens. The behaviours of social integration and exclusion proper to rule are thus increasingly interiorized within the subjects themselves (Hardt and Negri 2000: 23).

The ‘society of control’ might be diffused but it is nonetheless significant, particularly in the role of the interiorisation of this control, which I link to the panopticon and the docile body. In the society of control, discourse and power are normalised to create social order and are crucial to the subjectification and objectification processes of subject formation. In other words, the subject is both the object of power and the subject who internalises normalising strategies in order to exist within the acceptable parameters of the dominant paradigm. Hardt and Negri argue that power “is now exercised through machines that directly organise the brains (in communication systems, information networks, etc.) and bodies (in welfare systems, monitored activities, etc)” (2000: 23). This dispersal of power links with Debord’s “society of the spectacle”, where the global mass media has contributed to the normalisation of power.
The society of control exists predominantly but not exclusively through the global media. I argue that if the mass media contribute to the objectification of the subject through a panoptic disciplinary power then through the internalisation of this power, the subject is constituted and thus also becomes part of the diffuse society of control. I suggest that this discipline is intricately linked to the shared authority of another system of power: bio power.

Biopower – the concept that life, populations and the body are regulated according to systems of power – is linked to theories of the panopticon, the docile body and normalising judgement. According to Foucault, a “normalizing society is the historical outcome of a technology of power centred on life” (1980: 144). Hardt and Negri succinctly argue, biopower is “a form of power that regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it, and rearticulating it” (2000: 23-24). The last four centuries have witnessed significant transformation in the control of populations, and of life itself. John Marks argues that: “Rather than exercising its sovereign right to curtail life in periodic, spectacular manner, politics focuses increasingly on the fostering and direction – the government – of life” (2006: 333). As previously mentioned, Foucault indicates that the transformation from the public spectacle of torture to the compliant observation of the panoptic prison is a movement toward a discursive system that regulates and manages ‘life’. This administration can also be seen in the training and regulating of bodies, the coercive force of discipline and the examination and classification of subjects according to discourses such as the law, health, welfare and education. Foucault marks the transformation of the penal system in the eighteenth century and the development of distinct fields in medicine, psychology and the law when he declares that:
For the first time in history, no doubt, biological existence was reflected in political existence; the fact of living was no longer an inaccessible substrate that only emerged from time to time, amid the randomness of death and its finality; part of it passed into knowledge’s control and power’s sphere of intervention. Power would no longer be dealing simply with legal subjects over whom the ultimate domination was death, but with living beings, and the mastery it would be able to exercise over them would have to be applied at the level of life itself (1980: 143)

The discursive functions and power relations in ‘biopower’ are critical to investigating a moral panic. Biopower is often considered a limitless and boundary-less technique of discourse and power, a regulating formation that Hardt and Negri refer to as ‘administrative’. In relation to biopower and contemporary warfare, they are argue:

In order for war to occupy this fundamental social and political role, war must be able to accomplish a constituent or regulative function: war must become both a procedural activity and an ordering, regulative activity that creates and maintains social hierarchies, a form of biopower aimed at the promotion and regulation of social life (Hardt and Negri 2004: 21).

Biopower (and biopolitics) are an instrumental force of modernity. According to Mathew Gandy, during the period of Western industrialisation, “the body became a focal point for a plethora of different concerns ranging from the need for productive labour to anxieties over the control of human behavior” (2006: 498). Contemporary understandings of biopower are wide and varied. However, I draw predominantly on the notion of biopower in relation to self and state governance in the case of Terri Schiavo. The intensity of the case, the polarisation of her audience and the profound questions raised regarding the nature of subjecthood, can be interpreted as existing within the machinations of biopower. Agamben’s notion of “bare life” explores biopower and the exclusionary tactics of the state (Agamben 1997; Agamben 1998). An interesting parallel arises between the notion of bare life – a subject’s life reduced to a ‘bare’ existence, without social value or citizenship status – in relation to the ‘war on terror’ and the extraordinary significance of what the incapacitated body of Schiavo came to represent for so many. As Gandy argues:
For both Foucault and Agamben the term ‘bio-politics’ denotes not merely a blurring of the epistemological strategies of the life sciences and the human sciences but a cumulative process by which human life itself becomes incorporated within the aegis of the state (2006: 500).

As a theoretical trope, I find biopower a useful means by which to explore the conditions of moral panic in the twenty-first century. In addition I draw a parallel between Kershaw’s suggestion that spectacle is concerned with a fascination toward an observable object/subject and Hardt and Negri’s argument that fear is the ultimate weapon of the society of the spectacle:

> Although the spectacle seems to function through desire and pleasure (desire for commodities and pleasure of consumption), it really works through the communication of fear – or rather the spectacle creates forms of desire and pleasure that are intimately wedded to fear (2000: 323).

Thus, the question remains that if the ‘society of the spectacle’ is deeply entrenched within the ‘society of control’ where can there be moments of resistance? Hardt and Negri contend that: “It seems as if there is no place left to stand, no weight to any possible resistance but only an implacable machine of power” (2000: 323). If there does happen to be a mode of resistance, is it real and lasting or is this resistance the rearticulation of a de-territorialised system of power: power rearticulated in another form or place? I argue that there can be genuine sites of resistance, which I refer to as ‘heterotopia’.

Heterotopic spaces contain multiple meanings, are divergent from the ‘norm’ and challenge the social and political conditions from which they emerged. According to Foucault, heterotopia exist in any and all cultures; at different points in history they shifted from being spaces of crisis to spaces of deviation (1986: 24-25). Offering the example of the theatre as a site in which multiple spaces can exist in one single place, he argues that heterotopia can be transformative and “capable of juxtaposing in a single
The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which over there (Foucault 1986: 24).

Foucault suggests that a home for seniors, a prison, a garden and the cemetery are examples of heterotopia because of the effects of similar principles of displacement and transformation (1986: 23-24). Heterotopia also relies on a temporal displacement whereby “men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time” (Foucault 1986: 26). The participants in such spaces are often the only ones who can understand and contribute to what occurs within the space (Foucault 1986: 26). He argues further that:

Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory. … Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled (Foucault 1986: 27).

Many theorists have utilised the term ‘heterotopia’ to encapsulate points of resistance, whilst others suggest that this was not entirely what Foucault meant it to refer to. Nevertheless, I find it a useful conceptual model.¹⁴ Heterotopias are spaces where marginalisation and dislocation can be given weight and where difference is rendered prevalent. The Redfern riots produced a liminal space where the ‘grievances’ of Aboriginal people were foregrounded. In this sense the people who experience heterotopia are the rioters participating in the riot and the people involved in marking

¹⁴ For an analysis of the various theoretical uses of heterotopia as a concept, see: (Johnson 2006:75-90).
the place where Hickey died, with graffiti. Heterotopia is useful in fleshing out how a resistance to normative social order revealed a temporary space of radical Otherness, whilst the memorial of graffiti was an imprint of this transgression.¹⁵

A final note on performance

As I am writing about the intricate and complex relationship between discourse and power, I am ultimately arguing that the cycle of spectacle, spectatorship and moral panic is an acutely performative enactment. By this, I mean the discursive formations operating within the spectacle, which influence the spectator and facilitate moral panic are enacted performatively: what is said is also enacted. However, I am also suggesting that the entire social event – the event, response, and the moral panic – can be read as performance because of the nature of the global mass media operating as spectacle and the readership of the active spectator. This is where the social event (through its interactivity between spectacle and spectator) can be seen as performance.

The case studies are only one way in which these three events can be read as performance. But how can these events then be understood in performance? Chapter six acts as a commentary and link between the theoretical analyses in the case studies and chapter five, the performance text, Three Interrupted Lives. In chapter six, I explore how the performance practitioner can negotiate the complexities surrounding the event, response and the resulting moral panic by creating a reflective social commentary. I endeavour to produce a performance text that can be both affecting and challenging. I explore what performance can come to mean in this context – principally in relation to

¹⁵ It is critical to note that the capitalization of the term of Other (and Otherness) is a deliberate reference to not only the large body of post-colonial and literary theory devoted to the subject but also the objectification of the Other. In this sense the capitalization is not a rendering of the subject as mere terminology but rather draws attention to forces that occur within a moral panic that creates Otherness.
the performer-audience relationship. The performance draws from Kershaw’s understanding of performance as “spectacles of deconstruction” as enactments that “displace the nature of the ‘real’” (2003: 595). In this sense, the role of the performance maker in the creative process intersects with the role of the performance theorist as an analytical paradigm: both are commentaries on the significance of these three social events, moral panic and the contemporary globalised landscape. According to Elin Diamond, an investigation of performance as the enactment of discourse is both necessary and enlightening: “Viewing performance within a complex matrix of power, serving diverse cultural desires, encourages a permeable understanding of history and change” (1996: 2). I argue that if the three elements of spectator, spectacle and moral panic are critical to the original events, all three elements need to be present as points of departure in the performance text. The performance becomes an important vehicle to reflect on larger social performances and what the intimacy and immediacy of live performance can mean in ‘deconstructing’ the performer/audience relationship.

This dissertation is primarily focused on three events that occurred at a particular point in history. In the conclusion to the dissertation, I briefly explore the advances in technologies and social network devices that have occurred since these events took place and what they might mean for global media, the nature of spectacle and the mobilisation of the contemporary media spectator. Hence, the final question is what the manifestation of new new media might mean for spectacle, spectatorship and moral panic today and in the future.
Conclusions

The model of reading a social event as performance examines how the socio-historical and discursive conditions of an event can be confronted. I investigate the event as spectacle, the response as active and diffuse, and the resultant moral panic as a form of discursive negotiation between the two. Each case study has a particular focus on the specific socio-historical landscape of each event. The theories outlined here aid in a detailed exploration of the social conditions of each event. Ultimately, I examine the discursive formations and power relations that shape the representation of the subject, and explore how the subject is both objectified and subjectified by a spectacle of intense interest. Foucault argues:

The relationship between power, right and truth is organised in a highly specific fashion. If I were to characterise, not its mechanism itself, but its intensity and constancy, I would say that we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function (1980: 93).

These three events should not be considered in isolation from the socio-historical conditions from which they emerged, but rather as a microcosm of the ways in which society demands particular truths, perceptions and responses. The events analysed here not only tell us how certain responses propagate moral panic and reflect the moral consciousness of a community in crisis but are also unique moments where the machinations of the contemporary mediatised world can be scrutinised. The following chapter is the beginning of this explanation with the first of the three case studies. It focuses on the case of Australian woman, Schapelle Corby.
Power is only concerned with ensuring that the subject will misrecognize its subordination as self-determination

(Cavallaro 2001: 84).
Chapter two: Discipline in the performance of the Schapelle Corby case

Figure 1: Parting shot (Pennells 2008)

This chapter analyses the spectacle surrounding the trial and incarceration of Schapelle Corby as performance. The performance is not of Corby herself – the young Australian woman convicted of drug smuggling in 2005 and sentenced to twenty years jail in a Balinese prison – but an intense initial response to her situation that, in turn, ignited a sustained moral panic. As one commentator declared, it was a “case that spawned a crusade” (McMahon 2005). My interest is in the examination of the discourses, power and constructed truths embedded in this mediatised performance, including an analysis of the ambivalent space that Corby occupies.

The chapter begins with an outline of the Corby case, detailing the microcosm of a courtroom drama. Secondly, it explores the links between the spectacle surrounding Corby (during and in the immediate aftermath of the trial) and processes of
commercialism and commodification. As Anthony Lambert argues, “Schapelle has become national and regional property” (2008: 246). I then explore the notion that the intervening media and public operate as a panopticon producing a form of surveillance-as-spectacle. This surveillance is a type of discipline. Drawing on Foucault, I argue that this ‘surveillance’ results, at times, in a “docile body” (1977: 183) constructed through a “normalising judgment” (1977: 177) that polices how she is represented in the media. Finally, I examine the resulting moral panic in relation to this surveillance through reading the interplay of discourses of race, gender and sexuality.\textsuperscript{16} I believe that the mediated representation of Corby that led to a sustained moral panic was the manifestation of the subjectification/objectification processes of the media and public’s ‘panoptic’ gaze. I suggest that the spectacle continually evolves with its shifting audience periodically calling into question the nature of agency.

\textbf{The case of Schapelle Corby}

Schapelle Corby was born on 10 July 1977 and lived most of her life on the Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia. She was a beauty school student until she left her studies to care for her sick father, Michael. In 1998, she moved to Japan and married a Japanese man named Kimi, whom she met in Australia. They separated in 2000. Corby travelled to Bali on numerous occasions to visit her sister Mercedes, who lives there with her Indonesian husband and family. It was on a visit to Mercedes that Corby was arrested in Denpasar on 8 October 2004 and charged with transporting 4.1 kg of marijuana into Indonesia (concealed in the sleeve of her boogie-board case). After a highly publicised trial, she was found guilty on 27 March 2005 and sentenced to twenty years in jail. To this day, she pleads her innocence and remains in Kerobokan Jail. However, her transfer

\textsuperscript{16} It is important to note that discourses surrounding ‘class’ could also be analysed extensively in this case however, I felt that how class operates in this instance (particularly in relation to how Corby is positioned in relation to her family, her audience and the level to which she is commodified throughout the spectacle) would be too large an examination for the restrictions of this dissertation.
to another Indonesian jail is possible at any stage. During the whole process, Mercedes Corby has been her sister’s spokesperson and firmest supporter, along with her mother Roseleigh, father Michael and other family members. At the time of writing, the Corby legal team had exhausted all possible legal avenues of appeal.

The significance of the Corby spectacle is interconnected with a fear of the unknown in its Western audience. I argue that this ‘fear’ is closely linked to the worldwide anxiety experienced in the post-September 11 landscape. In Australia, this anxiety is also connected to the memory of the Bali terrorist attacks in 2002 and 2005, the Australian Embassy bombing in Jakarta in 2004 and, since then, the Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotel bombings in Jakarta in 2009. Lambert argues that: Indonesia became “both the site and the perpetrator of terror against Corby as the visual symbol of Australian identity and values” (2008: 244). As discussed in Chapter One, terror and fear on a social level are conceptually ambiguous terrains linked to perceived threats to morality tending to result in conservative responses. Thomas Johansson describes moral panic as the situation, “When significant boundaries are threatened one way or another, the outbreak of a moral panic signals an attempt to defend the boundary in question” (2000: 24).

Understanding moral boundaries involved in the spectacle surrounding Corby helps in examining this moral panic. This understanding includes race, gender and sexuality and how an interplay of these discourses shapes what Corby comes to represent for her audiences. However, before I examine the matrix of discourses involved in this event, I need to explore the commercialisation of the case.

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17 At the time of writing, the Australian Government is reportedly discussing a prisoner transfer arrangement with Indonesia so that eligible Australian prisoners, such as Corby, can carry out their prison sentences in Australia (Australian Associated Press 2010: 20).

18 Michael Corby died of cancer on 18 January 2008, three and a half years after his daughter’s arrest.
Creating spectacle through controversy

At the time of Corby’s trial (in 2005), the reaction to the Corby case, particularly in Australia, was one of intense interest. This response was partly inspired by multiple controversies that accelerated the media attention and commercialisation of the entire case. The trial verdict was broadcast live across Australia on (free-to-air) Channels Seven, Nine and (Pay TV) Sky News. It was reported that over one million viewers watched the courtroom drama unfold (Schwartz 2005: 139-140). Illustrative of the continuing media interest in the case were several more recent television ‘events’, including the series of television interviews with Corby’s former friend, Jodi Power. The original interview with Power on the Channel Seven programme Today Tonight, shown on 12 February 2007, included a provocative claim that Corby and her family were, in fact, drug takers and smugglers. This interview was watched by over two million viewers. It was followed by an interview with Margaret Power, Jodi’s mother, who agreed with the claim on the 13 February 2007 on the same programme. Another one million viewers watched the Corby family’s rebuttal of this claim on A Current Affair on the third night of Corby-related programming (Elsworth 2007). The initial interview with Power was filmed the previous November but was not screened until February 2007 at the beginning of the official television ratings period. This timing decision reflected a deliberate commercialisation of the case (Cubby and Forbes 2007). The Jodi Power saga continued into 2008, when Mercedes Corby pursued, and won (on 29 May 2008), a defamation case against Channel Seven, Today Tonight and Jodi Power. All parties agreed on an undisclosed financial settlement soon afterwards. In June 2008, after Corby had exhausted all legal avenues, Channel Nine presented an ‘impartial’ two-part documentary, called Schapelle Corby: The Hidden Truth on June 22 and June 24, 2008. It included interviews exposing friction among Corby, her family and the defence team, deliberate media ‘spin’ and questions surrounding the motives of
many of the parties connected to the case. What this media attention continues to reveal was that several years after the trial, Corby remains a popular figure with Australian mainstream media audiences. As Anthony Lambert argues, Corby, was (and still is to a lesser extent) “an Australian cultural event of monumental proportions” (2008: 238).

Other controversies included Corby undertaking a pregnancy test (which returned negative) after local media claimed she was pregnant, implying she had had sex while in prison (Australian Associated Press 2005). More recent allegations relate to her being permitted to leave prison on occasion to visit local Balinese nightclubs (Wockner 2007: 5). After her final appeal was denied in June 2008, Corby spent some time in a Balinese Hospital, reportedly suffering from depression. She was allowed to go to a hairdresser and beautician before she returned to jail.

Debate on journalistic ethics stemmed from claims that Mercedes Corby was ‘tricked’ into meeting a camera crew from the Australian television program Today Tonight when they reportedly lured her to a local restaurant by hiring a private detective to promise her access to restricted government information. Mercedes claims she was told the information came from Australian diplomat, Liz O’Neil, who had been killed in the Garuda Airlines crash of March 2007, only days earlier. When Mercedes appeared at the arranged meeting place, she was ‘ambushed’ by a cameraman, a reporter and a private investigator, who demanded that she take a lie-detector test regarding allegations she had used drugs (Weaver 2007).
As these examples of controversy attest, most of the media coverage of the case was produced within a framework of tabloid journalism and thus was often presented in a sensationalist manner. For spectators aware of such media commentaries, Corby and other figures associated with the case were represented as celebrities. As well as the celebrity status of Corby herself, it appeared that the spectacle had become a quasi-reality television program enacted as a “courtroom drama”. The attention given to Corby was referred to by reporter Neil McMahon as “the making of a martyr” (2005). Mercedes Corby was also accorded celebrity status; she was described as an “Angel of Bali” for her assistance to the victims of the 2005 Bali attacks (Wilson 2005: 2). She was most recently photographed for the men’s magazine, Ralph, in the January 2010 issue. Hotman Paris Huteupea, formerly a leading lawyer in Corby’s defence team, was represented in the popular media through references to his alleged sexual prowess and taste for expensive suits, diamonds and hand guns. At the time of the trial, the celebritisation of the case and its players furthered the media frenzy and commercialisation of the accelerating spectacle for Australian media audiences.

Corby’s media status was also strengthened by support from other well-known and popular figures. According to the Australian newspaper The Sunday Times, celebrities such as John Jarratt, Alan Jones, John Laws, and Barry Gibbs supported furthering the Corby cause (Editor 2005: 11). Sian Powell of The Australian Magazine noted that popular figures as vastly different from each other as Russell Crowe and Lindy Chamberlain had also declared their sympathy (2005: 1). This linking of the notion of

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19 John Jarrett is an Australian actor, Alan Jones and John Laws are Australian media broadcasters and Barry Gibbs is a musician with the Bee Gees.

20 Russell Crowe is an Academy-award-winning actor and Australian resident. Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton (formally Lindy Chamberlain) is an Australian woman convicted of killing her child while on holiday at Ayers Rock (Uluru) in the Northern Territory. She was convicted and sentenced to life in prison on 29 October 1982 and on 26 February 1986 was released from prison after a vital piece of evidence (her daughter’s matinee jacket) was found. In September 1988, her conviction was overturned. There
celebrity to the realm of commodification and capital production in the creation and sustaining of a spectacle raises interesting questions discussed in the next section.

Creating the surveillance-as-spectacle: The commodification of Corby

Representations of the Corby case continue to span across print and television journalism, Internet sites, web chat rooms and merchandise. At the time of writing, the Internet had approximately 163,000 references to Schapelle Corby. Each of these representations contributes to the spectacle of the case and, in particular, to a commodification of Corby herself. Steve Pennells, writing in *The West Australian* argued in June 2005 that Corby’s image “has been hijacked and used for everything from G-strings to mousepads” (2005: 8). Other examples discussed by Pennells include a Sydney man applying for copyright of the name ‘Schapelle Corby’ for book, television and film deals and a Queensland man applying for copyright to the name Schapelle to cover such items as paints, varnishes, clocks and fruit and vegetables (2005: 9). A Victorian man applied to register the name ‘Corby’ for an exclusive range of luggage titled “The Corby Case” (2005: 9). I argue that Corby’s productivity as a marketable commodity is, however, entirely dependent on her performing to a prescribed socially acceptable representation, principally as a presumed innocent white, heterosexual woman. Further, how Corby’s audience makes sense of her – and this audience is not a homogeneous entity – is inextricably linked to how she is valued both as a person and as a commodity. Each of the many spectators to the event, including media audiences, media producers and capitalist opportunists, determines Corby’s ‘value’ as a product, and as a subject.
Another key figure in the Corby case was Ron Bakir, a Queensland man, who provided the primary funding for her legal case. Bakir was also the sole shareholder and chairperson of Schapelle Corby Pty Ltd, with alleged intellectual property rights to the use of her name. He also registered the website, www.schapellecorby.com.au, as a means of raising funds for the Corby family. Both the company and website were disbanded following the guilty verdict, amid threats of investigations by the Queensland Department of Fair Trading and the Australian Taxation Office. Bakir is no longer assisting the Corby family. Another website, www.dontshootschapelle.com, initiated in the United Kingdom by a distant cousin of the Corby family, has suggested that the site raised a sum of twelve thousand dollars, although the validity of this claim and the whereabouts of this money remains unknown to the Corby family (Pennells 2005: 8).

The commodification of the case also fits appropriately with what Baz Kershaw describes as the paradigm of the curiosity or contempt of spectators toward spectacle (2003: 593). Although now largely considered to be a hoax, the following example of a website advertising a tour of Kerobokan jail positions Corby and her situation as a perverse exhibit. The tour advertises a “feeding time” when participants can watch Corby eat, take photos with Corby in her ‘cage’, and for an extra fee “feed Schapelle yourself” and “watch her face light up as you throw various pieces of food to her” (Hutauruk 2007). It describes an optional “Up Close Tour”, whereby visitors can spend thirty minutes in the cell with Corby, for photographs and conversation. However, it declares that, “For safety reasons Schapelle must be chained up during all cage visits, and should not be approached under any circumstances” (Hutauruk 2007).
One assumes this website is a parody of the popular spectacle surrounding Corby if only because it would be utterly offensive if the tour were actually to exist. This example, even as a hoax, illustrates the level to which Corby was commodified by utilising a voyeuristic desire similar to a nineteenth-century “freak show”. Whether as the reinforcement of an extreme objectification of women or as parody of the spectacle surrounding Corby, the Schapelle Corby Tour, nevertheless reflects of the consumption of the Other and participates in the production of the Corby spectacle. Yet, whether there is support, criticism or parody, the intervention of the spectator nonetheless contributes to the intensity of the overall spectacle and the objectification of the “thing exhibited as an object in either curiosity and contempt” (Kershaw 2003: 593). The disparities of opinion and the myriad voices form a spectacle resulting in the continual surveillance of the subject as object. These websites – such as the Schapelle Corby Tours and www.dontshootschapelle.com – are indicative of the transient flow of global information and capital and indicate the Internet’s role in the creation of contemporary spectacles. In this situation, Corby as a celebrity is commodified, fetishised and objectified. This process is indelibly linked to the potential for profit and is emblematic of the ways in which economic exchange functions in media-fuelled spectacles.

The relationship among the notions of performance, efficacy and consumption is influenced by cultural, economic and technological trends. As mentioned above in chapter one, “the world is being challenged forth to perform – or else” (McKenzie 2001: 158). McKenzie indicates that the concept of performance can be extended to include the cultural, organisational and technological modes of performance. The drive to perform separates the ‘productive’ performing subject from the non-performing subject. I argue that in the “consumer society” (Bauman 2001: 311), the non-performing subject
is positioned as the Other – disciplined, and often punished, for non-conformity. The mainstream media function in this case as a consumerist machine promoting a discourse of exclusion to maintain the profits involved in covering the case. Within the discursive interplay of race, gender and sexuality, a similar process to the consumerist discourse occurs. Quite simply, the representation of Corby as a beautiful fragile woman ‘wronged’, defenceless and in a hostile and threatening environment, sells. If Corby or the people close to her are unable to perform to this social norm, her profitability, as well as her social acceptability, might be questioned. The discursive undercurrent of this spectacle links to Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz’s argument that some media-induced spectacles involve the celebration and thus reinforcement of hegemonic dominant discourse (1994: 8). If power, discourse and knowledge are interconnected in the representation of normative truth, as discussed in chapter one, then the participating spectators in the Corby spectacle are the players within this intricate matrix.

**The active spectator in the surveillance-as-spectacle**

A necessary component of making Corby valuable is making her visible. This visibility promotes her consumption, and ultimately, objectification. The spectators who directly contribute to creating and sustaining the spectacle surrounding Corby enact a quasi-surveillance operation within the very enactment of consumption. Moreover, as long as Corby can attract this audience, there will be a market for the spectacle to continue. Likewise, while there is a spectacle, there will continue to be a surveillance of Corby and her story. Whether in a news forum providing information about the trial or a blog uniting supporters of Corby or on a tabloid Internet site discussing the merits of a particular hairstyle or lip gloss chosen by Corby, the media continue to contribute significantly to her surveillance. The notion of communication and information
technologies of both old and new media assisting a panoptic observation is imperative to this argument about the surveillance of Corby.\textsuperscript{21}

The confluence of spectacle and surveillance can be read, considered by Foucault as indicative of separate historical transformations, to exist together quite freely in this context. Until the eighteenth century, Western forms of punishment – public torture and executions – were the jurisdiction of the sovereign power. With the notion of the panoptic penitentiary, in conjunction with a normalising judgement ordering the societal value of a subject, a system of self-regulatory discipline emerged. Foucault’s reading of this historical transformation separated the two forms of discipline into spectacle and surveillance. My argument extends this notion of the division into spectacle and surveillance by suggesting that through the current mediatised landscape and the fluidity of liquid modernity, Corby, and other individuals associated with the case, are subjected to a spectacle that, in turn, acts as an objectifying surveillance mechanism. This is a situation whereby surveillance and spectacle coexist. In this sense, Corby can be seen to be disciplined within the panoptic surveillance of her own ‘spectacular’ visibility.

Foucault’s reading of the panopticon is very useful in exploring the Corby case. Principally, panoptic discipline operates through the idea of surveillance even if it is not literally enacted at all times. The inherent violence of the panopticon occurs through the present threat of an all-seeing and all-knowing observer. The panopticon can be seen to operate within many contemporary processes of legality, civil health and safety, capital efficacy and productivity, and entertainment. In the literal sense of being in prison,

\textsuperscript{21} The predominant technologies used as research were old media (newspaper, magazines, radio, and television) and new media (blogs, Internet information sites, and mobile phone text messaging to print newspaper). As indicated in Chapter one, the social networking devices available today (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) were unavailable at the time the event took place.
Corby is subjected to the surveillance of all things associated with a jail. Yet the observation by her audiences can be considered a disabling surveillance tactic compounding the impact of her actual incarceration.

Clay Calvert describes the USA in particular (and by implication, any Western society heavily influenced by the mass media), as a culture “of mediated voyeurism” that “values watching electronic images of other people’s private and revealing moments, especially those that are sordid and sensational or simply strange and unusual” (2004: 20). This notion of voyeurism links with Bauman’s point about the consumption of sensations (1998: 83). In the Corby case, a consumption of sensations functions in conjunction with the seemingly insatiable consumer appetite that views Corby as an object of beauty, innocence and presumed (in)justice. The access the media and public had to Corby was limited during the trial and subsequently during her prison sentence, which I argue, could only compound this fascination. This mediated perception of her – as the innocent ‘girl next door’ trapped in an unfamiliar and hostile environment by the unknowable Other – doubly incarcerates Corby as the object of a panoptic audience observation, as well as the literal prison that houses her.

The processes that contribute to the surveillance of Corby preceding and during the trial include the continual reporting on her emotional and behavioural ‘state’ reported in magazines, newspapers, television interviews, and radio talk shows. Other surveillance strategies involved the live telecast of the verdict, commentaries of government officials and politicians, protest rallies by supporters and the contributions of celebrities. In a reference to the extraordinary scale of the Corby spectacle, reporter Mark Burrows (interviewed in 2005 by Sian Powell) relates Corby to another spectacle: the death of
Princess Diana. He says, “I was in London for the death of Diana and Diana pales compared [with] what’s going on here... You can’t file enough stories about Schapelle Corby” (Powell 2005: 15). Although the attention toward Corby has shifted, as has her audience, at the time of writing there is still a market interested in her situation. This fascination is particularly apparent in the Australian tabloid magazine industry, which I discuss later in this chapter. However, at the time of her the trial the Burrows’ quotation reveals, from the point of view of the Australian media, the height of Corby’s celebrity status, the profitability of her situation and the scale of the spectacle that continued to develop.

As briefly discussed in chapter one Thomas Mathiesen argues that, to Foucault, “panopticism represents a fundamental movement or transformation from the situation where the many see the few to the situation where the few see the many” (2006: 43). Parallel to the panopticon is the contemporary emergence of the mass media as a ‘synopticon’. This synopticon is essentially where the globalised media technologies have again enabled the many actively to watch the few:

Increasingly, the few have been able to see the many, but also increasingly, the many have been enabled to see the few – to see the VIPs, the reporters, the stars, almost a new class in the public sphere. ... In a two-way and significant double sense of the word we thus live in a viewer society. ... As I have said, the panoptical and the synoptical structures show several conspicuous parallels in development, and they together, serve decisive control functions in modern society (Mathieson 2006: 45).

Similarly, I argue that as surveillance and spectacle coexist within the mass media, the many see the few and the few see the many. This coexistence amounts to a spectacle that is itself a continual cycle of surveillance. According to Gary Marx, the surveillance system of the twentieth century produces an exchange of observation: “Not only might anyone be watched; everyone is a potential watcher” (2006: 8). Interestingly, Mathieson
wrote of the mass media as synoptic in 1997 and Marx was reflecting on the evolution of surveillance techniques in 1985, well before the advent of new new media that has arguably accelerated and deepened the situation of the watcher and the watched. In this context, a diverse audience watches, at times participates and at other times is watched, by Corby, in return. Ultimately, this conflation of spectacle and surveillance leads to both the objectification and subjectification of Corby.

Foucault points out that the panoptic surveillance system was designed “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (1977: 201). So like the prisoner disciplined by the ever present gaze of the panoptic tower, Corby is not only regulated by the media and popular gaze, but is also made aware of this surveillance. Her appearance in court (including her tailored shirts, manicured hands, well-maintained make-up and hair) signified her attention to the presentation of the body. By writing her biography, dressing to certain standards and making comments to the media, she performs to this audience. She is forever being disciplined through both the literal observation of the court and the gaze of her audience. She was, and to some extent still is today, in a state of what Foucault calls “conscious and permanent visibility” (1977: 201), evidenced by the continued attention of the media and the cyber forums as sites for devotees of the ‘truth’ surrounding Corby.22

Fundamental to Foucault’s discussion of discipline and this notion of self-conscious visibility is the notion of the “docile body”, which has been shown to have limitations in

relation to feminism. This tension is fundamentally concerned with whether the post-structuralist deconstruction of the nature of power, truth and knowledge is also capable of allowing for difference and the specific struggle for empowerment.23 I borrow from the notion that the subject is constituted by socio-historical formations yet continually performs the subjectification process and is thus changeable. I also suggest that both agency and disempowerment should be examined together. The concept of the docile body is useful in this particular context because of the important notion that the docile body “may be subjected, used, transformed” (Foucault 1977: 136) and that through current technologies, identity formation and subjectification processes are continually shifting and evolving. The representation of Corby is influenced in just this manner. However, in this situation the question is not whether she has agency but rather whether the pursuit of agency can ever be truly successful.

This concept of the surveillance-as-spectacle is complex because on one level, Corby is subjected to the regulative forces that produce the docile body, and on another level, she has agency. The docile body requires complicity with the dominant discourse, an acknowledgment by the subject that they will obey the rules of this social norm. Thus, in many ways Corby is the docile body because she consciously and actively self-regulates according to what the media and public want to see. In another way, particularly during the trial, she actively used the media to appeal directly to her audience. It could be argued that to gain popularity and sympathy, self-consciously using the very instances of power that constrain her might indicate a level of agency on

23 Monique Deveaux articulates this tension when she argues: “Although Foucault’s writings on power have a certain heuristic value for feminists, I suggest that two major pitfalls recommend against uncritical appropriations of his thought: the tendency of a Foucauldian conceptualization of the subject to erase women’s specific experiences with power; and the inability of the agonistic model of power to account for, much less articulate, processes of empowerment” (1994: 223-247). Other material concerning this argument includes: (Bartkey 1990), (Bradotti 1991). and (Ramzanoglu 1993).
her part. The question then becomes whether this agency can actually disturb the panoptic gaze.

The process of normalisation is what positions discursive knowledge as truth. Behaviour and activity that do not fit into this perceived notion of social normativity are potentially punishable for pushing those boundaries. Discipline (and order) polices behaviour and action according to this imposed ‘normative’ function. Foucault suggests that the “power of normalisation imposes homogeneity; but it individualises by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them on to another” (1977: 184). In this argument, difference is only acceptable within the boundaries of normativity and not what is considered to be absolutely Other. In this sense, the identification (and classification) of someone behaving outside of these rules does not derive from an *a priori* or naturalised characteristic but from a codified practice determined by discourse that fixes, measures and so on. Normalisation is what maintains and regulates dominant discourse and thus, has a profound impact on the nature of subject formation, social acceptability and the notion of deviance.

If Corby is unable to conform to what might be considered normal social standards, her discursive status becomes ‘abnormal’. Similarly, if her family behaves in a manner considered socially inappropriate by her audience, they, and Corby, are classified and punished by this spectatorship. As a result, Corby and those close to her are measured, regulated, and classified according to the dominant discursive paradigm. Lambert argues that: “[Schapelle’s] image is able to mask, dramatize and normalize a range of familial, domestic and international behaviours by reconstituting Australianness as a
‘damsel in distress’, through whom the nation’s historical and recent coalitions are reaffirmed” (2008: 240). This mediated and mediatised representation is loaded with socio-historical significance that operates as a form of discipline that continually objectifies her.

Corby’s visibility is something that both helps promote her case to a wide audience and hinders her situation by continually subjecting her to an observation somewhat outside her control. Corby as a subject is constituted and produced through the same attentive gaze by which she is constrained and objectified. In this sense, the spectacle that is created, the Corby ‘event’ itself, is of a woman who is both subject and object, viewed with curiosity and contempt, revealing both hierarchical and interconnected networks of discourse and power as truth formations.

According to Foucault, disciplinary power “is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those where it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility” (1977: 187). In other words, techniques of discipline are dispersed and diffused while its subjects (those objectified by disciplinary power) are made inside, and outside, of power itself and thus, are subjected to this gaze. As Foucault explains, “it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them” (1977: 187). Foucault also suggests that the ‘parade’ (military, penitentiary, scholarly etc.), is an example of the ceremonial exercising of disciplinary power where each subject is subjected to an examination concerning levels of acceptability. The surveillance-as-spectacle, the panopticon of Corby’s fascinated audience compelled through either curiosity or contempt, is the examiner in this sense, always watching, always judging:
[the] examination is the technique by which power, instead of emitting the signs of its potency, instead of imposing its mark on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification. In this space of domination, disciplinary power manifests its potency, essentially by arranging objects. The examination is, as it were, the ceremony of this objectification (Foucault 1977: 187).

Thus, in this process Corby exists as both subject and object. She is the object being acted upon and the subject acting within this network of discourse and power. In a contemporary environment where technologies of surveillance operate continuously, Foucault’s argument needs to be extended: regarding the object of the panopticon being “the object of information, never a subject in communication” (1977: 200). However, this argument implies that Corby can only ever be an object of the media and popular observation, and never a subject with the capacity to communicate within these mediums. In the case of Corby, there are significant instances where she returns the gaze of her panoptic surveillance and thus blurs the distinction between the observed and the observer.

On 23 February 2008, Pennells recalled the circumstances surrounding taking a photograph of Corby:24

> It was the first day of Schapelle Corby’s trial, before the whole Schapelle phenomenon really took off. She put on lip gloss for the picture. I remember thinking it was strange thing to do for someone facing the prospect of a firing squad. She put her hand through the bars and made me curl my little finger around her in a “pinky promise: that I would make her look good (2008: 30).

Corby’s self-awareness suggests an understanding of the possible media response to her situation and in a way predicts the panoptic surveillance-as-spectacle that surrounds her. This argument acknowledges that her visibility enables, to a certain extent, a manipulation of her own surveillance. This awareness is, as mentioned earlier, both the issue of the spectacle and surveillance coexisting, as well as the ambiguous relationship

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24 The photograph is figure 1 at the beginning of this chapter.
between the subject objectified and the subject attempting to subvert such observation: where the watcher is watched and the watched watch back.

Corby requires the attention the media (and the wider public) provide to sustain a perception of her ‘innocence.’ The awareness of this spectacle is where she attempts to reclaim agency. Perhaps the most significant example of such a manipulation is in the documentary, *Schapelle Corby: The Hidden Truth* screened on Channel Nine on June 22 and June 24, 2008 Corby is filmed agreeing with her defence team to a ‘media spin’, whereby she would appeal directly to the Australian people. The next image is of her handcuffed and surrounded by the media. She is tearfully appealing to Australia for help. Both Corby and her defence team were intimately aware of the power of a spectacle that saturated the media. A blogger named “Blankie” responded to this documentary by saying that he “was amazed to find out that it was all an act by her” (2008). There is a sense of disappointment here, in the realisation that Corby’s representation was at least partly manufactured, that somehow the actions of Corby, her family and legal team had let down her audience. Yet the representation of Corby throughout the entire spectacle is continually and actively shaped, either consciously by her or by the numerous media or individual spectators.

According to Foucault, “It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection” (1977: 187). Gary Marx suggests that those “watched become (willingly and knowingly or not) active participants in their own monitoring” (2006: 7). Whether the reasons were financial necessity (in the case of the *A Current Affair* interview by her mother Roseleigh, directly after the verdict) or to aid the construction of a public awareness campaign,
“Team Corby”, like Corby herself, is clearly conscious of the power of a media spectacle and of a popular response by the public. By manoeuvring the surveillance that continually observes her, Corby exists between coercion and agency. The media and popular spectacle surrounding the case ensured that she was under constant surveillance in an attempt to construct value from her representation and it is precisely this visibility that Corby attempts to control.

Corby is disciplined by both a panoptic self-regulating gaze and a public spectacle. In this sense, she is the manifestation of the many watching the few (where discipline is induced by spectacle) and the few watching the many (where discipline occurs by surveillance). According to Foucault, discipline is fundamentally a question of the subject in ‘enclosure’ (1977: 141). Corby is enclosed by both literal and symbolic surveillance. At times, this enclosure is temporarily broken or called into question when she resists the media gaze. Recently, news spread rapidly throughout the Australian media reporting that Corby had spontaneously thrown two glasses of water at journalists in Kerobokan Prison. Perhaps the distressed Corby was exhausted by the continuous attention and lashed out? Her behaviour accompanies recent reporting of her emotional and psychological well-being (Cassrels: 3). Ironically, the very media she is ‘attacking’ for their continual examination is profiting from her responses. Whether she is considered brave, beautiful or insane, while there is still an audience deeply fascinated by her situation, Corby will be continued to be exhibited in such a manner. While this occurs, Corby can only be aware of this fascination. Thus, she is not only disciplined by this gaze but is also sustained by it.
Butler argues that social norms are continually reiterated into normativity and that this repeatability is crucial to subject formation. However, agency occurs in the variation to this pattern: “the task is not whether to repeat, but how to repeat or, indeed, to repeat and, through a radical proliferation of gender, to displace the very gender norms that enable repetition itself” (Butler 1990: 148). It could be read that Corby disrupts the gender norm by consciously manipulating the gaze that subjugates her. Yet, how subversive can this be if it means maintaining the very surveillance that polices her? As Foucault argues, the subject of visibility is inscribed by power and “becomes the principle of his own subjection” (1977: 203). Even when Corby participates in the spectacle, this agency is still within the parameters of an enforced intelligibility: in moments of what seem to be enactments of genuine agency, when she actively subverts the gaze, she nevertheless, feeds into the spectacle that maintains her surveillance. Peggy Phelan argues, “[Visibility] is a trap … it summons surveillance and the law; it provokes voyeurism, fetishism, the colonialist/imperial appetite for possession” (1993: 6). Ultimately, whether Corby manipulates or is quietly coerced by the spectacle that surrounds her, it is her audience’s interest and the visibility that this interest brings, which reinforce her subjugation. What can be deciphered from this negotiation between spectacle and surveillance is that the pursuit of agency is ultimately limited by the perceived threat to normative order. In other words, even when one attempts to override the discursive force of social norms, by having no choice but to use the same tools as the status quo, the subject remains regulated by it.
i don’t think Indonesia really cares if Schapelle was innocent or guilty, in my opinion Indonesia used her as an example to show Australians what not to do and let us know that they have the power and they will use it. … Even if you are innocent Indonesia says you are guilty (Andrea 2005).

Reactions to the Corby case were clearly shaped by discourses of race. Prejudicial language and cultural generalisations were apparent, particularly during the trial. During this time, commentary regarding the cultural and political make-up of Indonesia was widely published in print and on the Internet and supported in part by sensationalist media commentators. Some of these sentiments included a call for Indonesia to return the financial aid given in response to the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami and for boycotts of tourism to Bali. Louise Vickers, a member of the public, wrote, “Millions of dollars provided to the Indonesians after the Tsunami disaster should have at least bought her a fair trial. I will be boycotting anything Indonesian” (2005: 7). Some responses exhibited a sense that Indonesia had an ‘obligation’ to support Corby as though collective humanitarian responses to a natural disaster were in some way a bargaining chip for justice. There was even a suspected anthrax attack on the Indonesian embassy in Australia (Nicholson and Murphy 2005). Acknowledging both the symbolic status of the beach to Australian national identity, and the history of Australian tourism to Bali, Lambert contends that: “Schapelle occupies the place of the mythical Australian beach girl (the daughter who is Australia) now trapped in a ‘strange’ land, in non-white hands, and at the mercy of foreign systems and institutions” (2008: 241). The central theme in this racialised response was that Indonesia was considered a ‘foreign’ and inferior Other to Australia.
There was public outcry after an emotional plea by Corby late in her trial when one of the judges appeared to be reading a book. However, Krishna Sen notes that part of the title of the book was in fact “pidana seumur hidup”, which translates to ‘life sentencing’ (2006: 73), adding that: “[Clearly,] the judge had not been reading a Mills and Boon novel” (2006: 73). In controversies such as this, cultural difference became the subject of media and public scrutiny. According to Lambert, in reference to the Corby case: “the body of the white female persists as the unit of exchange in an aggressive adherence to historical tropes of nationalism” (2008: 241). This concept of the socio-historical inscription of nationalism is certainly one of the most significant and lasting legacies of the case. Some of these racialised comments by members of the public included Matt Rodman’s statement in The Herald Sun newspaper that Corby’s sentence was ‘outrageous’ and “the best support we can give is to boycott Indonesia. A boycott along with the cloud of terrorism would send a strong message from a more civilised world” (2005: 4). In the same newspaper article, Kerry Blythe wrote that: “I feel Schapelle was a sacrificial lamb. Her sentence was far too harsh, cruel and characteristic of only barbarians. I encourage all Australians to support this family to bring their daughter home” (2005: 4). Many comments were made shortly after the reduction in sentence for Abu Bakir Bashir, the alleged spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiah. 25 Phill from Southport declared in the Gold Coast Bulletin: “2yrs 4 the murdering muslim Bali Bomber. 20yrs 4 an Aussie Christian ‘accused’ of smuggling pot. Bullshit, send in the SAS” (2005: 7). Abu Bashir Bakir was accused of masterminding the attacks. However, with little proof, he could only be convicted by association. This did little to curb the opinion of many, as public contributor to the Herald Sun S. Conner exclaimed, “I think this is just totally wrong. How can they give her 20 years for this when the pigs who killed more than 200 in the Bali bombings are getting only five odd years. We need to

25 Jemaah Islamiah is a ‘fundamentalist’ Islamic group in the Asian region with suspected links to terrorism.
make a stand now and boycott this country (2005: 4). The traumatic Bali bombings in 2002 and 2005, the alleged role of Abu Bashir Bakir in these attacks, and an emotionally charged spectacle surrounding Corby fuelled proclamations of illegitimacy and injustice. L. J Charles wrote in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*:

Schapelle is imprisoned in a country where the laws have let smiling terrorists off for killing many hundreds of people, including Australians. This same system is then looking to sentence a person such as Schapelle to death. Where is the justice? Don’t let the fate of one of our fellow Australians be left in the hands of such an unjust system (2004: 16).

The “smiling terrorists” refers to the convicted terrorists involved in the 2002 Bali bombings. Mukhlas, his brother Amrozi and Imam Samudra were executed on 8 November 2008 for their involvement in the 2002 Bali nightclub bombings. However, at the time this comment was made, the trauma from the bombings was still very real. The terror attacks seemed to have translated for many into an opportunity to defend cultural and racial isolationism. These statements articulate a discourse of race that positions Indonesia as the “unintelligible” Other: illegitimate, corrupt and unjust. Jason Sternberg of Queensland University of Technology was quoted in an article by Mark Todd in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as saying:

The Australian public has almost taken what's happened to Schapelle Corby as a personal affront. ... The perception is that she is going through a kangaroo court. What is happening to her speaks to a deeply, deeply racist undercurrent that runs through Australian culture at the moment. It plays on the fear that we are suddenly, somehow unexpectedly under threat from Asia again. All these transnational tensions are being played out through this one poor woman stuck in prison, facing life in jail (Todd 2005: 15).

This fear that Sternberg acknowledges, as if Australia was in some way under attack, is a complex machination of discourses of racial and cultural elitism. Eric Ellis argued in reference to the Corby spectacle that: “there’s a strong, almost reflex whiff about her plight that speaks to the lurking suspicions held deep in the middle Australian psyche about Indonesia: that it’s bad, unsafe and corrupt” (2005). Blogger “CJ” reflects this
view when s/he writes: “All I can say is I will never, ever go to Bali. Between the bombings and this, I can’t imagine why a westerner would” (CJ 2005). Another blogger, Daniel, says, “Boycott Bali they’re the real terrorists. Let our Schapelle go” (Daniel 2005). Not only do these comments reflect a discourse of cultural superiority but also they position Corby as a single and isolated ‘us’ surrounded by a foreign and inferior ‘them’. Lambert declares that the “Schapelle event becomes the symbolic mobilization of the vulnerable western self, and its attendant resurgence of orientalist otherness” (2008: 244). These public responses and cyber conversations are discursive utterances of a racial and cultural intelligibility that projects difference as Otherness.

Such suspicions of Indonesia also included an outcry that English was not the official language used in the courtroom, as well as some absurd racial insults about cultural difference. Malcolm T. Elliott, an Australian radio commentator on Sydney station 2GB, declared in 2005: “The judges don’t even speak English, mate, they’re straight out of the trees, if you’ll excuse my expression” (Ellis 2005: 19). Ellis notes, concerning Elliott’s on-air comments that, “in a Schapellised Australia, it barely raised an eyebrow” (2005: 19). Ellis reports, in another article concerning Corby, on the incongruity between the emotive responses of Australia and Indonesia: “The Bali expats and intelligentsia are disgusted by Australia’s racist reaction. The other 230 million Indonesians ask, ‘Schapelle who?’” (2005). John Schwartz refers to a prominent and controversial Australian radio commentator, Alan Jones, when he writes:

Alan Jones on 2GB was furious that the Indonesian judges: ‘….don’t speak English and won’t get a translation of Schapelle’s comments until today. What’s that say about justice Balinese style? I thought she did brilliantly in very difficult circumstances.’ These comments reflect almost total ignorance and smack strongly of racism (2005: 143).
Jones and Elliott were not only disrespectful of cultural difference but also implied that Corby was innocent purely because of a presumed cultural superiority. Lambert writes: “The judges were subsequently represented in most media as incompetent, disinterested, corrupt in the extreme and finally heartless and barbaric for failing to register the significance of ‘our Schapelle’s’ tears” (2008: 244). Eric Ellis argues that Elliott “gave a flavour of white Australian prejudices when he asserted on air that Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudohoyono – or “Wham Bam Thank You Mam Yiddi-yonnio” as Elliott called him – and the Corby judges were monkeys” (2005: 18). According to Ellis, Elliott’s exact words were: “I have total disrespect for our neighbouring nation, my friend. Total disrespect … Whoa, give them a banana and away they go” (2005: 19). In one move, Elliott manages to vindicate Corby, subjugate and alienate Indonesia and help to reinforce a moral panic, in the mainstream media and Australian public, by connecting Corby’s situation with normative ideas concerning race and national identity.

In 2007, after investigating the comments made by Elliott following a complaint from a concerned radio listener, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) found that Elliott had breached clause 1.3(e) of the *Commercial Radio Australia Codes of Practice 2004*:

> ACMA considers that the ordinary, reasonable listener would have understood, from the cumulative effect of these comments, the program to impute that Indonesian judges and, as explained below, Indonesian people are to be likened to sub-human primates who have no proper language or culture, and who are racially inferior to Australians ... ACMA therefore finds that the program was likely to vilify Indonesian judges and Indonesian people (2007: 10).

Along with 2GB presenters Jones and Brian Witshire (for comments concerning Australians of Middle Eastern descent in reference to the Cronulla beach riots), the
radio station was ordered to undergo “new training procedures” to ensure that such racial vilification was unilaterally condemned. According to the ACMA Elliott is no longer presenting on 2GB and an apology was issued to the Indonesian Embassy (Australian Communications and Media Authority 2008). The ‘dealing’ with these media entities by the state-operated media regulatory body (the ACMA) indicates the performative power of the state. Judith Butler argues that the utterance of hate speech reveals certain hierarchies of power:

If hate speech is a kind of speech that no citizen ought to exercise, then how might its power be specified, if it can be? And how are both the proper speech of citizens and the improper hate speech of citizens to be distinguished from yet a third level of performative power, that which belongs to the state (1997: 821).

The responses of individual spectators, representatives of media organisations and the state that were definitively racist or implied a sense of disapproval of Indonesia reveal underlying social and political issues. There is an act of doing in the utterance of the statement; in the enactment of all forms of hate speech, and in the punishment given for racial vilification. It seems that Jones’s comments about “justice balinese style” were not inflammatory enough, as he was reprimanded for comments concerning the Cronulla riots, rather than for these comments. The absence of condemnation suggests the state has in some manner sanctioned less explicit statements than, for example, the comments made by Elliott. Thus, in doing so the ACMA has upheld the sentiment of the statement by Jones. When racialist statements are tolerated, the statement’s meaning is reinforced through the performative and iterative power of the comment. Elliott’s comments were too explicit and culturally insensitive to ignore and thus, there had to be a punishment. However, I argue that perhaps the damage had already been done when people in positions of power, such as Elliott and Jones, bolster what was certainly an ignorant display of cultural and racial generalisation.
The appropriation of the ‘intelligible’ subject as inherently superior is deeply imbedded in the fear of the Other. For example, in a blog commentary John Simmons asks: “What do we do with these backward, primitive, poor, uneducated nonsecular nations like Indonesia, when they try to impose their very different values on one of our own?” (2005). It could be argued that this is an ironic statement in that Simmons imposes his values when he positions Indonesia as innately inferior to a superior Australian (white) value system. The very operations of racial oppression and cultural reductionism are reinforced by a blogger named “Sam Boogliodemus”: “Aussies are soooooo phony and obnoxious. If she were a fat black abo, nobody would have cared. People are only upset because she's a reasonably attractive white surfer bimbo” (2005). This blogger criticises the Corby spectacle yet simultaneously insults Indigenous Australians, as well as Corby herself. Ultimately, the comment reflects the multiplicity of interconnected discourses that are in operation in the Corby case and that exist in the contemporary Australian context. Lambert argues that:

Schapelle functions as the Little Red Riding Hood of counter-terrorist discourse. … Apparently unaware of the ‘goodies’ she is carrying, she is interfered with en route and taken into captivity by an Other who neither respects or acknowledges her virtue or innocence (2008: 244).

What is particularly interesting regarding both Lambert’s use of symbolism in the reference to Little Red Riding Hood and the following comment by a blogger is the discursive interplay among race, sexuality and gender:

I saw an article about the prison she's bound for, after the sentence was handed down, which made it clear that it's a typical Asian hellhole, that the average lifespan of a long-term prisoner therein is about ten years, and that people you wouldn't even want to think about are going to be waiting for the nice middle-class Aussie girl to arrive. So naturally, much blood is boiling for the damsel in a hell of a lot of distress (The Western Breed 2005).

Emotive commentaries such as these not only reinforce the objectifying spectacle and reflect the nature and role of the interventionist spectator but also trigger a ‘social
anxiety’ surrounding the case. The implications are that discourses of racial and cultural exclusion function as a normalising judgment: by rendering Indonesia and its peoples as the inherently inferior Other and representative of terror and injustice.

A significant aspect of the mediatised spectacle surrounding Corby is related to her image as a young Australian woman. Men’s magazine *FHM* revealed that at the time of her trial, Corby was voted by its readers as one of one hundred ‘hottest’ women (Warner 2005: 4). Editor John Bastick declared, in reference to a potential photographic spread of Corby, that, “At the time she was on trial and potentially could have been executed. … So it may have been considered in poor taste. ... By the time she comes out she might be 50 so they might not be so interested then” (Warner 2005: 4). *Ralph* and *Penthouse* magazines also expressed interest in photographing Corby. *Ralph* editor Michael Pickering said: “She’s an attractive girl in a distressing situation and its probably tugging at a few blokes’ heartstrings” (Warner 2005: 4). According to Derryn Hinch, an Australian television personality, “Corby has been getting this attention because she is young, white, pretty, and has big boobs” (Yeaman 2005: 4). Anthony Lambert writes that: “[her] breasts have been the focus of photographers, of bloggers and news editors alike. In 2005, men’s magazine *FHM* bestowed on her the title of second-best rack” (2008: 249). These comments suggest that the media and popular representation of Corby was not only focused on her decorum and emotional vulnerability but also in observing and classifying her in relation to her sexual value.

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26 Incidentally, Lambert goes on to say that the award for “best rack” of 2005 was awarded to Joanne Lees, girlfriend of murdered English backpacker Peter Falconio.
Critical to the success of discipline-producing complicity in the docile body is the role of the ‘examination’. Foucault suggests that the “examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalising judgment” (1977: 184). In this instance, the hierarchy is the observing media and public audience, whilst the normalising judgment consists of a subjugating gender discourse objectifying women. The examination itself is every newspaper article, blog entry and magazine poll that classifies and positions Corby in that manner. Foucault goes on to say that in the examination “are combined the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of forces and the establishment of truth” (1977: 184). The examination of Corby is evidenced by her treatment as an experiment and an object of power; she becomes a canvas on which truth formations are inscribed. These processes reinforce a dominant gender discourse through the media and popular panoptic gaze, thus also furthering the objectification of Corby. This gender gaze is made particularly evident when FHM can only award her breasts second place in a national poll for ‘best rack’. I am not suggesting that Corby is unique in this sense; it could be argued that in any case where a woman is on display for public consumption, a form of sexualisation occurs. However, a gender discourse is both conspicuous and critical in sustaining the spectacle that surrounds her.

McKenzie writes that, “gendered subjectivity is itself constituted through compulsory performances of social norms” (2001: 166). Corby, disciplined by the surveillant gaze of the mass media and attentive public, is subjected to a similar performance in order to be considered socially intelligible. Riki Wilchins argues that, “we are subjected in daily life to a continuous dressage of gender” (2004: 69). These gendered codes are instrumental to subject formation and the social acceptability of the subject. However,
for Corby this is a heightened experience. To gain what Butler refers to as “cultural intelligibility” (1993: 2), Corby is constituted in and through this hierarchy of interconnected discourses. She must perform to certain social norms to continue to be considered worthy of her audience. Thus, she is shaped and regulated according to a gendered discourse that as a result produces a kind of Foucauldian docility (1977: 136). Nancy Bates, editor of the Fraser Coast Chronicle, argued, on 4 July 2008 that:

Our perceptions of guilt and innocence are easily tempered by image. Ugly, unrepentant, foul-behaved people are more easily judged guilty by the community than beautiful, pleading people of vulnerable appearance. Would Schapelle Corby have won as much attention and convinced so many of her innocence had she been unattractive and behaved repulsively? (2008: 8)

An interesting parallel to the intelligible femininity of Corby is the representation of Lindy Chamberlain. John Schwartz notes that the Australian media criticised Chamberlain for her lack of emotion thirty years earlier but congratulates her for her public support of Corby (2005: 140). Unlike Chamberlain, Corby presented a very public display of grief whilst on trial. Her overflowing emotion was perceived by many as a testament to her innocence:

It can be argued that Corby’s open and frequent displays of emotion, with tears and bouts of fainting, worked in exactly the opposite way to the more stoic display of defiance shown by Chamberlain in 1981-2. Corby’s behaviour was more consistent with the melodramas so often seen on television, in which a vulnerable and wronged woman is portrayed as a helpless innocent victim (Schwartz 2005: 140).

Corby is granted support because she stays within the parameters of what is considered appropriate behaviour for a woman, as opposed to Chamberlain, who was punished for her inability to perform to this standard and left within a “zone of uninhabitability” (1993: 3). Although the position and treatment of women has shifted significantly since Chamberlain’s trial, I do believe that Butler’s statement, that “we regularly punish those

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27 It should be noted that since Lindy’s second marriage, her name is now Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton. However, for the purposes of my argument I will refer to her by Chamberlain, as that was her name at the time of her trial.
who fail to do their gender right” (1988: 273) has resonance to the Corby case. During her trial, Corby was supported and congratulated by her audience for her docility because her emotional decorum was considered to be acceptable within the dominant discourse of appropriate behaviour for a woman.

Self-discipline is a vital component of the regulation of the body and the surveillance of the panopticon. Kevin Haggerty and Richard Ericson refer to the subjectification process involved in the panopticon when they argue that the panopticon “involves a productive soul training which encourages inmates to reflect upon the minutia of their own behaviour in subtle and ongoing efforts to transform their selves” (2006: 63). Corby exemplifies a hegemonic gender discourse as a beautiful yet fragile woman, a representation that she self-regulates in accordance with this dominant discourse. Neil McMahon remarks: “Corby behind bars; Corby in handcuffs; Corby in tears. And always, always beautifully groomed” (2005). Even in the bleakest hours of her incarceration, Corby refuses to ‘let herself go’, a practice Ellis reads as a self-conscious performance: “It’s the ultimate reality TV show, Corby, who seems to be the only bulu (foreigner) in Bali who doesn’t sweat, has adapted well to her starring role” (2005: 18 emphasis added). Corby is subjugated by a projected ‘femininity’: a ‘sweaty’ woman would be evidence of her ‘failing’ her femininity. Yet Corby is also complicit in her own subjugation by enabling this “starring role” (Ellis 2005: 218). She writes a year after the verdict of her need to shape and preen her body:

I still pluck my eyebrows, I put conditioning treatment in my hair and dye it as soon as the grey roots come through. Most mornings I apply Natural Glow bronzing powder and waterproof mascara – for all the tears – and am constantly applying Cherry lip gloss (Corby and Bonella 2006: 4).
Corby expresses a pride in maintaining her appearance. However, by so doing she reinforces her docility. This is not to imply that a person should not find his or her own way to cope with such a traumatic situation, but I acknowledge the significance of a gender-based discourse in this context. This subjugation is not only reinforced via her representation as a ‘helpless’ white woman exiled in a foreign landscape but also via her own acceptance of this projected image. Hence, Corby’s awareness of the significance of the spectacle that surrounds her compounds the actual observation of her.

I believe that, as long as Corby continues to perform her gender ‘correctly’, she will sustain her own objectification. If she does not, the risk is that her attentive and supportive audience might reject her. In an interesting development, recent media reports (principally magazine and Internet commentaries) have focused on Corby’s mental health. Concern for her well-being has taken on a paternalistic attitude. Headlines have included: “Corby not ‘in the real world’” (Cassrels 2009: 3), “Clemency pleas for ill Schapelle” (Wockner 2009: 4) and “Grave fears for Corby’s sanity” (Kellet 2009: 3). Whether these reports are true or not, her mediatised representation situates Corby as volatile, fragile and in desperate need of assistance. In this sense, her commodification – Corby’s audience value and commercial marketability – centres on her emotional demeanour and mental health status. There seems to be a shift from the time of her trial to the time of the reports above published in 2009, where her emotional outpourings were interpreted by many as symbolic of her innocence and innate feminine truth to her current situation as vulnerable to ‘madness’.

These reports seem to neither punish Corby for her inability to continue performing docility nor to declare her ‘erratic’ behaviour as projecting some kind of gendered
hysteria. Rather, they suggest that her possible psychological breakdown is the result of her foreign environment. In an interwoven interplay between gender and racial discourses, the suffering white woman is positioned in opposition to Indonesia, which is seen as evil, criminal and unfair. I am not arguing that Corby herself is not suffering from mental health issues but rather that there is a market value attached to representing her in this way to appeal to a fascinated spectatorship, which, in turn, further compounds the spectacle surrounding her. This changing media representation of Corby reflects that, as Corby’s audience shifts, so, too, does the nature of the spectacle.

If Corby is fantasised, fetishised and consumed as a heterosexual woman within the forums of such magazines as *FHM*, *Ralph* and *Penthouse*, then Renae Lawrence, from the Bali Nine, is the representation of social ‘unacceptability’ as a lesbian. In this case, linked to a gender and racial discourse, is a discourse of heterosexuality. When Corby, or the individuals associated with her, are unable to perform to a “heterosexual imperative” (Butler 1993: 2), they are symbolically punished. As Foucault argues, “The whole indefinite domain of the non-conforming is punishable” (1977: 178 - 179). Stephen Crofts contends that Corby, “expresses outraged innocence, anguish, muted anger, and sad resignation in the manner of a silent film star” (2006: 8). In opposition to this, Lawrence is the homosexual Other, who according to one blogger, “Looks like a thundering diesel dyke” (twodogshellbound 2008). I argue that Lawrence was never given the marketable status or the emotive spectacle granted to Corby because of presumptive heterosexual normalising strategies.

28 The ‘Bali Nine’ are nine Australians convicted of smuggling 8.3 kg of heroin into Indonesia. They were arrested in Bali on 17 April 2005. Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran were sentenced to death, while Si Yen Chen, Scott Rush, Tach Duc Thanh Nguyen and Mathew Norman had various sentences including twenty years and life. However, in 2006 the Indonesia Supreme Court imposed the death penalty for Si Yen Chen, Scott Rush, Tach Duc Thanh Nguyen and Mathew Norman. Michael Czugaj and Martin Stephens were sentenced to life in prison and Renae Lawrence received twenty years. Lawrence was the only woman in the group. Michelle Leslie, an Australian model, was arrested in Bali for possession of ecstasy on 21 August 2005 and was sentenced to three months jail. She was released on 19 November 2005.
Crofts suggests that the media interest in Corby is inseparable from her representation as a heterosexual woman: “She is as beautiful and photogenic as someone in a celebrity news item; compare Renee Lawrence from the contemporaneous Bali Nine trial, who has attracted markedly less media interest” (2006: 8). Corby was reported to have given make-up and dress advice to Lawrence, although, when Corby first met Lawrence, she described her as a ‘psychopathic lesbian’:

All the girls who’d shared a cell with her had been telling stories about this freak. She refused to let anyone else sleep if she was awake. She’d kick them in the head, sexually hit on them, punch them. So by the time she checked in at Kerobokan, I imagined Renae as a psychopathic lesbian. I was scared to death of her (Corby and Bonella 2006).

Lawrence has little chance to resist being positioned as the Other when she is referred to as a freak or a psychopathic lesbian. The Australian model, Michelle Leslie, was often handcuffed to Lawrence as they attended their court appearances together. It was reported that Leslie’s defence team wanted to have them enter separately – believing that Lawrence’s obvious guilt of drug trafficking might in some way affect Leslie’s attempts to prove her innocence. However, perhaps this decision was also linked to Lawrence’s sexuality. This situation could be read as a negotiation around the “cultural intelligibility” of women in this context: if Leslie was to be associated, linked, to the body of the lesbian Other, her own intelligibility might be called into question or at least reinforce a projected difference.

Hinch remarked on the difference between Lawrence and Corby: “I haven’t seen any TV network devoting prime time to some scrawny, male Vietnamese-Australian on death row in Singapore. ... Or for the Bali Nine girl and I’d say it’s because she’s

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29 Michelle Leslie, as a result of spending three months in jail at the time of her sentencing, was released the following day from Kerobokan Jail.
unattractive and a lesbian” (Yeaman 2005: 4). Lawrence is a perceived threat to the “heterosexual imperative” promoted by the mainstream media, consumerist discourse and dominant moral boundaries concerning sexuality. Hence, she does not receive the same amount of media or popular attention as Corby. In a recent book about daily life in Kerobokan Prison, Kathryn Bonella (co-author of Schapelle Corby’s autobiography *My Story*), remarks that the “other lesbians called Renae Lawrence the playboy of the women’s block. She was large, muscular and masculine, had money and was Western” (2009: 105). Lawrence is not only unable to claim innocence in reference to her crime – the cakes of heroin were found strapped to her flesh – but she is also guilty of not conforming to the normative function of the ‘naturalized’ heterosexual woman. In opposition, as long as Corby is able to maintain her innocence (of drug trafficking) she will retain the mediated representation of an ‘innocent’ woman supported by her ability to ‘successfully’ perform this feminine and heterosexual discourse.

Corby, Lawrence and Leslie are constituted and represented via the ‘intelligibility’ of their ‘sex’: “‘Sex’ is, thus, not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it will be one of the norms by which the ‘one’ becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility” (Butler 1993: 2). Sexuality, like gender, is a performative act constituted and enacted through socialisation and rendered legitimate or otherwise according to these normalising strategies. Barbara Creed argues that, “woman in whatever form – whether heterosexual or lesbian – has been variously depicted as narcissist, sex-fiend, creature, tomboy, vampire, maneater, child, nun, virgin” (2005: 109). Corby’s capacity to remain as ‘intelligible’ can be seen, in reference to Creed’s assertion, as a negotiation between a

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30 Hinch is referring to Van Tuong Nguyen the Australian, who was executed on 2 December 2005 for drug trafficking in Singapore.
depiction of symbolic virginity and maternal femininity. However, all three women are unable to escape from the classification and examination techniques of the status quo determining whether they are the patriarchal pin-up, the villainous manipulative woman or the homosexual Other.

The continual reiteration of a discourse of heterosexuality is maintained via the varied representations of Corby in the media, principally in the form of women’s magazines and her biography. Corby writes, in an ‘exclusive’ extract from her personal diary, that in Kerobokan jail “unsightly sexual activities occur”. She describes them as: “prisoners performing sexual acts on guards through the bars, or female prisoners kissing a female guard” (Corby 2007: 16). This extract illustrates not only a negative perception of homosexuality but of any sexual activity by the inmates. In this context, the representation of Lawrence in the media and in the public eye as different excludes her from social normativity, while desire for Corby ultimately derives from her helplessness and declarations of sexual abstinence. Corby writes of the dirt, smell and disease of other inmates (which implicates Lawrence even if only by association). In reference to prisoners with AIDS and hepatitis, she declares that, “I haven’t done anything to be exposed to those” (2006: 3). According to Lambert, “Schapelle remains above the others, but in a constant struggle with abjection, with territorial contamination” (2008: 250). Corby’s sentiments not only link the sexuality of the other inmates to the prison’s ‘unclean’ environment but also by doing so imply an unknowable foreign Otherness.

After it was reported in the Indonesian media that Corby might be pregnant, she was subjected to a court-ordered pregnancy test. The inference, before the test’s negative results were revealed, was that she was strongly suspected of either engaging in
consensual sexual activity or that some form of abuse had occurred. The implication of consensual sex is a threat to the perception of Corby’s innocence. How innocent could Corby be if she were guilty of ‘enjoying’ her incarceration? Lambert argues in relation to Corby’s pregnancy test: “Her body, then, became both a potential passport to freedom and a biological, ethnic and sexual prison” (2008: 249). Corby continued to dismiss similar allegations into 2007 and in reference to her rumoured romance with the Bali Nine’s Andrew Chan, she declared, “I don’t and have not had a boyfriend in here. I have never had sex in this filthy and disgusting place and won’t until I’m released – I’ll just keep eating a lot of chocolate” (2007: 17). If Corby was involved in a sexual relationship in prison, consensual sex might be considered morally ambiguous and thus, potentially damage her image as an ‘innocent’ woman.

Corby also represents the normative gender discourse that equates womanhood with motherhood. Corby wrote in 2007 of her desire for children: “Right now I’m in the middle of my final appeal. It’s my last chance for a normal life, for a future where I can get married and have a baby, fulfil my potential as woman. If it fails I do not know what I will do” (2007: 17). This statement encapsulates the naturalised patriarchal discourse of gender and sexuality in relation to the frustrations of her situation. It assumes that her ‘natural’ right as a woman to be a mother and a wife has been cruelly and unfairly disrupted.

Occasionally, Corby is unable to perform to expectations of heterosexual femininity. New Idea magazine described one hair cut as a “brand-new butch look” (Editor 2006: 22), suggesting that she had buried her shorn hair in the prison garden, “like some strange religious burial ceremony” (Editor 2006: 22). Lambert argues that implicit in the
representation of her shorn hair is an insinuation of guilt: “Is, she, for instance, becoming ‘prisoner’ by becoming less ostensibly feminine and heterosexual, and thereby less the Australian figure of distress that requires defence?” (2008: 253). In adopting this ‘butch’ hairstyle, Corby is presumably failing to reinforce a discourse of ‘femininity’. Not surprisingly, she is mocked by the media for not performing her sexuality and gender ‘correctly.’ Not only do these responses reflect a perceived failure to reinforce social normativity, they also show us that her audience is just as likely to reject as support her. These shifts in audience support could be seen as indicating an evolving, and perhaps superficial, spectatorship that then influences the nature of the spectacle.

As previously discussed, societal rules classify and regulate individual behaviour within a “normalising judgment” (Foucault 1977: 177). Each blog entry, magazine or newspaper article that discusses the figure of Corby contributes to this sense of observation and objectification. Whenever she or the people surrounding her fail to reinforce this normative judgment, they are criticised and symbolically punished. This punishment leads to a change in the mediatised and popular representation of Corby – shifting from endorsement to a lessening of support and at times contemptuous vilification. Some examples of public response are merciless: “Look at the family that poor girl comes from, she never had a chance, a bushpig mother, drugged yobbo father, half islander half who knows what no no no they are all scum leave them in Bali” (Housos 2005). In the screening of the documentary, Schapelle Corby: The Hidden Truth, very few individuals represented (family, friends and legal associates) escaped unscathed. The screening elicited further comments from the public, many vilifying Corby and her family. One blogger named Presti declared that: “[The] Corby family are
clearly manipulative trash” (2008). I find it fascinating that at the height of her popularity during the trial very little was reported against Corby’s family but that as the spectacle transformed – shaped and directed by her commercial marketability – her family was increasingly examined and critiqued. This shift suggests that Corby’s active and participating audience continually evolves with the spectacle surrounding her. Thus, Corby will continue to be “subjected, used, transformed” (Foucault 1977: 136) by these regulating discourses of normative society: a complex system that ‘qualifies’, ‘classifies’ and at times ‘punishes’ Corby and those around her (Foucault 1977: 184).

Conclusions

The moral panic around the Corby case is linked to what she came to symbolise for her audiences. For some, it was an innocent helpless woman in a foreign landscape. For others, it was her status as a sexual object within a consumerist discourse, while other respondents reacted strongly to the media and popular attention given to the case. The responses, however varied, contributed to an anxiety surrounding Corby, revealing deeply entrenched social and political issues – influenced by discourses of race, gender and sexuality – rendering the subject objectified. The moral panic is fuelled by a sense that social normativity is threatened in some way by her situation. The performance surrounding Corby questions how a subject can be considered “socially acceptable” and what happens to the subject when they are able, or unable, to perform this intelligibility. Corby is regulated and disciplined, like Foucault’s docile body, in that she is subjected, shaped and framed according to what her audience considers appropriate. At times, she is able to return the gaze and manipulate her situation to her advantage. Ultimately, however, this agency is incomplete, as it cannot exist outside the regulating regime of the media and the dominant discourses of race, gender and sexuality. Agency, in this
sense, is restricted to the same discursive paradigm that dictates social acceptability. For Corby, the spectacle is her greatest ally and her fiercest enemy and this surveillance of imposed intelligibility is potentially as inhibiting as the very walls of her literal incarceration.
...it was taking charge of life, more than the threat of death,

that gave power its access even to the body (Foucault 1980: 143)
In 1990, American woman, Terri Schiavo suffered a cardio and respiratory attack and, until her death in 2005, was in a persistent vegetative state (PVS), kept alive by a surgically inserted feeding tube. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggests that to “perform is to do” (2002: 33) and yet in the case of Schiavo, to do was to perform. The slightest bodily movement was perceived as a sign of some vestige of her former self. Because of the prevailing social and political landscape of the USA, the particularities of the Schiavo case became the canvas for a broader debate on the value of life. All three case studies explore the discourses involved in moral panic triggered by each event. The previous chapter examined the notion of the panopticon in relation to the Schapelle Corby case and discourse of race, gender and sex. In this chapter, I examine the particulars of the Schiavo case, while exploring the entire event as a performance of
contested truth formations in the regulatory operations of biopower (Foucault 1980; Agamben 1998; Hardt and Negri 2000; Žižek 2005).

Most of the opinion-as-evidence in this case came from old and new media, including newspaper articles, websites, television talk shows and blogs. The latter were generally attached to Internet sites of a critical liberal faction (constitutional/judicial analysts and the right-to-death campaign), in contrast to sites concerned with Schiavo’s parents Robert and Mary Schindler’s fight to save her (and to interest groups associated with the pro-life movement). As the spectacle accelerated, so did the performance of vitriolic judgments and divergent claims to truth. Scandalous opinions were validated as the prerogative of the individual, the family, of religion and of the State. Yet each intervention by the spectators in the spectacle further contributed to the building moral panic that occurred, predominantly in the USA. As a result, the objectification of Schiavo was compounded by the continual cycle of spectator, spectacle and moral panic.

This chapter begins with a history of the Schiavo case. I then explore how the spectacle surrounding the Schiavo case became the site for the furious struggle among competing versions of truth. Although Schiavo herself was in a hospice, her body (and medical status) were exhibited in the media, in the courtroom, on the floor of United States Congress, and on the Internet. She had become the literal manifestation of the body of evidence. As this was essentially a battle between various truth formations, I am interested in how hearsay was used. This exploration examines the ideological and discursive interplay of the moral panic triggered by the case in relation to Foucault’s theory of biopower (1980; 2003) and Giorgio Agamben’s conceptualisation of “bare
Biopower and biopolitics can be considered a critical discourse of modernity that enables the monitoring, classification and regulation of peoples and populations. Bare life refers to the perception that a subject is unworthy of participating within the status quo. In the contemporary landscape, particularly in relation to the ongoing ‘war on terror’, concepts such as these play a significant role in unpacking the nature of the moral panic surrounding the Schiavo case. The chapter concludes with questions about subjectification processes in relation to the case, in contrast with another American woman, Susan Torres.

The case of Terri Schiavo

Teresa Marie Schindler Schiavo (Terri Schiavo) was born in Philadelphia on 3 December 1963. She was the eldest of three children born to Robert and Mary Schindler, who are devout Roman Catholics. Terri married Michael Schiavo in 1984 and moved to St Petersburg, Florida, where Michael worked in the hospitality industry and Terri worked as a clerk for an insurance company. On February 25 1990, when she was 26 years old, Schiavo suffered a cardiac and respiratory attack. Michael found her unconscious in a hallway of their house in the early hours of the morning. She was resuscitated, defibrillated, and ventilated and remained in a coma for ten weeks (Wolfson 2003: 7-8). After numerous studies and tests, it was reported that, because of the lack of oxygen to the brain at the time of the cardiac arrest, Schiavo was in a continuous sleep-wake state. After three years in this condition without change, she was diagnosed as existing in a Persistent Vegetative State (PVS). Her only mechanism of

31 Florida state law defines PVS as: “a permanent and irreversible condition of unconsciousness in which there is: (a) The absence of voluntary action or cognitive behaviour of any kind, and b) An inability to communicate or interact purposefully with the environment” (Florida Legislature 2002).

Florida law permits the removal of life support of a patient in PVS without an advance directive if they have a judicially appointed guardian, or a guardian acting on the specific advice of a physician. (Florida Legislature 2002).
survival was a surgically inserted feeding tube and she remained in that state for fifteen years.

From 1998, Michael Schiavo began what were to be seven years of legal proceedings to have her feeding tube removed. He argued that it was what Terri would have wanted. By the time of her death, after the removal of the feeding tube for the third time, the Florida court system had heard some fourteen appeals, motions, petitions and hearings, rulings by the Federal United States Supreme Court, and intervention by the United States Senate and House of Representatives. President George W Bush, in the early hours of March 21 2005, signed a Congressional Bill later known as the Palm Sunday Compromise, allowing the federal courts to intervene (U.S. Senate and House of Representatives 2005). However, the Federal United States Supreme Court refused to hear the Schiavo case on the strength that no further evidence had been offered to refute earlier rulings, or that it was a constitutional matter. On 23 March 2005, Judge Greer issued a restraining order against the Department of the Children and Families (DCF), declaring that Florida law enforcement would have to act if the DCF removed Schiavo from the hospice (Cerminara and Goodman 2006). On 31 March 2005, at the age of 41, Schiavo died, thirteen days after the removal of the tube and fifteen years after her initial collapse.
The battle for truth

In 1990, Michael Schiavo was appointed Terri’s legal guardian and in 1992, he sued Dr G. Stephen Igel, the obstetrician who had been assisting Terri’s attempts to become pregnant. Michael argued that the high levels of potassium found in Schiavo’s body after her initial collapse indicated an undiagnosed eating disorder that was related to weight fluctuations she had suffered persistently over many years (Wolfson 2003: 8-9). It was found that Igel had been negligent because he did not inform Schiavo of the danger of high levels of potassium and Michael Schiavo, as her guardian, was eventually awarded one million dollars. During this time, the Schindler family and Michael amicably shared various duties in caring for Schiavo. By May 1998, Michael was convinced – after numerous experimental treatments and attempts at rehabilitation – that his wife was indeed in a permanent and persistent vegetative state (PVS) and that she would not have wanted to continue living in such a condition. The Schindlers disagreed and so began the extraordinary legal battle.

A trial was held to determine whether Schiavo would have wanted to continue living in such a condition. In December 1998, Richard Pearse was appointed as Terri Schiavo’s second legal guardian to assess properly Schiavo’s stance on euthanasia and Michael’s intentions. Pearse found no finite answers to either while the diagnosis of PVS was correct (Wolfson 2003: 11-13). In 2000, a trial was held to determine Schiavo’s wishes in the absence of an advance directive. This trial was a battle between the opposing forces of an alleged truth, with each side providing eyewitness accounts from eighteen witnesses. Michael argued that Schiavo had explicitly told him she would not want to be reliant on medical technology. He was supported by testimonies by his brother and sister-in-law, arguing they too had heard Schiavo make this statement (Lynne 2005: 3).
The Schindlers argued that (as a devout Roman Catholic), Schiavo would never have disregarded the sanctity of life; a friend also testified that Schiavo had mentioned she would want to continue living in the event something like this happened to her (Lynne 2005: 4). In February 2000, Florida District Court Judge George Greer ruled in Michael’s favour and, although the Schindlers appealed that decision, it was eventually upheld in 2001.

The Schindlers attempted various legal manoeuvres to delay the removal of the tube, including a request for oral feeding (deemed impossible because she was not capable of swallowing) and a guardianship challenge. The court ruled in Michael’s favour to uphold his right to guardianship and set the date for the tube’s removal to be April 24 2001. What followed was a frantic attempt by the Schindlers to stay the removal of the tube, including a motion citing new evidence. This motion was denied and Schiavo’s feeding tube was removed. The Schindlers quickly filed a civil law suit for alleged perjury and Judge Frank Quesada ruled that the tube be reinserted until the allegation could be heard. It was reinserted two days later.

At this time, it became apparent that the Schindlers needed a change in direction. They began a legal challenge to the diagnosis of PVS. They turned to the Court of Appeals, claiming that Schiavo might ‘wake’ if she received appropriate stimulation and on 17 October 2001 the Florida Second District Court of Appeals declared that an evidentiary hearing be held with five experts to provide an impartial and updated diagnosis.

32 This challenge was on the grounds that Michael was intimately involved with other women and that he was not providing adequate care for Schiavo. Michael was involved with Jodi Centonze and at the time had one child with her. They later married after Schiavo’s death. Michael argued that he had always been open about the relationship and that earlier, in the first years of Schiavo’s incapacitation, the Schindlers had encouraged him to see other women. He argued in response to the guardianship challenge that divorcing Schiavo was not in his interest, as it would mean reneging on his duty to fulfil her wish to die (Wolfson 2003: 1-38).
(Cerminara and Goodman 2006). The Schindlers and Michael Schiavo were allowed two experts each, with the final deciding expert to be appointed by the court. It was during this evidentiary hearing that the court saw six hours of video footage of Schiavo. The tape depicted Schiavo as moving slightly. Her parents argued that the movement was a response to the presence of her family and a floating balloon. Along with the video footage, updated computed axial tomography scans (CAT scan), and other medical procedures indicating limited brain activity, were presented to the court. Dr Cranford, Dr Greer and the court-appointed Dr Bambakidis determined that Schiavo was in PVS with no chance of recovery and Dr Maxfield and Dr Hammesfahr concluded she was in a minimally conscious state. Judge Greer, on reviewing the evidence and testimonies declared that Schiavo was in PVS without any hope of improvement and that Schiavo’s movements were inconsistent and incapable of reproduction (Wolfson 2003: 17). However, the Schindlers edited the six hours of video footage into various clips amounting to a total of six minutes and released them to the public via the Internet. The resulting images portrayed Schiavo as apparently responsive and aware. In my view, the unedited footage, conclusively indicating the extent of Schiavo’s PVS, was manipulated to encourage pity and released to the court of public opinion. The footage and how it was interpreted reflect how ‘truth’ is a contested and mediated construct.

In 2003, the Schindlers introduced a petition with five separate affidavits attached. Four were from the Schindler family and one from a Dr Alexander T. Gimon. The aim was to delay the removal of the tube. One of these affidavits came from the nurse Carla Sauer Iyer. Iyer alleged that low levels of blood sugar could have been attributed to Michael intravenously injecting Schiavo with insulin. Iyer told the court that in response she had
called the police and was fired the following day. Judge Greer denied the petition and stated that the petition “is an attempt by Mr. and Mrs. Schindler to re-litigate the entire case. It is not even a veiled or disguised attempt. The exhibits relied upon by them clearly demonstrate this to be true” (2003: 3-4). It appears that the accelerating spectacle of truth formations were rapidly becoming desperate. By this stage, the case had captured the imaginations of an ideologically and politically divided public:

By mid 2003, the landscape, time and texture of Theresa Schiavo’s case underwent profound changes. National media coverage, active involvement by groups advocating right to life, and the attention of the Governor’s office and the Florida Legislature catapulted Theresa’s case into a different dimension (Wolfson 2003: 18). The nature of testimony also transformed – evolving from judicial evidence from the expert witness in the early courtroom appearances to what I refer to as the survivor’s testimony given by the differing perspectives of the Schindlers and Michael Schiavo. According to John Durham Peters, the testimony of the survivor “lies in mortal engagement with the story told” (2001: 716). The Schindler family and Michael Schiavo were intensely invested in their understanding of truth: death or life was the outcome of each individual’s version of history involving what must have seemed like a mortal engagement with variations of the truth. Each party enunciated a survivor’s testimonial crucial to the continuation and direction of the spectacle, thus ensuring that it would meet their particular needs. Both Michael and the Schindlers relied on a sustained spectacle for the vindication of their particular version of the truth – to kill or not to kill.

The most acrimonious argument that unfolded within old and new media was the relationship among Schiavo, Michael and her family. Writing about the case, Joan
Didion declared that, “In the bright light shed by family disaster, few marriages look good” (2005). Michael Schiavo was questioned about “control issues” because he apparently kept a record of the travel mileage of Schiavo’s car. Didion notes that Bobby Schindler, Schiavo’s brother, had declared that before her collapse, she had tearfully admitted that her marriage was “falling apart” (2005). Speculation mounted surrounding whether Michael’s motivations were honest and whether there was a case for abuse. This speculation directly led to the Florida Department of Children and Families receiving and investigating 89 complaints regarding the abuse and exploitation of Schiavo. It was determined that there was no reason or evidence to believe that this had occurred at any stage by either the Schindlers or Michael (2005). On the *Larry King Show*, Michael declared that the Schindlers’ motivations to fight the removal of Schiavo’s feeding tube were purely financial (King 2003). The Schindlers claimed that Michael hadn’t pursued rehabilitation and he claimed in response that he had repeatedly sought medical options, all of which all resulted in the same prognosis: Schiavo’s medical condition would not change (King 2003). As Didion suggests, “Accusation was nonetheless the air all parties were by then breathing” (2005).

On 15 October 2003, Schiavo’s tube was removed for the second time. In an extraordinary move by the Florida legislature, a bill titled “Terri’s Law” was passed, enabling Florida Governor Jeb Bush to intervene in the case. Schiavo, six days without hydration or nutrition, was removed from the hospice by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and placed in hospital where her tube was surgically reinserted. Dr Wolfson was appointed as a guardian *ad litem* – an impartial witness – reporting to Governor Bush. Eventually, the Florida Supreme Court found that the legislation and intervention were unconstitutional. Apparently, the government had gone too far. The
actions of the government, politicians and the courts were critical in sustaining the growing moral panic surrounding Schiavo and her feuding family.

My objective is not to determine who was considered to be speaking the truth but instead (using this case as an example) to explore how truth is constituted and for what purpose it is legitimated. Further, my intent is to examine the prevailing dominant discourses and normalisation strategies that legitimise these truth formations. Dr Jay Wolfson alludes to the spectacle surrounding Schiavo and how it potentially affected the Schindlers and Michael Schiavo thus: “extensive urban mythology has created toxic clouds, causing the parties and others to behave in ways that may not, in the order of things, serve the best interests of the ward” (2003: 34). From this perspective, Schiavo became a symbol of a larger ideological struggle. She was the literal object exhibited for the purposes of sustaining a spectacle for the media and her opposing family, the vindication of opposing truths for the right-to-life/death movements and the battle for the preservation and/or disruption of normative discourse.

The series of events that occurred at the junction of government intervention represent both the symbolic and the literal applications of legal and political discourse on the human body. Therefore, when Governor Jeb Bush removed Schiavo from her hospice to have her feeding tube reinserted, he was symbolically inscribing legal discourse onto her objectified body. It could be argued that this move went beyond the pursuit of personal or political beliefs and entered the realm of national symbolism. This struggle was principally concerned with the contestations surrounding a particular discourse of liberty. The American tradition of liberty for all – personal, political, professional – associated with neo-liberalism as an economic and political strategy of the conservative
Bush administration (with its origins much earlier) and the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq seemed to position liberty as the prevailing discourse at the time. However, liberty is a problematic concept: for whom and how is ‘liberty’ pursued and/or obtained and at what cost? How can liberty ever be literally experienced by the subject who is physically and mentally incapacitated? Further, who is this liberty really for if it can’t be experienced by that subject? The fraught performance of enforced liberty can be only for the mass-mediated audience (and interest groups) that are galvanised in response to the six-minute clips, endless court appearances, speeches, prayers, speculation and gossip. The ensuing spectacle means that not only are the immediate players – such as Governor Bush, the Schindlers, Michael, etc. – implicated in the objectification of the incapacitated subject but also the spectators who became actively involved in the case. Schiavo becomes the actual battleground on which the fight for liberty occurs. The meanings produced by the audience become a concoction of hearsay, ‘expert’ opinion, and specific ideological interests. These contributions both in the formal courtroom and in the court of popular opinion (principally in the form of blogs) become a type of evidence that is primarily concerned with particular notions of liberty.

**Hearsay as spectatorial intervention**

John Durham Peters suggests that hearsay is “quotation, testimony at second-hand” (2001: 716). In this situation, hearsay occurs in the public sphere and is considered less ‘truthful’ than that which is discussed within the courtroom. However, the notion of hearsay is critical to unpacking the significance of the Schiavo case. As the spectacle accelerated, gossip and rumour began to be interpreted as evidence. Examining hearsay is valuable not only to understanding the cultural and political issues inherent in this
moral panic but also to understanding the nature of moral absolutism in the wake of polarised truth formations.

Didion reported that groups such as the National Right to Life, the Traditional Values Coalition, the Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, and Operation Rescue, were involved in supporting the Schindler’s case (2005). The National Right to Life was founded in 1973 as a response to Roe v. Wade and is the largest pro-life organisation (political action group) in the USA, with representatives in all fifty states. The organisation was instrumental in rallying both public and political support for the passing of the Florida State legislation, ‘Terri’s Law’, which allowed Governor Jeb Bush to intervene in the case. In 2010, there were still over two hundred articles in reference to Terri Schiavo on their website. Overall, public commentaries supporting the Schindler family and the pro-life campaign tended to be emotional and sensationalist. As discussed in chapter one, the very nature of blogs means that objective reporting is not necessarily important. Brian McNair argues that, at “times of global crisis the blogosphere comes into its own as a uniquely diverse and rich information pool, for which the occasional error or malicious rumour may be judged a small price to pay” (2006: 129). The evidence presented in court was examined and debated on blogs and this discussion was often imbued with the ideological position of the blogs’ creators and contributors. The impartial judiciary system was placed in a contested parallel with the court of popular opinion and thus the distinction between hearsay and evidence outside of the courtroom became blurred. The ideological
interplay among various interests groups influenced particular institutional bodies to respond, thus extending the spectacle and what Schiavo came to represent.\textsuperscript{33}

Patrick Kelley wrote in his blog: “Michael Schiavo is a hero in my opinion, one of the few true American heroes (a term which oft used and abused) ... What Michael Schiavo has been going through over the last twelve years amounts to libel and slander of the most obscene variety” (2005). Throughout his blog, Kelley makes some extraordinary speculations, some of which could be considered slanderous. However, the vast majority of vitriolic judgment was predominantly anti-Michael Schiavo.

One particular blog, \textit{A Family's Torment- Terri Schiavo}, contained a dialogue between pro-life campaigners and, in my opinion, represents the magnitude of the spectacle surrounding the case. What is intriguing about this blog is how speculation was presented as truth and not the unsubstantiated hearsay that it was. This particular blog provided what seemed to be a blow-by-blow account of the various court proceedings, yet the ‘evidence’ was grossly manipulated because of the particular intentions of its creators. On 12 February 2005, a detailed explanation of the case was posted by a blogger named only as ‘amdgmary’: “The following items are among many very frustrating circumstances that Terri Schiavo’s parents, brother, and sister consider to be abuses of Terri on the part of Michael Schiavo. … All of these have been condoned by Judge Greer and the Pinellas County officials” (2005). The abuse written about was based on allegations made by the Schindlers (and continually denied by Michael) were found to be unsubstantiated by Judge Greer (Cerminara and Goodman 2006). The same

\textsuperscript{33} In both the 2000 and 2004 US elections, both the pro-life and pro-choice movements in association with political action groups donated millions of dollars to the Democratic and Republican parties (OpenSecrets.org 2010).
blogger continues with accusations of neglect and the “Denial of Therapy, Rehabilitation and Necessary Services” (2005) and suggests that, as the inheritor of Schiavo’s medical trust fund, Michael may have had dishonest intentions. The blog contains an outline of the various times when Michael restricted visitors, predominantly Schindler family members, and refused to replace an old wheelchair – as evidence of his character failings and malicious intentions. The blog entry argues that Michael did not allow swallow therapy and reports that: “Terri’s parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, have the testimony of several physicians and have submitted additional affidavits to the court since the original January 2000 trial stating that, with proper therapy, Terri could be taught to not only eat food again, but also speak” (amdgmary 2005).

The 2003 report by the third court-appointed guardian ad litem, Dr Wolfson, found that there was no hope for rehabilitation (Wolfson 2003: 33). This information was absent from the blog and instead replaced with this statement: “Judge Greer has denied any swallowing therapy believing that a potential death by aspiration and choking is more agonizing than his order to have Terri die by starvation and dehydration” (amdgmary 2005). This allegation is followed by accusations of “Denial of Personal Items, Gifts” and “Denial of Stimulation” and the “Denial of Interaction with Parent” (amdgmary 2005). The list of accusations as evidence of negligence and abuse by Michael Schiavo is concluded with a statement: “Michael Schiavo refuses to Dissolve Marriage” and is “Living in Open Adultery” (amdgmary 2005). This particular blog is significant because its subjective judgments claiming to be factual and objective information directly manipulate an audience’s desire for guidance in making sense of complex issues. In response to these accusations, commentators deliberate and discuss the material in a manner that resembles a jury responding to evidence. ‘amdgmary’ is positioned as an
expert while other contributors become the juror weighing up the information.

‘Theodore’ posted on the same blog on 12 February 2005: “We need to remove that line ‘land of the free, home of the brave’ in reference to poor Terri” and later commented that the Schindlers were “understanding first-hand the definition of ‘American tyranny’” (2005). This post was followed by a comment by ‘cyn’: “As has been often noted, we are not allowed to treat prisoners or animals the way Ms. Schiavo is treated. Apparently the only rights that are important to Michael Schiavo are those that will lead to her death” (2005). As this quotation suggests, the accusations regarding the guardianship of Schiavo as negligent were reinforced, along with the suggestion that Schiavo’s universal human rights were under threat. Blogger ‘tutstar’ declared Michael Schiavo guilty of “false imprisonment” (2005) and “floriduh voter” proclaimed: “THIS IS NOT A CIVIL MATTER. IT IS A CRIME, THE CRIME OF THE CENTURY” (2005 original emphasis). “AnimalLover” declared, “we are our brother’s keepers and are responsible to defend the most vulnerable. I’m all for hiring mercenaries to take directly to Walter Reed for impartial evaluation. I’d be happy to donate” (2005). Negligence and physical abuse, considered tyrannical and synonymous with a perceived assault on liberty, amounted to a sense that a crime against humanity had been committed.

There is an advertisement towards the end of A Family’s Torment- Terri Schiavo for a computer desktop logo supporting the Schindlers’ campaign. It reads: “Terri Schindler Schiavo Life Ribbon Campaign”, but the name Schiavo is crossed out. The campaign not only provides unequivocal support for the Schindlers, but also symbolically extinguishes her relationship with Michael and undermines the legitimacy of his truth claims. An interesting tangent is Michael’s choice of epitaph for Schiavo that read: “Schiavo Teresa Marie Beloved Wife Born December 3, 1963 Departed this Earth
February 25, 1990. At Peace March 31, 2005 I kept my promise” (Goddard 2005). Michael Schiavo provocatively renders present his beliefs in the enunciation of the epitaph. Schiavo is identified without her maiden name and depicted as not truly living beyond the day she collapsed. Michael declares that it his ‘truth’ that prevails, with his final words, “I kept my promise”, positioning her family’s judgment in clear contrast. In this context, truth is reiteratively constructed and performed according to the motivations and circumstances of its production. Whether it is the Schindler ribbon campaign or, in contrast, Schiavo’s epitaph, truth is performatively enacted: what is stated is also in its utterance enacted. The supporters of the ribbon campaign render Michael Schiavo absent and in retaliation Michael silences the Schindlers and their supporters with a final statement of his certainty. The next section examines the underlying discursive issues at play within this challenge.

**Biopower: religion, politics and ethics**

Central to the truth claims embedded in this event are enduring questions about who speaks and who listens. I find the concept of ‘biopower’ useful in deconstructing these processes. Foucault outlines a shift from the sovereign authority of the management of death to the administrative regulation of life as “marking the beginning of an era of ‘bio-power’” (1980: 139-140). For Foucault, this does not only oppress but is inherent within any technique of regulation, productivity and influence. In fact, power “is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (Foucault 1980: 93). The manifestation of biopower as a tool to manage populations is based on a foundation of capital production. As people have learnt to live longer with an improved quality of life, populations have been manoeuvred into

34 See the following Internet address for an image of the epitaph: [www.telegraph.co.uk/.../2005/06/26/ixworld.htm](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/.../2005/06/26/ixworld.htm)
processes and institutions for the production, and the reproduction, of capital. Therefore, according to Foucault, “bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism” (1980:140-141). In a compelling dilemma, Schiavo both dislodges the capitalist endeavour as the incapacitated disabled object, whilst also being a symbol for the ideological pursuit and discursive imperative of biopower: the regulation of life.

John Marks suggests that, rather than “exercising its sovereign right to curtail life in periodic, spectacular manner, politics focuses increasingly on the fostering and direction – the government – of life” (2006: 333). This quotation is particularly relevant in relation to the extraordinary reaction of the Florida State government, the United States Congress and even the Executive Office of the President with regard to the Schiavo case. What was seen by some politicians as a deprivation of liberty was seen by many others as a gross intervention of the state. The conservatism exercised in response to the case was channelled by ideologically constituted interest groups, including politically motivated parties, religious groups and a range of media organisations.

The case was embraced by religious right factions as representative of the continuing struggle for the sanctity of life. Particularly leading up to Schiavo’s death, the passionate and vitriolic sentiments linking support for the Schindlers and the Christian right became more and more frequent and emotive. The final entry in the blog, A Family’s Torment- Terri Schiavo by an individual named only as ‘GeekDejure’ was: “Hail Terri… Child of God… We Pray those judicial sinners… Do not cause the hour of thy death… Amen” (2005 original emphasis). In brackets after the name ‘GeekDejure’ were the words “LOL = Liberals Obey Lucifer”. At another point in the
blog, Mittens writes: “Michael is one of the most Wicked and Heartless men Walking the earth, if you can even Call him a man. O Lord, Continue to Protect Your daughter from the sons of Darkness!” (2005 original emphasis). On 7 March 2005, the leader of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace Cardinal Renato Martino, on behalf of the Vatican, issued this statement regarding Schiavo:

She will die a horrible and cruel death. She will not simply die; she will have death inflicted upon her over a number of terrible days even weeks … how is it that this woman, who has done nothing wrong, will suffer a fate which society would never tolerate in the case of a convicted murderer or anyone else convicted of the most horrendous crime? (2005).

For the millions of Catholics worldwide and the supporters of the Schindlers and pro-life advocates, the case must have seemed quite simple: it was morally reprehensible to ‘kill’ Schiavo. Didion referred to the Christian symbology of the case when she wrote of the final removal of the feeding tube in March 2005: “It was the convergence of that countdown with the holiest week in the Christian calendar that exacerbated the ‘circus’, the displays of theatrical martyrdom outside the hospice” (2005). In an online article in The New York Times on 25 March 2005, six days before Schiavo’s death, Abby Goodnough wrote: “Many of those supporters are making parallels between Ms Schiavo and Jesus, describing ‘the passion of [Terri Schiavo]’ as Easter approaches” (2005).

After the first anniversary of Schiavo’s death, Father Frank Pavone, the National Director of Priests of Life and an avid supporter of the Schindlers, released a letter to Michael Schiavo in which he declared:

Some have demanded that I apologize for calling you a murderer. Not only will I not apologize, I will repeat it again. Your decision to have Terri dehydrated to death was a decision to kill her… it was murder in the eyes of god and of millions of your fellow Americans and countless more around the world. You are the ones who owe all of us an apology (2006).
In contrast, John J. Paris in an online article in the *Southern Medical Journal*, argued that the Vatican’s statement was a misleading interpretation of Catholicism: “In fact, the tradition makes it clear that if there is no further physical or spiritual benefit, to be gained in sustaining life, then there is no moral obligation to do so” (2005). Following this argument, Schiavo quite obviously did not enjoy “physical or spiritual benefit”, and therefore, it was not immoral to assist death. The autopsy report revealed that not only was Schiavo irreversibly in PVS but also that the pyramidal neurons essential to the cerebral cortex had been destroyed. Further, her brain weighed half of what is expected of a woman her height, weight and age. Dr Jon Thogmartin reported that “no amount of therapy or treatment would have regenerated the massive loss of neurons” (Cerminara and Goodman 2006). Why did Father Pavone feel it necessary to allege the case was murder a year after Schiavo’s death, particularly in the revelation of the extent of her condition? I suggest that his allegations were entirely ideological.

Within this event, biopower can be seen as one of the key institutionally enforced discourses within the operation of government, politics, ideology, religion and science. According to John Marks, the Second World War established two outcomes of biopower: mass war between multiple countries and populations and the study and practice of eugenics (2006: 333). As a result, debate followed on the dangers and limits of science and the role of bio-ethics. Thus, the science surrounding stem cell research, genetic cloning and the human genome project continues to stimulate debates, which, according to Marks, “all raise significant biopolitical issues” (2006: 333). The evidence of such a “biopolitical anxiety” (Marks 2006: 334) inherent in the Schiavo case is clear as both a cause and effect of the social and political landscape of the United States at the time.
The Christian Right did not only influence the mobilisation of interested spectators but also participated in a larger project of national symbolism being enacted through the political machinations of the United States legislature and government. President Bush made the following statement on 17 March, 2005:

The case of Schiavo raises complex issues. Yet in instances like this one, where there are serious questions and substantial doubts, our society, our laws, and our courts should have presumption in favour of life. Those who live at the mercy of others deserve our special care and concern. It should be our goal as a nation to build a culture of life, where all Americans are valued, welcomed, and protected – and that culture of life must extend to individuals with disabilities (2005).

The political pursuit of a “culture of life” reveals that this issue of biopower is a fundamental endeavour of the industrialized modern world. Bush reinforced the notion that all of levels of public life – “our society, our laws, and our courts” – must regulate, control and maintain populations. Not only does the statement reflect an allegiance with the pro-life campaign and the religious right, it also equates this stance with a disabilities rights advocacy. What for many was considered a ‘private’ case, or at least an issue solely for the State of Florida, was made a Federal issue when a cultural conservatism was endorsed directly by the Executive Office.35

The timing of the statement is crucial to understanding its significance. The day the statement was made, on 17 March 2005, the Supreme Court refused to review the case and the US Senate passed a private bill concerning the case. This was also the day before Schiavo’s feeding tube was ordered to be removed for the third and final time (Cerminara and Goodman 2006). The President’s statement not only cemented his personal views on the Schiavo case but also his views on the subjects of euthanasia and

35 These sentiments were not isolated to the Schiavo case. Early in 2001, President George W Bush issued a “gag-order” that served the interests of the far right conservatives and isolationists within the Republican Party when he withheld “US aid to any family planning service provider anywhere in the world if its staff (with separate, non-US funds) provided, lobbied for, or even mentioned abortion or abortion rights to its patients” (Bennis 2003: 3).
abortion. The statement operates as a channelling of support by signalling to his conservative and Christian right supporters that he shares a similar ideology and a course for future action. Further, he indicates to fellow Republicans that they should follow his lead. The statement ensures the continuation of the spectacle and anxiety surrounding Schiavo.

Four days after the statement on 21 March 2005, President Bush signed the Palm Sunday compromise. The Bush Administration had been re-elected four months earlier and the government intervention in the case was largely attributed to ‘paying back’ the conservative right factions for returning a Republican majority and President Bush to office (Stolberg 2005). Around the time of the congressional intervention, the CBS network found that 82 percent of Americans thought that Congress and President Bush should not have become involved in the case (Stolberg 2005). Speculation about the political appeal for such support was rife. The Palm Sunday Compromise Bill was passed in the Senate with only three senators present and passed in the House of Representatives on 21 March 2005 at 12.41 am. According to Sheryl Gay Stolberg, Republican Senator Susan Collins declared that it “went through like a tsunami” (2005). In all, 74 percent of people interviewed in the same CBS poll believed that the government intervention was enacted only for political mileage (Stolberg 2005). Stolberg suggests that, “when the case of Terri Schiavo came along – a brain-damaged woman, grieving parents, a husband painted as a villain and a Greek chorus of protestors – many in Congress leaped into the stage light” (2005). Furthermore, in 2005 it was revealed that an unsigned memo had been distributed to several Republican senators, revealing the potential political merits in supporting the Schindlers (Allen
2005). It seems that Schiavo case was a political opportunity the conservative Republican right could not pass up.

The domestic socio-political landscape was complicated further by global political machinations. Members of Coalition forces had been fighting, and dying, in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. Further, the American military was steeped in controversy over the Abu Ghraib prisoner-abuse scandal. In 2005, at the height of the Schiavo spectacle, the legitimacy of the incarceration of foreign prisoners at Guantánamo Bay was being challenged. Meanwhile, the Bush administration was questioned over US military involvement in Iraq after admitting a lack of evidence concerning supposed weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This time also saw the emergence of information regarding torture and clandestine CIA interrogation centres. The entire premise of the war on terror was being challenged. I argue that the political support for the Schindlers was not merely a crisis of conscience or an alliance between Governor Jeb Bush and his brother President George Bush. Rather, it was a timely intervention for distracting a dissenting public.

When war is conceptually based, the boundaries for such a battle become limitless and indefinable. Hardt and Negri write of the characteristics of past warfare as having definite spatial and temporal parameters: war was declared, it was fought, it moved countries and it ended (2004: 13). Contemporary warfare, however, is largely supported by concepts without spatial limitations or time frames. Hardt and Negri argue that war “has become a regime of biopower, that is, a form of rule aimed not only at controlling the population but producing and reproducing all aspects of social life” (2004: 13). Not only does the Schiavo case represent a conflict of ideological symbolism, but the case is
also set against the backdrop of contemporary warfare that both conceptually and literally has no end.

In an article published online the day after the 2004 US Presidential elections, Bill Bennett argues that the election was won with a return to a moral debate: “Ethics and moral values were ascendant last night – on voters’ minds, in American’s hearts” (2004). Bennett goes on to argue that the rejection of the proposed “redefinition of marriage” legislation concerning the civil rights of same sex unions as a vote for Bush. He even quotes the Los Angeles Times as saying that more than half of Bush’s voters cited “moral issues as a principal reason for their support – more than any other issue, including even terrorism” (Bennett 2004). Bennett concludes his short analysis with the statement that, having “restored decency to the White House, President Bush now has a mandate to affect policy that will promote a more decent society, through both politics and law” (2004). This statement suggests that the perceived threat to the moral boundaries of the nation was an ongoing concern for the contemporary American public. The homily of a “culture of life” functions as a regulative tool for the subject at home and at war, as well as a nostalgic reflection on a conservative morality.

Hardt and Negri point to further consequences of biopower amidst contemporary warfare. Where international and domestic politics merge, the definition of the ‘enemy’ becomes diluted and the notion of the ‘outside’ is brought to the forefront: “To the extent that the enemy is abstract and unlimited, the alliance of friends too is expansive and potentially universal. All of humanity can in principle be united against an abstract concept or practice such as terrorism” (2004: 15). One of the more explicit manifestations of this concept of the outside is the parallel between Schiavo and the
events at Abu Ghraib and the detainees in Guantánamo Bay. The ethics of these cases is concerned with the nature of punishment, torture and the corporeal embodiment of subjectivity. When is torture acceptable? Does the nature of contemporary warfare suspend previous notions of torture, death and the subject? Why is the prolonging of life, where there is no volition, not also considered a form of torture? Why is one subject’s life considered valuable and worthy of care and another obsolete and unnecessary, even invisible? These are biopolitical questions.

Foucault understood sovereign power as initially pertaining to the granting of life and the taking of life in a visible and definitive way that later developed into the institutionalised state-operated biopower of regulating populations and making death less visible. Elizabeth Dauphinee and Cristina Masters locate the transition to biopower as the “transformation of modern sovereign power from the right to ‘let live and make die’ to the right to make live and let die” (2007: xiii). Intrinsic to the “make live” is the invisibility of death, or what they refer to as the “desubjectification process” (Dauphinee and Masters 2007: xiii). Biopower in this context, means that in order to regulate populations of bodies, or as Agamben argues to: “transform the care of life and the biological as such into the concern of State power” (1999: 155), death and killing needed to be removed from the concept of liveliness itself. Thus, on the one hand, the killing of civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan is deemed a casualty of war (perhaps even a quasi-retribution for the killings of September 11), whilst, on the other hand, to “make live” (through the pursuit of liberty and democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan) was ultimately the argument for invasion. As Dauphinee and Masters suggest, biopower is a “set of regulatory practices that produce spaces of exception in which human beings are stripped of their political subjectivities such that any violence can be committed against
them with impunity” (2007: xii). This impunity is granted when the subject is considered unworthy of being a subject and thus subjectification and desubjectification processes continue. For Schiavo, on the one side, she became a symbol of a life that should be allowed to “let die”. However, on the other, she was representative of the life still living, the subject not quite desubjectified enough to warrant a visible killing. The notion of visibility is critical to how moral panic surrounding the case was created and sustained.

The philosopher and social commentator, Slavoj Žižek, draws a parallel between the prisoner abuse scandal of Abu Ghraib, the Guantánamo Bay detainees and the case of Schiavo by suggesting that each involve a rationalisation of torture. The torture of the Iraqi prisoner is legitimised – albeit the practice is kept largely invisible and the victims are considered ‘subject-less’ – because there is a perceived threat of the invisible force of terror. Similarly, the fight for Schiavo is representative of a desire for the preservation of the notion of liberty. Yet the continuation of her life at any cost is somehow not considered a form of institutional torture: “The legitimization of torture and the excessive care for a human life reduced to vegetative state are thus two manifestations of the same grotesque logic” (Žižek 2005: 3). Žižek describes the Guantánamo Bay detainees as persons who were “missed by the bombs”: a definition he suggests is a declaration of them as the “living dead” (2005: 2). This notion is linked to the invisibility of death in the regime of biopower that Dauphinee and Masters describe and the impunity of the State in allowing torture and killing because the victim’s subjectivity is reduced to the living dead. Žižek suggests that the attention focusing on the battle for Schiavo’s life resulted in an objectification of the subject to the point of absolute exclusion and absence from her own spectacle. Schiavo had no cognitive
perception of an enforced liberty whereas the ‘detainees’ have their status forcibly
removed:

What these two opposites share is a reduction to bare life … Terri Schiavo not
only deserved to enjoy every human right but must have them forced on her,
though she was unable in any event to make use of them as a person; the tortured
prisoners are able to use – and presumably desperate to be granted – any human
right but must be deprived of all (Žižek 2005: 5).

The notion of the “bare life” is undoubtedly a reference to Agamben’s suggestion that a
subject positioned outside of the political system is reduced to a bare life. The homo
sacer – the Roman understanding of a subject stripped of the rights of the citizen exists
neither inside nor outside the law – is reduced to bare life (Agamben 1998: 71). Because
of this dichotomy the bare life is rendered invisible: a subject stripped of political
subjectivity thus allowing the state to kill with impunity because the subject is no longer
considered worthy of the law. Thus, the bare life is a “state of exception” from the
workings of ‘citizens’ of power in the sovereign state (Agamben 1998: 159). Therefore
what is considered unlawful is now not even considered anything at all: action without
impunity. Jenny Edkins argues:

[The] life excluded from politics is a life in some senses unworthy of
consideration – a life that can be killed without that killing constituting murder –
though it was necessary for politics, in that something had to be excluded for the
political community to be constituted as bounded and sovereign (2007: 37).

Edkins applies the notion of bare life to the thousands of posters of missing persons
displayed in New York City in the aftermath of September 11 by arguing these posters
were emblematic of the depoliticisation of the bare life that paradoxically becomes
inherently valuable (and arguably political) to a grieving city. The posters were
reminders of the attacks on ordinary life everywhere. Agamben suggests that at one
stage, the bare life existed on the fringe of the political world, but in the modern
biopolitical sphere, the bare life is capable of being about anyone and living anywhere.
In this sense, as biopower increases in potency and legitimacy as a modernised tool for
the regulation of populations and life: any subject has the potential to be considered
unworthy of the normative discourses of law and basic human rights. This
desubjectification was most evident in the scientific experiments and mass
exterminations carried out by the National Socialist Party of the Third Reich in the
nineteen thirties and forties. Agamben argues:

Insofar as its inhabitants were stripped of every political status and wholly
reduced to bare life, the camp is also the most absolute biopolitical space ever to
have been realised, in which power confronts nothing but pure life, without
mediation. This is why the camp is the very paradigm of political space at the
point at which politics becomes biopolitics and homo sacer is virtually confused
with the citizen (1997: 110).

Most recently, the policies of rendition through covert CIA operations, unlimited
detention of terror suspects and legitimised torture techniques practiced in Guantánamo
Bay are examples of the impunity granted to the political state and the perceived
unworthy status of the bare life subject. According to Miguel de Larrinaga and Marc G.
Doucet, “Guantánamo Bay has become the prime example through which the question
of exceptionalism and its bounded relationship to sovereignty has come to the fore”
(2008: 530). The Schiavo case became a conflict over who was or was not granted the
rights of subjecthood. Aside from being played out at the same time, the invisibility
(and perceived illegitimacy) of the detainees of Guantánamo Bay is in direct contrast to
the visible spectacle of the Schiavo case. However, both situations are fraught with the
struggles associated with ideology, morality and human rights. As Kelly Oliver argues,
“It is easier to justify domination, oppression, and torture if one’s victims are imagined
as inferior, less human, or merely objects who exist to serve subjects” (2001: 3). In this
instance, torture and the granting of subject status are given equal footing by the
regulatory powers of biopower.
The manifestation of biopower is apparent throughout the Schiavo case. On one side is the traumatised family and the morally, ideologically and politically motivated factions that support the sustenance of life and the removal of judicial power in deciding such cases. On the other side, the decisions made by the courts were considered a victory for the pro-choice, pro-euthanasia cause. For the pro-choice (and liberal) movements, the case reflected a sense of gross intervention of political and governmental forces. I argue that underlying these arguments is a fundamental fear of death. George Felos, Michael Schiavo’s lawyer, speaks of this fear in an interview with Larry King: “This is a death adverse society. Death is one of the last taboo subjects. We don’t like to talk about it. We don’t like to contemplate our own death. And watching somebody else die, like Terri Schiavo, makes people very uncomfortable” (King 2003). In this sense, a spectacle that focuses on death is so taboo that it can operate only in terms that focus on the value of life. Bauman contends that: “Fighting death is meaningless. But fighting the causes of dying turns into the meaning of life” (2005: 317). As a spectacle of biopower, this taboo surrounding death is linked to the notion of “make life and let die” and that death is either rendered invisible or sanctioned through the killing of an already perceived invisible subject. Foucault argues that in the biopolitical regime the main concern is to ‘make live’; hence, death has no authorised or enunciated place: “Power no longer recognises death. Power literally ignores death” (2003: 248). Biopower (or biopolitics) finds ways to legitimise killing by arguing that it will support the more crucial agenda to ‘make live’: “Biopolitics hides its death-producing activities under the rhetoric of making live” (Dauphinee and Masters 2007: xiii).

The moral panic surrounding the Schiavo case was sustained because she was never entirely able to represent either side: she was neither the case to ‘make live’ nor the case
to ‘let die’. Her death was not or could not possibly be considered invisible and her subject status was not unworthy enough to be considered ‘bare life’. Thus, allowing her to die could not be justified by the right-to-life movement. The religious right and the conservative political landscape of the time determined her life to be worth living and thus the discursive practices of biopower – the ultimate institutionalised regulation of living bodies – were reinforced.

At the beginning of this chapter, I wrote about how spectatorial hearsay was embraced as testimonial and evidence of certain aspects of the case. I also wrote of the two rival parties – the Schindler family and Michael Schiavo – as engendering a kind of ‘survivor testimony’. Agamben discusses the Latin definition of the witness as being either of the ‘testis’ – the person who stands as the independent third party reporting on a situation regarding two rival groups – and the ‘superstite’ – the person who bears witness to a situation from beginning to end (1999: 17). In this context, Schiavo existed in an ambiguous terrain. She was never able to be the testis, as she was incapable of reporting on two rival parties. However, the recordings of her spasmodic movement were used by both parties as a form of testimonial to pursue their individual arguments. In a similar sense, she was also unable to bear witness to the spectacle that centred on her. Again, the rival parties had to bear witness for her, as well as for themselves. This ambiguous landscape – a witnessing without a witness – most definitely contributed to the intensity of the spectacle and the moral absolutism portrayed by both sides of the argument.

Contributing to sustaining the spectacle and prolonging the moral panic was the personal and emotional involvement of particular spectators. This intervention ultimately led to the objectification of Schiavo. She was essentially an object via her
incapacitation. However, she was also objectified symbolically via the spectacle: she was exhibited to further the ideological and discursive interplay deemed necessary at the time. Because of the fraught ‘social anxiety’ and the extraordinary role of the intervening spectatorship surrounding this spectacle, the nature of the subject as a concept must be unpacked. It is the notion of the construction and condition of the subject which is the focus of the final section of this chapter.

**Re-imagining the subject-object divide**

This section is concerned with whether there would have been such a fierce moral panic, or such a notorious spectacle, if Schiavo were not ‘seen’ to be alive. Did the fact that her audience observed a person who appeared to be active contribute to the intensity of the debate? Even though a diagnosis of PVS is a declaration of severely limited brain activity, would there have been such intervention by spectators if Schiavo were in a coma? To examine these questions, I explore the performance surrounding Schiavo in comparison to the case of American woman Susan Torres.

Susan Torres, from Arlington, Virginia, was declared brain dead on 7 May 2005 after collapsing from secondary cancer in the brain, at the age of twenty-six. She was fifteen weeks pregnant and her husband Jason made the decision to keep his wife attached to life support until the baby had developed enough to be born. Apart from the bioethical questions and the fascinating metaphors that this spectacle conjures, what is interesting about this case is what it suggests about what might be perceived as the constitution of the subject. Schiavo and Torres both occupy the space of the observed object, yet the
socio-historical context of each case grants each woman subject status, depending on what they came to symbolise.

Schiavo and Torres existed in a temporal power play: bodies in disenfranchised space and disorganised time. As Elisabeth Grosz would have it: “Bodies, living and nonliving, are spatial and temporal bodies” (2004: 4). Schiavo’s ‘live-ness’ was contingent on a temporal suspension imposed by years of legal battles. Torres’ body was contained within a temporal acceleration: a battle between the propellant forces of cancer and the slower development of her child. However, the role of visuality was the most significant factor in how these women were perceived and their subsequent subject/object status.

In the edited footage, Schiavo appeared to have not only sight but also the capacity to interpret what she saw. For some, the edited footage of her eyes apparently responding to movement came to represent volition, agency and thus, subjectivity. Because her eyes were open, those who viewed her could not perceive her as an incapacitated, unthinking object. In this sense, the spectacle surrounding Schiavo was not only characterised by a popular and mediatised visibility but also by the embodiment of visuality. It became the truth that this particular audience needed to be given: her open eyes were a sign of life. Thus, it could be argued that the eyes were instrumental in the perception of Schiavo as an embodied, lived subject.36 In this sense, the entire Schiavo spectacle complicates the distinction between the subject and object.

36See the following for in depth analysis of the historical, philosophical and linguistic significance of visuality (Houlgate 1993). and, (Jay 1993) and (Jay 1993)
Susan Torres was kept alive entirely by a respirator and never awoke from her original collapse. Thus, the issue of visuality – she no longer looked alive but one could see the ultrasound imagery of the growing baby – played a major role in the decision to continue her life support. The family and medical team were able directly to observe the baby’s development, which arguably influenced their decision to continue the pregnancy. Justin Torres, Susan’s brother-in-law and the family spokesperson, was quoted as saying that the whole family was encouraged when his brother Jason felt his unborn daughter kick: “It was a very, very nice reminder of what this is all about” (Daily News Central 2005). Therefore, the debate lies in the preservation of the sense (particularly the sense of sight) as Vangie Bergum and Mary Ann Bendfeld argue: “visual perception is symbolic rather than immediate” (2002: 76). I would argue that if the ultrasound had not been available, the continuation of Torres’ life for the incubation of the baby would not have been considered a ‘moral’ obligation.

Torres’s family unanimity in its decision to extend her life for the development of the baby undoubtedly influenced public support. The inevitability of Torres’ death determined whom she came to symbolise as a woman and mother. Although Susan Torres did not receive as much media attention or public outcry, she became a symbol of success for the pro-life movement. Torres herself was considered beyond hope of recovery and therefore it was acceptable to ‘let die’. However, there was still hope for the child. The pro-life movement claimed this outcome as a celebration of life. According to Martha Brant of Newsweek: “Torres’s plight has garnered worldwide attention, but mercifully it is not a replay of the Terry Schiavo case. Instead, it may be a quiet antidote. ... For some prominent members of the pro-life movement, bruised by the Schiavo battle, Torres presents a simpler case” (2005: 34).
Torres’ was a “simpler case” because she was, and could only ever be, an object. Once the baby had developed to an acceptable weight and the advancing cancer was considered too grave a danger to continue with the pregnancy, the baby, Susan Anne Catherine Torres, was born via caesarean section. Her birth was twelve weeks after her mother was declared brain dead. The following day, the respirator keeping Susan Torres alive was removed and she died soon after. Sadly the baby also died five weeks later, on 11 September, from complications experienced during surgery for a perforated intestine.

The photographs of Torres circulated in the media were of her before her illness: images of a healthy and happy young woman. I suggest that these images assisted in curbing criticism surrounding the extension of her life for the sole purpose of gestation. It is interesting to note that while the images of Schiavo released to the public tended to be of her in PVS, Torres was portrayed mainly as a young healthy woman before her medicalisation. These images memorialise her as perpetually healthy and young, while in reality her comatose body was ravaged by cancer. I would argue the representation of Torres pre-medicalisation captured her ‘liveliness’. That representation assisted in limiting the ethical ambiguities of her situation. It was understood that the woman depicted would never be the same again. However, her unborn child might live and hence the discursive function of biopower was seemingly clear and without issue: Torres was the case to “make life and let die” (Dauphinee and Masters 2007: xiii). In comparison, the mediatised representation of Schiavo situated her as divisive. The pro-life movement was convinced that her bodily movement, along with her open eyes, equated to a moral right to life. The court ruled that these moments were involuntary, evidence of the extent of her PVS, and that she would not have wanted to continue living in such a state. The pro-choice factions took this as evidence of the impartial and
secular role of the judicial, government and executive functions. While both cases were significant representations of biopower as a discursive function, Torres became an example of a quiet “letting die”, while the Schiavo case was a furious battle for moral absolutism in the fight to “make live” (Dauphinee and Masters 2007: xiii).

So why is it considered morally reprehensible to remove Schiavo’s feeding tube and yet not so in terms of the removal of Susan Torres’ respirator? On one level, it may be because death via starvation takes longer and is therefore perceived as a form of torture. Perhaps a different view is that Schiavo was represented with her eyes open, while Torres was only ever seen frozen in her pre-medicalised youthful state. In another respect, keeping Torres alive as an incubator for the development of her unborn child influences the opinion that her assisted death was more morally ‘correct’ than that of Schiavo. She helped life continue, and once this was achieved, was allowed to die. Therefore, the constitution of the subject relies upon his/her capacity to contribute to society. Schiavo became a subject because she was a useful symbol for the ideologically conservative factions of religious and political life in America. In comparison, Torres symbolised the inevitability of death and the forces of nature and, as a woman, was seen to have supported the sanctity of life by fulfilling her role as a mother. In both instances, the women were objectified by society’s gaze, yet were gifted a subject status by what they came to represent. However, this subjectivity was indivisible from their partially functioning bodies. In this context, the subject does not exist outside of an objectification by the media and public.
Conclusions

Terri Schiavo became an object of intense public scrutiny invoked by an ideological, political and religious conservatism, the regulative forces of biopower, intermingled with a new world order of conceptually elusive boundaries. The spectacle surrounding her, where her open eyes came to symbolise subjectivity, inspired a conflict that spanned fifteen years, numerous government interventions, and the breakdown of a family. The video footage and courtroom testimony became synonymous with gossip and speculation, ultimately leading to the symbolic trial of all parties, including Michael Schiavo, the Schindlers, the government, and the United States judiciary system. The significance of the case was not so much about the debate surrounding the removal of a feeding tube, as it was about the questioning of the rights and responsibilities of who participated in the spectacle. In this sense, the fight for life at any cost becomes greater than the object or the subject. The battle for life is ultimately the struggle for power: “it was the taking charge of life, more than the threat of death, that gave power its access even to the body” (Foucault 1980: 143). To examine this struggle is to understand how modern power operates. The Schiavo case, like all three social events discussed in this dissertation, is an opportunity to tease out the ambiguities inherent in understanding the nature of the subject, spectatorship, mediatised spectacle and moral panic.
Graffiti. Tags, throw-ups and pieces. Names, statements, logos. Written illegally or sprayed to order. Messages in the city and to the city. Omnipresent

(Mai 2005: 15).
Chapter four: Resistance and transgression in the Redfern riots

In the late hours of 15 February 2004, some residents of Redfern, an inner city suburb of Sydney, took to the streets to stage an act of resistance against a “thin blue line” – the New South Wales (NSW) Police force – that lasted approximately nine hours (Gargett 2005: 10). By the early hours of the following morning, some forty police were injured, many ‘insurgents’ arrested, but the streets of ‘The Block’ were once again silent. The unrest was subsequently referred to by some as “the Redfern riots” and led to three independent inquiries: the internal NSW police inquiry, the NSW parliamentary inquiry and the coronial inquest into the death of Thomas ‘TJ’ Hickey, which was the initial catalyst for the protests. Hickey, a seventeen year old Aboriginal boy, lived with his family in both Redfern and country New South Wales. He was riding home on the night of 14 February 2004 and after a short police pursuit, he was propelled from his bicycle and impaled on a fence near Phillip Street and Waterloo Green. Hickey died in hospital from extensive injuries to his neck in the early hours of Sunday, 15 February. Later that day, the so-called ‘riots’ erupted. This chapter examines the representations of the Redfern ‘riots’ as a performance of a moral panic by exploring notions of agency, representation and space.

First, I outline the history of the suburb of Redfern, provide some background to the riots and briefly explore the concept of space in relation to urban resistance as a way in which to try an understand why the riots occurred. I examine the ways in which the riots were portrayed in the media and the public and the socio-historical conditions of the short but fierce ‘social anxiety’ that resulted from the riots. I reviewed copies of front-

37 Senior Constable Michael Hollingsworth and his partner, Constable Maree Reynolds, denied pursuing Hickey, yet at different times held contradictory evidence as to what happened that night. Initial statements were made by the officers (they shared notes) in the hours after his death. Yet, after it was revealed that there were several witnesses, a week later these statements were amended with the admission that they had, in fact, mounted the curb to follow Hickey. Ultimately, Abernathy found that the police were not responsible for his death (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2004).
page newspaper stories, as well as online reports. During an Internet (Google) search for images of the riots, I discovered a photograph. I argue that this image, and the ease with which I located it, is representative of how the riots were generally portrayed pictorially in both old and new media. While it could be argued that this was an impressionistic approach, rather than a methodical analysis of the media coverage, it is precisely the pictorial impression of the ‘riots’ that I am interested in examining. I choose to analyse this image, not in relation to how often it was used or how it was reproduced, but rather by exploring how, as products of the media, an image of the riots can frame a particular take (or perspective) on the riots and thus, reflect underlying discourses of race and criminality. It is imperative to define the parameters of this research. My interest in this case study is the mediatised representation of the riots, and the rioters, and not in the different stories relating to the police, parliamentary or coronial enquiries or the tragic details of T.J. Hickey’s death. I argue that to investigate in detail every incident, story and detail of the riots, Hickey’s life and the issues associated with Redfern and the Block is well beyond the scope of this case study. Instead, this chapter is principally concerned with how the riots were represented in the media in the first few days after the riots and how some members of the public responded to this initial representation. I suggest that the images and statements made by the media and the public did not lead directly to a moral panic. However, the socio-historical context of the riots and the ways in which they were framed in the media, in the days immediately after the riots, meant that an anxiety was inevitable. I contend that in some of the responses to the riots, a discourse of colonialism influences a confluence of representations of race, identity and criminality. Thus, the popular representation of the protestors, particularly in the riots’ immediate aftermath, reflected deeper issues about race relations in Australia.
The chapter moves on to an investigation of another important text in this story: an urban graffiti response to the riots. I explore the politics of space in the memorialisation of the site of Hickey’s death with graffiti. The case studies presented in chapters two and three employed the concepts of the panopticon and biopower to examine the moral panic in each instance. This chapter examines the space of transgression to both such forces. I propose that a reading of the riots and the memorial is heterotopic because they mark an ambivalent space between subjugation and empowerment for those involved.

The history of Redfern and the riots

‘The Block’ consists of a block of land that lies at the intersection of Louis, Vine, Eveleigh and Caroline Streets in the inner Sydney suburb of Redfern, across the street from a busy train station and adjacent to Sydney University. The Gadigal people are the traditional owners of the land, and according to Elizabeth Rice in the *Indigenous Law Bulletin*, throughout the twentieth century, Redfern and ‘the Block’ were a meeting point for Aboriginal people as well as a place for employment opportunities (Rice 2005: 19). At the time of Federation in 1901, the six states were bound by a constitution that made two references to Aboriginal persons. Firstly, Section 127 stated that all Aboriginal persons were excluded from the census and, secondly, part 26 of Section 51 gave the power of ‘protection’ of Aboriginal persons to each state. As a result, Aboriginal people were disallowed the rights of citizenship until the legislated policies were amended in the 1967 referendum. The policy of assimilation, principally orchestrated by the state and federal governments from the 1930s, directly led to the forcible removal of Aboriginal children of mixed descent from their families, and
people affected by these policies are now known as ‘the stolen generation’ (NISATSICF 1997).38

Throughout these oppressive periods of Australian history, Redfern has emerged as a suburb with intense symbolic and literal meaning for Aboriginal people. There is a long history of Aboriginal activism throughout Australia, predominantly in the twentieth century, including the establishment of the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association (AAPA) in 1924, the Australian Aborigines League in 1936 and the Aborigines Progressive Association (APA) founded in 1937 (Foley 2009: 13). During the turbulent times of the nineteen sixties and seventies, the ‘Black Power Movement’ gained momentum, influenced by the civil rights movement in the USA, while in 1965, Charles Perkins conducted his famous ‘Freedom Ride’ (Foley 2009: 14).39

One of the most profound and sustained activist projects is the Aboriginal Embassy, erected on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra in 1972 as a permanent site of protest (Foley 2009: 18). The embassy continues to be both politically and visually symbolic: an unequivocal demand for recognition and sovereignty. Partly in response to this wave of activism, the Labor Government of Gough Whitlam (1972-1975) was committed to a policy of ‘self determination’ for Indigenous Australians, and thus, in 1973 gave the land titles of the area now known as ‘the Block’ to the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC). The transfer of land ownership represented a distinct policy

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38 This term was coined as a result of the 1997 Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission report, Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. This report explores the impact of the Australian Federal, State and Territory Governments policies of assimilation, which saw the removal of thousands of Aboriginal children from their biological families. The report found that: “The Australian practice of Indigenous child removal involved both systematic racial discrimination and genocide as defined by international law. Yet it continued to be practised as official policy long after being clearly prohibited by treaties to which Australia had voluntarily subscribed” (NISATSICF 1997: 266).

39 Charles Perkins conducted a tour of regional New South Wales, with thirty white students from Sydney University, exposing segregation and other instances of racial discrimination in Australian communities (Foley 2009: 14).
shift for the Australian government away from the colonial operations of protection and assimilation towards self-governance. According to Angela Pitts this “secured the first Aboriginal urban land rights in Australia and marked a period of genuine support and self-determination” (2009: 117). The Block had become a literal reflection, and a spatial metaphor, for the struggle towards sovereignty and agency for Aboriginal people.

By the late twentieth century, the Block, and Redfern, had become key sites for the social movement toward reconciliation. Andy Gargett in the *Indigenous Law Bulletin* writes: “Redfern is arguably the ‘black heart’ of Australia with a strong political, spiritual and cultural significance to Indigenous peoples from all over NSW and across Australia” (2005: 8). On 10 December 1992, Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating, marking International Human Rights Day as the official launch of the United Nations International Year of Indigenous People, gave an historic speech in the Block on the nature of reconciliation:

> It is a test of our self-knowledge. Of how well we know the land we live in. How well we know our history. How well we recognise the fact that, complex as our contemporary identity is, it cannot be separated from Aboriginal Australia. How well we know what Aboriginal Australians know about Australia. Redfern is a good place to contemplate these things (2001: 9).

Keating’s statement was a conscious acknowledgement of both the endurance of Aboriginal culture and the significance of Redfern to Aboriginal activism and empowerment. Over last three decades, however, the Block has deteriorated into an area with a reputation for poverty, crime, social dysfunction and drug abuse. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, an era of political conservatism and heightened private and public interest in real estate in the inner city has led to repeated calls for the

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40 By no means am I suggesting that ‘Aboriginal culture’ as a unified or homogeneous entity but rather that Keating’s statement alludes to the need to acknowledge the significance of Aboriginal ‘culture’ for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.
demolition of the derelict housing on the Block. Because of its location close to public transport and the CBD, Redfern is a prized residential and commercial property area in the inner city. The Redfern Waterloo Partnership Program, established in 2002 and the Redfern Waterloo Authority 2004 were government programs established to confront issues to do with Redfern and the Block, although with varied success and some controversy (Aboriginal Housing Company 2007). According to the AHC, recent initiatives to develop their own plans for the site (beginning in 2004) have met with strong resistance from the NSW State Government (Aboriginal Housing Company 2007). It should be noted that in September 2010, demolition of the Block began and the AHC’s Pemulwuy Project (named after Pemulwuy the Gadigal warrior) plans to construct over sixty houses to be managed by the AHC. According to Angela Pitts and Peter Valilis of the AHC, the Pemulwuy Project “represents the most significant urban renewal opportunities on Aboriginal land in Australia and the Social Plan is now recognised as one of the most important social planning strategies in Aboriginal community urban renewal projects” (2007: 8). What remains to be seen is what happens to an Aboriginal presence in Redfern after these processes have been completed.

In discussing the socio-historical origins of disenfranchisement for Aboriginal people, it is both useful, and necessary, to raise the influence of colonial (and postcolonial) discourses. Both the symbolism and practical reality of Redfern for Aboriginal people are intertwined within complex socio-historical forces stemming from a colonial history. The widely disparate experiences of postcolonial contexts throughout the world mean that there can never be a unified or homogeneous postcolonial context. The theory

41 The social conservatism was largely supported by the Howard Liberal Government and in particular, their refusal to ‘apologise’ for the crimes committed against Aboriginal Australia and the stringent and complex machinations of claims for Native Title. In 2008, the Labor Government led by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued an apology, as the first act of the new parliament, on behalf of the government, which the opposition party ratified. This apology was not only an election promise but also an enormously significant moment for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia because it was a legal and symbolic acknowledgement that the policies of past governments had, and continue to have, horrific impacts on the lives of Aboriginal Australians.
and study of postcolonialism can afford neither to be prescriptive nor reductive in its
delineation of what is (or is not) or who is (or is not) postcolonial. Instead, it must relate
to the specific socio-historical and political context of the nation.\textsuperscript{42} Ania Loomba
suggests that postcolonialism, “far from being a term that can be indiscriminately
applied, appears to be riddled with contradiction and qualifications” (1998: 12).
Loomba goes on to argue that what might be more useful is to think of the “contestation
of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism” (1998: 12). I find this comment
helpful when engaging with the representation of, and the varied responses to, the riots.
I argue that Australian race relations are influenced by oppression and dispossession
brought on through colonialism. Albert Memmi declared: “Who can completely rid
himself of bigotry in a country where everyone is tainted by it, including its victims?”
(2003: 67). In this sense, who is capable of being entirely free from this colonial legacy?
Australia is both the colonised (in relation to its Indigenous citizens) and the coloniser
(in relation to its settler history). More recently, Australia has become a multicultural
nation participating in shifting partnerships with many countries, whilst retaining strong
ties with Britain. Stephen Muecke notes that Australia exists in a “complex process of
self-definition” but that “postcolonialism is something that can only be properly
achieved in relation to the original inhabitant” (1992: 10-11). He also argues that the
non-Aboriginal population are to “be held responsible to assist in the decolonisation of
the Aborigines” and yet are themselves “scarcely emerging from their own colonial
status” (1992: 11). Perhaps the Australian context can be best described as having a
multicultural make-up within the dominant white paradigm of a former colonial
stronghold. The legacy of such racialised (and class-based) dominance cannot be

\textsuperscript{42} Postcolonialism is as wide and varied a discipline as it is contested and messy in its definition. A wide spectrum of theorists
contribute to the field: Homi Bhaba, Terry Eagleton, James Clifford, Stuart Hall, Albert Memmi, Edward Said, Frantz Fanon,
Guyatri Chakravorty Spivak, Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra
How criminality is produced and represented in the media is determined by the media organisations and their readership. The ‘news’ – and what is considered ‘newsworthy’ – are an interplay between discourse and discursive institutions. As discussed in chapter one, the notion of a mediatised truth is both contentious and dependent on a range of factors including marketability, profitability, sensationalism, and audience demographic. The mainstream representations of Aboriginal people often play against sovereignty through an episteme of disruption and non-conformity and this perception directly influences what is considered newsworthy. Stephen Mickler argues that: “Deviance, its control and its opposite, normality, are in fact the primary discursive objects of news making” (1998: 27). Moral panic is constituted through this discursive interplay of normativity and non-conformity. Mickler suggests:

[The] institutional spheres of police and news media intersect in the shared purpose of visualising and controlling deviance. The news media and police have an institutional affinity in reproducing order and an ideological affinity in acknowledging order (1998: 29-30).

In this sense, the Block may have degenerated through abject poverty, poor management and criminal activities. However, the symbolic spatial status of the Block also means that any disruption to normative order within the larger non-Aboriginal community raises significant issues. What the riots exposed was a history of tension between the discourses of the media, governance, individual sovereignty and the representation of Aboriginality. Hickey’s family and community commonly believed that the police were implicated in his death because of a history of hostility between the

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43 It is important to note that I do not suggest that the selling or using of drugs is exclusive to the Aboriginal population of Redfern. There have also been countless community development projects in that community and neighbouring communities helping to combat drug addiction and supporting other community health initiatives.
residents and the police. “Mr Lawrence”, a community outreach worker associated with the Catholic Church, made the following statement reflecting this conflict: “People are suspicious about what happened. The police want it to blow over, but everyone is suspicious. Because we are black, we are guilty” (Penberthy and Kamper 2004: 4). The circumstances from which the Redfern riots emerged cannot be removed from this sense of injustice and the inequitable hierarchy dividing race relations in Australia at the time.

The notion of space continually emerges as a fundamental concept in examining the riots. Space is not only of concern because the performance occurred on the urban streetscape but also because the riots were themselves a struggle for empowerment. Geographically, the riots were contained within the demarcated location of the Block, particularly through the presence of the riot squad, who represented governmental and policing institutions of social control. The weapons used by the rioters were drawn from the immediate area and included bricks from the footpath and shopping trolleys used to house Molotov cocktails. However, the riots also represented a space of political resistance and the pursuit of cultural citizenship. Michel Keith and Stephen Pile write that: “Distinct, irreconcilable understandings of space underscore the cultural mappings of the contemporary” (1993: 5). Other politically motivated riots include Paris (1968, 2005), Tiananmen Square (1989), Los Angeles (1992), Palm Island (2004), Macquarie Fields (Sydney) (2005) and Cronulla (Sydney) (2005), and with the exception of the 1968 riots in Paris and the Tiananmen Square uprising, these riots involved a racial conflict. In addition, the riots in Los Angeles, Paris (2005) and Macquarie Fields (outer suburban Sydney) were initiated by a tragic death interpreted as some form of gross injustice and oppression by those involved. I would argue that on each occasion

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44 Cronulla and Macquarie Fields are low-income outer suburbs of Sydney with a long history of ethnic and racial tension. Although the Tiananmen Square riots (and subsequent massacre) and the riots in Paris in 1968 were not racially motivated, they nevertheless remain useful examples of political resistance in public space.
these riots were a symbolic and literal attempt at reclaiming space involving a kind of ascension of agency and a radical transformation of normativity.

These insurgencies, regardless of the duration of the violence, are a deliberate shock to the status quo. They initiate transgression where the dispossessed temporarily gain power. Stuart Hall argues that: “The use of violence marks the distinction between those who are fundamentally of society and those who are outside it. It is coterminous with the boundary of ‘society’ itself” (1978: 68 original emphasis). The Redfern riots featured similar dynamics. An initial tragedy reinforced a deeply entrenched sense of injustice and the response to Hickey’s death was a determined attempt at utilising symbolic space. In this sense, Redfern comes to represent more than just a suburb. Under these socio-historical circumstances, some residents and supporters of the Redfern community in and around the Block seemed motivated to take up arms in order to seek retribution for what was perceived as an example of the discrimination experienced by Aboriginal people. In this way, Hickey’s death represented far more than the loss of one boy’s life. In many ways the mediatised response to the riots took on the form of a visual and linguistic expression which in turn helped to constitute and maintain the moral panic surrounding the situation.

Visual and linguistic representations of the Other in old and new media

In various ways (partly determined by the medium and its audience), the riots were represented, judged and enacted into a performative constitution. Butler argues: “The power attributed to hate speech is a power of absolute and efficacious agency, performativity and transitivity at once (it does what it says and it does what it says it
will do to the one addressed by the speech)” (1997:77). In Redfern in 2004, hate speech, issued by some mainstream media and members of the public, helped to produce and sustain a notion of criminality. I argue that both visual and linguistic representations can be read as revealing and extending certain ideological positions and racialist discourses. As Goode and Ben-Yehuda argue: “We must never lose sight of the fact that fear and concern are expressed in specific actions taken, beliefs held, or sentiments felt by specific individuals in a society or community” (1994: 41 original emphasis). In this context, both visual and linguistic statements by the some members of the media and the public concerning the riots helped sustain an ‘anxiety’ regarding Aboriginal people in general.

The media influence public perceptions of criminality and help to disperse ‘truth’ formations that are produced through discourse. The truth, according to Foucault: “is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A ‘régime’ of truth” (1980: 133). I argue that the following photographic and linguistic texts, the first appearing the day of the riots and the rest circulated in the days after, enact this manifestation of problematic truths influenced by the media, interest groups and the public.

Early on 15 February, Police Inspector Robert Emery held a press conference and stated that while the police were near Hickey at the time of his accident, they were not responsible for his death. He contended that: “Police were in the vicinity but they certainly weren’t chasing him” (Australian Associated Press 2004). The police denial was issued before an official investigation of the case could occur, even though the actions of police that night, police procedure and several eyewitness accounts were yet
to be properly examined. It is possible that the statement was made because of the acrimonious relationship between the police and some of the Aboriginal residents of Redfern and their supporters and neighbours. However this provocative and speedy denial appeared only to increase a sense of injustice for Hickey’s community. A street poster accusing the NSW Police Commissioner and other police officers of being “child murderers” and implicating them in Hickey’s death, surfaced in Redfern on 15 February, several hours after his death. This poster/flyer contributed to the mobilisation of community members angered by alleged police involvement.45

Charles Miranda of The Daily Telegraph wrote: “The flyers – which proclaim police were chasing the youth when he crashed his bicycle – were distributed widely, raising tensions” (2004: 2). The poster/flyer is a key example of Foucault’s explanation of how knowledge is discursive (1980: 69). In this instance, the discourses constituting the poster/flyer – race, policing and criminality – helped to activate the community already exposed to a much larger matrix of discourses: race, the media, poverty, dispossession, homelessness, governance, gentrification, the police, criminality, and individual sovereignty in a mutually reinforcing cycle. The poster/flyer can be read as a symbolic battle cry drawing upon a long and fraught history of race relations in Redfern; the poster not only triggered tension but also reflected a community already in crisis.

In reference to the video footage of the horrific beating in 1991 of American Rodney King, Butler argues that ‘visuality’ is an issue within any racial struggle. She contends that the legal team defending the police were able to distort the video in such a way as to appeal to a racist perception that the black male body is a continual threat to white male hegemony. By slowing down the video images, the jury witnessed what looked

45 See the following Internet address for the image of the poster/flyer: http://www.australian-news.com.au/Redfern_riots.htm
like a menacing animalistic black male readying for attack. Butler argues: “According to this racist episteme, he is hit in exchange for the blows he never delivered, but which he is, by virtue of this blackness, always about to deliver” (1993: 19). Butler suggests that (the victim) King is ultimately perceived by the jury as the aggressor. The defence team relied on a perception of an inherent racial hierarchy within the white hegemonic subconscious. Butler concludes that: “The visual field is not neutral to the question of race; it is itself a racial formation, an episteme, hegemonic and forceful” (1993: 17). I suggest that images of the riots distributed in the mainstream media in the days immediately after the Redfern riots were produced through a similar racial episteme.

![The riots were sparked by the death of a local teenager](Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2004)

Figure 3: The riots were sparked by the death of a local teenager

(Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2004)

The pictorial example above is, in fact, only one of many that I found in an Internet search for images of the riots. This image, plus others, was found through Google Image and although not necessarily belonging to any particular print newspaper, typify the
kinds of images used in the mainstream media to depict the riots generating the pictorial symbolism that potentially influenced audience judgement.46

Figure 3 depicts a band of police with a burning car providing a prototypical ‘riot’ reference in the background. The police are configured as the central subjects in the image. They are, in fact, the only subjects clearly represented within the frame. Whilst the nature of the portrayal would be dependent on the characteristics of the newspaper’s readership to some extent, I suggest that the authoritative readiness assumed by the police is supported by their relatively relaxed stance. The rioters are almost completely absent from this image; the rioters are so far in the distance that the image of the fire is more prominent. This spatial negotiation implies that the people the reader can see clearly are both literally and symbolically associated with authority. This image reflects a hierarchy of power relations within the representation of the riots. The band of police is the focus of the image which, I argue, positions the reader on the “same side” as the police, whilst the rioters in their blurry absence become ‘deficient’ or ‘shady’ characters representative of chaos and the unknown.

I choose to read this image as contributing to an overall representation of the Aboriginal rioter as inherently Other: unknowable and abstracted from the audiences’ field of view. Gargett argues in reference to the Redfern riots that: “The media produce the Indigenous body as criminal. Indigeneity itself becomes crime” (2005: 9). With these easily accessible images, the mainstream media position the rioters and the police in an

46 Similar images were printed in: The Australian on February 17, pages 1 and 6; The Daily Telegraph on February 16, page 1; Sydney Morning Herald 16 February, page 1 and 17 February, page 1; The Courier-Mail 17 February, pages 1 and 4. The following Internet address depicts an image of an injured policeman and can be read in a similar way to the image depicted here: http://www.australian-news.com.au/Redfern_riots.htm
immovable dichotomy. Certain racial stereotypes are reinforced in response to the riots in a way that position Aboriginality as synonymous with criminal behaviour. I argue that these images contribute to the overall sense of the Aboriginal rioters as unknowably Other. Simone Drichel argues:

If colonialism’s way of dealing with cultural otherness was to contain it within the boundaries of preconceived stereotypes, what strategies can postcolonialism offer for dealing with an otherness it is so loath to relinquish? How can postcolonialism continue to embrace ‘the other’ without simultaneously recycling stereotypes? (2008: 588)

What is equally important to recognise is that the Self is created through a similar process. Understanding this dual constitutive and reiterative process of the Self and Other helps to avoid the dilemma referred to by Drichel. Just as images and perceptions of Aboriginal people can be constructed through varying degrees of colonial and racist discourses, so, too, are the perceptions of non-Aboriginal people constructed. This complex interplay of discourse and power produces truth formations. The objectification/subjectification processes lay the foundations for particular responses from the media and the public in the aftermath of the riots, thus further compounding the simmering moral panic.

Several responses from the public contextualised the origins of the riots and attempted to counter the surrounding moral panic. Jane Flynnes-Clinton wrote in *The Courier Mail*: “This racism and our seeming inability to admit it or deal with it drills a hole in the soul of Australia” (2004: 15). In response to the riots, prominent Aboriginal leader and former politician, Aden Ridgeway argued that:

I do not excuse the events of that night but they comes as no surprise to me or any person who is familiar with the volatile dynamics of Redfern, and the wider issues in Indigenous politics in this country. …What happened on Sunday night in Lawson Street was an extreme expression of the mistrust between aboriginal
youth and the police service set against a backdrop of poverty, a lack of jobs and limited education (2004).

Lee Rhiannon MLC went so far as to declare in reference to the death of Hickey that: “The handling of this incident by the NSW govt authorities is another shameful act in a shared history that continues to be dominated by harassment and exploitation of the indigenous people of this country” (2004). However important these voices were to the ensuing debate, I am interested here in how the media are able to facilitate a particular tension regarding Aboriginality and criminality. In the days immediately after the riots, there were some extreme responses from some members of the public that further objectified the rioters within a racialist discourse, producing what could be called a ‘naturalisation’ of racial difference. I suggest that these responses were directly influenced by the portrayal of the riots in the mainstream media. Joanna Atherfold argues that: “Rather than foster understanding or concern for Redfern’s Indigenous community and its complex history, images may simply reiterate the view that Indigenous people deserve their plight” (2006: 46). Although Atherfold is specifically referring to the negative depiction of the Aboriginal rioters in the linguistic ‘imagery’ used in the media, this quotation is also applicable to the meanings associated with a visual representation of the riots. Whether in a visual or linguistic form media articles in the immediate aftermath of the riots “were framed largely in terms of chaos and the re-establishment of order” (Atherfold 2006: 43). I argue it is critical that this representation is explored in reference to how the riots may have come to be understood in relation to larger issues concerning perceptions of Aboriginality.

47 Although the notion of linguistic form is in reference to print and cyber media there is another kind of linguistic representation that should be noted. In terms of the language employed in the representations of the riots the automatic labelling of the unrest as a riot suggests an underlying discursive imperative situated within the linguistic choice. In the construction of this binary distinction, the many reasons for Aboriginal discontent are not acknowledged and instead replaced with a simplistic summation that renders the unrest as illegitimate and irrational. Thus, even in the choice of the word riot a performative statement demarcates a space in which a discourse of criminality is performed.
In their media analysis of the Redfern riots, John Budarick and Debra King argue that the riots were represented very differently across media outlets. In relation to the Indigenous newspaper, the *Koori Mail*, they argue that it:

Framed powerful ideological positions regarding racial identity and imagined racial communities in order to construct a different, more problematic version of the riots. In so doing, they discursively challenged mainstream constructions of the riots by providing alternative symbolic resources with which readers could understand the riots (Budarick and King 2008: 356).

The *Koori Mail* included a “greater number of Indigenous voices” than other mainstream newspapers and their language was less emotive or harsh in relation to the violence than that of the *Sydney Morning Herald* or the *Daily Telegraph*. As Budarick and King explain, “more neutral language was used in which less emphasis was placed on individual actors” (2008: 362). Budarick and King argue further that, overall, the *Koori Mail* (as opposed to the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph*) represented the socio-political and historical origins of the riots: “The riots were situated within a context of social injustice and poor policy. … This was followed by a prognosis that focused on the history of unsuccessful government policy towards Indigenous communities in Australia” (2008: 362). However, the *Daily Telegraph* framed the riots “as an inexcusable violation of the law” and argued that, “Violence was emphasized, and the police were positioned as a thin blue line under siege from an unruly criminal mob” (Budarick and King 2008: 362). In addition, the coverage by that newspaper tended to be about drug use and trafficking on the Block “to strengthen the law and order diagnosis and that comments from the police were the dominant witness to the events that took place” (Budarick and King 2008: 362). Budarick and King argue that: “The law was seen as sacrosanct, with the status quo having to be upheld through these laws as a matter of urgency. There was little room left for any deeper social context of the riots” (2008: 362). The *Sydney Morning Herald* tended to “frame the riots as an issue of race relations in Australia” and that “the key questions revolved around
Aboriginality and an essentialized Indigenous nature” (Budarick and King 2008: 363). With all three newspapers, they contend, “to a greater or lesser degree, there was a commonality in creating two distinct groups, an ‘us’ and a ‘them’, with one of these groups constructed as an Aboriginal community” (Budarick and King 2008: 363). It is interesting to see, in these few examples, how Australian print media used language differently to respond to the riots and how language might have influenced the perceptions of the public. In the following section I use both print and talk-back radio comments to better understand how the spectator in this event (both media and public) contributes to a moral panic concerning Aboriginality in general.

Atherfold notes that between 15 February and 11 March, seventy percent of quotations reported in the Daily Telegraph were from members of law enforcement agencies or politicians, while in the Sydney Morning Herald quotations of a similar origin were approximately fifty percent (2006: 44). Although she suggests that the latter newspaper had a greater cross-section of sources, the riots were predominantly represented from the perspective of “authoritative sources” (Atherfold 2006: 44). An editorial of The Australian, entitled “No excuses can exonerate Redfern riot”, contended that the riots were “not the Australian way to surrender the streets to mob rule” (2004: 12). Not only is the participant in the riots rendered illegitimate by their collective status as a ‘mob’, but also the word ‘excuse’ insinuates a history of criminal activity that has been previously ignored. In response to the positioning of Aboriginal people as criminal and violent, the non-Aboriginal participants (police, government etc.) are reinforced as dominant and stable. It is not surprising, then, that a moral panic is propagated through the exchange between the media and their readership regarding the riots specifically and of Aboriginality at large. The following anonymous quotation from the Herald Sun
exemplifies this perception: “The riots in Sydney’s Redfern are absolutely disgraceful. Unfortunately, Aboriginal people have a huge chip on their shoulder” (Various 2004: 16). According to Budarick and King:

When the media cover social issues and events – particularly ones that encompass populist concerns such as law and order, crime and multiculturalism – they also engage with ideological norms and constructions. These ideological norms come in the form of deeply entrenched and naturalized views and beliefs about society and the world at large (2008: 356).

The normative discourse concerning race informs the mediatised and public responses that position the rioters as objects in opposition to law-abiding subjects, thus perpetuating a moral panic surrounding an already existing prejudice regarding Aboriginality and Aboriginal issues. Drichel contends: “How can we conceptualize an indigenous identity without trading on the same old stereotypes we have become so used to in discussions surrounding (formerly) othered peoples?” (2008: 591). It becomes extremely important to resist repeating and hence, reinforcing the Otherness associated with stereotypes. Although this Otherness might be contextual, the creation of such stereotypes is essentially a discursive process. Discourse pertains to be knowledge and this knowledge is historically driven. Hence, the Other is constructed through a history of competing discourses designed to objectify, naturalise and disempower.

**A discursive interplay in the riots**

The media representations of legality, criminality and civic responsibility are enforced and acted upon in the very negotiations and references to the space and spectacle of the riots. Gargett argues that: “The police are constructed as neutral characters in the lead up to the riot: simply doing their job. During the riots this neutrality is replaced with victimisation – police sacrifice their well-being to return order to the streets” (2005: 10).
The ‘uninhabitable’ space of the abject Other (Butler 1993: 3) is employed to delineate the space of normative order. The creation of this space is particularly notable in the polarisation of the ‘criminal’ rioters with respect to the ‘innocence’ of the police. The NSW Police Commissioner, Ken Moroney suggested that bravery medals be awarded to all police involved, describing their conduct as “absolute heroism” (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2004). The NSW Opposition Leader at the time, John Brogden, declared the Block should be bulldozed, whilst the then Federal Opposition Leader, Mark Latham queried where the parents of rioting children were during the riots. The then Prime Minister, John Howard, declared the riots the result of the “total breakdown of family authority” and openly formed an alliance with the police when he said: “I defend very much the police in a situation like that” (Shaw 2004: 3). The NSW Premier, Bob Carr stated: “I’ve always said about Redfern that the riot we saw was criminality, plain and simple” (Australian Associated Press 2004). Thus, we can see that the relationship between lawful and unlawful behaviour is used to position the rioters as a homogeneous racialised entity. Although it was written in the 1950s, Albert Memmi’s statement resonates in this context: “The colonized is never characterized in an individual manner; he is entitled only to drown in an anonymous collectivity” (2003: 129). The politicians’ statements illustrate how an ideological positioning is rendered as ‘truth’: an entire group of people is reduced to a stereotype implicating criminality and an inherent Otherness articulated from the highest levels of government to individual spectators.

Piers Akerman, a respected conservative columnist with the Daily Telegraph, referred to Redfern as “a petri dish for rafts of self-indulgent social engineers wishing to experiment with the lives of a chronically dysfunctional group of people” (2004: 18).
By suggesting that the riots were both the result of dysfunction and also the ‘pandering’ of liberalist policy, Akerman places the Self and the Other in diametrically opposed positions that are considered normative. He later declares that there was nothing to suggest that Hickey “was a victim of anything more than his own tragic stupidity and a cycling mishap” (Akerman 2004: 18). By laying the blame entirely on the victim, he renders the arguments of the community illegitimate and ignores the circumstances of Hickey’s life. Regardless of whether Hickey was or was not pursued by the police, Akerman systematically denies the acrimonious history between Aboriginal people and the police. In reference to the possible involvement of police in her son’s death, Gail Hickey was quoted as saying: “It’s got to stop, the way they treat our kids. They treat our kids like dogs ... they manhandle them” (Miranda 2004: 19). This history of mistreatment may have contributed to Hickey’s sense of fear, and thus, inadvertently led to his accident. For Akerman, the sight of an Aboriginal youth fleeing the police is an event unworthy of investigation. A fear of the police might, in fact, be the reason why a youth might flee and is certainly a substantial circumstance necessary of inquiry. At the very least, it is reason to open up debate rather than shut it down – which it seems to have been the intention of Akerman’s comments.

There were some instances of questionable behaviour by the media in relation to the riots. Bob Francis, in response to the riots, on his Adelaide radio show, Radio 5AA, declared: “How dare you call it a display of grief? You dirty, rotten bastards” (Friends of the ABC 2004). This comment provoked a response from ‘Gary’, a member of the public, saying that if he had been a policeman present at the riots, he would have “emptied his gun into the crowd and would have made sure he did not miss” (Friends of the ABC 2004). The Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) declared the Bob Francis show guilty of inciting racial hatred. However, the Authority has yet to pursue
any formal punishment (Friends of the ABC 2004). The Honourable Ian Gilfillan reported on these findings and asked the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, the Honourable T.G. Roberts, if he believed the ABA had responded adequately. The Minister responded with various comments, including: “I think the ABA is somewhat of a toothless tiger in what it metes out when dealing with these issues” (South Australian Democrats 2005). For me, the radio commentary exhibits explicit racial discrimination which is compounded by the inactivity of the governing bodies that are meant to judge such behaviour. In the absence of such an action, those governing bodies (such as the ABA) are implicated in enunciating an *implicit* racial discrimination. Butler argues that:

> What the law says, it does, but so, too, the speaker of hate. The performative power of hate speech is figured as the performative power of state-sanctioned legal language, and the context between hate speech and the law becomes staged, paradoxically, as a battle between two sovereign powers (1997: 81).

In abstaining from properly punishing the radio station, the ABA is hence sanctioning the use of hate speech and is effectively complicit in condoning such behaviour. Thus, the law, the governing institutions and the conductors of media communication are implicated in the production, performance and reiteration of hate speech, as much as ‘Gary’ and his bullets.

Another conservative Australian columnist Andrew Bolt wrote in his opinion essay in *The Herald Sun* on 18 February 2004

> Who’s to blame for the Redfern riots? Drunken thugs and guilt ridden whites who have poured money into the hands of Aboriginal agitators. We all paid to stage this Redfern race riot – that’s how suicidal we now are. ... The hate-spewing Aboriginal ‘leaders’ who cheered and praised the rioters? We paid them. ... The Aboriginal ‘leaders’ – and their guilt-chocked white accomplices – who excuse the most depraved behaviour of a black by blaming it on a white? We paid them. ... We paid them as we pay such ‘leaders’ of other ethnic and
religious groups out of this same racist conception of multicultural Australia. Stupid. Stupid (2004: 19).

It is necessary to include the entire quotation to illustrate clearly the extreme nature of this statement. Bolt reinforced the constitution of the Other by framing Aboriginal activism as unnecessary and illegitimate. He implied that it was nothing more than a stubborn inability of Aboriginal people to assimilate into ‘mainstream’ Australia. In this instance, such a statement (made only three days after the riots) punishes activists such as Lyall Munro, who argued that the riots were essentially a demand for acknowledgement: “A stand was taken by our young people last night. It’s completely freaked the country out. As for the question of condoning violence – violence begets violence, and if that’s the only way to save our kids, so be it” (Penberthy and Kamper 2004: 4). Although potentially creating a greater divide by refusing to condemn violence, Munro makes an important point by positioning the riots as a proclamation of dispossession and grief. In opposition, Bolt’s opinion reflects normative social practice and the reiteration of an underlying racist discourse – producing what Butler refers to as a “structural subordination” (1997: 76). Bolt denies the protestor a voice by systematically ridiculing the social circumstances of the riots and reiterating racial stereotypes. Butler argues: “As a performative, hate speech also deprives the one addressed of precisely this performative power, a performative power that some see as a linguistic condition of citizenship” (1997: 81). Bolt subordinates as he writes and thus, in his articulation of his ‘stupid stupid’ reading of the Redfern riots, he objectifies the rioters and removes their right to subject status.

Bolt was not alone in this argument. In relation to the riots, certain responses of the public and the mainstream media helped to facilitate this reading of the rioter as ‘criminal’ and ‘illegitimate’. In reader feedback to Bolt, Keith Hooper states in
agreement, that Andrew Bolt “… is right to declare (Feb 22) that taxpayers paid for the Redfern riot, because those who live in the past rob the future” (2004: 89). This response implies that the disadvantages of Aboriginal Australians were either trivial indulgences or ‘payment’ for failing to assimilate to the dominant white culture and that non-Aboriginal people were victims of political policy. Similarly, J.D. Bindon argues: “Good on Andrew Bolt for having the courage to write what a significant proportion of the population feels” (2004: 89). Bolt, and others, attempt to close down debate by reproducing colonial and racialist attitudes toward Aboriginal people, thus positioning the rioters as inherently inferior, and in doing so, reinforcing normative social order.

A particularly interesting Internet forum appeared on 29 March 2004 in response to a *Four Corners* television report on the riots broadcast on the ABC earlier that night. One blogger referred to as ‘Tulips’ suggested: “It appears to me that there is one law for the rich one for the poor one for the white and one for the black” (2004). Another named ‘realist’ stated: “The 4 corners program tonight stunk with the same bleeding heart blame-game that we Australians are getting used to – but still makes us sick” (2004). Another blogger wrote: “Drugs, riots and all that aside a boy lost his life. If he had been white and appeared to be from a wealthy family do you think this would have happened” (Ginny 2004). This last response reflects the inequality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. What these texts reveal are the discursive operations at the heart of the riots. What Butler calls the “linguistic condition of citizenship” (that I argue should be a universal human right, the right to self-representation) is denied in most of the responses that assume a generic criminality (1997: 81). Thus, the lived experiences of the rioters are circumscribed by the normative practices that construct Aboriginal people as the Other. These responses also indicate the way in which
communities operate when they believe that social normativity is under threat. The moral panic that emerged reflected a fear of those who deviate from social order and an ongoing divide in race relations in Australia.

Not long after the riots, the Redfern Police Station was relocated from a small street-level office into two adjacent six-storey office buildings (the former TNT towers), looking down over Redfern Station and towards the Block. Although the timing of this move may be coincidental, Police Minister John Watkins did announce that the new police station would be “right where the police want it, with a bird’s eye view over the Block” (Jackson 2004). Foucault might have argued that the emergence of this ‘panopticon’ was associated with the regulation of people in an attempt to control disorderly behaviour. According to John Pløger, the “Panopticon is an architectural design or équipement that shapes control and domination independent of human force, dependent on the possibility of uncontrollable visibility” (2008: 64). My interest here is not in the successes or failure of governing bodies or the individual perspectives of residents, but rather the way in which complex issues (such as the situation of the Block at the time of the riots) are represented discursively. The statements of Bolt and Akermann suggested a colonial discourse in their statements of blanket criminality: an inherent racial difference and concerns of radical deviation. The declaration by Watkins reinforces the notion that a state-sanctioned police presence in Redfern, whether from towers or on the street, might discipline the ‘criminal’ mass through perpetual observation. At the very least, such a declaration can only serve to inflame an already complex and fraught relationship between Aboriginal residents of the Block and the police.
A fundamental principle of the disciplinary regime, according to Foucault, is the compliance and docility of the object: “He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power” (1977: 202). The acrimonious history between police and Aboriginal people – particularly in Redfern – suggests a quasi-panoptic system. Yet the riots prevented the panopticon from actually succeeding, primarily because the riots reflected a lack of compliance with the law. Although the police station moved into the TNT towers after the riots, the very fact that there were riots indicates the failure of any disciplinary regime associated with a sustained observation. By deliberately disobeying social order, the rioters refused to become ‘docile’.

**Belonging in liminality**

According to the anthropological/performance research of Victor Turner and Richard Schechner, there are four phases in a “social drama”: the breach of a social code, the crisis, the redressive action, and the resolution (Schechner 1985: 14; Turner 1987: 34). In this context, the application of Turner and Schechner’s theory of the social drama provides two alternative readings of the notion of the ‘resolution’ stage and hence, an interesting theoretical paradigm concerning instances of social crisis.

On one level, the breach of a “social code” in reference to the Redfern riots is not necessarily an isolated event but is the culmination of generations of oppression experienced by Indigenous Australians, which led to the belief that the death of Hickey was the result of police victimisation. The ‘crisis’ can be read as the actual riots and the “redressive action” as the retaliative action of the police and riot squad. Finally, the
resolution’ was the restoration of social order with the cessation of the uprising and the subsequent inquiries, and arrests.

Another reading could be that the initial breach resulted from the action of the riots and that the crisis was the face-to-face encounter with the rioters as Other. The “redressive action” might then be understood as the aftermath to the riots. These responses could include the media, the inquiries (coronial, police and parliamentary), community development initiatives such as the formation of the Redfern Waterloo Authority and the recently approved redevelopment initiative, the Pemulwuy Project, initiated by the AHC. Thus, in effect the “redressive action” is the reinforcement of the status quo. However, in this reading, the final stage of the social drama is incomplete: there is no resolution or return to social normativity. In some respects because of the initially high level of what I refer to as this ‘social anxiety’, the full extent of the inequity, grief and dispossession felt by the rioters was silenced and although the status quo is returned, the transgressions of the riot continued to be ‘felt’ by the participants and Hickey’s community. Schechner argues: “Liminal rituals permanently change who people are. These are transformations” (2002: 63). The significance of this particular reading is that there are important aspects that continued to linger after the riots official closure. The riots have elements of both a social drama and a moral panic and that the notion of an unreconciled and incomplete resolution to deeply imbedded race issues warrants critical examination.

There is a complex negotiation in the midst of this transformation. Firstly, the riots caused a primarily negative backlash from the mainstream media and sections of the public, thus triggering a moral panic. Secondly, whilst the riots were short-lived, they
did have an impact beyond their conclusion. One of the rioters declared in the *Four Corners* television report, *Riot in Redfern*, broadcast on 29 March 2004, that: “[Like], we gotta show what Redfern can do, you know. ... Like, if we can beat the coppers, we can beat anyone....” (Jackson 2004). This young (anonymous) girl is acknowledging a sense of power and agency gained in challenging the *status quo*. Another example occurred on the first anniversary of Hickey’s death, when his community presented the Redfern police station with a list of seventeen demands (one for each year of his life) regarding the investigation into his death. These demands were not acted on. However, the peaceful protest recognised the ongoing need to rectify the gross inequity experienced by Aboriginal Australians. According to Pløger:

> Space, knowledge and power will always create relations and forms of institutionalized forces. Institutions are not only governmental institutions or knowledge apparatus, but also the installation of discourses in public and onto publics (2008: 66).

I extend this statement by suggesting that discourse and power are also inscribed on the streets of a city, most notably in the enactment of an urban social crisis. I argue that the memorialisation of Hickey’s death in the form of graffiti street art is a particularly significant response to the riots: a literal inscription on the city pavement of the grief felt by his community.

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48 It should be noted that as time went on many members of the media, government and public called for open and critical debate surrounding the issues of the riots. This included comments made by Aboriginal politician, Aden Ridgeway, Ian Gilfillan and T.G. Roberts, among others. Mainstream media reporting also began to include a range of perspectives in the weeks after the riots, including the weekend edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 22 and 23 February 2004, entitled “It takes a riot to care about these kids” and other reports specifically about Hickey’s life and tragic death. However, this chapter is primarily concerned with the framing of the riots in the mainstream media immediately after the riots as a way in which to look at how a short, explosive moral panic can be triggered through racial discourse. For the above article see Jopson 2004: 25.
The memorial of graffiti

One year after Hickey’s death and the riots, the NSW Department of Housing and the Sydney City Council refused to display a commemorative plaque because they argued that it implicated the police in his death. The proposed plaque, made by students from the University of Technology Sydney, described the death of Hickey: “On the 14th February, 2004, TJ Hickey, aged 17, was impaled upon the metal fence above, arising from a police pursuit. The young man died as a result of his wounds the next day. In our hearts you will stay TJ” (Pearson and Brewer 2005). The plaque would only be accepted if the wording of “police pursuit” was changed to “tragic accident”, to which his mother, Gail Hickey, replied: “I ain’t going to change no words for no-one” (Pearson and Brewer 2005). The refusal of the original plaque is a performative gesture, which censors a community’s desire to inscribe their symbolic citizenship and demand for recognition. It could be argued that the refusal to accept the original plaque is a performative gesture, which censors a community’s desire to inscribe their symbolic citizenship and demand for recognition. Butler contends that:

[the] mechanism of censorship is not only actively engaged in the production of subjects, but also in circumscribing the social parameters of speakable discourse, of what will and will not be admissible in public discourse (1997: 131-132).

Therefore, in the absence of the plaque, the silencing of individual and collective grief reinforces normative practice of what is considered “speakable discourse” and what (according to Butler) “will not be admissible in public discourse” (Butler 1997: 131-132). By the authorities’ rejecting the plaque, its absence takes on a new significance. In its place, another kind of memorial emerged: a wall of graffiti.

There is a wall near Phillip St and Waterloo Green with a surrounding fence where Hickey fell from his bicycle and died. This wall was subsequently covered in signatures,
messages to Hickey and the term ‘RIP’. I suggest that any form of graffiti acts as a conduit for some form of knowledge. It is a message sent from an artist to a broad audience, yet will often, particularly in the instances of ‘tagging’, be understood only by a very small section of that audience (Keith 2005: 152). The knowledge transmitted is the performance of belonging because of the spatial and performative inscription of the artist’s sense of identity within their location. As Keith explains, graffiti is an ancient practice (2005: 137). The first rock paintings and the messages on the walls of Pompeii, testify to graffiti as a practice and a mode of communication. It also has a long history as a tool of political activism: messages of protest on the Berlin Wall, of countless anti-war sentiments across the ages and political markings from Tehran to Stockholm. Graffiti is often associated with the memorialisation of spaces by marking the territory of the dead. Large ‘pieces’ were made in memory of music artists (Tupac, Jam Master Jay) and religious and popular icons, such as Mother Teresa and Princess Diana. In the instance of marking death, a piece creates a sense of presence in absence. A piece may be the graffiti artists’ attempt at memorializing that which is gone and marking out a space for an emergence of what may be yet to come.

Tagging is the signature of the graffiti artist. It delineates space and enables the writer to be present: to have a significant place in a world that elsewhere and at other times may exclude them. According to James T Murray and Karla L Murray: “A tag is a writer’s name or signature mainly used to indicate a writer’s presence, not for artistic purposes” (2002: 39). It is interesting that there are so many literary references to an image-based form. Graffiti artists are called Writers, their work referred to as Writing, with an entire language system to describe the work (Cooper and Chalfant 1984: 27). Examining the

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49 For an interesting examination of graffiti responses to the death of Princess Diana (and others) see Taylor, D. (2003).
sub-cultural movement of tagging and graffiti as legitimate cultural practices challenges and extends the parameters of what can be considered art, language and text. 50 Graffiti can be read as an artistic and communicative practice encoded with specific and unique cultural signifiers. For the purposes of this examination, the cultural signifier is principally a person’s sense of belonging and desire for recognition in relation to space and identity: “Almost every tag contains an element that seeks to take possession of a space” (Mai 2005: 17).

Figure 4: The site of Thomas ‘TJ’ Hickey’s death

(Newman 2006)

50 According to Michael Keith to ‘write’, to ‘tag’ and graffiti as communication, text and literature are all phrases that are commonly used, by both the artists and analysts of graffiti (Keith, 2005: 136-152).
Figure 4 is a photograph of the site where Hickey was fatally impaled. The messages of ‘RIP’ and the special notes of memory delineate and perform the space of a memorial site and the tags, the names of the urban radical, inscribe the space with the identity of its authors. Berlin graffiti artist ‘Amok’ is quoted as arguing that regardless of the “politics that control our cities, tags will always mark their streets. Writing is an essential urban phenomenon” (Mai 2005: 2). Graffiti, whether considered as art, language or vandalism, is nevertheless the marking of identity in time and place. Michel Keith suggests that “understanding urban writing is ultimately about appreciating the symbolism of the surface on which it is inscribed as much as the ostensible message of the tag or the script” (2005: 137). The site pictured above, in this sense, is made present through the combined symbolism of surface and inscription making an otherwise ‘meaningless’ urban streetscape into a place of great significance.

The memorial of graffiti is fervently rendered present by the ownership of Hickey’s community. Keith argues that: “graffiti is not merely the sign or the effect of an underlying ethological community; rather it is the embodied social landscape” (2005: 150-151). The very presence of graffiti implicates a radical re-writing, a transgression of social order and the language and practices of cultural normativity. As Keith suggests: “Graffiti is perhaps the exemplary mode of outlaw communication. By definition it is intrusive, emblematic and opportunistic” (2005: 136). This search for agency is a liminal transgression that continues beyond the closure of the riots, as Markus Mai explains: “Whether they’re sending a signal, being different, being provocative, spreading their fame, creating, thrilling in illegality or finding and expressing their identity, Writers are leaving their mark” (2005: 15). In this context, the mark is the tag and the tag embodies the presence of a radical memorial in the absence of official
commemoration. The memorial of graffiti continues to be a significant site with the art collective *Squatspace*, conducting a ‘Tour of Beauty’ through Redfern, with invited speakers providing commentary that draws attention to their particular lived experience. Lucas Ihlein suggests that speakers on the tour “represent themselves: they are free to be as inflammatory, seductive or rhetorical as they like” (2009: 47). One such speaker (as recently as May 2009) was Ray Jackson, a Redfern community leader, who traces Hickey’s final route, while calling for a reopening of the coronial inquest. This sort of activity, according to Ihlein forces us into “the uneasy role of impromptu mourners and amateur crime-scene investigators” (2009: 47). In April 2009, there were reports of plans for a redevelopment of the memorial site, removal of the fence and stripping the ‘unattractive’ graffiti, although Sydney City Council denied these reports at the time (Thompson 2009).\(^{51}\) It appears that, for Hickey’s community, this site continues to function as a memorial marking his death. If graffiti involves a search for empowerment through deliberate transgression, the performers of graffiti as memorialisation enact the very thing that they are seeking: agency. Keith suggests: “what is at stake in these forms of urban graphology is an emergent struggle over inclusion, citizenship, entitlement and belonging” (2005: 137). The memorial of tags houses multiple authors and meanings, which trace a liminal, heterotopic space of grief. Although it is a memorial to Hickey, his death is indelibly linked to the riots, and thus, the graffiti acts as a legacy of both the impact of his death and the riots.

\(^{51}\) According to Angus Thompson, reporting on the ‘proposed’ redevelopment of Waterloo Green, and the site where Hickey died, Gail Hickey remarks that the council was considering displaying the banned plaque and that twice a year Gail, and TJ’s community, meet in memory of his birthday and death (Thompson 2009).
**Heterotopia**

Many theorists have embraced the concept of ‘heterotopia’ to encapsulate ambiguous space. Originally, it referred to anatomical anomalies such as tumours, cysts and extra appendages or absent limbs: where a physiological displacement had occurred and the body enabled the growth of something unusual. Essentially, Foucault theorised that understandings of spatial and temporal configurations could be related to ordered reality, utopia and heterotopia:

Utopias are sites with no real place. ...They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces. ... There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted...I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopia (1986: 24).

Kevin Hetherington argues that, for Foucault, “places of Otherness are spaces, whose existence sets up unsettling juxtapositions of incommensurate ‘objects’ which challenge the way we think, especially the way our thinking is ordered” (1997: 42). They are sites or enactments of disruption and dislocation yet still identifiable against that which it is in opposition to or in reflection of. Johnson suggests that heterotopic spaces: “mirror, reflect, represent, designate, speak about all other sites but at the same time suspend, neutralize, invert, contest and contradict those sites” (2006: 78). The notion of a transgressive liminality is indicative of both heterotopia in general and the Redfern riots specifically.

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52 Some theoretical uses of heterotopia have included postmodern geography, architecture and cyberspace. See: (Hetherington 1997), (Chaplin 2003: 340-356), (Downes 2005) and Johnson 2006: 75-90).
In her analysis of “contamination plays”, Joanne Tompkins associates the dystopian abandoned nuclear testing site of Maralinga in South Australia and certain performances that deliberately destabilise this abandoned space as a form of heterotopic presence (2006: 94): “Contamination renders Maralinga more dystopic than utopic, but in the chasm between the non-place and utopia, the plays explore heterotopic possibility” (2006: 94). In another reference to “theatrical interventions”, Tompkins suggests that heterotopia as a device is “a ‘place’ that has agency, meaning, and relevance to the real world, even if it is ‘unreal’” (2006: 95). In this sense, performance theory, like that of performance itself, can utilise the concept of heterotopia to examine instances of social enactment where disturbance is foregrounded: where an absence can be made present. I find this notion of utopia as absence and heterotopia as presence particularly relevant in relation to reading the memorial of graffiti as rendering present a community who was not only denied a plaque, but also denied its grief.

Hetherington makes a crucial point of not romanticising the notion of heterotopia but rather suggests that it is a useful concept to identify fluid and transgressive spaces:

In general, the term has been used to try and capture something of the significance of sites of marginality that act as postmodern spaces for resistance and transgression – treating them in many ways as liminal spaces. ... The paradox is that heterotopia can be either or indeed both. Spaces of total freedom and spaces of total control are both spaces of social ordering (1997: 42).

Foucault does not necessarily define heterotopia exclusively as sites of resistance, although I find it useful in this context because the Redfern riots and the memorial were an ambivalent negotiation between order and disorder: “heterotopia are sites of all things displaced, marginal, novel or rejected, or ambivalent” (Hetherington 1997: 46). It

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is not that heterotopia by nature involve resistance, but that any form of civil unrest and rioting could be argued as heterotopic. It is the notion of marginality, displacement and ambivalence, which is perhaps the most crucial component on reading the riots and the memorial of tags as heterotopic space.

Heterotopias are about deviation: “those in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed” (Foucault 1986: 25). Which leads into another principle that: “a society, as its history unfolds, can make an existing heterotopia function in a very different fashion” (1986: 25). In one sense, the riots were heterotopic because of the deviation of normative order whilst in another sense the memorial of graffiti is an extension of this transgression but is different still because of its function and context.

Heterotopia can house several alternate and potentially conflicting spaces within one place (Foucault 1986: 25). In other words, the riots may have occurred on the night of 15 February 2004 of the Block, but there were multiples spaces of meaning within the riots, such as dissent, mourning, retaliation and the reinforcement of social normativity. They also involved a temporal displacement. For Foucault, heterotopia are most often linked to “slices in time” and can either represent an “accumulation of time” or “to time in its most fleeting, transitory, precarious aspect” (1986: 26). In this sense, the riots enabled a temporary suspension of order while the memorial represented a more permanent deferral in the inscription of a lingering non-conformity. Heterotopia is particularly relevant in relation to the riots as spatial and temporal deviation. Teresa Davis argues in relation to Foucault’s understanding of heterotopia that, “heterotopia are ‘like utopias’; these sites relate to other sites, they both represent and invert them but
unlike utopias they have to be ‘enacted’ or practiced” (2010: 663). The Redfern riots and the memorial of tags were the lived practices of a transgression of hegemonic order.

There are specific rules to the entry of a participant in the heterotopia: “the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place...To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures” (Foucault 1986: 26). The memorial site requires a shared language for the meaning of the site to be interpreted and for the participants to be granted entry into the shared meaning making process; it can only be truly entered and owned by its artists. For Mai, a tag “defines a site, an area or a viewpoint and claims it as it own” (2005: 17). A tag might define a space but it can never be entirely owned by anyone other than the community from which it was born. This is the haunting trace of the writer who transforms an otherwise inanimate landscape into embodied space.

Foucault’s final identifying principle is perhaps the most representative of the riots: the relation of the heterotopic space to the ordered space of ‘reality’. Heterotopia tend to reveal something significant about the ‘real’ space, from which the heterotopia have deviated. According to Foucault, the role of this type of heterotopia is to “create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory” (1986: 27). In the disruptive space of the riots, of the unreal space, the nature of reality (of social normativity) is revealed as social construction. When grief and dispossession lead to temporary chaos, the cause and nature of this displacement is foregrounded. The representation of the rioters as Other, both through explicit racism and an implicit insidious objectification on the grounds of cultural and racial difference, necessitates a critical reflection as to how and why this
objectification exists. The riots and the memorial of graffiti can be read as landscapes of
dissent and as a result, the social and political issues regarding race that exist in the
‘real’ space of everyday life are exposed.

In the context of the Redfern riots, the deviation drew unequivocal attention to the
make-up of order. It is ambivalence which is the ultimate transgressive quality of the
riots and the memorial of tags: heterotopia are “a major source of ambivalence and
uncertainty, thresholds that symbolically mark not only boundaries of a society but its
values and beliefs as well” (Hetherington 1997: 49). Whilst heterotopic spaces might
share certain qualities and reflect common principles, the truly transformative capacity
of the concept exists in its irreducibility and incapacity to be defined properly. Sarah
Chaplin, relating heterotopia to urban geography (in particular, Los Vegas), suggests:
“the positioning of heterotopia both semantically and physically cannot be stable and
fixed, since its very purpose is to effect contingency and disrupt continuity” (2003:
342). Whilst the writers of the memorial of graffiti enact grief, their status and identity
is equally ‘unknowable’ and therein a level of transgressive agency exists. While
utopias have “no real locality”, “afford consolation” and “permit fables and discourse”,
heterotopia are “disturbing” and “make it impossible to name this and that” (Foucault
1970: xviii) by existing in disseminated and dislocated space; quite like the liminal
space of the “betwixt and between” (Turner 1969: 95). According to Chaplin, “Foucault
regards the ability to resist naming as a fundamental characteristic of the heterotopia: its
evasiveness provides a powerful sense of agency with which to challenge the easy
complacency of utopia” (2003: 346). Thus, while moral absolutes and vitriolic
statements proclaimed during the heights of moral panic exposed deeply imbedded
ideological and discursive issues the riots and the memorial of grief remain inherently unstable.

Conclusions

When we examine the Redfern riots as performance, as the flow between the social event, the spectators’ responses and the resulting moral panic, we must confront the socio-historical circumstances of the riots. I argue that the riots were an embodied lived enactment of the resistance to oppression and the enunciation of underlying discursive formations. In other words, the riots were motivated by and reflected the experiences of real people caught alongside the forces of history. The mediatised responses tended to objectify the rioters by representing them as criminal and illegitimate. In the aftermath of the riots, the ‘criminal’ body is fashioned by interested media bodies and the public and moral panic erupts. This anxiety produces the perception of Aboriginality as the unknowable Other.

The riots were catalysts for a particular kind of ‘social anxiety’ that exposed ingrained social and political issues surrounding race relations in Australian society, however they also provoked a different space of belonging for the people directly objectified by these race issues. The memorial of graffiti is one such site of belonging, where the space indicates marginality and dislocation but also transgression and agency. We can learn about the conditions of ‘real’ space by contrasting it to the chaos of displaced time and place in the riots. To explore the protests as the performance of liminality and heterotopia is to question the limits of ‘different’ space.
Although the Redfern riots may have reinforced the power formations that maintain inequity for Aboriginal people by stimulating racialist responses from many spectators, the memorial site, on the other hand, is a space of discontinuity and disruption. It is, as Hetherington explains: “an almost magical, uncertain space, monstrous combinations that unsettle the flow of discourse” (1997: 43). Not only does the memorial disrupt a traditional connotation of a memorial, it also locates the significance of the death of Hickey for his community. This space of dislocation is deliberately separate from the space of the status quo. For Hetherington, the important point to remember when considering heterotopia is “not the spaces themselves but what they perform in relation to other sites” (1997: 49). The riots, the aftermath and the memorial are all ambiguous ‘sites’ of dislocation that are significant precisely because of what they are not. They do not prescribe to a discourse of social normativity or legal obedience. They are zones of disorder, transgression and belonging in difference. The 2004 riots were a fight for the streets, a literal and symbolic space of sovereignty and agency in an uncomfortable dance with dislocation and abject poverty. The riots revealed a performance between specific bodies of discursive conflict colliding with grief and dispossession in an acute attempt to be heard.
Acts become sedimented precisely through the orbit of their historical repetition and desedimented through, shall we say, “exorbitant” variations on such repetition, citation, rehearsal, and parody

Chapter five: *Three Interrupted Lives: An original creative performance work*

The following is a performance text inspired by the events surrounding the Schapelle Corby trial, the Redfern riots and the Terri Schiavo case. Before the performance, the audience will be given a programme briefly describing the events surrounding the case studies, which inspired the performance and the research process. They will also be told that there is a small level of audience interaction. In reference to the following performance text, stage directions are indicated by italics. Quotations from literature or media material are indicated with quotation marks and references. The language is often deliberately clipped to encourage a particular acting style.

**Character/Persona breakdown**

Narrator

Fan

Victoria (1894)

Colonial

Dispossession

Hope

Host

Guest
Three Interrupted Lives

The audience enters the space and is immediately greeted by the Performer. The audience members are given a yellow ribbon at random. Other members are given a slip of paper with instructions. These include: “When I say stand up and look left stand up and look left” and “When I say stand up and look right stand up and look right”. The space is set up in such a way that there is a thrust stage with audience on three sides. A scrim far upstage is used throughout the performance as a projection screen and for particular lighting effects. There is a large sofa draped in a white sheet stage left, a series of crates upstage centre and a small digital/video camera. There is a ramp continuing from upstage right to downstage centre. There is a long piece of string that is suspended like a clothesline around the perimeter of the stage. A scratchy song can be heard playing. A soft orange light from the top of the ramp emerges revealing a small music box. The Performer gestures to the audience to be seated and speaks

NARRATOR: I think we are ready. I believe we are. The beginning.

The Performer exits and reappears at the top of the ramp. She winds the music box and as she does this, she tumbles down the ramp with the music box in her arms. She sits, appears shocked and then cleans herself off. She winds the box up and places it downstage. The Performer moves in a disjointed manner mimicking the dance of the figurine of the music box. Her silhouette flickers on the scrim in the deep orange glow. The music box stops playing but she continues to dance in the disjointed movement. The song is replaced with the building cacophony of technological sounds (text messages, phone calls, etc) which plays underneath the following speech. Projected on the ramp
are shards of red and orange lights producing fiery shadows on the backdrop. The Performer directs the following speech to the audience.

NARRATOR: Do you sense the charm? I say. Be ready. For the moment. Do you feel the heat? You might not know it when it. But it’s here. This is a time eclipsed by alarm bells. Do what we want. Hear what we say. Some of what I speak is real. It’s been spoken before by others other than me. Some of what you speak (pointing at audience) what he speaks and what she speaks is real. It’s truth. We’ll see. You and me. Let me set the scene.


The NARRATOR moves over to the ramp and lies across the sofa.

She jumps to the sofa balancing as though on a tightrope. The sounds of technology continue building in volume and intensity.

How many epochs have had such a stinking smell and a crackling of fear? Sink or swim but burnt either way. Mothers, daughters, sisters and lovers denied page time. Crusades pursued. Natives wiped out, a generation removed. The six million or so killed, starved, raped. What is this, an invasion of a perversion? Consumption, consumption, consumption? Is this an age of injurious spectacle? A time eclipsed by alarm. Bells. I can hear it. I can.

She jumps from the couch with the sheet and leaps to the ramp. She wraps herself in the white sheet and the sounds of technology ends. There is silence as the red and orange lights are replaced by a white spotlight as she turns to the audience.
What say we, you and me, start with a girl. Strange and golden. A fan. Captive in a prison with innumerable walls. So high you can’t climb. So fragile the walls just might shatter.

*The Performer hides underneath the white sheet.*

**Episode one: Has anybody seen my gal?**

*Projected on to the white sheet which covers the Performer is the title Episode one: Has anybody seen my gal? The song “Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue (has anybody seen my gal?)” plays:*

“Five foot two, eyes of blue  
But oh! what those five foot could do  
Has anybody seen my girl?  
Turned up nose, turned down hose  
Never had another beaus  
Has anybody seen my girl?”


*The Performer emerges from beneath the sheet with a yellow ribbon around her neck and a handful of newspaper clippings. She plays with the ribbon throughout the following. This persona is called the FAN. She is emotionally volatile; at times vulnerable, reminiscent, cheeky or desperate.*
FAN: I love her. I really think I do. Its silly isn’t it – the way we worry about who we say it to and why when really there’s no time to waste. Anything could happen and then it’s all over. Cancer, accident, jail. I was one of the first. Yeah, I was an original. I was one of the only ones who recognised her pain and the injustice. At the beginning.

Sometimes it bothers me. Yes. It bothers me that everyone has jumped on the bandwagon claiming support when they weren’t there from the beginning.

*She starts to hang the newspaper clippings on a long piece of string as though they were clothes on a washing line.*

Most people took notice after the television interview. But I was there at the start. From the very first day, 8 October. Well, actually, that is a bit of a lie (it sits heavy) it was more like a couple of days later. I mean, it was reported in the paper and I was, you know, a little delayed in reading it and I was in the shops waiting for mum to come out of the hairdressers and BANG there was this article on this (*pause*) girl and I was (*pause*), you know, mesmerised. Her poise. Her silky thick hair. Her manicured hands and sculptured face. Those eyes. Blue eyes with a sparkle. With terror and strength.

What a woman. What a glorious example. And now she’s trapped. This butterfly, like the enormous blue ones from the top of Queensland, is trapped. She’s like a collection. Like a trapped, captured exhibit. Stuck in that cell interrogated for hours. Moved to prison. So dirty, and rotten. With rats and dirt and sweat. No privacy. I think she even has to squat to go to the toilet. So filthy. How is such a beautiful thing expected to survive such an ordeal, such waste?
The FAN is stunned and outraged. A single light globe slowly appears from the ceiling above the Performer. It is suspended on a long lead and slowly swings casting a shadow as it sways. The movement reveals the different newspaper images and articles about Schapelle Corby.

They don’t know what they’ve done. They’ve caged the wrong bird. Her only crime is being an angel. A beautiful shining angel in a dirty foreign exile. They’ve locked her in with murderers. That smiling man. They’ve locked her in with Muslims.

There is a marked shift to happy reminiscence

I moved to the Gold Coast. I felt I would be of most use in Queensland. You see it was my idea to start a campaign, to lobby. I thought we had it sealed when Russell stepped in and then Lindy said she ‘understood’. There isn’t any stronger proof of innocence than Lindy?

With some help from a growing base of supporters, we created Internet sites, rallies, and a letter campaign. I suppose you could call me a fan. I am a fan, of hers. But I’m more than that, so much more than that. They described how difficult the situation was that it was important to keep diplomacy open, or something? I don’t think ‘they’ understood our position though … the importance of saving her from the dirt and the muck. (builds in anger) It was our job to save her. If we didn’t, everything about her, what she stood for and what we stood for would be lost. Innocence lost. Beauty lost. Honesty and
integrity lost. I will not tolerate her being stolen by little, smelly sweaty brown men who
don’t realise what an extraordinary beautiful butterfly she is. She never lied about
anything. She has only ever spoken the truth. They can’t be trusted (angry) They are the
fanatics. They can’t be trusted.

The light globe extinguishes. Floor lights shine upward casting an imposing light upon
the head and torso of the Performer. The Performer approaches the audience and takes
several yellow ribbons from members of the audience. As she speaks the following, she
ties the ribbons around different parts of her body while she adopts the physicality of a
woman in a tight corset. She is Victoria, an Aristocratic woman from 1894. Chopin
plays in the background

VICTORIA: “Yours is very beautiful, fine hair, but perhaps you are a little anaemic. It
is almost certain you are too thin, and of a very nervous disposition. We are going to
give you a very desperate remedy for your hair, namely, twice a week rub paraffin oil
(the very purest) on your head with a sponge at night. It will not be so unpleasant as it
sounds:, the smell will have quite gone off by the morning; if not brush your hair by an
open window; the result will be worth a little discomfort” (Irmingard 1894: 470).

There is the sound effect of planes and busy city noises. The single light globe brightens
and the Performer is the Fan once again. The Chopin music stops playing. The
Performer directly asks the audience for the yellow ribbons. This will require
improvised lines encouraging the audience to give her the ribbons.
FAN: I moved there a month before the verdict. The campaign had stalled. It was no longer enough to lobby the politicians or the celebrities. We had to take action … real action. You could see she was suffering. I remember the first time I met her in person. I paid the guards the money and met her at the gate behind the bars. She was pale and pasty. She said she wasn’t eating much and I gave her some goodies, chocolate, chips, Vegemite. She looked a little confused. I gave her tampons, and toilet paper. Told her to keep her chin up and not to let the bastards get her down. I asked her if she’d been raped. (She is surprised, frustrated and uses the next line as a justification) Those bastards will do anything to rip apart a woman’s innocence, her pride. She said she had to go. I asked her if she had a message for the Australian public. She didn’t. I nearly forgot to give her the make-up. It was important that she keep her beauty regime going. She had to look her best as often as possible. I told her I would always protect her. I knew I had the support of Australia I received messages from thousands of people. I knew I had to take it a step further than the clothes and tea towels and stuff. The yellow ribbons were a national symbol of support … you know, tie the ribbon around your letterbox if you support her. We called it ‘official merchandise’ and we had everything from g-strings, to coffee mugs, T-shirts, and computer mouse pads. I saved a couple of the g-strings for her … and for me, you know, something special. A guy from Queensland was applying for the use of her name for paints, varnishes, clocks and fruit and vegetables.

*The light globe starts to fade during the following*

Some people have criticised us for going too far, for sort of ‘profiting’ off her pain. But that hurts me because every day people contact me to keep going with the cause. Well
they don’t contact me directly but you know people contact the website, and her family. And people post messages on blogs and stuff and I always keep up to date with what people in the magazines are saying and stuff. I feel encouraged to go further, to push for her innocence to be you know glorified. Everyone’s pretty passionate. A lot of people have said that they won’t go back to Bali and neither would I if I didn’t have to support her. We’ve given enough money to help them now they should be able to help themselves. There are messages from Norway, California, Canada, England and New Zealand. Even Malaysia. (genuine) Which surprised me. I suppose there are good people everywhere. The whole world seems to want to get involved. Which is great! You know in the name of justice and fairness we can all come together and fight evil and get her home. Home where we can protect her. You know protect her from everyone else.

Sometimes I worry that it will take a miracle. Or violence. Maybe war? I’m not sure. But someone will be pushed to the limit. Especially after the bombings. (in a naively menacing manner) She is an Aussie and a Christian and she is innocent. They need to understand this.

The following is said while tying more ribbons around the Performer’s body. She gestures to the audience to help tie them and there is a distinct shift her performance. Victoria is upright and contained. Chopin begins again

VICTORIA: “The way to get pale, of course, is to get ill. The unnatural flushing when you walk is quite another matter. Are you sure that your stays are not too tight, and that
you do not stoop? Either of these things would flush your face unhealthily. So would tight boots. When you walk, walk in perfect comfort – your shoulders well back and your chin well up. You will find you cannot do this unless your feet are perfectly comfortable. Your stays ought never to be so tight as to prevent you, while walking, from giving a deep full breath without stopping in your walk. It you are already wise in these respects, and your face still flushes, the cause is probably indigestion, and you must be careful not to walk too soon after meals. If it is a hot dry flush, soften your skin by rubbing on a little cocoa oil at nights. If it is damp and sticky, keep a piece of clean washleather to wipe your face with occasionally, and use a little good powder” (Queenie 1894: 470).

The Performer is now the FAN

FAN: I reckon when she’s out she might have a bit of career as a model or an actress. They want to make her a star. It is like she is on parade, or like a circus show, always on display. Like a woman with snakes or the bearded women and stuff, except she’s beautiful. She’s trying, always trying, to look her best. She never lets herself go. Not like the other woman. Well she didn’t let herself go she was never there in the first place. I thought she was a man. . It says here (pointing to a crumpled piece of paper she has hidden in her clothes) that at the beginning, my baby was scared of her. She thought she was a psychopathic lesbian. A psychopathic lesbian! I don’t like that woman. I don’t trust her. Besides, I’m her friend. I think I can be the woman that she can admire, to see how devoted I am, how passionate. How committed.
She wraps the remaining ribbons around her body and the light globe swings again this time the light lead is lower still. This time the soundscape of Chopin is disjointed and scratchy.

NARRATOR: “Lady Dorothy Nevil in ‘A page of confessions’ when asked, “the quality you most admire in Man” wrote “intellect”. When asked what she thought was “the quality you most admire in Woman” she wrote that “she wants to find a quality she can admire” (Queenie 1894: 383).

There is silence as she reaches for the music box and assumes the persona of the NARRATOR. She speaks directly to the audience.

She can’t find a single admirable quality. Not a single one. How truly sad.

The Performer unscrews the bottom of the music box and scoops a handful of sand from its base. She slowly lets the sand seep through her fingers falling to the floor. She finds the digital/video begins filming herself during this next section, which is simultaneously projected through the live feed onto the scrim. Occasionally the audiences will be included in the projection of the live feed. The lighting change makes the yellow ribbons tied around her body look like she is wearing an orange jumpsuit. She is bound like a Guantánamo Bay prisoner. The Performer struggles to take the yellow ribbons off. The movement is disjointed and jarring. PUT THE BLAME ON MAME, the song made
famous by Rita Hayworth from the film "Gilda" (1946) (Allan Roberts / Doris Fisher)

Anita Ellis (Film Soundtrack) plays under this dance:

“When they had the earthquake
in San Francisco
Back in nineteen-six
They said that ol’ Mother Nature
Was up to her old tricks
That’s the story that went around
But here’s the real low-down
Put the blame on Mame, boys
Put the blame on Mame

One night she started to shim and-shake
That brought on the Frisco quakes
So you can put the blame on Mame, boys
Put the blame on Mame.”


By the end of the song, the Performer is free of the yellow ribbons and walks upstage.
She puts the camera on the ground on a skewed angle. The feed is still actively filming.
She winds the music box and places it downstage casting a large silhouette of the
figurine on the scrim.

Episode two: May the streets rest in peace

As the Performer arranges five crates around the room, there is a soundscape of police
sirens, running, bottles smashing and news readings, including the following text as a
voiceover. There is an image projected on the scrim of the title “Episode Two: May the
Streets Rest in Peace” with the live feed projecting over the title. The live feed is of the
Performer setting up the crates. The following text is a voiceover in the style of a BBC
WWII newsreel. The quotes are deliberately repeated over each other in a loop:
VOICEOVER: “A petri dish for rafts of self-indulgent social engineers wishing to experiment with the lives of a chronically dysfunctional group of people” (Akerman 2004: 18). “This is the moment one of Sydney’s worst riots reached a crescendo yesterday as police confronted a barrage of fireworks, bricks, and bottles hurled by an uncontrollable mob. A 48-hour chain of events ignited by the death of a teenager unleashed nine hours of terror in Redfern” (Penberthy and Kamper 2004: 1). “Was a victim of anything more than his own tragic stupidity and a cycling mishap” (Akerman 2004: 18). “A petri dish for rafts of self-indulgent social engineers” (Akerman 2004: 18). “I defend very much the police in a situation like that” (Shaw 2004: 3). “I’ve always said about Redfern that the riot we saw was criminality, plain and simple” (Australian Associated Press 2004). “Absolute heroism” (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2004). “Not the Australian way to surrender the streets to mob rule” (Editorial 2004: 12). “This is the moment one of Sydney’s worst riots reached a crescendo yesterday as police confronted a barrage of fireworks, bricks, and bottles hurled by an uncontrollable mob. A 48-hour chain of events ignited by the death of a teenager unleashed nine hours of terror in Redfern” (Penberthy and Kamper 2004: 1).

The Performer stands on one of the crates. She moves easily between persona/character in this episode signified by changes in voice and physicality. The live feed ends and replaced with a projection of a PT Barnum poster advertising a ‘circus’ show of Aborigines with the writing “Dime Museum, commencing Monday, December 3rd, P.T Barnum’s Last Sensation, Australian Bushmen, cannibals, blacktrackers and boomerang throwers.” The Performer throughout this episode finds moments to paint her body and costume. She speaks the following dialogue painting her exposed skin with red paint.
COLONIAL: J. W. Bleakley from the book, “The Aborigines of Australia”, 1961: “Far from being shut off from the outside world, the inmates are encouraged to take part in local activities in sport and social life. The attitude of the public generally is sympathetic and helpful and all girls available for domestic service are readily employed. The main reserve is a La Peruse, which has become a popular visiting spot for tourists. The inhabitants of the native village have become highly civilised, living in neatly kept homes with many modern amenities, and have shown themselves will able to manage their own affairs”. (Bleakley 1961: 220-222).

The Performer continues to paint her body and addresses the audience.

The Performer moves the crates around until she is satisfied. The Performer adopts the persona of DISPOSSESSION. This persona is nervous and fidgets. She is distrustful of the audience. She straddles one of the crates and at other times paces or walks impatiently. The following speech is conversational.

DISPOSSESSION: My name is anger. Or regret. I’ve also been known as exile. I live on the outskirts. On the fringe. But in the centre of most cities. I live in the decrepit space and the fancy. I am created by ... I’m not sure. You can smell it, can’t you? Hear the crackle. Sense it? I am created by an authority that knows no better and when knowing better does nothing. I am the freak show owner of Baltimore 1883…

The Performer takes on the voice of the colonial persona as before. As she says the following text, she tears down the newspaper images suspended from the string from the earlier section. She screws up the paper and hands it one by one to the audience. On one side there are articles about Schapelle Corby and on the other side refer to the Redfern riots.

COLONIAL: “With deep scars and seams in the tortured flesh, and bones, sticks and large things, thrust through the nose and ears for ornaments, veritable bloodthirsty beasts in distorted human form, with but a glimmering of reason and gift of speech”. I am the literature that knew no better by making poetry out of man as animal … making man a beast “as free as Nature first made man, Ere the base laws of servitude began, When wild in woods the noble savage ran.” John Dryden, The Conquest of Granada, or Almanzor and Almahide.
She screws up the final piece of paper and places it in her mouth. She chews the paper then spits on to the ground. The image of the poster disappears as the soundscape of running feet and sirens begins again. The Performer continues to paint herself restlessly. While she does this, there is a black and white super eight film projection of the filmmaker’s feet walking at various speeds. At times, the film is disrupted by sharp edits and blurred photography. The film pans up from the feet to the memorial of tags in honour of ‘TJ’ Hickey. The film ends. At the end of the sequence, the Performer is once more Dispossession. The soundscape of sirens and footsteps is replaced with a solitary violin making sounds like a bird underplaying the following text.

DISPOSSESSION: I am stolen children and broken promises, sugar addictions and strychnine waters. I am prison cells and life sentences. I am disease and forgotten moments. I am a land in which sporting heroes and travel shows are golden but make sure you cross the street. My name is Dispossession. I am the bitumen of your street. I am the tower that became the police station “with a bird’s eye view over the Block” (Jackson 2004). I am the man who wanted to empty “his gun into the crowd and would have made sure he did not miss” (Friends of the ABC 2004).

The Performer is covered in red paint and she turns to the pile of sand on the floor and writes ‘RIP’ in the sand. The hymn, ‘All things Bright and Beautiful’, is sung by a children’s choir the whole time that this action is occurring. Once she writes the ‘RIP’, she enacts a young child and plays with the crates. She eventually forms a pyramid with the crates. The Performer goes to the top of the pyramid and steps inside the crate and squats. She is a little girl.
HOPE: Hi. (giggling) Hi. I bet you didn’t think I would be here. I come here often. I do! I’m here all the time. I like to live in the shadows and take you by surprise. Boo! You can’t see me, well not really. Sometimes I make myself known. I mainly come out when there has been a bit of trouble. I know I’m naughty. You should look out for me. No…. I mean you should look after me. (she laughs) My name is Hope.

A soundscape of police sirens, news readings and footsteps plays again building into a crescendo of urban chaos. A large piece of white material falls from the ceiling and spills over the crates. Hope is giggling underneath. She finally frees herself and an image on the white material appears. It is a photograph of a pyramid of crates in a Redfern park. There is silence except for the sound of the music box playing and the silhouette of the dancing figurine looming large over the projected image.

Episode three: Nobody talks about death

The sound fades to the sound of a heartbeat. The Performer moves to the couch. She drapes the white material from the previous scene over the couch. The title of the episode is projected on to the white material “Episode three: Nobody talks about death”. She lies down on the couch and the title disappears. The Performer speaks the following text as the NARRATOR.

NARRATOR: Teresa Marie Schindler Schiavo was born on December 3rd, 1963 and died March 3rd 2005. She suffered cardiac arrest in 1990 and was in a coma for ten weeks. She was in a persistent vegetative state for 15 years. Her life support was a tube inserted into her stomach. Her husband and family by her side fought each other to the
end. A question of liberty. A question of morality. Who are we if we cannot talk, smile, touch? She took thirteen days to die.

*She simulates a cardiac arrest violently plunging forward and falling to the ground. We notice the stain left from the paint of the previous episode, an outline of the Performer’s body on the couch. She slowly gets up from the ground. There is a loud soundscape of applause and television show music. The Performer fluctuates between a guest and the host of a talk show. It is deliberately difficult to tell the guest and host apart. Both are spoken with an American accent to place this section within the context of Terri Schiavo. She walks into the audience and says the following from amid the crowd.*

HOST: Welcome to what I imagine will be an invigorating debate over the value of human life. Who gets to live? How long can we suspend life? How do we value life? Do we duplicate, replicate, generate, or, dare I say, validate life or death? All are welcome to participate. All of you watching. I assume. Are alive. All of us are going to die. That’s for sure. Some will die a long, slow painful death. Cancer. Stroke. Paralysis. Starvation. Persistent vegetative state. Takes a long time to go. Some will die quickly with a wack of a police baton. The ‘thwack’ of a bus. Or a bullet to the heart. It’s all death and it’s all on show tonight. Because remember. “Nobody talks about death” (King 2003). A message from the President.

*The President is played as a petulant teenager swinging from the couch to juxtapose the complexity of the language.*
PRESIDENT: “The case of Terri Schiavo raises complex issues. Yet in instances like this one, where there are serious questions and substantial doubts, our society, our laws, and our courts should have presumption in favour of life. Those who live at the mercy of others deserve our special care and concern. It should be our goal as a nation to build a culture of life, where all Americans are valued, welcomed, and protected – and that culture of life must extend to individuals with disabilities” (Bush 2005).

It is important to note that the wording of text below is at odds with the content. The choice of wording and performance style is deliberately naïve and child like.

PRESIDENT: Terri was fighting for her life. Well, the doctors, the ‘experts’, say that she had no understanding of what her life meant but while there is one life to save this is a life I will save. My brother was fighting for her in Florida and I came home from Texas late one night to sign a law saying that the highest court in America, the most important court in the whole world, the whole wide world, would decide if her parents were right. And they were right because while there is one life to save that is a life I will save. (Anxious) I was losing popularity and the lifers voted me back in and we kept having boys blown up and fooling around with guns. We had the photos of men being tortured and some questions were raised about our boys taking the ‘other’ boys to ‘other’ countries to fiddle with their bits and ‘do things’ with their holy books. And those boys in Cuba dressed in their orange jumpsuits. You know what their problem is? They were fighting for the wrong man. I don’t see them. I can’t see them. I had to jump in to save her. I had to. Because while there is only one life to save this is a life I will save. (Pause) If I can’t save one at home what’s the point of killing them over there?
Performer switches between several points of view in the following section. Each point of view whether it is the Christian right, or the Euthanasia lobby will be represented by the HOST and GUEST and each persona morphs into the other.

HOST: “I say let it end, all the hatred, death for a Christian is a wonderful thing. I applaud Michael in all his efforts is letting Terri rest in peace and becoming whole again and being about to walk in golden fields (Anonymous 2005). “Nobody talks about death” (King 2003). Stand up and look left.

Four audience members stand up and look left.

GUEST: The courts they prey on the disabled. They test and prod and exhibit. What is the point if you can’t save one life at home? What is the point? “We need to remove that line “land of the free, home of the brave” in reference to poor Terri. Hitler must be guffawing from the pots of hell” (amdgmary 2005: 6).

At certain intervals, the dialogue will be projected onto the scrim as though it was simultaneously being written on the Internet.

HOST: “I think her family has been selfish and have used her for their own causes and I find that pathetic” (Roswell 2005). “Terri is not an inanimate object where we’re going to pass her back and forth (King 2003). “Nobody talks about death” (King 2003). Stand up and look right.
Four audience members stand up from their chairs and look. right

GUEST: Kevin Fobbs from blogsforterri.com. (Angrily) “God – not man – decides what “quality of life” means because he – not man – created life and he – not man – decides when life begins and ends” (Fobbs 2005). God not man. God not man. (Calmly) R. Theodore, 2005. “However it came to me just the other day that it is WE, God’s people, who are HIS hand and feet and mouthpieces on this earth and God makes sure we are supported and surrounded by a host of angels to assist and protect us. It is therefore God’s people that must take the physical action to rescue this girl from certain murder” (Theodore 2005). (there is a sense of fatigue) Please sit. (The eight audience members sit down) AnimalLover, A Family’s Torment, 2005. “We are all our brother’s keepers and are responsible to defend the most vulnerable. I’m all for hiring mercenaries to take to Walter Reed for impartial evaluation. I’d be happy to donate” (AnimalLover 2005: 9) (softly spoken) GeekDejure 2005. “Hail Terri … Child of God … We Pray those judicial sinners … Do not cause the hour of thy death … Amen!!!” (GeekDejure 2005: 15).

Dean Martin’s song “I don’t see me in your eyes anymore” plays. The Performer sits quietly on the sofa. She quietly mimes staring at an imaginary balloon floating in the air above her and at the end of the song softly says, as the NARRATOR, the following directly addressing the audience.

NARRATOR: “Terri is not an inanimate object where we’re going to pass her back and forth” (King 2003). (Exacerbated) “Nobody talks about death” (King 2003).
The Performer drapes herself in the white material and stands with the red paint markings obvious to the audience. Mozart’s ‘A Verum Corpus’ plays throughout the following monologue interspersed with intervals of a loop of recorded laughter. There is a projection of human cells developing and rapidly multiplying and reproducing. The projection should cover the entire performance space particularly visible over the white material with the painted outline of the Performer’s body. The Performer is the NARRATOR.

NARRATOR: There is extensive damage the nervous system with atrophied brain weighing 615 grams, half the weight of a healthy female of the patient’s weight, height and age. Extensive damage to cerebral cortex, basal ganglia, cerebellum, midbrain, thalami and hippocampus regions of the brain. All pyramidal neurons necessary for cortex function were damaged. Curiously the coronary vessels and heart are healthy suggesting initial collapse was not due to cardiac arrest. There appears to be no sign of trauma to the neck or throat region. Severe dehydration noted.

The Performer destroys the RIP message made from sand on the ground with her feet. The soundscape of the looped laughter is replaced with loud applause. The projection has stopped and there is a single spotlight on the Performer. She is the host/guest once more and adopts the American accent for the following. She repeats the first gesture of running the sand through her fingers until the sand is a mound on the floor.
HOST: What is the point if you can’t save one life at home? “Terri is not an inanimate object where we’re going to pass her back and forth. Nobody talks about death” (King 2003).

_The Performer takes off the white drape and is the neutral persona of the beginning._

_With her back to the audience she dances very slowly and mimes the lyrics to the Nina Simone song ‘I’ve got life’._

“_I got my arms, I got my hands_
_I got my fingers, Got my legs_
_I got my feet, I got my toes_
_I got my liver, Got my blood_

_I’ve got life, I’ve got my freedom_
_I’ve got life, I’m gonna keep it_
_I’ve got life, I’m gonna keep it_”

_The Performer speaks the following to the audience. In the background we can see the pile of yellow ribbons, the sofa couch, the mound of sand, pyramid of crates, and the white material with the painted outline of the Performer’s body. She holds the music box in her hand._

NARRATOR: Now you see. The one. Two. Three. I wonder at how you take them. If you laugh, scoff, rebuke or nod off. Timing is golden when such panic ensues and history interplays with the lot. Are we at an intersection where life, death, exile and hope all fight for the spotlight? We project. Pod cast. Tweet. Wik. Write. Blog off. Neither deaf nor blind to the cries in the night. We gather notes. Ideas. Speculation. Notate the rotation and observe without hesitation. Alarm. Bells.
The Performer takes the music box and places it in the centre. The Performer exits and the lights fade. The music box can be heard playing as the shadow of the figurine grows larger. The cacophony of technological sounds from the beginning sequence progressively gets louder.

The End
Performative thinking must be seen as a means of cultural analysis

(Schechner 2004: 8).
Chapter six: *Three Interrupted Lives* and the social event in performance

The rise of globalisation, the impact of new media and the nature of spectacle in the twenty-first century have contributed to a situation summarised by Baz Kershaw as one in which “human exchange and experience is suffused by performance” (2007: 12). The argument at the beginning of this dissertation was taken directly from Diana Taylor’s statement that to “say something is a performance amounts to an ontological affirmation”, while “performance also constitutes the methodological lens that enables scholars to analyse events as performance” (2003: 3). Building on Taylor’s statements I deploy two performance paradigms as analytical strategies: one that theorises social phenomena as performance and one that proposes that a social phenomenon is performance by making it the subject matter in a performance. The secondary paradigm is enacted through a combination of the previous chapter (and performance piece), *Three Interrupted Lives*, and this final chapter. By drawing on Taylor’s notion of “ontological affirmation” and Kershaw’s understanding of “spectacles of deconstruction” (2003: 595) this chapter explores how a performance piece might encourage a nuanced reading of the issues surrounding moral panic and be read as a meaningful addition to the conceptual analysis of social phenomena in the twenty-first century.

In this chapter I examine current and past performance practices that enact a critical intervention and/or social commentary of some kind. The chapter is also an overview of dramaturgical decisions I made as evidence to how I might have contributed something similar in writing about these specific events in performance. These decisions relate to notions of space, text, personae, media, visual imagery, soundscape and issues of truth and representation. I have tried to find ways to represent in performance the basic
elements that each case study shares: the social event as mediatised spectacle, spectatorship, moral panic and the enactments of truth, discourse and power. This is not only to link back to the theoretical examination of moral panics in this context but also to speculate how these notions are critical to the ways in which performance might intervene in, and perhaps even abate, the outcomes of moral panics. Ronald N. Jacobs argues that it is in the world of fiction and theatre where a “moral empathy might be cultivated” to confront issues of suffering and disempowerment and that in the case of live theatre, “the moral sensibility is reproduced through a powerful sense of proximity and immediacy” (2004: 132-133). His final statement suggests that the intimacy and immediacy of live performance can help to frame a performative social commentary, as well as challenge the cultural sensibilities of the performer/audience relationship. We can achieve this commentary by locating those moments where this intimacy and/or immediacy are either embraced or interrupted. I view the two paradigms – social phenomenon as and is performance – as complementary yet interconnected observations of the contemporary mediatised world. In addition, by conducting a close reading of how both paradigms are enacted, one can consider the potential role of performance as a vehicle for interrogating moral panic and the changing nature of spectatorship. In this sense this chapter attempts to identify where the research involved in examining these social events as performance influence and contribute to how these events can be understood in performance and vice versa. Or in other words, I ask how the performance speaks to the case studies and how the case studies speak to the performance. Ultimately, Three Interrupted Lives was intended to be a performance that enacts a social commentary by challenging audiences to question what makes individuals and communities define themselves when social normativity is perceived to be disrupted.
Performance as ontological affirmation and spectacle of deconstruction

The case studies proposed that spectacle, spectatorship and moral panic in the twenty-first century could be usefully interpreted as performance. I understand contemporary mediatised social events to be the focused manifestation of information that can lead to the production of spectacle and moral panic through the active engagement of spectators (both the mass media and the public). Gabriella Giannachi contends that globalisation “operates primarily at the level of information” (2007: 1) and with this in mind I have argued throughout the case studies that the transmission of information produces bodies of knowledge, which not only form and inform discourse but also create truth claims. Considering these statements, and following Giannachi’s claim that “the politics of information is also an aesthetics” (2007: 1; original emphasis), I contend that much can be gained through examining the same elements of the contemporary mediatised locale in performance. There is an aesthetic aspect to the exchange of information. The conceptualisation of ‘information’ represented within an ‘aesthetic’ provided a primary motivation for enacting a secondary paradigm to complement the case studies: what can be said, and done, in performance can contribute an alternative (and perhaps interventionist) angle on what people say, do and think in a moral panic.

Performance and performance studies continue to flesh out the possibilities for performance. At the same time theories of performance continually produce and contest claims about related concepts such as the nature of space, time, presence, technology, the body and the subject. When Diana Taylor suggests that declaring that something is a performance grants it an “ontological affirmation” (2003: 3), not only is she acknowledging the ‘real’ lived experience of a performance event, but her ‘naming’ the

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performance also grants it another form of ‘being’, another kind of ontological existence. My position is that performance is about the ontological and epistemological questions of space and time, story and narrative, performer and audience, presence and absence, and not as a dichotomy but as ambiguous, liminal slippages in meaning. These elements can be fleshed out and played with according to the frame, style or intention the performance maker uses to produce meaning and significance accordingly.

However, what I intend a performance to ‘mean’ may differ significantly from the meanings that an audience member may make. Rather than viewing this as a problem, I argue that different meanings actually create much of the ‘power’ of performance. In fact opening up opportunities for meaning-making can generate debate and have the potential to encourage an active and engaged spectatorship. The generative capacity of performative meanings can create myriad experiences for the performance maker and audience alike and these can be deeply significant. However, the many dramaturgical elements in a performance can, and do map the intentions of the performance maker. In this context, Three Interrupted Lives can be understood as the embodiment of what I see as the central issues in each case study and, more broadly, as the very nature of what it means to ‘be’ in the contemporary ‘mediated’ world.

Kershaw has proposed that, “if spectacle is everywhere in the performative society, so much so that humans are constituted though it, then in theatre and elsewhere it gains new kinds of significance” (2007: 210). While his particular concern is the productive negotiations between performance and ecology as a way to confront the excesses of the twenty-first century, this quotation is helpful in understanding the spaces that are shared between the mediatised digital world and live performance. In an earlier article, Kershaw describes the kinds of performances that problematise contemporary global
phenomena as “spectacles of deconstruction”: “spectacles that question and displace the nature of the ‘real’” (2003: 595) and suggests that such performances “open up new domains for radical revisions of the way things are” (2003: 599). The three case studies examined in this dissertation revealed moments when the structures of social normativity were genuinely believed to be under threat. Examining these events through the role of the spectator, the nature of mediatised spectacle and the conditions of a moral panic meant that the socio-historical circumstances of each event were also opened up for interpretation. To attempt to do this in performance is tricky and potentially risky (as I will describe throughout this chapter). Ultimately, I believe that there is everything to gain by doing so. By creating a performance about these specific events, their discursive conditions can be made ‘present’ and thus also challenged. In this sense, the ways in which societies manifest fear, crisis, belonging and identity have a significant place in artistic performance practice.

Until this point, I have identified the spectator as the active participant in moral panic. In this chapter, I also refer to the ‘audience’ and in this sense, I mean the audience member to the performance piece. The significance of the three social events was largely to do with the responses of the active spectator. By introducing the spectator from the original three events as material in performance, I am able to acknowledge the role ‘they’ played in the social event whilst still leaving the performance open to interpretation.55

55 I must also raise a point of tension about whether audiences do, or do not, have previous knowledge of the cases and, if so, how this might affect their interpretation of the piece. It is safe to assume that, although an audience member may not have any knowledge of the particulars of each case, they will have an understanding of the mass media, public spectacle and social crisis. Ultimately, I wanted the performance to resonate with a broad audience. Thus, it is more important that they identify with the themes and issues raised, rather than recognise the actual specifics of the cases.
There are many ways to play with the concepts of moral panic, the media spectator and spectacle in performance. Essentially, I used juxtaposition and paradox to create a space where the audience was encouraged to reflect on the performance itself and their role within it. Using the example of *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit* by Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Kershaw writes about how this performance challenged colonial imaginings through creating the conditions for paradox and a direct exchange between the spectator and performer:

In the moment of exchange the performer potentially can challenge the ethical assumptions of the spectator’s action, encouraging them to see the situation from two sides at once, transcending the contradictions and possibly perceiving the paradoxes in the event. … The spectacle of deconstruction has the potential to generate such reflexivity through paradox (2003: 610).

In *Three Interrupted Lives*, I have attempted to create a “spectacle of deconstruction” through dramaturgical elements such as space, text, personae, media, visual imagery, soundscape, and raise issues relating to representation – whereby juxtaposition and paradox can confront the conditions of moral panic, spectacle and spectatorship, as the deconstructed material of live performance. Ultimately, I hope the performance encourages a more nuanced understanding of the issues surrounding these cases, and of moral panic in general, and thus, activates a critical spectatorship of its own.

**Space**

The first dramaturgical element I examine is space, by which I mean both the physical environment where the performance is staged and the socio-cultural meanings ascribed to those spaces. A creative reimagining of the three case studies might be well served by a site-specific location, such as an enclosed space resembling a prison, a museum or art gallery. Each of these spaces could be interpreted as symbolising a sense of observation and/or spectacle in some form. Incorporating an intermedial element such as live cyber
interactivity could also be productive in drawing attention to mediatisation, as well as the distinctions among audience, performer, space, time and form. However, by staging the events in a ‘theatrical’ space I argue it is possible to deliberately invert theatrical conventions, disrupt the distance between the performer and audience and, in so doing, draw attention to the events themselves and the nature of the performer/audience relationship. Housing the performance as an installation or in another non-theatrical space would also play with the performer/audience relationship but in a manner where, from the outset, the audience is prepared for that kind of artistic expression. However, by setting the performance in a traditional ‘theatre’, and intentionally using the space to invert convention, audience expectations can be challenged.

As the spectator plays such an integral role in the manifestation of a moral panic it is important to house the audience in such a way that their presence is acknowledged as critical to the performance process. Thus, I designed *Three Interrupted Lives* around a thrust stage that allows the performer to move into the depths of the audience, whilst at other times remaining distant. This staging was intended to engender moments of both intimacy and estrangement between the performer and the audience. For example, the audience enters the space by crossing the performance area and the performer gives each one, at random, a yellow ribbon and directions for audience interaction. Immediately, the audience members are made aware that they are encouraged to play an active role in the performance. The literal inscription of the performer on the space through a painted outline was included as a way to build the performance maker into the performance itself, while live video feed draws attention to the mediation of the performer’s ‘presence’: where the performer is able to look at herself and the audience being filmed in real time. At another point, a swinging light globe creates a sense of an interrogation room and later the impression of a television talk show, where the
performer becomes the host of the show and enters the audience. Both the interrogation room and talk-show format are examples of how I wanted to represent the notions of surveillance, spectacle and the active spectator in performance. This is a reflection of how the research, and theoretical findings, involved in the case studies have directly influenced the performance. The nature of surveillance in performance needs to be acknowledged in the representation of the Corby case, just as the urban space needs to be for the Redfern riots or questions of the body in relation to Schiavo. In addition my intention in playing with the space between audience and performer was to raise questions about the role of the media spectator in producing ‘spectacle’ and the role of the audience member in a performance event. In relation to the work of Forced Entertainment Judith Helmer argues that:

Despite their obsession with the play of proximity and distance between performers and audience, the group almost always worked in the simplest stage arrangement – audience at one end, actors at the other – often with a raise separating the two. In this way, traditional spatial opposition was maintained and even enhanced at times (2004: 64-72).

It seems to me that the point of placing their work in conventional theatrical spaces is to acknowledge the tradition, history and discursive knowledge that go with this environment in order to deliberately play with the ways in which this arrangement can engage the spectator, challenge expectations and guide meaning. Helmer late quotes company member Cathy Naden when she writes that Forced Entertainment “wanted to infiltrate the mainstream theatre” and “stay in those spaces, saying that there is an alternative to the work that’s normally seen there” (Helmer 2004: 72). By doing so the performance makers are directly involved in creating a dialogue and a relationship, between space, performance/performer and the audience. Without speculating on how individual audience members made sense of the questions that I might pose in the representations of these events, by creating conditions of ‘discomfort’ about where the boundaries lie between audience and performance, I am able to highlight the complex
issues stemming from each event in relation to the conditions of the actual live performance event.

**Text and truths**

In relation to ‘text’, I wanted the performance piece to have a non-linear, non-narrative form linked to other performative elements that challenge the role of the audience and inscribe the intentions of the performance maker. The piece plays with textual form and performance style through dramatic monologue, direct address, episodic structure, audience interaction, presentational forms of acting and verbatim quotation. When the Narrator says, “Now you see. The one. Two. Three. I wonder at how you take them. If you laugh, scoff, rebuke or nod off. Timing is golden when such panic ensues and history interplays with the lot” the audience is being asked to question their role in what they have just witnessed. In reference to the work of *Frantic Assembly* specifically, and of the theatre spectator more generally, Florian Malzacher argues that “the spectator is part of the event, existing within the same space and time. Active presence in a common situation” (2004: 124). The textual elements and performance style of *Three Interrupted Lives* were intended either to support the spoken text or to expose disjuncture in the dialogue and narrative flow of the piece. I utilise non-narrative and non-linear techniques, disjointed sound and strong visual statements in conjunction with a more traditional theatrical monologue to disrupt action, story and dialogue. When language is disrupted significance can be gained from drawing attention to the meaning of the language, or the issues that play at the heart of the language. In this sense, whether it is spoken text, written text used as a visual cue, or how this text is delivered, the case studies and the circumstances of moral panic in each instance can be used as the very material of performance. In this way, language – or at least non-linear, non-narrative, lyrical language – becomes a form of heterotopia: liminal and transgressive.
A crucial area of analysis in each case study is the role of the contemporary spectator as an active participant in the spectacles with which they engage. As a performance maker, I take from those ideas the imperative to incorporate both the notion of the active audience member of the performance and the active spectator who contributes to the original event. I explore the role of the former through actual audience interaction whilst the latter is primarily approached by including the voices of the original spectator.

Direct address and audience interaction are common in contemporary performance and deliberately challenge the roles of, and boundaries between, the audience and the performance. The Wooster Group is famous for meta-theatrical exposition. For example, their performance of *Brace up!* (1991 and 2003) began with the audience entering while performers were warming up and casually talking with each other. The ‘actual’ performance began with the recitation of stage directions from *Three Sisters* by Anton Chekhov. Direct address can be utilised in a similar capacity for exposing the artifice of the theatrical space and the activation of the spectator. Throughout *Three Interrupted Lives* the role of the Narrator uses what Marvin Carlson refers to as “a subversive and parodic self-consciousness” (2004: 189). Rather than eliciting similar judgments made in the original events, the Narrator asks the audience to question the nature and intensity of moral panic. The performer continually engages with the audience directly and thus breaks down the distance between audience and performer. The direct address is ultimately an invitation for the audience to reflect on the issues raised in the piece.

The performance text is divided into three episodes, bookmarked with the performer as ‘Narrator’ at the beginning and the end of the performance. Rather than following a linear and chronological narrative structure, the episodes appear to be isolated and
distinct and are deliberately estranged from narrative flow or singular meaning. The connection between them is the notion of moral panic and mediatised spectacle alluded to at various points by the ‘Narrator. The Narrator helps the audience understand that they should be questioning both the form and the content of the performance. Each episode is identified by a projected title. This is both a storytelling device and a meta-theatrical technique to remind the audience of the artifice of their surroundings; the text becomes a literal sign post as to the direction of the piece. The episodic structure was a useful way to frame my commentary on each event and to play with moments where the audience might identify with the material and where they are deliberately kept at a distance. Elizabeth LaCompte suggests that her work at The Wooster Group, has been described as a ‘tapestry’: “where you might just see the pattern or the strand or something and then as you looked closer you discern the bigger images that made the story” (Quick 2007: 60). I align with this sentiment and suggest that greater than the specifics of the three events is a more significant story about how identity formation, mediatisation and moral panic are the core of the overall performance. The episodic structure allows for the non-narrative text to appear contained within meaningful segments helping to direct the audience toward the actual material within each episode and the projected text identifying each episode signals to the audience that this guidance is deliberate.

In reference to text and dialogue, the most prolific technique that I employed in the script is the use of verbatim quotations sourced from both the literal words of spectators to the original events, as well as excerpts from historical text. At the beginning of the performance, the audience is given a program noting the use of verbatim dialogue, a history of the events and other notes regarding the research and creative process. The
verbatim dialogue is also referred to in the opening speech (and at other points in the performance) and quotations are prefaced with the name of the individual who made the statement. In addition to the verbatim quotations, the script is also interspersed with excerpts from various literary sources providing a form of historical context. These excerpts can be ‘read’ as a form of quotation raising interesting questions about how reproducing history can act to disturb notions of time and place.

I proposed in the case studies that the three events became spectacles because of the intervention of spectators. Therefore, it is both relevant and conceptually significant to incorporate the words of the individuals who were involved as a way in which to position these events in performance. This is where the research of the case studies directly informs the performance. The contentious issues pertinent to each case were what propelled the spectators to engage, respond and further contribute to the mediatised spectacle and persistent moral panic. In many ways these issues were consumed by an active media spectatorship driven to consume a heightened spectacle of the ‘real’. To involve the ‘real’ within a performance representation of these events focuses these issues; to document the ‘real’ in performance draws unequivocal attention to what makes the real real. Carol Martin argues that theatre and performance “that engages the real participates in the larger cultural obsession with capturing the “real” for consumption even as what we understand as real is continually revised and reinvented” (2010: 1). Martin’s argument is particularly relevant when representing moral panic in performance because of the shifting web of discourses surrounding truth claims inherent in any moral panic. Documenting the real in performance creates an interesting slippage between fact and fiction, and by using the ‘real’ (excerpts from newspapers, blogs, magazines and radio) words of the people associated with the events, the polarisation of
‘truths’ that exist in a moral panic can be represented, and thus, questioned. The performance cannot be categorised as exclusively verbatim theatre because I deliberately use fictional dialogue in conjunction with verbatim dialogue however, intentionally incorporating both ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ helps to destabilise any sense that, when retelling social events, truth is stable or fixed.56 This point, I believe, is critical to both the success of ‘theatre of the real’ and to the representation of moral panics in performance because the nature of truth is already found to be intensely problematic.

Carlson points out that, “emphasizing the instability of repetition has provided a particularly important part of modern resistant political performance” and it is in the variation of codes, tools and traditions of the dominant social order where these very issues can be subverted (2004: 189). By focusing on and repeating the language that was used to stage and reproduce the events through media, the nature of the three events is called into question. In this sense, the verbatim quotation is a form of interruption: interrupting a text’s context to highlight the content of the text. At a certain point in the performance, the audience is asked to “stand up and look left” and “stand up and look right”. Thus at a particular point in the performance, where I use actual language from the three cases, some members of the audience will be separated from the rest of the audience by standing and looking directly at each other. These devices effectively implicate the audience in the performance by asking them to participate and, by doing so, draw their attention to the words that are actually spoken. The concepts of repetition and interruption are deliberately used to highlight the performance material at that very moment, which hopefully guides the audience to reflect upon the context and content of

56 Carol Martin identifies various terms for this kind of performance and the importance of the work: “Theatre of the real, also known as documentary theatre as well as docudrama, verbatim theatre, reality-based theatre, theatre of witness, tribunal theatre, nonfiction theatre, and theatre of fact, has long been important for the subjects it presents” (Martin 2010: 1)
the performance. However, there are some risks involving ‘repetition’ and ‘interruption’ in relation to the use of verbatim quotation and the concept of representation.

In reference to Anna Deavere Smith’s prolific performance work of retelling ‘real’ stories, Alice Rayner argues that: “To grasp the work means letting go of categorical differences such as news and fiction, or imitation and reality. The tension between those categories leads to calling the work ambiguous” (2002: 365 original emphasis). This is a useful concept in regard to Three Interrupted Lives. Verbatim material in performance is framed according to the intentions of the performance maker, and therefore, the conditions of these intentions need to be considered. Martin suggests: “What is real and what is true are not necessarily the same. A text can be fictional yet true. A text can be nonfictional yet untrue” (2006: 15). In the case studies, my interest was the manifestation of certain truth formations, rather than attempting to extricate the ‘truth’ myself. In a similar way, I use verbatim dialogue to tell the story of moral panic in each instance, rather than to retell the mechanics of the event itself. In an interesting parallel, Martin, in reference to Deavere Smith’s work, argues that:

The “raw texts,” if simply read on a page, often reveal hatred and intolerance (along with humor, warmth, and personal, value-derived opinion); but Smith’s performance clearly signals that racial and gender hatred cannot be accepted as the end of the story (1996: 83).

This quotation suggests that merely retelling hate-driven and intolerant behaviour does not necessarily subvert it. It might, in fact, reinforce the sentiment. Thus, it is integral that the way it is repeated and the way it is framed, are brought into the equation. Martin argues that the use of verbatim text must be about opening up debate rather than being pitched as the “end of the story”. For ‘theatre of the real’ to be successful there must be an understanding of the dramaturgy involved in staging fact, and how the shaping of the
real can be both powerful and dangerous. Martin argues that there is currently “an emerging theatre of the real that directly addresses the global condition of troubled epistemologies about truth, authenticity and reality” (2010: 1). A similar approach is integral to Three Interrupted Lives. Verbatim text is taken as raw material and crafted in a way that allows it to disrupt or to blur the distinctions between fact and fiction. In this sense what is documented, the real, is intentionally directed in a way as to encourage debate around the events rather than help sustain the moral panic that each event produced. Martin writes of the Argentinean performance maker Vivi Tellas and her approach to the theatricalisation of ‘real’ lives:

Regular people and the real worlds to which they belong are her subject. These worlds are for Tellas living archives articulated in daily rituals, images, ways of being, habits of interacting, experience, knowledge, and texts. These living archives housed in individuals use theatrical elements such as repetition, the construction and use of space, scenes, storytelling, spectator, and entrances and exits in ways the verge on the theatrical ... The fascination of this work is its articulation of how the ordinary is extraordinary and how the extraordinary is, in fact, often part of the ordinary (2010: 11-12).

The construction of personae, at times more allegorical than character based, the theatricalisation of the everyday and the spectacular, and the inclusion of the verbatim text taken directly from the three social events depicted in the case studies, illustrates how moral panic can be depicted in performance as a type of archive. This also indicates on another level how the central elements of the active spectator, spectacle and contested truth claims can be made present performatively; how in this context the extraordinary reveals the underlying discourses that exist as an undercurrent to the everyday and the ordinary. Martin argues:

Even as documentary theatre typically tries to divide fabrication from truth by presenting enactments of actual people and events from verifiable sources it is also where the real and the simulated collide and they depend on each other (2010: 2).

In this way, the use of verbatim quotations interspersed with dramatic and historical text and other dramaturgical framing devices teases out questions about the notion of ‘truth’
itself. I do so by asking several questions: what is different between the historical source and the event; why might anxieties exist in relation to socio-historical origins of contemporary phenomena; and how does the fictional material contextualise the events and its origins?

**Representations**

One of the consequences of contemporary mediatised spectacles that result in moral panic is that the individuals are, to a certain extent, rendered ‘absent’. Hence, it seems appropriate that this notion of ‘absence’ be included in the performance’s reimagining of moral panic. In fact, in each episode I deliberately refrain from actually depicting the principal individuals involved in the original case. However, this absence can lead to another potentially problematic situation: the misinterpretation of why the people directly involved in the original event are excluded from the performance piece. The aim of *Three Interrupted Lives* was to engender a critical response to the representation of moral panic. The issue of appearing to reinforce this anxiety was one of the risks in representing these events in performance.

While researching the nature of moral panic and contemporary spectacle, I was reminded of a comment by Kershaw regarding the controversial responses to the performance already briefly mentioned, *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit* by Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña. Kershaw writes that by the “simple stratagem of refusing to signal clearly the ontological status of its codes, this spectacle risked reinforcing the very forces it aimed to subvert” (2007: 234). What began as a satirical commentary on colonialism resulted in responses ranging from indignation to the
genuine belief that the performers were in fact recently ‘discovered’ natives. However, the contested meanings only contributed further to the debate with which Fusco and Gómez-Peña were wishing to engage: “while withholding any indication that it was indeed a pretence, it implicated spectators in its reduced spectacle of human degradation in challenging and highly contradictory ways” (Kershaw 2007: 234). In relation to the case studies the very thing that enables the global transmission of information is also what reinforces the objectification of the individual subjects involved in these events. The notion of objectification becomes a central theme in the performance, while it remains another risk, in terms of reinforcing this objectification, in the representation of the events. One of the principal ways I confronted this issue was by directly utilising theatrical convention and contemporary performance techniques.

Martin suggests that contemporary ‘theatre of the real’ is often influenced by postmodernism in the embracing of fragmented text, the representation of personae over character and realism and “especially in asserting that truth is contextual, multiple, and subject to manipulation” (2010: 3). She also suggests that the documenting of fact in verbatim performance is about acknowledging the interconnection of societal forces; “that history is a network of relationships” (Martin 2010: 3). It is in this context that I have created a range of personae (who at various stages directly address the audience) and are deliberately symbolic in order to represent issues, elements or themes associated with the events. Similarly I embrace the potential for performance to be a dynamic space for critical reflection for audience and performance maker alike by placing the ‘real’ within an obviously theatrical environment, hence calling attention to the ambiguities of representation. Thus, critical to the negotiation of representing absence without reinforcing it is positioning what happens on stage and framing how this might
then be interpreted by audience members.

It is in the representation of the Redfern riots where these questions relating to representation are the most apparent. Describing an exhibition of photographs of prisoner torture in Abu Ghraib Prison called *Inconvenient Evidence* and the documentary theatre performance *Guantánamo*, Wendy S. Hesford argues that ‘trauma’ can be acknowledged and countered through the notion of repetition (2006: 39). Yet, as Hesford recognises, there is also a risk of reinforcing trauma through the repetition and reproduction of instances of oppression and domination. I felt that it was imperative (when negotiating the complexities of the Redfern riots) to acknowledge the traumatic injustices associated with past Australian government policies, as well as the social, economic and political circumstances experienced by many Indigenous Australians today. However, it is equally as important to acknowledge survival and empowerment. The representation of trauma is complex and potentially problematic. Hesford suggests that the risk of the misrepresentation of trauma can be avoided only through the acknowledgement of framing and the role of the audience (2006: 39). Thus, framing becomes particularly important in relation to the representation of the Redfern riots because of the potential trauma associated with the reproduction of stories about Aboriginal people.

In the days immediately after the riots, the historical context and the perspectives of the rioters were largely absent from the mainstream media. This absence suggests that dispossession, poverty and inequity were silenced in favour of generalisations about
widespread criminality. The performance draws attention to this silencing through the inclusion of verbatim material from the media and historical text, indicating an oppressive history and purely allegorical representations of the notions of dispossession and hope. By not having an actual character representing the ‘rioter’ and having instead a persona representing a state of being or a concept, I avoid misrepresentation because I never attempt to speak for the individuals involved in the actual case. By creating at times symbolic characterisation and at other times neutral personae, I am attempting to draw attention to the possible causes of conflict, rather than repeat or reinforce it, and to argue that one cannot underestimate the power of both dispossession and hope. In this sense, I deliberately use Hesford’s notion of ‘repetition’ (2006: 39) by situating historical text (interspersed with verbatim responses to the riots and fictional dialogue) to both acknowledge the objectification of the rioters and frame the riots in an historical context. Through these devices I hope to expose the very real and often traumatic experiences of both dislocation and survival.

Martin describes how the traumatic experiences ‘recounted’ through the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission were represented in the opera *Rewind: Cantata* by Phillip Miller. In this production memory is transformed through image, dance and music whilst breathlessness, sighs and pauses become powerful “aural enunciations of physical realities overburdened with painful memories” (Martin 2010: 6). Thus, in this context the notion of dramaturgical framing and the utilisation of theatrical conventions become incredibly important in relation to the representation of moral panic. In relation to the Redfern riots the potential trauma associated with generalising or misrepresenting the lives of Aboriginal people is something that must be considered carefully. There is

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57 With the exception of comments by Lyall Munro, Aden Ridgeway and the anonymous girls interviewed in the *Four Corners* interview by Liz Jackson, the mainstream media’s immediate reporting on the events is my major sources here. The newspapers also carried images and articles about ‘TJ’ Hickey and his family but I am principally concerned here with the representation of the riots.
the potential, through these framing devices, to produce something significant and powerful that, like *Rewind: Cantata*, might in fact encourage critical self-reflection in audience members.  

Martin argues that much of “today’s dramaturgy of the real uses the frame of the stage not as a separation, but as a communion of the real and simulated; not as a distancing of fiction from nonfiction, but as a melding of the two” (2010: 2). I find this notion helpful in the representation of moral panic, the role of the media and the formation of personae for both the Terri Schiavo and Schapelle Corby cases. In the case of Terri Schiavo I refer to her by name several times but within the context of a television talk show, which also involves audience participation. This format was intended to establish the role of the media in this case specifically but also as a satirical commentary on the larger debate surrounding the right-to-life/death movements and the intervention of the US government in the case. The performance artist Karen Finley writes of the Schiavo case that Terri became “a national pastime, a place for us to act out as an uneasy, confused society” (2006: 184). Her inspiration for the performance, *The Passion of Terri Schiavo*, performed as a double bill with *The Dreams of Laura Bush*, was the extraordinary ‘passion’ from the media and public and the disparity between these responses and reactions to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. As Finley explains, “There are daily suicide bombings. Yet Terri Schiavo transfixed a nation with her one individual life. Maybe that is the point. The real interest is on one’s own individual life worth” (2006: 184). Finley embraces the responses to the Schiavo case and creates various personae, including the depiction of a ‘mother’ to Schiavo, who speaks at length in descriptive monologues. However, there is a risk in portraying specific individuals

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58 It should be noted that for some audience members *Rewind: Cantata* was a painful experience in itself and that this is a risk when retelling the traumatic experiences of real life situations.
from “real-life events” in case it is misunderstood that the performance is intended to speak on behalf of them. In fact the notion of Schiavo reduced to “bare life” because of how she came to represent larger issues relating to the right-to-life/death debate and the very notion of liberty further supports this idea that she is almost entirely absent from her own performative representation. Thus, I was concerned with presenting the relationship between the media and the possible social and political conditions that produced the moral panic surrounding Schiavo rather than the individuals in the case. As much as possible I wanted to present these issues through satire so as to reveal the underlying turbulent and at times virulent moral panic that was inspired by the case. For example, the President of the United States of America is presented in an ironic way, as a teenager, joined by two other personae, the ‘Guest’ and the ‘Host’, in an imaginary television talk show. The talk-show format is used as a parody of the role of ‘reality television’ as a media institution and the political spectacle surrounding the right-to-life/death campaign that occurred in Schiavo’s name.

Chapter two argues that Corby’s pursuit of agency is inextricably linked to the discursive forces that subjugate her. The interplay and hierarchy of discourses ranging from race, gender, sexuality and media essentially contribute to the tension between her surveillance and agency. The question then became how to represent in performance the objectification of Corby by the moral panic that both supports and subjugates her. The mediatised spectacle surrounding Corby created a tension between objectification and agency. In the performance Corby is alluded to but never directly mentioned. This is because the episode is really about the story of the fictional personae ‘the Fan’ – the manifestation of Australia’s obsession with Corby – rather than Corby herself. The Fan speaks of the treatment of a woman she never names and surrounds herself with
newspaper clippings of Corby, which at times can be visible to the audience. The Fan expresses an innate fear and disgust about a landscape, culture and community of which she is ignorant. While she does not declare a sexual love for the woman she speaks of, she does imply resentment toward “a psychopathic lesbian”, a direct reference to the way Renae Lawrence was referred to by Corby and some members of the media. I include this quotation to draw attention to the perceived threat to social normativity that dominated the media and popular representation of Corby. To illustrate this ‘threat’, the performer moves between the Fan and Victoria (a nineteenth century character with verbatim historical text as dialogue) as a parallel between the subjugation of women of the nineteenth century and the media and popular surveillance of the woman that the Fan holds in such high esteem. The perception of Corby, as examined in both the case study and the performance, is informed by what, I argue, was a desire by some of the media and public to observe, exhibit and control her in ways that were at times (particularly during her trial) vitriolic, prejudiced and culturally insensitive.

I argue that Three Interrupted Lives does not speak for others or discard the lived experience of individuals involved in the events. Instead, it highlights the issues of each case, including the notions of agency, the mass media and social crisis. Martin writes that: “How events are remembered, written, archived, staged, and performed helps determine the history that they become” (2006: 9). I frame these events in performance in order to reflect upon, and contribute to, a discussion about them. I argue that particular choices regarding text such as verbatim quotation, performance styles and personae reduce the risk of misrepresentation and instead can serve to open up issues surrounding these cases.
Media

Media institutions, technologies and media audiences were shown to play a crucial role in each of the case studies discussed in this dissertation. The media, the very thing that enables the global transmission of information, are also what enable the objectification of the individual subjects involved in these cases. Thus, media is a central theme in the performance. Various media technologies – including print, television, the internet and new media – allow users to mobilise support, voice opinions and pass judgment on the spectacles with which they engage. I have already explored how these media and public responses were incorporated into the performance as a way in which to examine the nature of ‘truth’, the spectator and moral panic. To a lesser extent, I have also utilised multi-media performance devices to acknowledge the global media’s role in perpetuating moral panic. Both techniques are critical to the performance as ways to confront the nature, role and limits of mediatisation and manifestations of contemporary spectacle. Thus, the performance was designed to address the modes of communication that were so instrumental to the proliferation of spectacle and moral panic in each case.

Performance studies and performance theory have for some time been concerned with the tension between live performance and mediatisation. However, the debate has moved on in recent years, reflecting the notion that performance is forever shifting and transforming and that the media plays a significant role in exploring the nature of performance today. Thus, although there are some multi-media and intermedial elements in the performance, I ultimately decided that it needed to reflect the technology available at the time of the events: principally that of old and new media.

Rather than construct a performance that was a media spectacle unto itself, my script

59 For variations on the theme of mediatisation and live performance see: (Phelan 1993), (Auslander 1999), (Kershaw 1999), (Lehmann 2006) and (Giannachi 2007).
aimed to acknowledge the role of the active media spectator in the perpetuation of spectacle and moral panic. Therefore, the performance incorporates text and images from print, radio and internet sources and film and soundscape made in response to the events. At different points, I included a soundscape of various new media devices and a live video feed projection of the performer on stage. The live feed calls into question the temporal and spatial equation that is equally as slippery as placing fact and fiction together. Kershaw refers to the performative society, particularly the role of the media spectator, as “founded on narcissism: we are always looking for ourselves in the spectacle, both on and off the screens” (2003: 606). This suggests a dual role for the contemporary spectator: we may make the spectacle but we are also aware of the spectacle. The live feed is an attempt to place this issue in the performance: the video films the performer dancing while capturing images of the audience watching her, and themselves, in the live projection. In the performative society we have the potential for self-reflection: we are able to reflect on the notion of looking at ourselves looking (Kershaw 2003: 606). In this sense, in the shared physical space the spectator and performer face each other in a moment that is already about to disappear; not unlike Peggy Phelan’s notion that performance is always in a process of disappearance (Phelan 2003: 295). In this moment I am encouraging the audience to reflect on their role in the performance, to think about what has been left behind and how they feel about the issues presented before them, in the present.

The use of multimedia was intended to draw attention both to the environment it refers to, whilst also acknowledging technology itself as a form of mediation, particularly the kind that embraces the notion of looking and being looked at in return. Martin argues

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60 By soundscape, I refer to a musical score, voice over and sound effects to produce an extensive audio experience.
that with the “growth of the virtual world, the real is no longer a simple assertion of presence” (2010: 2) Thus, in the representation of moral panics it is critical that media (in myriad forms) has a place in this performance. Whether it is by presenting verbatim text that was originally produced through the mass media (old and new media) or by mediating the performance with various forms of technology both the form and content of the piece can be utilised to complicate the relationship between performance and the representation of the ‘real’.

**Visual imagery and soundscape**

Hans Belting writes of the capacity of the image to bear witness when he suggests that: “*Iconic presence* still maintains a body’s absence and turns it into what must be called *visible absence*. Images live from the paradox that they perform the *presence of an absence* or vice versa” (2005: 312 original emphasis). Several visual and sound motifs are repeated throughout the performance to create either a sustained link between the episodes or to distil particular issues in simple yet decisive theatrical moments. Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas refer to the capacity of the image to engage with its viewer in a “personal encounter”, where “images are still perceived to have a power and an agency to bring to life – to bring into a particular kind of presence” (2007: 10). The primary examples in this context, where presence is the paramount meaning, are the music box, the sand and the paint. The music box symbolises the presence of the ‘Narrator’. In the first episode, the Narrator unscrews the music box and lets a handful of sand fall through her fingers. Later, in *Episode two: May the streets rest in peace*, the sand is moved into an inscription of RIP on the floor of the performance space. In this instance, the image is intended to represent the memorial of graffiti and the heterotopic performance enactment of displacement. Finally, in *Episode three: Nobody talks about*
death, the performer destroys the RIP message and repeats the first gesture of running the sand through her fingers. In this sense, the sand becomes a visual link between the episodes.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the paint represents both the literal and symbolic inscription of the body on the performance space. In the second episode, the performer paints her exposed skin red and lies on the sofa covered in white material. In episode three, she simulates a cardiac arrest falling from the sofa to the floor. The painted outline of her body on the white material is thus made visible to the audience. This final image represents both the lingering inscription of the performer on the performance space and the ambiguities inherent in Schiavo’s subject/object status. I felt that this was a necessary inclusion in the performance in representing the conflicted nature of the moral panic surrounding Schiavo and how she was rendered an object of a much larger debate surrounding the right-to-life/death. Both the sand and the paint are links between the episodes and permanent inscriptions of the performer, Narrator and the events on the performance landscape.

In Episode one: Has anybody seen my gal, the performer takes back the yellow ribbons that were handed out at the beginning and ties her hands and feet, eventually binding her entire body. At this point there is a movement sequence to the song *Blame it on Mame* originally sung by Rita Hayworth in the movie *Gilda*. According to Mary Anne Doane, this song: “attributes various types of natural and other disasters to female sexuality” (Doane 1991: 104). In this context, I have constructed an intentional parallel between Corby and Gilda – linking patriarchal perceptions of female sexuality and notions of imprisonment. This image is further complicated by the performer’s outfit of yellow
ribbons, which under the orange light are intended to resemble the uniform of a prisoner at Guantánamo Bay. This action is intended to situate notions of imprisonment in relation to the ‘war on terror’, mediatised representations of gender and the ‘foreign’ racial Other in the Corby case.

In chapter two, I explore the mediatised and popular responses to the Corby case as a form of panoptic surveillance. Although this notion of surveillance is partly represented in the performance through dialogue – repetition of the words ‘trapped’, ‘exhibited’, ‘locked’, etc. – I use some visual devices to further this sense of surveillance. Throughout the episode, a swinging light casts shadows over the performer. At times, this light also shines on the newspaper clippings that the Fan suspends from the string that encircle the stage. Together, these devices were intended to show the extent of the Fan’s obsession with Corby, symbolising the surveillance of her by the media and public.

The memorial of graffiti is the final filmic image of episode two, which testifies to the notion that written and visual texts are involved in ‘remembering’ historical events. In relation to a comment by Susan Sontag, that the “photograph is like a quotation”, James Polchin argues that: “as quotations, photographs act as metonyms, carving out a split second of time as a signifier of larger events or historical experience” (2007: 214). By including the image of the memorial of graffiti I attempt to draw attention to the absence of the official commemorative plaque and to the heterotopic space of the memorial of tags as displaced and transgressive. Guerin and Hallas write that: “Images are considered not simply to evoke the violence and trauma of the event, but to represent it, to make it present again (and in some cases, consciously make it present for
the first time)” (2007: 9). While the audience may not be aware of the facts, they are confronted with a memorial of sorts made obvious by the volume of messages stating ‘rest in peace’. This is both the memorial of Hickey’s death site and a memorial that occurs in the performance space. The tags are transgressive not simply because the graffiti is illegal but also because it comes from Hickey’s community in a geo-political inscription. Peggy Phelan writes of an “ethics of the invisible”, of finding a way to embrace that which cannot be seen or, like performance, that which is continually in a process of disappearance (2003: 295). In a way, the footage of the feet is an attempt to render visible that which can only partially be seen. One can never entirely know the extent of grief or the lingering transgression of heterotopia.

I conclude this episode with a personal experience. While walking through the streets of Redfern with my family over a period of three days in 2006, I passed through a park where several Aboriginal children from the local area were playing and building structures out of milk crates. On the first day, we remarked on their skill when they constructed a pyramid out of the crates. On the second day, they were building another structure. We asked if they could build a pyramid again so we could take some photographs. On the third day, the children were gone but the pyramid remained. A sense of celebration was imprinted on my memory. I chose to read the activity and the repetition of the game as a metaphor for the radical and transgressive qualities of innocence and hope.

The visual image and sound is very important in Episode three: Nobody talks about death. The performer lists the findings of Schiavo’s autopsy while draped in the sheet with the red paint outline of her body, while Mozart’s Ave Verum Corpus (loosely
translated to “Hail, true body”) plays (interspersed with a loop of recorded hysterical laughter). During this sequence, there is also a projection of human cells rapidly multiplying and reproducing. The projection covers the entire performance space, including being particularly visible over the white material covering the performer’s body. I conclude the episode with the performer miming the words to the Nina Simone song, *I’ve Got Life*. These devices as enactments of visual and aural symbolism situated alongside quotations and dramatic monologue help to address issues about the body, agency and biopower.

**Conclusions**

These three events can be read as not only performance but also as an invitation to see how performance as a practice can become a forum for critical exploration and social commentary within creative practice. *Three Interrupted Lives* is not only another way of looking at spectacle, the contemporary media spectator and moral panic. It also offers an opportunity to see what can happen through the intimate and dynamic presence of the performer/spectator relationship. As a performance maker, I take elements of a social performance and place them within the theatre in the hope that this transformation is able to provoke debate. By using dramaturgical devices that utilise space, text, media, personae, visual imagery and soundscape –that raise notions of representation and truth – a performance reimagining of social phenomena can potentially contribute to a unique social enquiry. Kershaw writes that spectacles of deconstruction are “celebrations of the equivocal” and I attempt to do something similar with *Three Interrupted Lives*: to create a meaningful and challenging reimagining of three unique events that suggested something significant about the ways in which individuals and communities interact in the globalised media environment.
It remains to be seen whether the time of postmodernity will go down in history as the twilight, or the renaissance, of morality

(Bauman 1993: 3).
Conclusions: Looking back and beyond

Liquid modernity is partly produced through evolving information and communication technologies. Thus, it is also the product of fractured and transient mediatised experiences. Ronald N. Jacobs suggests that:

The vision of life as a coherent project and a singular narrative … no longer resonates with the personal biographies of most people. In its place is a life strategy oriented around fragmentary episodes and ever-new beginnings. … A commitment to transience has replaced the value of durability (2004: 127).

The notion of the transient subject – shaped by a multiplicity of ‘narratives’ and influenced by discourses of mediatisation and consumerism – feeds directly into how one might come to understand the contemporary spectator of media, and thus also the manifestation of a moral panic today.

Throughout this dissertation I have explored how and why, within the context of discourse and power, moral panic occurs in relation to spectacle and spectatorship. My detailed analysis of the three case studies revealed that, in each instance, moral panic had an active spectatorship and a mediatised spectacle to enable its production. The events contained divergent, and sometimes extreme, responses that led to myriad claims to truth and a perception that normativity was, in some manner, under threat. Chapter two analysed the Corby spectacle and explored how it raised issues concerning gender, sexuality and race. Chapter three examined the polarised views on the value of life and the role of self and state governance in the Schiavo case. Chapter four investigated the racialist response to a community suffering from generations of implicit and explicit discrimination in the 2004 Redfern riots. The modes of communication involved in each of these cases were a mix of ‘new’ media (blogs, online news forums and websites) and ‘old’ media (talk-back radio, newspapers, magazines and television). Together, this
information created a discursively constructed spectacle of competing truth formations. In this section I make some final conclusions about the findings of the case studies and the relationship between the research and the performance text. I then position this research in relation to media technologies found today and the impact they may have on the changing role of the global media spectator and the nature of moral panic. In this instance I briefly explore several examples of how new new media has been used to mobilise both individuals and critical debate surrounding important social issues and to ask how moral panic may be impacted by new new media. Whereas the case studies examined each event via a specific set of socio-political circumstances at a particular point in history, this section allows me to explore what this might mean for the study of performance today.

Looking back and beyond

Taylor contends that, “Looking entails a responsibility, a risk, and a danger” (1998: 184). By examining social events that lead to moral panic, there is an inherent risk in relation to representation and the personal experiences of individuals involved. ‘Looking’ does entail both a risk and also a responsibility to pursue debate. This dissertation is a discursive enquiry, that is, an examination of the socio-historical conditions from which mediatised spectacle emerged in these particular circumstances. By acknowledging the ways in which truth claims are formed and how individuals and communities identify themselves and engage with each other, I argue that this risk can be turned into debate.
The frenzy surrounding Corby’s situation may have waned over the years since her incarceration, the rebellion of the ‘riots’ somewhat dispelled and the political spin of the right-to-life movement lost some of its force following Schiavo’s death. Similarly, new new media has transformed how social events are seen and understood and these technologies and processes continue to transform the role of the contemporary spectator. Nevertheless, each event reflected a powerful moment where social normativity was understood to be under threat, resulting in a significant impact on the representation of the individuals involved and how the events were received. Was Corby the performer of her own story or was she completely objectified by her audience and rendered ‘absent’ by a mediated representation? Was the performance act the riot or the aftermath where the statements issued replaced the ‘rioting’ subject with the criminal object? Was Terri Schiavo the performer – without functional body or mind – or was the performer, in fact, the religious right, the United States government or perhaps even the ‘war on terror’? Such questions are useful in reflecting on the implications and significance of each event by looking beyond to larger questions of mediatisation, representation and subject formation.

Chapter one examined the thesis argument: that social phenomena can be examined as performance through a theoretical analysis while the same enactment is a performance when represented in performance. By drawing from theorists such as Bauman, Debord, Baudrillard, Kellner, Kershaw, Agamben and Foucault I explored the mediatised and technologised world as a complex matrix of contested truth claims, discourse and power. The key to reading each event as performance was to understand the events as constituted through the elements of mediatised spectacle, spectatorship and moral panic in relation to a discursive undercurrent. Each element participates in furthering the
mobilisation of the active spectator and the moral panic resulting in both the
subjectification and objectification of subject(s) involved. Ultimately, the examination
of these intertwined elements reveals the myriad performances of discourse, power, and
truth in the twenty-first century.

Chapter two examined how the mediatised spectacle surrounding Schapelle Corby was
a form of panoptic surveillance constituted through discourses of race, gender and
sexuality. Because of intense media attention, Indonesia as a nation was demonised and
Corby’s capacity to perform to social norms relating to sexuality and gender was
scrutinised. However this case was also an example of the coexistence of spectacle and
surveillance. Through a self-awareness of the spectacle, Corby contributed to the
production of a tension between herself as the ‘docile body’ and her pursuit of real and
lasting agency. Ultimately, the tools for subversion available to her were still the
mechanics of her subjugation. Thus, the discourses of the media, race, gender and
sexuality thwarted any sustained transformation.

Chapter three examined how the legal, ideological and political battle surrounding the
Terri Schiavo case involved contested truth claims and hearsay testimony as evidence
within an overriding discourse of biopower. At the time of Schiavo’s death in 2005,
President Bush was actively pursuing a “culture of life” (Bush 2005). As an advocate of
the right-to-life movement, Bush reinforced his personal opposition to stem cell
research, abortion and euthanasia. However, the discourses involved in the “culture of
life” extend well beyond his personal belief systems into the wider machinations of
global politics, religion and bioethics. This chapter drew upon the understanding that
biopower involves the administration, regulation and control of populations and the
shaping of the subject in relation to the value of life. Informed by Agamben’s notion of “bare life”, I situated the mediated representation of Schiavo (and what she came to mean for so many) in opposition to the concept that other people are rendered powerless in a “state of exception” (Agamben 1998: 159). Finally, in contrast to Susan Torres, Schiavo came to represent the power of visuality in an explosive period of American history complete with competing truths, ideologies and discourses.

In Chapter four I examined how visual and linguistic mediatised representations positioned the Redfern riots, and rioters, as inherently inferior and criminal. However, explosions of grief and trauma triggered new spaces of belonging and transgression, exposing the limits – or limitlessness – of power and the subject within it. The riots and the memorial of graffiti were (and to a certain extent remain) heterotopic because, according to Hetherington, they produced “spaces for the means of alternative ordering through their difference and Otherness” (1997: 46). Therefore, I argue that the performance of the Redfern riots and the memorial of graffiti are heterotopic sites of marginality, displacement and the pursuit of sovereignty.

Chapters five and six addressed some of the foregoing issues in a very different format. They situate the three events in performance. By using Taylor’s concept of the “ontological affirmation” of declaring that something is a performance, I created a secondary and complementary model by using the case studies as material in performance. Chapter five, the performance piece, *Three Interrupted Lives*, attempted to open up the many issues in each case, whilst also exploring how the contemporary performance maker can contribute to a ‘spectacle of deconstruction’. Chapter six raised questions about the possible limitations of this approach and the reasons behind certain
dramaturgical decisions. By drawing inspiration from other performance practitioners and theorists I examined the possibilities of a performance style that uses the documentation of ‘real life’ as a form of social enquiry.

The case studies and *Three Interrupted Lives* examined how moral panic existed *as* and *in* performance by concentrating on three events that took place several years ago – when many of the social networking devices and processes considered to be new new media were not available (Levinson 2009: 1). Thus, the key issue for me in reviewing the research and concluding this discussion is locating moral panic, spectatorship and spectacle in relation to the current landscape of emergent technology, new new media and increasingly fluid and temporary social connections.

**The spectator, spectacle and moral panic in the liquid modern era**

New new media has helped facilitate the celebritisation and mediatisation of everyday regular activities. Reality television continues to commodify the lives of “ordinary people” or further the spectacle surrounding already famous individuals. There are Internet sites for anything from cooking to alternative health treatments and Ebay enables consumption without engaging in direct contact with anyone else. Google Maps, Google Earth and GPS navigation systems allow us to locate ourselves in relation to almost any landscape, street or streetscape in the world, while the many manifestations of the mobile phone enable us to be contacted almost anywhere at any stage. Facebook, YouTube, MySpace and Twitter facilitate an immediacy of information previously unknown and allowing us to exist in a state of perpetual tourism. As Bauman explains, “most of us are on the move even if physically, bodily we stay
put” (1998: 77). New new media allows us to observe, consume and participate within social phenomena without ever having to necessarily physically encounter it.

Navigating this new terrain, the spectator is capable of pursuing endless possibilities for consumption and sensation: the user has the capacity to be somewhere or to be someone else by continually buying, consuming, observing, producing and performing. The newness of new media means it always has the potential to become something else, something better, something different. In reference to the consumer society, Bauman argues that the consumer is “constantly greedy for new attractions and fast bored with attractions already had” (1998: 84). This society relies on a desire for the experience (and sensation) of consumption, as opposed to the consumer product itself (Bauman 1998: 83). Therefore, consumerism links with new new media in the need to continually produce innovative technologies and services to satiate a consumer that ultimately cannot be satisfied. According to Bauman, “to increase their capacity for consumption, consumers must never be allowed to rest” (1998: 83). Thus, consumerism must have an impact on the nature of its users (and hence spectatorship), mediatised spectacle and the discursive interplay of both. This impact will influence how moral panic might emerge if, and when, it does. I argue that it is important to explore the dimensions of the spectator, the spectators’ engagement with new new media in creating spectacle and moral panic as they exist today.

How is one to think of the liquid modern subject engaging with the liquid modern mediatised world? Operating in a landscape of spectacle, one can witness war, poverty disease, natural disasters and ecological destruction at the click of a switch. Or, as Sontag expressed it, being “a spectator of calamities taking place in another country is a
quintessential modern experience” (2004: 16). Therefore, how can one confront or engage with the Other? This matter becomes even more fraught when we consider the inequities in the world and our exposure to the suffering of others? Should one feel pity, indignation or find some other critical mode of engagement in a situation where we are confronted by the Other in pain? (Boltanski 1999: 114-115) I raise these questions because, with the advent of new new media, there is no end to what the user is able to witness.

While observing spectacles was also the case with old and new media, the speed and intensity of the ways in which one can access and/or contribute to this information has rapidly developed in the past decade. I argue that as the vessels for viewing these mediatised spectacles evolve (with the accompanying impact on identity and community formation), so too does the nature of spectatorship and how the spectator responds to the material that he or she witnesses. This is not to say that spectators are always faced with a moral dilemma or that the nature of morality in the age of information is even of primary importance to my conclusions. However, so much of this dissertation has focussed on spectatorial engagement that it is important to explore – even in a tentative way – what this might mean in the current context. It is critical, I believe, when analysing social performance to engage continually with the ways in which the subject, and the spectator, are shaped by and respond to an increasingly technologised world.

Urry argues that virtuality leads to a new modality, a dichotomous lived experience of fluid encounters. He claims that virtual travel produces “a kind of strange and uncanny life on the screen, a life that is near and far, present and absent, live and dead” (2002: 199).
This kind of journey requires only a single click online to enable one to pass through borderless territories (alongside other hyper real visitors), where notions of proximity, intimacy and actual live engagement are called into question. Social networking devices ensure that networks are formed through virtual human encounters. Bauman contends that in virtual proximity, “Each connection may be short-lived, but their excess is indestructible. Amidst the eternity of the imperishable network, you can feel unthreatened by the irreparable fragility of each single, transient connection” (2003: 60; original emphasis). Connections might be made but the subject can decide on the level of engagement and the duration of the encounter, thus allowing for the development of a multitude of temporary and potentially transient human connections. This may have been the case with the kinds of technologies of new media that were involved in the original three events (blogs, websites, etc.). However, new new media takes the interactivity and engagement of the spectator to a whole new level.

The question then arises, what does this virtuality bring to the ways in which subjects think of themselves in relation to others? I raise this question because in each of the case studies a moral panic emerged as a result of ‘concerned’ spectators responding to and engaging with other interested people. Does virtuality increase, diminish or alter this dynamic in any way? Bauman argues that:

> [virtual] proximity renders human connections simultaneously more frequent and more shallow, more intense and more brief. ... Virtual proximity can be, both substantively and metaphorically, finished with nothing more than the press of a button” (2003: 62).

In the context of virtual proximity, it becomes increasingly important to explore how these technologies and processes influence spectatorship in order to understand the possibilities and/or limitations of a technologically mediated subject.
The active spectator is critical to the constitution of spectacle surrounding an event and in the propagation of responses that lead to moral panic. It appears that in opening up such social phenomena for analysis, we can raise questions about how these elements might function in light of new new media. Fluid and fractured virtual encounters not only influence subject formation; they also influence the ways in which spectacle is produced and responded to and the ways in which spectatorship is transformed. One of the most interesting aspects of new new media is the role of the ‘user’ as both the consumer and producer of information. As mentioned this shift in spectatorship was only beginning to emerge at the time of the case studies, particularly in the form of blogs (Levinson 2009: 1). There have also been significant changes in the social, economic and political circumstances of both Australia and the USA since these events took place and these changes have an impact on how the media might be used and as a result on the constitution of spectacle and moral panic. The perception of a deviation from social normativity was at the core of moral panic in the three case studies, which leads to the question of how new new media might influence an individual or a community when social norms are challenged. The question also arises as to how new new media might impact on the subject as user, consumer, observer and performer, and how this is both cause and effect of power and discourse.

Since September 11 2001, the subsequent attacks on the London Underground, the bombings in Bali and Madrid and the attacks in Mumbai, the surveillance and

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61The global economic situation was irrevocably influenced by the onset in late 2008 of the most severe financial crisis since the Great Depression. The Australian Federal Government led at the time by former Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and in the USA, the administration of President Barack Obama introduced economic stimulus packages. The elections of Rudd in 2007 (and the replacement of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd with the first female Prime Minister Julia Gillard in June 2010 and her subsequent election in September 2010), and Obama in 2008 heralded a shift away from the neo-liberal socially conservative administrations of the John Howard Liberal government in Australia and Republican President George Bush in the USA to one in which social welfare had a (small) place in the socio-political landscape of both countries. However, I argue that regardless of these shifts, and even after such a significant financial crisis, the demand for consumption and commodification, foundational elements in the success of globalisation, continues to run deep. With globalisation come the commercialisation, commodification and politicisation of new new media and other associated technologies.
monitoring of subjects is a common occurrence. This surveillance includes the observation of information on the Internet, email and phone usage, CCTV images, bank account transactions and so on. With technological advances in the sourcing and sharing of information comes the potential for enormous commercial profit and this market-driven commercial imperative is not separate from the political sphere, global media or security technologies. Kiyoshe Abe argues that the “information society is at the same time the surveillance society (2006: 265).” While the panoptic surveillance of current new new media can at times make George Orwell’s *1984* appear as child’s play, I argue that the very nature of these technologies has an ambiguous relationship to surveillance strategies. If the panoptic system is to be successful the object of surveillance must be aware of the observation and in compliance to the system monitor their behaviour accordingly. However new new media lends itself to the surveillance/spectacle paradigm – where those watched are also watching back.

The new new media user actively contributes to the production and exchange of information which means that the panopticon of contemporary global media is to some extent disseminated. In this sense the user is an agent in control of his or her own surveillance. The changing role of the spectator indicates that the mediatised panoptic observation of Schapelle Corby that triggered a moral panic was in some ways a stand-alone event – a unique mediatised spectacle – and that the mechanics of creating and sustaining spectacle have shifted since her incarceration in 2005. The spectator to the original three events was also a producer of information via their engaged response to the spectacle. However, the spectator (and user) of new new media is both consumer.

62 Google admitted in May 2010 that it had unwittingly collected digital information through unencrypted networks via WiFi collection devices attached to their Street View cars (Albanesius 2010). The recent scandal surrounding Google exemplifies Abe’s assertion about how these technologies and processes serve in producing a surveillance society, while ‘Wikileaks’ continue to make headlines with using new new media to facilitate an agenda for political and institutional transparency (Wikileaks 2010).
and producer without necessarily needing an event to respond to. This means that in addition to the new new media spectator’s self-awareness of their role in watching and being watched in return they must contribute to the entire watching process for these systems and processes to work at all. Although I would not go as far to say that the panopticon is not present in the current context, I do argue that locating the panopticon is a more complex process in new new media than it was in older media. Because the user is an active agent within these technological media, there is even more reason to explore issues surrounding media-based technologies in the twenty-first century and the role both play in relation to spectacle, spectatorship and potential instances of moral panic.

How is one to think of moral panic in an increasingly globalised, technologised and interconnected world? Does liquid modernity help foster or disseminate moral panic? Or are the social, historical and political conditions of a mediatised spectacle ultimately what determine moral panic? The productive capacity of the user of new new media and the fluid and transient nature of liquid modernity do not mean that spectacle and/or moral panic do not and will not occur. In fact, the cult of celebrity requires the immediacy and proliferation of sensationalist information that new new media can provide. However, if a moral panic responds to the underlying issues of a community and is sustained by perceptions of a threat to social normativity, new new media has the potential to either reinforce this sense of panic in an enormous force of mobilisation or dispel it before the simmering moral panic has much chance of developing. The active spectator is just as likely to engage, respond and contribute to multiple media events – moving from one to another, as quickly and as often, as is presented to them. I suggest that these factors may contribute to a social event being ‘quelled’ before there is much
chance of a moral panic being created. However, there is always the potential for new new media to facilitate moral panic both rapidly and fiercely, just as new new media may be a vehicle for mobilising political activism.

In many ways, the advent of new new media is emblematic of heterotopic space – in that each technology and network system possesses qualities of an ambiguous temporal and spatial displacement. Downes argues that virtual environments “draw our attention to new ways of creating heterotopic temporality” (2005: 133). By examining the fluid and transient nature of virtual space, and by seeing new new media as heterotopic, the circumstances surrounding the emergence of a mediatised event can be challenged, and thus, can become the ideal vessel for social commentary and political mobilisation. The death of Neda Soltan and the 2008 Obama Presidential campaign are two events that deployed new new media to raise awareness of certain social and political circumstances and therefore are useful in describing how an active and engaged spectatorship can be mobilised today.

On 20 June 2009, the death of Iranian woman, Neda Soltan, was filmed and posted on YouTube. Very quickly, the images went viral and triggered an enormous response. Soltan, dubbed the “Angel of Freedom”, became a symbol for the tyranny of repression in Iran.63 Provocative iconic images can exist in the collective consciousness as a reminder of suffering and tragedy. Heterotopias direct attention to the normative social order by being in opposition to it. In this sense, Soltan’s videotaped death was an example of how an image (or series of images) can be read as heterotopic because the

63 Neda Soltan, an Iranian university-educated woman, was travelling to attend a rally in Tehran to protest against the alleged discrepancies in the Iranian Presidential elections. Stepping out of a car, she was shot in the heart and died in the arms of her friends. The moment of her death was a fiercely powerful image, with some commenting that it might become as symbolic as the image of the unarmed man standing in front of a tank in Tiananmen Square (McElroy 2009) or how the “naked, napalmed girl running down the road has come to encapsulate the Vietnam war” (Jardine 2009).
image draws explicit attention to a ‘real’ space of tyrannical hegemonic order. The fact that the footage went ‘viral’ on the Internet also lends itself to the concept of a virtual fluid space that thrives on disruption.

Barack Obama and his campaign team during the 2008 US Presidential election fully capitalised on the needs and desires of a new generation of consumers seeking active political citizenship through a skilled use of social networking devices and an unprecedented usage of new new media. Obama secured the support of over 70 percent of voters aged under 25, the highest rate of votes for that age group since exit polls began in 1976 (Fraser and Dutta 2008). The Obama campaign built in momentum by drawing from a growing communication, information and technological sector, whilst also acknowledging that they, and the campaign itself, were a product of this new world order. Arianna Huffington of The Huffington Post stated: “[Were] it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not be president. Were it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not have been the nominee” (Miller 2008). The campaign activated an audience who felt underrepresented and misunderstood, broke new ground in maintaining the support of the primary Democratic base and accumulated vast private donations by tapping into the social and technological phenomenon of new new media.

The utilisation of new new media exposed an ambiguous and at times transgressive space surrounding the situations discussed above. The ‘Angel of Freedom’ and the Obama campaign are examples of new new media’s capacity for short explosive bursts

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64 Although the Internet – particularly news websites, email and blogs – had been utilised in the 2004 election the usage of new new media in the 2008 election was unprecedented. There were two main points as to why this was the case. Firstly, the technologies and social networking devices such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube were not available during the earlier campaign and secondly the Obama campaign team completely embraced these new media when they became readily available. However, all candidates were in some way involved in new new media. Hilary Clinton announced her candidacy through her website, Republican Mitt Romney was the first to have a Facebook account and by the time of the primaries all candidates had some form of social network site (Rawlinson 2008).
of political activism. The question becomes whether this kind of media can mobilise
effectual political action or genuine engagement or if this connection is as superficial or
short-lived as the fluid interaction of its users. Nevertheless, the make-up of
spectatorship in the twenty-first century has changed with the differing requirements of
these technologies and systems. Thus, mediatised spectacle and the moral panic it may
or may not trigger must also be transformed in some way. New new media deliberately
engender some kind of interactive engagement with their user and as a result influence
the production and reception of information, and identity and community formation.
Just as blogs, television, mobile phone messages and print media were critical to the
significance of the original three events so too is new new media crucial to the
construction of current social performances and to what future mediatised spectacle
might look like.

To engage with these events – the Schapelle Corby trial, the case of Terri Schiavo and
the Redfern riots – via two interconnected models is to not only explore underlying
power formations that provoke moral panic but also to unpack and retell the complex
and ambiguous nature of these three social events. The mediatised representations of
each case raised many questions about agency, subjectification and objectification
processes and the performance of truth, discourse and power in the global media. In
addition, arguably, one of the central elements of performance is that artist and audience
alike can be involved in social inquiry: to exist in a shared space where performance can
be a tool for social commentary. Inspired by this tradition I wanted Three Interrupted
Lives to open up debate about the conditions from which each event emerged and the
nature and impact of moral panic as a particular kind of social phenomena. Just as the
three elements of the spectator, spectacle and moral panic were interwoven in the
original three events, for moral panic to exist today, these factors would again have to respond to and inform each other. These notions are even more apparent with the advent of new new media and the transient fluidity of contemporary spectatorship and subjectification processes. While a tension definitely exists between how the mass media might be used to propagate moral panic and how it can be used to increase social awareness the mutually informing nature of the active spectator and mediatised spectacle is fundamental to the constitution and proliferation of moral panics today. This dissertation produced two performance paradigms that contribute to the wide terrain of social and performance analysis. The opportunities for this kind of critical pursuit regarding other social performances, cultural activities and discursive enactments are endless. Similarly, I am confident that the capacity to make, and critique performance that extends the debate about the nature of the subject, spectacle and the general mediatised and technologised landscape is limitless.
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