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The governance of everyday life

At first glance, everyday life is separate from the domain of public life. Everyday life occurs in the private sphere, removed from public scrutiny. It is constituted through our work, through our family life, through our leisure activities. Our work and our leisure activities can of course occur 'in public', but these activities are not deemed to be part of public life; our everyday individual practices and behaviours are not subject to a generalised scrutiny. Everyday life is difficult to define: it consists of a complex and often disparate array of relationships, practices and behaviours that are collected together only because they inform our everyday existence. In this sense, it is perhaps best defined through particular spatial and temporal contexts. Paradoxically, everyday life is highly individualised and amorphous, and as such is 'unknowable' in any total sense, and yet it also suggests activities that are shared and are uniformly recognised and understood by a large number of people. Understood in this latter sense, everyday life is a profoundly *social* phenomenon.

Theorisations of everyday life

The *value* of everyday life has been subject to extraordinarily diverse appraisals. In his well-known and influential study, Henri Lefebvre (1984) differentiates between the 'everyday', as the space and condition in which authentic and vital existence occurs, and 'everyday life', which

is marked by the control and alienation of life in the contexts of developed capitalism and bureaucratic society. Everyday life has been considered more commonly from the latter viewpoint, which highlights the repetition and drudgery of work, the overwhelming focus on consumerism and the maintenance of the home, as well as an inordinate interest in personal relationships and romance and leisure activities such as sport. Everyday life is thus presented as a sphere that has been drained of politics but a sphere that nonetheless works to produce the disciplined subjects necessary for the ongoing growth of capitalism. In a range of work, from the development of the Marxist tradition in the Frankfurt School theorists to American cultural critics such as Lasch, everyday life is caught up in a binary logic which sets the public sphere against the private sphere, politics against leisure, citizens against consumers. (We saw this binary operating in chapter 9, where the referendum on an Australian republic was defeated because it was often presented as a 'political' issue without any bearing on the everyday lives of Australians.)

Alternatively, everyday life has been lauded as the sphere with greater freedom from the dictates of powerful interests in society. Everyday life is celebrated because it is where we can most authentically 'be ourselves', it is the place where ideas and attitudes are more 'naturally' generated from more concrete and practical contexts. Paradoxically, everyday life is said to provide greater opportunity for political action precisely because of its autonomy from the public realm. Everyday life is a democratic concept. It is constituted by those practices and behaviours, such as eating, sleeping and defecating, in which all humans (even celebrities) engage. As Rita Felski (1999/2000, p. 16) notes:

> Everyday life . . . does not only describe the lives of ordinary people, but recognises that every life contains an element of the ordinary. We are all ultimately anchored in the mundane.

The work of Michel de Certeau examines the dynamic and creative practices and uses of time in which individuals engage within the disciplined constraints and compulsions of everyday life. De Certeau charts this terrain by distinguishing between strategies and tactics. Strategies are actions which, thanks to the establishment of a place both

physical and theoretical, enable those within that territory to exercise power over others. Tactics, conversely, are the art of the weak: they involve 'a clever *utilization of time*, of the opportunities it presents and also of the play that it introduces into the foundations of power' (de Certeau 1984, pp. 38–9, author's emphasis). Tactical behaviour occurs through many everyday practices, such as shopping, travelling, talking and reading. The personal use of office stationery or personal use of the Internet at work, the individual choices made when shopping or walking across town, constitute tactical behaviour.

De Certeau emphasises the productive capacities of acts of consumption in everyday life. These acts of consumption—reading, buying, using—are productive in that they bring about change in the objects consumed, but they are also activities which remain invisible because they do not manifest themselves through their own products. As de Certeau (1984, p. 31) states:

> In reality, a rationalized, expansionist, centralized, spectacular and clamorous production is confronted by an entirely different kind of production, called 'consumption' and characterized by its ruses, its fragmentation . . . its poaching, its clandestine nature, its tireless but quiet activity, in short by its quasi-invisibility, since it shows itself not in its own products . . . but in an art of using those imposed on it.

Throughout this book the involvement of the media in the production of public life has been discussed, but the media are also an integral feature of everyday life. Our experiences of public life are primarily mediated and encountered in the contexts of everyday life. In addition, the temporality, the spaces, the experiences of everyday life are diffused by the presence of the media, whether through reading the newspaper in the morning while munching on toast, or listening to the radio in a traffic jam, or spending the evening in front of the television. The *daily form* of the media is an important structuring device of everyday life. The *contents* of the media, while often dealing with extraordinary events and issues, also regularly present an ordinary, or at least a familiar world. Through the presentation of both extraordinary and ordinary stories, the contents of the media work to confirm the patterns, concerns and values of everyday life.

The media have had to learn to adopt the speech forms of everyday life (Scannell 1989, p. 148–9). Workers at the BBC in the early days of radio realised over time that the voice and rhetorics of various forms of public speaking such as lectures, sermons and political orations were unsuited to the new medium of the wireless. Instead, the individualised contexts of reception required a more personalised form of address. The communication contexts of radio, and later television, promoted not only everyday ways of talking but the subject matter of everyday life as media content.

Such a production of everyday life is a fundamental device by which we secure a sense of normality, which in turn enables us to counter the anxieties and stresses of contemporary existence. Everyday life has often been devalued because of its repetition. In such contexts everyday life is considered to generate alienation and an unthinking approach to the people, experiences and events we encounter. By contrast, modern life privileges the development of the self in its escape from the strictures of everyday life, through innovation and variation. Lefebvre employs linear and cyclical concepts of time to distinguish between modern life's valorisation of progress and accumulation and the more traditional and regularised patterns of everyday existence that are perceived to hinder such developments. This kind of categorisation, however, overlooks the value of everyday life in enabling us to remain 'grounded', facilitating not just the ability to cope with modern life but the resources by which we can act in modern life. As Felski (1999/2000, p. 21) writes:

> Within the maelstrom of contemporary life, change is often imposed on individuals against their will; conversely everyday rituals may help to safeguard a sense of personal autonomy and dignity, or to preserve the distinctive qualities of a threatened way of life. In other words, repetition is not simply a sign of human subordination to external forces but also one of the ways in which individuals engage with and respond to their environment.

Often, then, the classic theorisations of everyday life, usually informed by a Marxist perspective, emphasise the *alienation* of everyday life. From such a perspective, the sphere of everyday life is a

bourgeois domain, with its domestic contexts, its focus on the family and the individual, and its remove from political realities. It has been argued that the growing prominence of the sphere of everyday life corresponds with the declining efficacy of people as political subjects. While such an argument is not without merit, it fails to appreciate the exercises of *agency* that occur in everyday life. The multitudinous activities of the mundane, such as eating and drinking, driving and even lazing in the sun, constitute activities where the agency of individuals is exercised, and are inscribed with cultural and political value. To highlight these exercises of agency is not to uniformly celebrate everyday life. Everyday life is too much of a heterogeneous sphere of life to be captured in either an overarching positive or a negative appraisal. Rather, following Silverstone, the agency of everyday life is bound up in its *ordinariness*, by which is meant 'the more or less secure normality of everyday life, and our capacity to manage it on a daily basis' (Silverstone 1994, p. 166). This exercise of agency, however, is not autonomous but represents choices that are to some degree structured through available options. Our decisions in everyday life—about how we treat our loved ones, how much we drink at dinner and even how long we might spend lazing in the sun—are subject to variously explicit and implicit forms of governance. As we will see below in our discussions of self-help media, lifestyle journalism and public information campaigns, this governance is not an oppressive form of control but a process that *enables* subject formation. As such, everyday life is best encapsulated not as a site of bourgeois alienation nor as a site where we can escape political and social strictures: rather, it is best understood as a complex site where the agency of individuals is exercised through the engagement with regulatory regimes.

Self-help media and lifestyle journalism

Much of the media we consume on an everyday basis is not concerned with strictly political content but instead deals with issues that have traditionally pertained to the private sphere. We read lifestyle magazines which report on everything from how to be a better parent to how to re-cover our loungeroom cushions. We watch television current

affairs programs which conduct safety tests on consumer products and we watch talk show and reality television programs on self-help, health and body care. Part of the difficulty of commenting on such media resides in the proliferation of such genres, which take everyday life as a subject of discussion. Tabloid or popular journalism, discussed in chapter 4, is a broad term that captures much of this media (Lumby 1999, p. 17):

> The media formats we think of as tabloid, including popular newspapers, weekly women's magazines, talk shows and some commercial current affairs programs, tend to base stories around individuals, particularly celebrities, and to emphasise the personal and emotive impact of a given issue, at the expense of examining the broader structural context. They also tend to be image-dominated, favour shorter stories and rapid edits, and borrow techniques from entertainment-based media—tabloid current affairs programs, for instance, often use dramatic music, lighting and voice-overs.

Tabloid journalism's attention to celebrities may seem at odds with the domain of everyday life—although, as noted in chapter 3, stories about celebrities often are grounded in the concerns of everyday life, such as financial difficulties and the juggling of career and relationships. Reality television is an equally problematic genre, which features the surveillance and recording of everyday life. Sometimes 'reality' television portrays highly constructed and artificial scenarios, but sometimes it is more akin to cinema verité documentary and captures everyday private and working life. Following its phenomenal growth in book publishing, self-help media is another genre that explores everyday life. One of the best examples of this has been Oprah Winfrey's embrace of the concept for her talk show television program (see below). Lifestyle or 'infotainment' journalism is yet another media genre that focuses on everyday life. This genre includes gardening, cooking, and home care advice and information, but it extends to treatments of such political issues as household waste generation and land care.

Theoretical distinctions between the public and private spheres have little relevance to our everyday media consumption: within the same television news bulletin we can move from a story on the Middle

East conflict to another on how to manage your credit card debt. Much academic concern has been expressed at the explosion in popular or lifestyle media at the expense of more traditional political journalism as well as the increasingly blurred boundary between the two forms of media. While any erosion of political news media outlets and content are legitimate concerns, anxiety about a clearcut division between the two forms of media is misplaced. This is not to argue that distinctions between the public and private are insignificant: judgements about the content of such domains and their boundaries are informed by an always shifting set of political and social values.

The production and care of the self in everyday life has become a major source of mass media attention. This media attention highlights how the maintenance of physical and mental wellbeing is a major project for the modern subject, especially given the ever-increasing pressures of work and family life. The creation and maintenance of the self is often presented through a link with the care and attention to the body. Our ability to take care of our bodies through exercise and dietary regimens is an important marker of our status as 'normal' subjects. While our identities are often manifested in the care and presentation of our bodies, it is also the case that the production and care of the self in everyday life occurs increasingly through our attention to our emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing. We see this in the rise of the 'men's movement', which has promoted the importance of men recognising and acting on their emotional needs.

Oprah Winfrey's self-titled television talk show is the best-known media example of this interest in the everyday spiritual needs of people. In the 1998/99 season *Oprah*, already an enormously popular talk show watched each day by 33 million viewers, adopted a new focus known as 'Change Your Life TV' (Parkins 2001). The new format of the program involved the regular appearances of five self-help experts to enhance viewers' spiritual awareness and personal growth. 'Change Your Life TV' also featured a segment at the end of each program called 'Remembering Your Spirit', which Winfrey described as intending to help viewers 'connect with the importance of listening to what their souls' desires are and remembering to incorporate those desires into their lives' (Winfrey, in Parkins 2001, p. 149). The shift in focus in Winfrey's program, while popular, generated criticism from some viewers and

commentators. Conflicting opinions about the politics of self-help media is also found in academic studies. Epstein and Steinberg, for example, declare that self-help is limited because it is always 'divorced from the social' (1998, p. 85). Parkins, conversely, argues that 'Change Your Life TV' has an 'intersubjective dimension' (2001, p. 151), and that its process of self-transformation is 'always linked with relations with others and with a broader community' (2001, p. 148).

More generally, 'lifestyle' or 'infotainment' journalism has become one of the most prevalent media genres. Lifestyle journalism is ubiquitous on television in Australia and has covered a very broad range of topics, including gardening and home improvement (*Better Homes and Gardens*), finance (*Money*), sexuality (*Sex/Life*), and holidays (*The Great Outdoors*). Lifestyle programs are successful because they are concerned with the pleasures and exigencies of everyday life, but they are also characterised by a lively pacing and an informal and involving mode of direct address. And lifestyle television is attractive to the networks because it is usually cheap to produce and can easily be linked to product promotion. Often television lifestyle programs are linked to a magazine via cross-promotion, although there are many independent lifestyle magazines and lifestyle segments are a growing feature of daily newspapers. Lifestyle journalism directly involves the reader/viewer in user-friendly formats, although the genre is also characterised by expert instruction in knowledges, ethical conduct and practices to improve one's life. As Gay Hawkins states, writing with regard to gardening programs, announcers occupy 'an ambiguous space between amateur and expert' (2001, p. 187). Hawkins draws on the work of Nikolas Rose in order to explain how the rise of the expert in lifestyle journalism is an excellent example of 'neo-liberal forms of governing' (Hawkins 2001, pp. 187–8):

> [Rose] argues that the guidance of selves is no longer a matter of large scale authorities: religion, morality, 'the state' but rather the province of experts of subjectivity: 'who transfigure existential questions about the purpose of life . . . into technical questions about the most effective ways of managing malfunction and improving "quality of life"'.

In Australia, no program has been a more successful manifestation of the lifestyle or infotainment televisual genre than *Burke's Backyard*. Although the origins of this genre are debated, *Burke's Backyard*, which started in 1987, has been described as the founding Australian lifestyle program (McKee 2001, pp. 256–7). As the title suggests, the program is primarily concerned with the private and domestic spaces of Australian suburbia. It covers stories on gardening, home maintenance and improvement, as well as other domestic activities such as pet care and cooking. The program is a celebration of everyday life, and much of its success revolves around its production of the 'ordinary' Australian way of life. This is captured in Burke himself—in his casual dress, his manner and colloquial language, such as his sign-off of 'Hooroo'. *Burke's Backyard*, like other infotainment programs, negotiates a careful balance between the giving of expert advice and associating with the audience as 'an equal'. The program also works hard to construct a consensual community (McKee 2001, p. 262) through its invocation of the great diversity of ordinary Australian life. Celebrity gardeners, such as politicians, are presented in an intimate, non-professional manner which underlines the connections they have with their fellow Australians. While the program presents a predominantly suburban and middle-class Australia, it commonly features a range of other people who exhibit differences of geography, class, religion and sexual orientation. Burke sometimes runs politically oriented stories on the environment and on issues such as cat control, but the program ultimately is able to unify the Australian community through its non-political content. It is precisely the domain of the everyday—home, family and garden—which is presented as the domain that 'we' all share.

Public information campaigns

We regularly receive media messages about our conduct in everyday life through public information campaigns. Whether through an advertisement reminding us to put on some sunscreen or a warning about the evils of alcohol consumption and driving, we are constantly being exhorted about correct behaviour. Public information campaigns are usually funded and devised by government agencies. They are usually

long-term projects with several different media and research phases, and they are distinguished here from more singular promotional material. Public information campaigns have been conducted for myriad purposes: they have been influential in the developing world in the areas of health, family planning and agriculture but they are also prevalent in industrialised countries; they seek to create a range of effects, from the changing of nutritional intake to the casting of a vote. Public information campaigns rely heavily on mass media campaigns, although they also distribute information in relevant places such as schools and workplaces. Many public information campaigns focus on the care, health and safety of individuals and emanate from a health department or a transport department, as with road safety issues. Alternatively, campaigns sometimes focus on relating individuals to the broader society. In Australia, the Federation campaign promoted the centenary of Federation and encouraged national pride. Neighbourhood Watch has been another campaign that has encouraged us to know our neighbours in order to prevent break-ins and other crimes. In other contexts, public information campaigns have focused on such issues as racial harmony (Taylor & Botan 1997).

Defining such a diverse range of communication campaigns is difficult but they can be captured under some general characteristics (Rogers & Storey 1987). First, a public information campaign must have a clearly defined purpose, with specific, measurable outcomes. The campaign may seek to bring about cognitive, attitudinal or behavioural change, and the campaign effects may benefit the sender or receiver. Second, public information campaigns occur within specified time limits so that evaluations can be conducted: they may run over a week or could extend over a decade. Third, public information campaigns involve an organised set of communication activities, from sophisticated mass media campaigns to the stall at the local shopping centre. Finally, a public information campaign is a *public* campaign: it is thus differentiated from interpersonal and private communication processes and is targeted at a large audience, although this may be limited to particular groups within a local community.

Public information campaigns involve the production of disciplined subjects. In this sense, everyday life is not disconnected from the public domain but is rather an object of great public scrutiny.

As with the above comments on lifestyle journalism, public information campaigns are manifestations of 'neo-liberal forms of governing', where the knowledges, attitudes and behaviour necessary for the efficient functioning of a society are conveyed to members of the public and responses to these messages are monitored and policed. Public information campaigns are more explicitly pedagogical exercises than lifestyle journalism: they involve direct instructions about correct conduct and often outline punishments and other consequences for those people who do not respond appropriately to the imparted information. The pedagogical feature of public information campaigns arises partly from their status as advertisements. Unlike most mass media texts (although like much lifestyle journalism) and like advertisements generally, public information campaigns usually employ direct forms of address. Public information campaigns can, however, sit oddly in conjunction with advertisements: in the same advertisement break we can be encouraged to buy a fast car and be warned about the dangers of speeding. As an example of a neo-liberal form of governance, the production of disciplined subjects by public information campaigns does not occur primarily through overt threats of punishment but through more 'productive' means, which involve the subject in their own 'production' and surveillance. The issues of governance in public information campaigns are also significant: the health and safety of the individual and their obligations to others are presented as practical and technical issues of 'managing' everyday life successfully. More fundamental moral, aesthetic and spiritual components of disciplined subjects are not usually considered by public information campaigns but are the domain of other social institutions, such as schools.

In Australia there have been a number of public information campaigns that have achieved high levels of public awareness and, in some instances, notoriety. The Health Department has been running anti-smoking campaigns for several decades, from the original QUIT campaign through to more recent campaigns such as 'Every Cigarette Is Doing You Damage'. Arguably, the most (in)famous campaign involved the 'Grim Reaper' television advertisements about HIV-AIDS. The advertisements featured 'Death' as the Grim Reaper, amid swirling

smoke, rolling a bowling ball towards a group of people and knocking them over. The 'Grim Reaper' certainly did create a public consciousness about HIV-AIDS, sparking public outrage and concern and making a celebrity out of Siimon Reynolds, the young creator of the advertisements. The Grim Reaper advertisements and those from the QUIT campaign, such as the one showing the diseased lungs of a smoker, are deliberately constructed as 'shock' advertisements and are designed primarily to create public awareness of an issue. In the usual narrative of a public information campaign, subsequent advertisements will challenge attitudes and finally behaviour with emphasis on the provision of facts and information.

'Freedom From Fear'

The Freedom From Fear Campaign Against Domestic Violence was launched in August 1998. This campaign, an initiative of the Western Australian government, differed from other campaigns on domestic violence because it focuses on the perpetrators and men at risk of commiting acts of domestic violence. The campaign calls on these men to accept responsibility for their behaviour and to take action to stop the occurrences of abuse. Freedom From Fear is a multifaceted media and information campaign, employing television, press, radio and outdoor advertising. The campaign distributes information resources at various workplaces, involves community consultation, and places information products in recreational sites, such as on beer coasters in pubs. The campaign is linked to the policy developments of relevant institutional authorities, such as the police. It has also established a 24-hour telephone information helpline and counselling programs, for perpetrators and 'at-risk' men as well as for victims and children (Freedom From Fear 2002).

The first phase of the mass media advertising campaign highlighted acts of physical violence and focused on the suffering of children in the families in which domestic violence is happening. The advertisements usually cut between the act of physical violence against the partner and the fearful reactions of the children. They featured texts such as 'Every time you hurt her . . . he feels it too'. The advertisements

urged the perpetrators of domestic violence to act to stop the occurrences of abuse with the message 'Do something about it', chosen partly because it was a 'positive' message that appealed to the agency of the men. Later stages of the campaign will focus on other types of domestic violence, including sexual and emotional abuse.

Public information campaigns, such as Freedom From Fear, face the arduous task of disciplining the everyday lives of people who engage in acts of deviant behaviour. Such campaigns work hard to overcome many psychological barriers: perpetrators may engage in selective perception and not acknowledge their engagement in domestic violence or they may manufacture excuses or 'rationales' for such behaviour. Subsequently, the campaign managers have to correctly identify the target audience, formulate an effective message, and accurately deliver that message to the target audience. Preliminary research employed focus groups of males aged 15–40 and focus groups comprising perpetrators of domestic violence. The research indicated that the campaign messages should avoid an accusatory or blaming tone if perpetrators were to be reached by the campaign, that there was a need for a prevention focus, and that 'potential perpetrators' should be targeted as well as current perpetrators. The strategy of emphasising the suffering of children and the need for the perpetrator to take action to stop the abuse was chosen over other possible messages, emphasising criminal sanctions, community intervention, social disapproval and the damage to the partner. Measuring the specific 'effects' of public information campaigns is difficult given the impossibility of isolating media effect from other political, social and cultural factors, but Freedom From Fear researchers found that overall campaign recall was high, that there was significant improvement in awareness of support services, and that a promising attitudinal trend had emerged over the course of the first stage of the campaign regarding how people viewed domestic violence and its effects on the whole of the family (Freedom From Fear 2002).

Domestic violence is an appropriate topic of discussion here because it illustrates how the social meanings of actions are determined through the ways they are located on the public/private spectrum. The very term 'domestic violence' distinguishes it from other, more public forms of violence. The assignation of violence against one's family as

'domestic' has located it in the private sphere, and historically this meant it was not always the subject of great scrutiny by public authorities, such as welfare organisations, the police and the legal system. Arguably, the assignation of the violence as 'domestic' has also worked historically if not to condone the violence then at least to classify the violence as less criminal than other, more public forms of violence. However, as we have noted throughout this book, the value system that differentiates and informs public and private activities is historical and subject to change as a result of political struggle. Largely as a result of the work of the feminist movement, domestic violence has over several decades come to be better acknowledged as a matter of public concern, and there has been subsequently greater news reportage of incidents of domestic violence. This is not to argue that the public/private boundary as a marker of social value has been dissolved because traditional private sphere activities have been 'politicised', but it is to argue that the boundary has assumed an even greater significance because the political values that always inform such distinctions have been made more explicit. The boundaries between the public and the private sphere continue to carry significance: public officials, such as police, are well aware of how issues of privacy must be respected and negotiated in any investigation.

Public information campaigns always involve processes of public formation, and are always informed by particular value positions. Freedom From Fear has the laudable aim of preventing and reducing the prevalence of domestic violence, and in order to do so it must make choices about which social values to mobilise and how to represent public life and types of people. Generally, the campaign works to unify the public through representations of concern about the welfare of children. As the public sphere becomes increasingly heterogeneous it becomes harder to conceptualise a common unity, and increasingly such constructions of unity work through the need to protect children. 'The public' is represented as a 'protecting public' (Brennan 2001, p. 94) and, while this may seem like a successful strategy to 'depoliticise' the public and bring together a plethora of differences, it nonetheless has political effects. I would not go so far as to say that the Freedom From Fear campaign suggests that the 'primary responsibility in a household facing domestic violence' is 'the preservation of childhood innocence'

(Brennan 2001, p. 97), but the advertisements do work to construct a unified public through representations of the powerlessness of children. As Marc Brennan (2001, p. 95) states:

> . . . without agency children continue to be a site of powerlessness, constructing those with agency as a universalised site united by its concerns in responsibility and protection. This construction is central to the public service advertisement and its use is one of the ways in which the discursive space of the public may be organised. Through the discourse of childhood, individual differences within the public can be masked through the connotations of responsibility and the protection of the powerless . . .

Conclusion

Everyday life has an unusual status: it is contrasted with public life but it is also the subject of much media attention. Everyday life is contrasted with formal politics, but so much of politics is about the structures, contents and values of everyday life. It is highly individualised, private and 'unknowable' in any complete sense, but everyday life is also a mundane, highly regularised existence, many of the features of which are shared or recognised by a large number of people in the society. Everyday life has also been valued in very different ways by theorists. On the one hand, everyday life has often been criticised as a site of repetitive and alienating activities, where people are cast as non-political subjects, primarily concerned with consumption, personal relationships and leisure activities. These criticisms maintain that such subject formation is nonetheless a highly political process and is vital to the ongoing viability of capitalism. On the other hand, everyday life has been praised as a site where people can exercise a greater degree of freedom from such disciplinary structures. It is argued that the repetitive basis of everyday life and its production of a sense of 'normality' is a mechanism that helps people cope with the pressures, stresses and upheavals of much modern life. Ultimately, it is argued, everyday life is a democratic phenomenon. The increasing media focus on everyday life is witnessed in the rise of lifestyle

journalism and self-help media. These kinds of media encompass a disparate range of programs and texts, but they often take features of everyday life in order to engage in processes of commodification and they can divert people from other more explicitly political interests and activities. Different kinds of self-help media and lifestyle journalism can also be highly informative and helpful, performing an important role in the production of contemporary culture and assisting people in the maintenance of physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Many forms of media that deal with the contents of everyday life, particularly public information campaigns, are engaged in the governance of the conduct of individuals and groups in society. This governance functions less through overt threats of punishment and more in 'productive' and 'educative' ways which involve people in their own subject formation.