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Everyday Advertising Context: An Ethnography of Advertising Response in the Family Living Room

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Consumer research largely examines television advertising effects using conventional psychological accounts of message processing. Consequently, there is an emphasis on the influence of textual content at the expense of the everyday interpersonal viewing contexts surrounding advertising audiences. To help restore this theoretical imbalance an ethnographic study was conducted in eight Australian homes to explore the influence of everyday viewing contexts on advertising audiences. This article examines how the everyday advertising contexts of social interaction, viewing space, media technology use, and time impact consumer responses to television advertising texts. Advertising viewing behavior in the family living room is framed within broader household activity and around cultural ideas regarding family life, and can enhance consumer and family identity value. Our theoretical framework details how television advertisements, everyday viewing contexts, household discourse, and viewer practices intersect to produce processes of advertising response and engagement not explicated in previous studies of consumer behavior.

Jacqui Vickers, her sister Sally, and mum Sarah watch the teen soap opera *Home and Away*. The dinner rush is over, and all three watch the program's dramatic storyline in shocked silence. When the television program breaks, different kinds of everyday activity in the living room organize how television advertising is experienced by the viewers. Sally attends to her homework with her back to the screen. Jacqui turns to chat with her mum seated next to her and largely ignores an ad for Retravision. Sarah ignores her daughter, however, and instead watches the television advertisement. Unsuccessful at grabbing her mum's attention, Jacqui engages with a spot for Dettol hand wash. Her visual attention to the ad shifts according to the chat now established between her mum and younger sister. As the Dettol ad ends, Jacqui inquires: "Did you see that? Ha ha! Did you see that ad, Mum?" She attempts to insert herself into the chat by resourcing the ad's quirky ending. But she is ignored, again.

Home and Away returns. Sally stops chatting and returns to her homework book. Sarah then faces Jacqui and chats with her for 10 seconds before both reengage with the program. Advertising responses at home are influenced by wider domestic situations, physical viewing positions, and the use of other objects in the family living room, and shape the meaning of ads. (Observational note, Vickers household, 7:20 P.M., Thursday, June 26, 2008)

The contexts through which we respond to television advertisements, engage with them, and read and decode their messages have been studied in consumer research. Much research examines the effects and outcomes of variables such as broadcast and program context and social context on audience reception and engagement (Murry and Dacin 1996; Raghunathan and Corfman 2006), using predictive measures such as brand attitude or ad recall (Murry,

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Lastovicka, and Singh 1992). Other research also addresses contextualized ad engagement but focuses on understanding the processes of engagement in social settings and the interpersonal meanings constructed through it (Kates 2004). Ritson and Elliott's (1999) account of advertising context outlines part of this process, highlighting how television advertising texts are sometimes watched and engaged at home due to social influences operating beyond domestic settings. We build on Ritson and Elliott's research by concentrating not on the external social influences that increase ad engagement but on the everyday (i.e., commonplace or mundane) domestic situations, interpersonal interactions, and object use that acutely shape viewing, response, and engagement during actual advertising broadcasts at home. Consumer researchers have traditionally assumed that advertising information and socially engaging advertisements hold their power over viewers during the viewing event. Yet, as highlighted in our seemingly banal opening observation note, shifts in interpersonal and situational contexts such as Jacqui's seating position and Sally's chat with her mum largely influence Jacqui's experiences with the quirky Dettol advertisement. In light of our data, Ritson and Elliott's outline of the social contexts of advertising seems inadequate to more roundly address a central question in consumer research: what motivates viewers at home to respond to, watch, and engage with certain television advertisements while they ignore others?

To help fill this conceptual gap, our study analyzes the ways that television advertising broadcasts interact with and influence viewer behavior in the family living room. Two key research questions are proposed. First, what are the central elements that activate the process of television advertising response, from initial exposure to engagement and consumption? Our article examines the culturally framed viewing contexts and practices organizing advertising experiences in the living room and provides a theoretical framework outlining advertising engagement and consumption in domestic settings. Advertising consumption is holistic and includes how the lived experience of both the television program break and advertising textual interpretation are embedded within consumers' "everyday practices and the structure of [their] cultural communities" (Jansson 2002, 24). In home viewing situations, it accounts for the household discourses and wider viewer contexts and practices that lead to the viewing and personalizing of advertising messages, including how moments during the television program break are reclaimed by consumers for homemaking purposes. From this perspective, consumer research has not accounted for the variety of everyday household discourses that compel ad viewing behavior or displace advertisements from attention. Second, how do contextualized viewing practices produce domestic advertising meanings? Here, we are influenced by Epp and Price's ideas concerning "network transformations" (2010, 833). We argue that exposure to a television advertisement in a domestic viewing space may set in motion particular contextual shifts, linked to shared household ideas around family identity, that

impact the ways viewers at home subsequently watch television ads scheduled within a particular program break. These are significant questions for consumer researchers interested in television advertising engagement and consumption, as they invite us to consider advertising response from a viewer-centred perspective and caution against conceptions of advertising engagement and interpretation organized solely through broadcast media contexts. They also help uncover the situations and contexts that motivate advertising experiences, responses, and engagement at home; and locate the presence of family interaction during the television program break. Next, we further develop some of these theoretical perspectives and assumptions to ground our analysis.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Advertising Context

Studies of advertising context within consumer research are largely derived from cognitive and social psychology and apply experimental methods to determine measures of advertising engagement and effectiveness. It is normal in ad experiments to both implicitly and explicitly delimit the notion of reception and engagement context. For example, participants are often asked to evaluate an ad in isolation from the programming that generally contextualizes the viewing experience (Batra and Ray 1986), while other studies try to "maximize external validity within experimental constraints," for instance, by testing commercials surrounded by stimulus television programming (Brasel and Gips 2008, 34), by accounting for advertising frequency (Campbell and Keller 2003), or by introducing into the viewing event confederates with limited "audience member familiarity" (Puntoni and Tavassoli 2007, 294). As well, in many interpretive studies, television advertising texts are read and interpreted by culturally informed viewers through the ad's textual, intertextual, and allusory media features (O'Donohoe 1997; Scott 1994). These traditions and techniques have each served the discipline well: they link ad interpretation to a text- and message-based notion of engagement, enabling researchers to better understand how we as consumers process advertising and brand information, as well as how we respond to the formal features of the broadcast advertising text, the commercial pod, and the surrounding programming. Yet a principle limitation has been a reduced understanding of how the situational and temporal context elements surrounding audience members—such as Jacqui Vickers's attempts to connect with her mum in our opening empirical vignette—strongly govern and influence the very act of ad reading, engagement, and interpretation during television program breaks (Hornik 1988; Kates 2004; Ritson and Elliott 1999).

This lack of contextual sensitivity within extant consumer behavior stands in contrast to the study of television audience behavior in other disciplines. Media studies researchers, for example, have also examined television audience behavior, albeit from a marketer-controlled rather than consumer-centric perspective. David Morley (2000) provides a

conceptual framework for examining how actual consumers in everyday domestic settings experience and respond to commercial television programming at the moment of broadcast. He theorizes that contemporary viewers at home read and interpret television material through three inter-related everyday consumer contexts (2000, 16–30): the idea of home as a place of rules and comfort (Ang 1996), living room symbolism (Money 2007), and through the identity conflicts and obligations of the individual viewer embedded within a family collective (Kim 2006; Mankekar 1999). Couldry (2000) additionally highlights how the contexts of intertextuality and the time effects of viewing intersect to create personalized social meaning from television pro-grams. Others have observed how transitions in actual pro-gram audience composition and behavior influence exposure to and personalization of television material at home (Brody and Stoneman 1983). Despite these productive perspectives on household program viewing, media studies researchers have generally been reluctant to empirically study household advertising audiences due to their discipline's Marxian ap-proach to examining consumer culture (Scott 2006). Media research therefore fails to account for the ways that—among other things—television advertising's "peculiar media goals" (Ritson and Elliott 1999, 266) of reach and frequency ensure that the television program break and the ads scheduled within it produce more widely shared social experiences than programming.

Advertising scholars, however, have developed a body of work that empirically examines how television advertising material is personalized in specific post-broadcast situations (Griffiths and Machin 2003). In the family living room, viewers may enjoy television advertising material, often us-ing it as a transformative identity resource, for example, when children appropriate it to display literacy and com-petence to parents (Bartholomew and O'Donohoe 2003). Yet many viewers also feel ambivalent about television ad-vertising entering the private, domestic contexts of the fam-ily home, often enduring advertisements as an intrusive, commercialized entity (O'Donohoe 2001). Research also outlines how shifts in practice such as media multitasking and time shifted program viewing impact how television program breaks are experienced in the living room (Bardhi, Rohm, and Sultan 2010; Pearson and Barwise 2008). De-spite these advances of viewing in post-broadcast situations, advertising theory rarely investigates how the actual tele-vision program break and the advertisements broadcast within it are experienced at the precise moment of broadcast at home and the role of interpersonal advertising contexts in these experiences.

So, heeding Ritson and Elliott's (1999, 275) request for consumer researchers to study the "actual act" of advertising viewing, we borrow ideas from media studies and elsewhere to advance an empirical account of how television advertising is experienced and engaged by audiences in the everyday viewing contexts found in a family living room. Our research suggests that everyday social interactions, viewing space and time, and concurrently used media technology all influence

the ways that advertising is viewed, engaged, and personalized during actual broadcast events. Importantly, we understand any precise moment of advertising response as less moderated through any one particular contextual element but more through specific orchestrations of the entire network of ad-vertising contexts, orchestrations that themselves influence the subsequent flow of everyday household and family life (Lind-lof, Shatzer, and Wilkinson 1988). We aim to elevate the concept of advertising context to a more important theoretical position within consumer behavior and to arrive at a more formal treatment of advertising response and consumption.

(Re-)Negotiating Family Identity in the Living Room

Family identity within the living room appears precarious considering the opposing and differing interests, demands, and electives of individual family members in various parts of the contemporary home. Livingstone (2007) writes how media-led developments in late modernity have shifted the model of Western family life once based on collectivism in the living room to one based more on a "bedroom culture." Holloway and Green (2008) note that changing parenting styles have meant many parents now manage household disputes among children by encouraging media use practices in separate household rooms. Such household tensions are themselves said to be aggravated by wider cultural trends involving increased levels of materialism and individual modes of product consumption (Bauman 2007; Buijzen and Valkenburg 2003). With increasing crisis and physical sep-aration within the home, the notion that advertising viewing contexts can motivate relational and pro-family behaviors in the living room may appear little more than theoretical speculation.

Yet, simultaneously, researchers find that living room ex-changes are perhaps at their most varied and closest: given the hurried pace of contemporary family life, including the felt experience of time depletion (Cotte, Ratneshwar, and Mick 2004), intergenerational and cross-sibling exchanges have never been tighter (Broege et al. 2007). "Quality" house-hold interactions enhance or challenge elements of affection, trust, and bonding between family members (Kremer-Sadlik and Paugh 2007). In many living rooms, "cold spots" are created, as moments are recovered and reclaimed by family members to more firmly control the "temporal rhythms of daily life" for homemaking purposes (Southerton 2003, 20). Our research examines the role of the temporal and situa-tional contexts of advertising response in the living room through these lenses of family socialization.

The popularity of domestic media leisure forms, such as television sets, mobile phones, and video games, has led to rises in intrafamily media consumption practices in the liv-ing room (Atkins 2001). These situated and social exchanges demonstrate media-contingent practices of family identity. Family identity, as understood here, follows Epp and Price's (2008, 56) formula as an interplay between the "comple-mentary and competing" commitments within families.

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Family members use particles of media and television culture to tell stories and share gossip at particular times, in particular places, to the family collective or subsets of it in the living room (Morley 1986, 2007). Our research suggests that viewer responses during the television program break orient around these perspectives of family identity practice.

From the above reviewed literatures we further summarize several important theoretical gaps. First, prior research has not shown why viewers momentarily engage with certain advertisements and then apparently ignore them, particularly advertisements that contain relevant product information, or that may stimulate product consumption or develop brand loyalty. That is, it has not addressed the contexts and situations under which targeted television advertisements are apparently avoided during the television program break, nor has it been explained how everyday behaviors in the family living room may disturb key advertising engagement practices. Second, previous studies have not outlined the circumstances under which television advertisements that seemingly have low relevance to viewers are watched and engaged in family viewing situations. Finally, this corpus has not studied the influence of changes in everyday situations and contexts during the television program break on advertising engagement or consumption, or on family viewing behavior. Advertising consumption involves a wide array of potential changes in the living room arising from the interactions of viewer practices, household discourse, and advertising texts. Advertising theory has not explained why particular viewing practices are performed during a specific viewing event nor traced the implications for advertising consumption or household behavior.

METHOD

Our study is a videography of viewer behavior in the family living room (Kozinets and Belk 2006; Tutt 2008) and sits within a growing body of video-recorded ethnographic studies of advertising response in advertising and consumer research (Brodin 2007; Pearson and Barwise 2008). It was conducted in eight family homes in Glenvale, a pseudonym for a middle class suburb 13 miles southeast of Melbourne, Australia. Using video recordings with member check interviews, we studied the everyday behaviors of consumers in the family living room and noted what they do during television program breaks and how they experience, respond to, and engage with real-life advertising broadcasts.

Prior videographies of household advertising viewing and engagement have sampled a series of homes selected across a range of age groups, socioeconomic factors, cohabitation arrangements, and household sizes (Brodin 2007). The eight homes in this study, however, were purposively selected using an explicitly homogeneous sampling strategy (Patton 2002). With Glenvale, we aimed to select a field site typical of the Australian suburban heartland, as suburban living in Australia is often regarded as a national ethos (Dowling and Mee 2007). Within Glenvale, eight suburban family households were recruited in line with normative Australian marketing industry and television audience ratings metrics, specifically, the most valuable commercial audience category of two-parent families with children aged 5–17 years (OzTAM 2008; see table 1).

The video recording of viewer behavior was achieved by placing a small video camera, a microphone, and a hard drive recorder unobtrusively in the main television viewing area in the living room in each of the eight suburban family homes. The equipment was installed in each home for two continuous weeks and a week of viewer acclimatization to the presence of the equipment was allowed before the actual recording of viewer behavior began. Each camera recorded activity in the entire living room including audio and, through an input connection from each family's television set, a small picture-in-picture insert showed what was being watched at each precise moment. All recordings took place between February and August 2008.

Primary video data for each of the eight households consisted of footage recorded from the final seven days of television viewing behavior. This was then edited to produce 3,800 minutes of video clips of viewer behavior, filmed over the 1,250 television program breaks that occurred during the recording period across the eight homes. These clips were watched many times over, and behaviors of family members during the program break were detailed and analyzed using ethnographic coding for verbal and nonverbal behavior (Norris 2004; Patton 2002).

Once emergent themes of advertising response had been developed, the first author returned to Glenvale in May 2009 to triangulate the etic analysis with participant accounts of viewing behavior. Member check and video auto-driving interviews (Heisley and Levy 1991) were conducted with each of the eight families and were professionally transcribed to produce in excess of 285 single-spaced A4 pages. Theory and data were toggled in iterative fashion (Spiggle 1994) to develop four themes explaining everyday advertising response and engagement during the program break in the family living room, focusing on the processes and meanings of advertising experience and viewing to householders.

Everyday advertising experiences are explained through consumers' cultural immersion within Australian suburban family life. In the following section, we outline suburban family life in the Glenvale homes by describing its general ideological form, recently observed challenges, and its current character. These aspects contextualize the Glenvale families within our sampling strategy and underpin our discussion about advertising response and engagement in the family home.

SUBURBAN FAMILY LIFE IN GLENVALE

Suburban family life is an aspiration and reality for many Australians. From the ideology's first planting in the new British colony in 1790, suburbanism has subsequently grown into an Australian national creed, routinely politicized and culturally celebrated for its putative social egalitarianism and equitability (Gilbert 1988). The architects and planners of

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TABLE 1

PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPATING FAMILIES

Household pseudonym	Informant, age, and occupation	Living room environment	Additional sets
Adams	Peter, 46, postal worker; Claire, 32, postal worker; Zere, 8, student; Justin, 6, student	DVD and PlayStation, remote control set, Foxtel pay TV, digital	One in master bedroom
Dangerfield	Nick, 35, church minister; Susan, 33, social worker; Rick, 6, student; Daniel, 4, preschool; Steve, 4, preschool	DVD and PlayStation, remote control set, Free-to-Air TV	One in family room with Foxtel and DVD/VCR
Davies	Ian, 50, secondary school teacher; Maureen, 43, kindergarten assistant; Sarah, 18, university student; Amanda, 16, student; Linda, 14, student; Tina, 6, student	VCR and DVD, remote control set, Free-to-Air TV, digital	One in lounge room
Richards	Craig, 36, personal trainer; Bec, 34, personal trainer; Joanne, 10, student; Hector, 8, student; Victor, 8, student; Olivine, 8, student	VCR and DVD, remote control set, Free-to-Air and Foxtel pay TV	One upstairs (PlayStation), one in master bedroom (rarely used)
Smith	Greg, 36, hospital lab technician; Simone, 35, social worker; Andrew, 13, student; Nigel, 12, student; Nicole, 11, student; Damien, 9, student; Anthony, 16 months	VCR and DVD, remote control set, Free-to-Air TV, digital	None
Vickers	John, 46, business development manager; Sarah, 45, teaching assistant; Jodie, 16, student; Jacqui, 15, student; Sally, 11, student	DVD, remote control set	One in family room
Whitney	Steve, 44, CIO; Renae, 43, postal worker; Seb, 15, student; Isabella, 12, student; Emma, 10, student	DVD and Xbox, remote control set, Foxtel pay TV, digital	One in master bedroom
Williams	Andrew, 40, car dealer; Simone, 40, supermarket manager; Siobhan, 15, student; Tim, 11, student; Dane, 9, student	DVD and Wii, remote control set, Free-to-Air TV, digital	One in lounge, one in master bedroom (rarely used)

Australian urban family living produced a uniquely Australian form of urbanized, middle-class settlement by infusing an Arcadian sentiment inherited from the English colonists with the cultural nationalist mythologies inspired by local "bush poets" such as Henry Lawson. This Arcadian form, as Johnson (2006, 261) astutely observes, locates the mid- to outer-level Australian suburb as an idealized authentic place of "semi-rural escape" from the "dirt, dangers, and immorality" of the seemingly commercialized city.

Paradoxically, the cultural success of Australian suburban discourse has helped stoke recent moral panics about competing discourses undermining this form of middle-class family lifestyle (Hamilton 2003). As noted by Pusey (2003), these are suburban anxieties focused on the "dark side" of rationalist economic philosophy that gained political currency in Australia from the 1980s onward. At root is a tension between the "real and imagined hardship" (Hamilton 2003) felt by many Australian families, particularly the lived experience of many middle-class "working families" in the mid- to outer-level Australian suburbs whose family time is constrained by longer working hours and the spillover of work into home life (Pocock and Clarke 2005). Accordingly, Australia's Arcadian family lifestyle is increasing experienced as under threat and fragmenting and is framed against global capital interests and other related agents—including

both the broadcast of commercial advertising into the home and an untrammelled view of consumer culture—that are assumed to challenge and weaken it (Buchanan et al. 2006).

The overall character and lived experience in our sample of Glenvale homes appears to reflect some of these recent shifts in Australian suburban ideology: middle-class family aspiration (Dovey 1994; Latham 2003) tempered by a cautious view of overwork, and concerns about the increasing encroachment of materialist and consumerist aspects into the domestic sphere (Allon and Sofoulis 2006; Pusey 2003). The participant Susan Dangerfield best expresses a common concern held by the Glenvale householders, calling television advertisements broadcast into the living room "a bit of an invasion," as they often rub against family time and challenge pro-family discourse. Importantly, in half of our sampled homes, a strong commitment to religious and moral development was evident. For example, Greg Smith runs Bible study sessions with his children every Wednesday night, and Nick Dangerfield is a local church minister. Equally, all participating households displayed a commitment to children's well-being, with participation in team sport emerging as a unifying discourse across most of the homes.

In the Glenvale living rooms, advertising response during the program breaks is patterned into wider domestic activity

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such as mundane family dramas, intergenerational play, and moral discussion. The family living room in Glenvale therefore evinces a suitable ethnographic field site from which we can gain insights about advertising context and its influence on viewer behavior during the television program break, and about how family members are exposed to (and experience, engage with, and make sense of) television advertising in suburban, everyday viewing settings, beyond traditional research perspectives of advertising reception. The next section focuses on everyday advertising context as experienced in the Glenvale living rooms. These interpersonal advertising contexts orchestrated numerous text-based, situated, and social viewing behaviors, and also influenced several identity-sculpting and relationship-building endeavours. We present them in our four cultural themes below. From our wider empirical data set, we selected for our themes only the most "archetypal" (Ritson and Elliott 1999, 265) viewing episodes to highlight the importance of each of the viewing contexts to the process of everyday advertising response, engagement, and personalization. Our discussion then presents our framework for analysis and addresses the implications from this videography to understand the links between advertising context, viewer practices, and household discourse.

FINDINGS: FOUR CONTEXTS OF ADVERTISING RESPONSE

The Social Context: The Role of Multimodal Interaction

One of the first insights from Glenvale is that after the relatively isolated viewing styles that absorbing program content created within the households—where we observe very little chat and discussion between viewers—the arrival of advertising often provided the cue for much more engaged social interaction. The intergenerational experience of father and son, in the case of Greg and Damien Smith, illustrates how everyday physical interactions can represent the dominant behavioral activity during the broadcast of television advertisements:

> Damien and Greg watch *Sea Patrol* on channel 9. As the first program break commences, Damien attempts to tickle his dad. His father tickles Damien back. The play continues through the break, replacing attention toward the advertisements. When *Sea Patrol* resumes, both return their gaze to the program. At the start of the next break, Greg immediately grabs Damien's hand and kisses it, while both of them intermittently watch the advertisements. Greg pretends to smack Damien on his bottom, displacing their looks at the advertising. Damien laughs, turns to Greg, and asks him to play a childhood game. Greg, who has now returned his gaze to the program that has just resumed, suggests another time. Both watch *Sea Patrol*. When the next program break commences, both watch a recruitment advertisement for the Australian Defence Force, filmed in the style of the *Sea Patrol* program. It prompts Damien to turn to Greg and ask: "Dad,

> what did you actually want to be when you grow older [*sic*]?" Greg faces Damien and mentions as a young boy he dreamed of being a veterinarian. Both gaze back at the ads as Damien remarks on his dad's current job and comments that his own dreams of being a soccer player may not materialize. As the ads roll on, Greg talks about his experiences regarding career aspirations, personal ideas of success, and moral attitudes to money. *Sea Patrol* returns and they both focus on the program in silence. (Observational note, Smith household, 9:00–9:30 P.M., Monday, March 31, 2008)

During the breaks, intimate yet resolutely mundane physical moments strengthen the identity commitment of one individual toward another. We note that the compounding of each physical encounter between Greg and Damien across the three breaks heightens the bond between father and son and enriches the communication between them as they wait for *Sea Patrol* to resume. This intergenerational dyad uses the moments offered by the program breaks to nonverbally express their filial relationship. It is a complex expressive process in which attention to the advertisement is continually displaced by multimodal interaction involving gestures and small chat (Norris 2004); at best, advertising is only intermittently engaged. Through the Defence Force ad's allusion to job recruitment, however, it culminates in Greg's brief though deep discussion about careers, tempered materialism, and moral affairs with his 8-year-old son. Equally important, during the periods where the *Sea Patrol* program resumes, their filial interactions immediately fade, and both father and son return to a more stereotyped audience position.

In this initial example from the Smith household, social interactions between father and son are achieved at the expense of a more engaged and attentive viewer of advertising. But family interactions in the living room can also have the opposite impact, reincorporating television advertising back into the viewer's focus. Like Greg Smith, Andrew Williams is occasionally observed playing with his children during the television program break. The morning of August 1, 2008, however, was not one of these occasions. Andrew does not perform some of the more caring behaviors appropriate for a loving father because of the strain he is under; his car dealership business is in serious financial difficulty, and his moodiness this week has already caused much tension and anxiety within the family. In fact, throughout the recording week, the Williams's living room was the setting for a series of strained discussions as the entire family debated the merits of a fresh start by moving interstate, downshifting, and simplifying their current suburban lifestyle. Here, we note the ramification of the behavior of one antisocial viewer in the living room on the verbal and nonverbal viewing strategies performed by other family members during the break:

> The Williams siblings watch *Sunrise* on channel 7 with their dad Andrew. When the program breaks, Andrew readies himself to take Siobhan to school. Suddenly, Dane announces that his reading book is missing. He needs his dad to sign the school book to certify he completed last night's home-

work. Andrew is grumpy and, while staring at a Telstra advertisement, he gruffly tells Dane he should take more care of his belongings. The atmosphere in the Williams's living room instantly becomes tenser, prompting Siobhan to respond: "Don't yell at him about it . . . it's not his fault!" Andrew retorts in exasperation: "Back off the parents!" Father and three children all focus on the Telstra ad in stony silence. Dane's voice quivers as he focuses his eyes on a mascara advertisement and suggests that one of his classmates "must now have two" reading books. Siobhan chats with Dane in an overtly upbeat and reassuring tone with her eyes entirely focused on the screen. As an advertisement for the Clothing Warehouse sale begins, all eyes and attention move off the television and focus elsewhere: the book is finally found. Dane smiles at Andrew, who signs the book. Everyone is relieved. (Observational note, Williams household, 8 A.M., Friday, August 1, 2008)

Once again, a particular intergenerational interaction impacts on the process of advertising viewing. Significantly, the book activates a particular network of viewer practices (Epp and Price 2010), including the short drama, that has at its core the Arcadian-inspired tension generated by the family's uncertain future. The combined strain prompts Siobhan's cheery and skittish conversation. It also causes the three children to avoid eye contact with their father and with each other. Instead, all eyes settle on the television screen with deliberate intensity, paradoxically driving more apparently engaged advertising attention. This is not by any means, however, the image of the focused viewer of advertising understood by many researchers, in which heightened engagement with the advertisement is caused by textual features or by the product being promoted. As Siobhan explains in the member check interview when reviewing the incident:

> I pretend that I'm watching [the advertisement] so I can actually [stand up for my younger brothers] without looking at them, because Dad gets all mad at me when I try to stand up for them. I don't want to look at Dad when he's angry, so every time I'm talking to Dad [when defending her brothers], I look at the TV. (Interview excerpt, Williams household, Monday, May 18, 2009)

Siobhan's interview comments suggest her "pretend" looks at the advertisements during this short intergenerational standoff are nonverbal viewing behaviors that reduce the "conversational discomfort" (Lull 1980, 203) experienced in the living room. Apart from reducing tension, her viewing practices also attempt to foster a stronger sense of sibling unity—particularly by encouraging Dane to speak up—while diplomatically appeasing her already burdened father too.

Television program breaks often provide crucial opportunities for family members to socialize through multimodal interaction. A viewing episode during a single program break in the Whitney living room outlines in greater detail how this particular system of social interaction works to achieve greater family well-being, with implications for advertising engagement:

> Seb and his parents watch *Top Gear* on SBS. Seb sits on the couch and rests his arm on his mother Renae's hip. The program breaks, and an Olympic Games promotional ad airs. He watches it for a moment before attempting to get up. Renae places her hand on his shoulder and inquires: "You're not going?" "Yes," he replies. Renae quickly asks her son how his leg is, after he shaved it following an accident at a soccer match on the weekend. Mother and son intensely look at and discuss the shaved area, and this behavior draws his dad, Steve, seated nearby, into the conversation. Concern over the leg injury displaces Renae's attention to the ads and Seb's urgency to go to his bedroom. When a spot for Crown forklifts airs, there is a short pause that disrupts the chat, and the ads once more come into focus, and it seems that visually attending to a Shannon's motor insurance ad allows the viewing triad to gather their thoughts. Renae initiates a quiet conversation about Seb's soccer match, which all three chat about while gazing at the ads on the screen. When *Top Gear* resumes, Seb remains on the couch, and the three of them watch the program in silence. (Observational note, Whitney household, 8:30 P.M., Monday, July 14, 2008)

In this episode we note that even though viewers often try to personalize the program break for family interaction, they are not entirely successful: the advertisements are not entirely displaced from attention, and viewing is usually incomplete and partial. Multimodal advertising interactions work through the ordering of three elements that converge in any viewing event: explicitly visually attending to a television advertisement, verbal communication, and bodily gesture. In this instance, we observe the elements of phatic conversation and physical interaction between Seb and his mother are multimodal behaviors that are prioritized over the explicit visual engagement of advertisements; even though each of the three converging elements is reorganized in different hierarchical arrangements to choreograph subsequent advertising responses observed later during this same break. Additionally, Renae's initial request to Seb to show her his injured knee is delivered with a sublimated perlocutionary intent (Gaines 1979) to manage the social interaction during the break to prevent Seb from leaving the room. Crucially, during the interview, Renae mentions that Seb will turn 16 later during the year and so may only live at home for two more years until he completes his secondary schooling. It is mainly this bittersweet realization that her eldest child is growing up quickly, she says, that prompts her to personalize the program break and reclaim from it a few more moments to interact with Seb. Paradoxically, the three-way discussion following her request to Seb not only organizes the partial viewing of advertisements on the screen, but the chat's subsequent intensity also stymies opportunities for the three viewers to more fully engage with any of the advertisements subsequently broadcast during the break.

Advertising broadcasts are by definition social events, not

just in the sense of how they are experienced but also in the sense that responding to and interacting with them at home can enhance narratives about family life. The range of multimodal practices observed during the program breaks in the Smith, Williams, and Whitney households helps build an impression of real-time television advertising viewers as partially attentive, as talkative and socially embodied, and embedded in the stresses, strains, and humor of everyday household discourse. The particular hierarchical ordering of multimodal behaviors enacted by particular viewers—privileging the gentle smacks and tickles between father and son in the Smith living room, Siobhan Williams's excessively cheery chats and stares at the screen, or Renae Whitney's perlocutionary acts—add texture and nuance to our understanding of both how consumers marshal family identity and domestic discourse during the program break, how they arrange advertising viewing, and how these socializing behaviors intermittently dislodge advertising from viewer attention.

The Spatial Context: The Deterritorialization of Advertising in the Living Room

The process of deterritorialization structures advertising engagement and consumption in the Glenvale living rooms. Deterritorialization describes the loosening of ties between certain consumer practices and their performance from within particular physical locations (Appadurai 1996; Üstüner and Holt 2010). Our observations challenge consumer research perspectives that reduce the effect of viewing space on television advertising experience and interpretation (Campbell and Keller 2003; Fisher and Dube 2005). Advertising deterritorialization implies viewers immersed in the physical settings of the living room do not experience television advertising the same way they experience it in traditional research settings, for example, by understanding it through reception measures of brand attitude. Instead, many advertising responses in Glenvale are observed through interpersonal processes of consumer agency and domestic power linked to the physical character of each family living room. In the Adams family, for instance, Peter, Claire, and daughter Zere all sit in the living room. Yet in fact they sit in two deterritorialized zones, where different modes of viewing behavior are sanctioned from within two physically separate places in the room. Peter effectively harnesses this understanding during a program break:

> Claire and Zere sit directly in front of the television and watch *A Current Affair* on channel 9. Peter sits at a small dining table at the back of the living room. He faces the television but reads a newspaper laid out on the table. The program breaks. Claire and Zere relax their gaze at the screen and chat. An ad promotes the Spirit of Tasmania cruise liner, and Zere asks Claire about it. Later, an ad for the Classic War Movies DVD collection is broadcast. Its jingle is a military tune. With eyes focused on the newspaper, Peter briefly whistles along to the jingle while reading the newspaper. When the ad voiceover mentions the film *The Great Escape*, Peter

looks up at the ad for less than a second. His partial attention toward it is displaced by the newspaper immediately in front of him. Later during the same commercial, he whistles the tune to the iconic war film, while still gazing down at the paper. Claire is humorously surprised. Zere walks over to hug him, and he briefly whistles the tune again, still looking at the newspaper. Peter ignores a Jenny Craig ad, and he begins to chat to Claire, even though his eyes do not lift from the paper. (Observational note, Adams household, 7:45 P.M., Wednesday, April 23, 2008)

In the Adams's living room, the two main couches are arranged in an L-formation. The small dining table sits at the tip of the long arm of the "L," and the gap created between the couches and the dining table functions as a walkway for the family. More importantly, the gap contextualizes an invisible social separator, a buffer between the two leisure zones, symbolizing where family mealtimes occur (the dining table) and where relaxation and television viewing generally take place (the couches). During the member check interview, Peter indicated he felt excluded from the chat on the family couch and that his whistle of *The Great Escape* film score was deliberately enacted to remind both Claire and Zere that, in his own words, "I'm here too!" The jingle from the Classic War Movies DVD advertisement displaces his attention from the newspaper and heightens his sensitivity to the deterritorialized "emotional geography" (Davidson and Milligan 2004) in this zoned living room. Peter is a postal shift worker who sleeps at 9 P.M., much earlier than Claire, as he leaves home at 4:30 A.M. each weekday to go to work. So during the week, as he explains in the interview, his "family time" is limited to only the few early evening hours once Claire arrives home after work at 5:30 P.M. During this program break he concludes that the furniture arrangements in the living room actually separate him—both spatially and emotionally—from other family members. Rather than engage with the ad's visuals or sponsoring message, he creatively engages with the advertising jingle, consuming it as a social resource to cross the imaginary boundary and symbolically reconnect with his wife and daughter.

We can also apply Allon's (2004, 261) notion of "new spatialities" to elaborate these processes, highlighting how viewers in Glenvale create advertising viewing spaces at home that are impacted with deeper, more personalized meaning. In the homes observed, for instance, the notion of "the living room" is phenomenologically experienced by family members as more expansive than merely configuring it solely through the architectural boundaries of the actual room where much of the television is viewed. Open plan architecture, found across all the sampled Glenvale homes, is fundamental to this process. In the following observation from the Davies household we note a large portion of the wall is cut out between the kitchen and the family living room, implying that—for family members in the kitchen—living room experiences enter and blur the felt "kitchen experience" during the break:

> Maureen Davies is in the kitchen and has just prepared a breakfast pancake for Tina. Tina sits on the main couch in the living room, just underneath the wall cutout, and eats her pancake while watching *Saturday Disney*. When Maureen stands directly in front of the stove preparing a second pancake, she can't see the television screen, though she can hear the television audio track through the cutout. During the break, an advertisement for Colour-by-Number Doodle Pony airs. Tina yells: "I want to get that, Mum!" Maureen's attention to the pancake is displaced; she turns and faces the cutout, and her gaze shifts from the stove to the television. She twice attends visually to the ad through the cutout, but on each occasion the cooking pancake pulls back her focus: "What is it?" she asks. Tina replies, pointing at the screen: "That! . . . It's a Doodle Pony!" Maureen, responding to Tina's gesture, walks closer to the cutout and refocuses on the screen: "I haven't seen that one before." Maureen reengages with the ad, chatting to Tina about it through the cutout. *Saturday Disney* recommences, and Tina attends to it. The pancake on the stove ensures Maureen returns her attention to breakfast preparation. (Observational note, Davies household, 8:10 A.M., Saturday, May 10, 2008)

The space-bridging function of the wall cutout aids the process of advertising deterritorialization for Maureen because it opens up to her in the kitchen the typically mundane family activities, interactions, and events that occur in the living room. Challenging normative approaches in consumer behavior, which reduce or ignore the impact of spatial meaning on advertising engagement, we observe that the viewing of the advertisements through the cutout allows viewers such as Maureen to aurally and visually experience a "doubling of place" (Moores 2004, 30). That is, the lived experience of viewers such as Maureen, positioned in other areas of the home, is one of domestic "co-presence" (Urry 2002, 267) when they attend to advertising discourse originating from within the living room. Unlike her husband and most of her friends, Maureen was raised without a television in her childhood home, and Christian morality and family interaction were explicit domestic discourses into which she was socialized. In fact, she only began to develop the appropriate television viewing behaviors (and associated interpretive skills and literacy practices) after she married and left home. As she remarks in the interview, her relatively late socialization into television viewing practice now means the television is used in her own home as a tool to explicitly enhance family interaction. The cutout, as a part of the domestic viewing architecture, aids this goal, and it is initially activated by a network of viewing practices involving Maureen preparing breakfast in the kitchen, and Tina watching television in the living room, as well as ideas of family interaction, and the Doodle Pony TVC itself. Simply, the physical presence of the cutout allows Maureen to engage with and recontextualize advertising material broadcast into the living room. More importantly, as a deterritorializing ad context, the cutout allows Maureen to remain active in family relationships by engaging with advertising discourse—

in her own words, "to be part of it, still"—while attending to domestic matters in other areas of the home.

Advertising deterritorialization suggests that for ad viewing experienced in the family living room, the domestic architectures, spaces, and furnishings surrounding viewers are inscribed with various social meaning, contextualizing how advertising is subsequently experienced and interpreted during the program break. Just as the contexts of open-plan design in contemporary Australian homes encourage a partial but continual opt-in of householders to everyday family events (Dowling 2008), so the meanings attached to both the program break and television advertising are often deterritorialized, enabling family members to interact with and create personalized domestic meanings from them when physically located in other areas of the family home.

The Media Multitasking Context: Concurrent Media Technology Use in the Living Room

In their discussion of "simultaneous media use," media engagement researchers Pilotta and Schultz (2005) detect a shift in how viewers experience television in the contemporary living room. They correctly reveal that in many homes in the developed world, the contemporary television viewing episode is experienced while also tasking with any number of competing media technologies, for example, mobile phone, gaming console, and laptop-tablet screens. Our direct observations of viewing in the Glenvale households, however, unpack the actual event of what is widely called "simultaneous" or "concurrent" media use or media multitasking at home to reveal it as a series of shortened sequential viewing practices within a single—putatively concurrent—viewing event. Our findings also challenge perspectives of audience behavior described as either dedicated advertising avoidance or visual attention (Brasel and Gips 2011; Rojas-Mendez, Davies, and Madran 2009); we reveal that domestic multimedia tasking behaviors and associated visual engagement practices during the program break are motivated more by broader household events and everyday family interaction than by a pressing want to avoid or attend to television advertising.

Individual identity commitments of family members are central to many of the concurrent media technology use (CMU) experiences observed during the program breaks in Glenvale. As a solo viewer, Steve Whitney is occasionally observed watching the advertisements during the break. Yet as a member of a double-income "working family," he is also very aware of the spillover of his professional activities on the quality of wider family life:

> Steve sits directly in front of the television and taps on his BlackBerry. All afternoon he has worked on a draft article for a computer professionals' bulletin board, while watching snatches of the *V8 Supercar Championships* on channel 7. He has already promised to take his family on an outing and is now running late. The break commences, and there is a noticeable change in audio quality, prompting his brief orientation to the news promotion on the television screen. Sud-

denly, his wife Renae peers over from the kitchen to check on Steve's progress, forcing Steve to reengage with the BlackBerry and focus on the writing task, thus displacing any potential engagement with the ads. His daughter Emma stands over him later during the break and complains about his tardiness: "When? . . . Dad? . . . When? You said 5 minutes ago [sic]!" Steve's concentration on his draft is interrupted. His eyes shift off the BlackBerry; he faces Emma, and chides her: "Don't stand here, it slows me down!" Emma leaves in frustration. Steve refocuses on the BlackBerry and takes no notice of both the advertisements that continue to air and the return of the car race. (Observational note, Whitney household, 3:30 P.M., Saturday, July 19, 2008)

Steve's advertising viewing practices comprise foregrounded focused looks at his BlackBerry screen as the break is initially personalized for the purpose of writing. Even though this is a Saturday afternoon, competing elements of Steve's professional and family life intertwine as he attends to the BlackBerry. His disengagement from visually attending to the ads is a direct consequence of the professional obligations that loom large in what should be a moment for a family outing. He therefore takes a multisensory approach using mainly aural means to monitor the advertising broadcast while he types on the BlackBerry. He is largely unaware of the advertising visuals on the television screen and not due to any particular motivation to avoid them. Steve reveals in the interview that when he actually glimpses the advertising, his brief visual monitors were not performed to watch the advertisements on the screen but rather to relieve his concentration on the small BlackBerry screen, as well as to pause and gather together his thoughts and opinions for his article as he rushes to complete his draft. The overriding sentiment of potentially letting down his family this weekend afternoon means the BlackBerry becomes the locus of visual attention, rather than the television screen, and advertising engagement remains latent. This blending of multisensory modes of media engagement with domestic discourse features widely in advertising experiences in the everyday CMU observations in Glenvale. It is a blend of perceptions that shifts according to a network of practices involving the particular domestic viewing situation, time allocation skills, and media forms engaged in the living room. This combination of visual and aural advertising experience is also seen elsewhere in the Whitney living room, for example, in leisure viewing situations:

> Renae relaxes after dinner and watches *Doctor Who* on UKTV with her daughter Emma. *Doctor Who* is one of Renae's favorite childhood shows, and Emma has been socialized into it too. As the break commences, Renae chats with her eldest daughter Isabella, who stands next to her, before reading a *Women's Day* magazine buried in her lap. During the break, a Pine-O-Cleen ad is broadcast. Renae very briefly attends to it, but any deeper ad engagement is deferred by her interaction with Emma over the magazine, which the two now browse in unison. The two discuss the magazine's stories, a practice that not only enriches their mother-daughter

bond but also further prevents any of the other ads on the television screen from fully entering Renae's field of attention. When *Doctor Who* resumes, Renae keeps reading the magazine for a minute and then returns her eyes to the television screen to watch the show again with undivided attention. (Observation note, Whitney household, 8:10 P.M., Tuesday, July 15, 2008)

Both Steve and Renae Whitney's CMU practices attempt to create "cold spots" during the "hot spot" (Southerton 2003) of the advertising broadcasts, by reconfiguring, personalizing, and reclaiming moments offered by the program break. Renae's behavior is an already busy allocation of consumption practices during the program break, including reading a magazine. During the interview, Renae mentions she often combines visual and aural monitors of the broadcast flow of advertisements on the television, which in this viewing episode allows her to concentrate on the magazine and monitor when *Doctor Who* resumes while keeping visual advertising engagement to a minimum. Similar to Steve's CMU practices, we observe how Renae's foregrounding of the *Women's Day* magazine largely backgrounds the television screen and displaces the advertisements. But in Renae's case this is performed by explicitly allocating time for mother-daughter interaction during the latter half of the break (Southerton 2006).

The riotous activities in the Smith living room, recorded in an episode at the end of the school holidays, more vividly demonstrates how these aspects of CMU behavior during the break have implications for advertising response. During this particular break in a football broadcast, we note the time allocation skill of the close sibling triad of Andrew, Nicole, and Damien and its relationship to media multitasking, advertising response, and family interaction:

> Andrew and Nicole sit on the couch, each with an Etch-a-Sketch on their lap. Damien sits on the ground. All watch the football game on channel 7. A goal is scored and the program breaks. Nicole draws a crude picture of a bottom on her board, stands on the couch, and giggles excitedly: "What part of your body is this?" She shows the board to Andrew. The children look at the drawing and laugh. Andrew responds by drawing a hairy bottom on his board. Again, all look at the drawing and laugh. Nicole gurgles with laughter: "That's disgusting, Adam!" No one watches a station promotion for *So You Think You Can Dance*. The siblings now gather around the Etch-a-Sketches. Damien, who idolizes his eldest brother, turns his head away from the Etch-a-Sketch in Andrew's hands and visually monitors a Sony Bravia spot airing on the television, then returns his attention to the action at the couch, quipping: "I've got the *best one* for Andrew!" Damien grabs the Etch-a-Sketch from Nicole and sits down to draw. None of the three siblings watch the ads that are broadcast. Rough-and-tumble play unfolds between Nicole and Andrew, prompting their dad, Greg, to warn Andrew to calm down; he obliges, and sits and watches an ad for Pedders Suspension. Suddenly, Damien calls out to Andrew, whose attention to the ad is immediately displaced. Andrew turns

and looks at Damien's drawing on the board. He recoils: "Aw, man, that's *disgusting*! You don't draw pictures of that! Dad! He's drawn a picture of a, err . . ." Andrew turns to Greg and points to his crotch. He looks back at Damien and skittishly laughs: "That is *overboard*, man!" The siblings look at the Etch-a-Sketch, giggle again, and chat hysterically, ignoring the ads. Sponsorship billboards air, signalling the football's return, but the living room is still a scene of chaos, and it takes a minute for the children to return to the football. (Observational note, Smith household, 8:15 P.M., Saturday, March 29, 2008)

We note many situations and contexts in the Glenvale living rooms that determine which media screen is foregrounded and engaged with during CMU events. In the example above, we apply Southerton's (2006) theory of practice to explain the Smith siblings' CMU behavior and note the various everyday advertising contexts that converge to displace any message-oriented advertising engagement: the high degree of "audience member familiarity" (Puntoni and Tavassoli 2007, 294) developed between the sibling trio; the relatively calm and focused viewing of the actual football match itself and the high frequency with which breaks are scheduled in the football broadcast; the tight coordination of the siblings' time orientations during the break and, more widely, during the holidays (more spontaneous and social) compared to their dad's (more planned and disciplined); and, finally, the ability of the Etch-a-Sketch screen to participate as a shared resource in the siblings' social interactions. As with the Smith's living room, in coviewing situations in Glenvale more generally, CMU or media multitasking advertising contexts are observed through these intersecting elements of social familiarity, rush and calm, through the synchronization of viewers' time orientation, and most importantly through an accessible media screen that provides a common focus for social interaction.

Our cases demonstrate how television advertising is dynamically engaged or displaced in CMU situations. We also note how viewer engagement across different media screens is cycled into individual or family identity commitments and outline how television screens interact with other media screens, viewers' time allocation practices, and household and family discourse in the living room, to reveal the precise ways that advertising responses occur in CMU situations.

The Temporal Context: Time and Advertising Viewing

It's 7:10 A.M. on a school day. Joanne and her younger brothers Hector and Victor watch *King of the Hill*. Their mum, Bec, is in the adjacent open plan kitchen busily preparing breakfast. The program breaks. The children watch a station promotion for *Unan1mous*. Bec calls out "Weet-Bix, guys?" (an inquiry about cereal preferences), over the top of an ad for the DVD release of *Iron Man*. The *Iron Man* ad is partially displaced from attention, as Joanne and Hector answer "Yes please!" while Victor asks for toast. "Yeah, after Weet-Bix!"

Bec replies. The children reengage with the ad. When a Wonder Performance Sandwich Bread TVC airs, Hector asks Bec about the meaning of the ad. She looks up, very briefly engages with it, answers Hector's query, then resumes attention to the breakfast preparation. *King of the Hill* returns. The children resume their viewing and await their breakfast. (Observational note, Richards household, 7:10 A.M., Wednesday, May 28, 2008)

Bec Richards's query to her children during the advertising broadcast might appear a mundane and unimportant moment. Yet it illustrates the centrality of temporal context to viewers' perceptions and experiences of the program break and the advertisements broadcast within it. Television advertising in the morning is often only partially experienced by Bec and, as noted by the discussion about the Wonder Performance commercial, is briefly engaged as a way to interact with her children. She is a busy mother with four children, has a partner, and is studying for professional exams while working both as a swimming instructor and personal trainer. Instead of watching and engaging with advertisements, quotidian domestic tasks such as breakfast preparation displace advertising attention and assume priority at this time of day.

Domestic behavior such as meal preparation performed during the program breaks are common time-reclamation strategies played out by the parents in the Richards household, in ways similar to Renae and Steve Whitney's CMU behaviors examined earlier. In the above observational note, Bec talks and tasks and barely engages with the advertising on the television screen. In the interview she confirms she had already planned and mentally scheduled time, somewhere into one of the 3-minute breaks in *King of the Hill*, to personalize and reclaim the break for her query about breakfast preferences (Ebert, Gilbert, and Wilson 2009; Southerton 2003). Her strategy ensures that in this working family, the morning's household activities flow more smoothly. These behaviors contrast with traditional representations of advertising response in consumer research that reduce or ignore the effect of time; they mainly assume viewers experience advertisements as if temporal considerations—including diurnal effects (variations in the time of day of viewing) and social orientation elements (Cotte et al. 2004; Hornik 1988)—have no bearing on the way they respond to and engage with advertisements.

Bec's advertising viewing behaviors are also observed later during the same day as this early morning episode. In an observation involving Craig, her partner, they detail more richly the diurnal and social orientation elements of couple viewing during the program break. The children are at school; the couple are at home alone. Against the backdrop of wider family life, they participate in a lunchtime ritual while watching *Dr. Phil* together:

Bec moves closer to Craig on the couch during this break in *Dr. Phil*. They quietly chat about a friend's problem, while occasionally looking at each other. As a Reflex copy paper advertisement airs, the couple quieten even more, and they

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both focus their eyes on the screen. Their behaviors are awkward and stiff. Craig turns to Bec, and they face each other. They kiss for 10 seconds. Any potential to engage with the Reflex ad is displaced. The couple complete the kiss, sit back, and smile midway through a Lite 'n' Easy advertisement. They focus their eyes on the Lite 'n' Easy ad and chat quietly again. When *Dr. Phil* returns, the couple quieten and refocus their attention on the program. (Observational note, Richards household, 12:10 P.M., Wednesday, May 28, 2008)

Bec and Craig take advantage of their together-alone lunch-time viewing to strengthen their relationship during this break. Their shared interpretive strategy acknowledges the temporal segmentation that guides the family's daily household cycle. It also highlights a common though awkward practice: rather than dedicated advertising viewing, viewers have to create their own standards of advertising response during the liminal moments of the program break (Couldry 2003). The personalization of this portion of the break—Bec's change of seating position, the backgrounding and displacement of the advertisements, and the brief chat and kiss between them—is performed at this precise moment because of a specific felt experience of everyday household time: a mutual recognition of an imminent end to their time together this afternoon. Interestingly, both Bec and Craig visually monitor the Lite 'n' Easy ad, so motivating its potential reincorporation as a focal object (Epp and Price 2010), but their mutual chat ensures that the ad also remains displaced from full attention.

Bec and Craig's kiss and intimate chat during this break are advertising responses enacted specifically to maintain and enhance their relationship. With four young children to look after and other household commitments to attend to at other moments during the household's daily cycle, Bec implies that there is a performative aspect to their responses within these program breaks:

> We have lunch together every [week] day and that's our time. . . . That's [during the break] when we usually cuddle up and talk. If we miss that, it's hard. Oh yeah! We know that that's our time. (Interview excerpt, Richards household, Friday, May 15, 2009)

The diverse ways that Bec and Craig experience advertising at home provide excellent insights into how program breaks and television advertisements are actually personalized and integrated into a couple's respite from their family and professional commitments, in different ways, at different times of the day. Interestingly, in many observations when Bec and Craig are together alone at night, after the children have gone to bed, we note the couple occasionally "cuddle up" in similar ways as outlined above. Yet often the effort required to sustain any meaningful chat is too much for the couple at the end of a long day. In these instances, extended glazes at the screen mean that advertisements are more frequently brought back into their viewing practices, and advertising meanings are often personalized and shared through humored phatic comment.

In addition to specific diurnal influences, we can examine more deeply how temporal influences structure moments of advertising response and engagement in the Glenvale homes. Focusing on a viewer's phenomenological orientation to household time helps understand why Hector Richards differently experiences two broadcasts of the same advertisement involving one of his favorite action films, *Iron Man*:

> It is 8:10 P.M. on Thursday night and Hector attentively watches *The Simpsons* with his siblings. During a program break, a commercial airs announcing the DVD release of the movie *Iron Man*, and it catches Hector's eye. At the same time, their dad Craig enters the room. Hector's twin brother, Victor, turns to Craig and worriedly inquires about their mum: "How come she was sad before?" Craig hesitates to explain, but Victor demands an answer: "No, you've got to tell us!" Hector very briefly monitors the dimly lit *Iron Man* ad. But Victor's raised voice displaces Hector's ad response, and he also turns to Craig and pensively listens to him discuss the health of a sick relative and how this news has saddened their mum. Hector, still looking at Craig, wears a concerned look and asks if his grandaunt is going to die. Craig, sensing his son's unease, reassures him that she is "alright." The contrasting brightness of a L'Oreal mascara ad forces Hector's eyes back to the television. The anxious family atmosphere combined with the ad's low relevance to Hector, however, prevents any meaningful attention to it and, while gazing at the spot, he quietly murmurs: "I don't want Mum to be sad." *The Simpsons* returns, and Hector redirects his attention to it. (Observational note, Richards household, 8:10 P.M., Thursday, May 22, 2008)

The next morning there is an entirely different response to exactly the same *Iron Man* advertisement:

> At 7 A.M. Hector and Victor watch *King of the Hill*. The program breaks and Hector comments on the program segment's storyline. An ad for the *Iron Man* DVD movie release airs, and the two brothers watch it attentively. While he is still watching the ad, Hector rehearses one of the humorous lines of dialogue featured in it: "Where's the fun in that?" After a few seconds, just as a Daewoo Whitegoods TVC airs, he clarifies to Victor his thoughts about *Iron Man*, while gazing at the television screen: "I think he just likes to be boss!" The ad rolls on, and the boys silently gaze at the television screen. When *King of the Hill* resumes, the brothers watch the program in silence. (Observational note, Richards household, 7 A.M., Friday, May 23, 2008)

Even when viewed from within the same place, and by the same two people, the same advertisement is received very differently across the two different time periods. In each, different viewing times construct vastly different viewing events in the family living room, leading to very different levels of exposure to, engagement with, and interpretation of the same ad. In the first evening exposure the brief presence of his dad combined with bad family news almost fully displaces the *Iron Man* ad from Hector's awareness. Yet the very next morning, in a viewing situation devoid of any pressing family news, we observe how the same ad is thor-

oughly engaged with. Crucially, this change in advertising involvement takes place not because of any textual feature, but rather because of a change in Hector's social orientation across the two broadcast events, enabling him in the second event to use the *Iron Man* advertising text to connect with his twin brother, who is also a big fan of the movie.

What we witness in these vignettes with Hector Richards, as well as in many other observations in the Glenvale living rooms, is that the combination of actual advertising viewing time with the way it is experienced through everyday home-making events, discussions, and social dramas determines the level to which an ad is either engaged or displaced from attention. Everyday viewers experience ads, attend to them, disengage from them, and reattend to them in different ways at different times of the day depending on the flow of household discourse. The importance of temporal context in the home, especially the intertwining of its diurnal and social orientation elements that sharpen its expressions of family and relational identity, makes it a powerful context shaping the ad response process.

DISCUSSION

Implications for Understanding Contexts and Advertising Response

In our article we analyzed the social settings and situations that help organize the lived experience of the television program break and the types of everyday advertising responses performed through these interpersonal contexts. We produce a conceptual framework so researchers can better understand important features of our analysis of advertising context and its impact on advertising response, engagement, and consumption. Figure 1 highlights the practices and processes that occur when four key culturally

framed contexts—social interaction, spatial, media multitasking, and temporal—intertwine within any single advertising response event.

Our figure outlines what happens when a television program breaks and an advertising text is broadcast in a naturalistic viewing setting. Commonly, the viewing of ads scheduled within a program break is personalized through everyday consumer discourse and is embedded within a network composed of the interpersonal contexts of the particular viewing setting, the media context surrounding the advertisement, the advertising text, and viewers' interpretive practices. Advertisements are activated and foregrounded when consumers incorporate them into their social practices, wider behaviors, and ordinary routines during the break. Contextual shifts during the program break such as the onset of a social drama, the "doubling" of viewing space, or the broadcast of a new advertisement are common viewing situations that can displace advertising attention. In these instances, advertising is backgrounded and considered disengaged when it is not directly employed by viewers. Our research analyzes how specific features of the viewing network—linked to broader consumer discourse and patterns of behavior—can background personalized ads and how advertising attention is heightened or lowered during actual broadcasts in naturalistic viewing settings. Prior research has found that when engaging advertising is displaced by attention to complementary and competing activities in the living room, it can also be reengaged by viewers later during the program break (Krugman, Cameron, and White 1995). We provide a deeper understanding of this activity by detailing the influence of household advertising context elements in orchestrating this dynamic engagement, displacement, and reengagement process.

As outlined in figure 1, our analysis includes a number of intersecting elements that guide advertising response and

FIGURE 1

ADVERTISING RESPONSE IN THE FAMILY LIVING ROOM
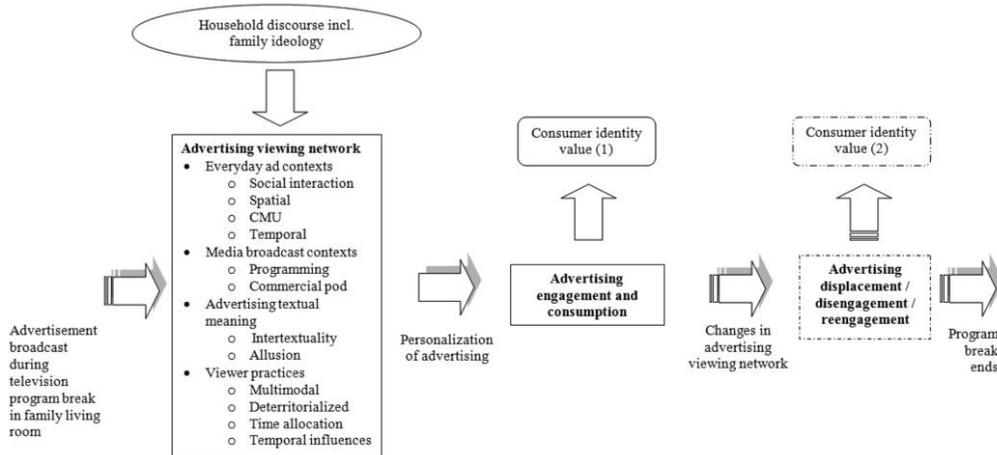
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produce different consumer identity engagements in the living room, including the impact of the actual advertising message and its intertextual/allusive traces, broadcast influences such as programming or other advertisements scheduled within the commercial pod, viewers' domestic practices, and changes in interpersonal viewing contexts such as household discourse, viewing time, and everyday interaction. Our findings outline how the contribution and valence of each contextual element to the consumption process varies during each advertising response episode. Critically, however, when consumers at home are exposed to ads broadcast during the television program break, they invoke sociohistorically developed household discourse that reduces the felt experience of the program break as an intrusive commercial broadcast segment. By enmeshing their advertising responses and behavior with meanings pulled from Australian suburban and family discourse, many Glenvale viewers place themselves as householders working to enhance family identity value and foster a smoother flow of everyday domestic life. For these viewers, viewing practices during the program break work toward greater family unity and household functioning through their control, reclamation, and personalization of a broadcast particle often initially felt as invasive and family-weakening.

Advertising Contexts and Practices in the Living Room. A key finding in consumer research is that advertising contexts are significant to living room and interpersonal communication (John 1999; Ritson and Elliott 1999). Deeper examination is required of the bridging and bonding function of commercial advertisements in the living room, particularly in light of the widespread criticism television advertising receives for its more pernicious influence on households (Buijzen and Valkenburg 2003; Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Denton 1997). We propose, more contentiously, that contextualized advertising experiences and responses can arouse and sustain issues of interest to living room practices and to householders, who effectively link their advertising responses during the program break to pro-family initiatives and quite readily personalize commercial advertising. Broadly, advertising engagement and consumption in the family living rooms we studied is performed through ideas of household functioning and emotional well-being held by participants. Advertising consumption is therefore a practice in which social and commoditized meanings are separated out and interpersonal meaning is routinely affirmed. Advertisements are often contextually framed. Consumers may actively attend to television advertising's commercial sponsoring messages (Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler 2010) or may wholly avoid them (Holt 2002), but most of the time advertisements are experienced partially and incompletely, and responses are negotiated through everyday interpersonal contexts. The television program break and television advertisements broadcast within it are understood as active social agents that allow consumers in the living room to deal with everyday domestic tensions (Epp and Price 2008; Ritson and Elliott 1999). A vital component of this consumer agency process is outlined in our research: the role of everyday advertising contexts to help marshal well-being in the living room.

The issue of audience member agency has been highlighted by Ritson and Elliott (1999), who observe that product information readings of advertising can be displaced by interpretive strategies that help build social group identity. When framed within this perspective, our research spotlights how consumers build their advertising engagement and consumption practices around the everyday dramas, narratives, and discourse within the suburban family living room. We provide an important extension to Ritson and Elliott's theory by detailing the sociocultural processes that organize advertising engagement in the consumer context of the living room (via multimodal, deterritorialization, time allocation, and temporally influenced practices). All but the youngest of our household consumers both explicitly and implicitly understand commercial television advertising's link to the broadcast economics of commercial television (Lawlor and Prothero 2008). In making this link, householders are engaged in an Arcadian project that evaluates advertising's potential utility as an authentic social agent, not as a commoditizing particle of consumer culture. Ritson and Elliott, however, argue that consumers watch and engage with television advertising at home based on an advertisement's link to out-of-home social group identity. We find, conversely, that advertising engagement—as expressed through consumers' responses and contextualized experiences during the actual broadcast event—is based on shared living room meanings. In this sense, Ritson and Elliott's assessment of advertising consumption at one level productively connects to the wider social world of consumers. Yet paradoxically, they also explicitly call for a deeper analysis of advertising response and viewing behavior within actual broadcast settings. Simply, in the absence of any meaningful discussion about actual viewing contexts, television advertisements are merely understood as resources for identity signaling through product consumption (Kates 2004; Luedicke et al. 2010). We outline processes in which television advertising often enhances family identity value by activating a network of consumer practices involving the living room's viewing contexts, suburban and household discourse, consumer identity commitments, and personalization strategies.

Advertising Viewing Context and Family Identity Practice. Examining everyday advertising context enables consumer researchers to more deeply understand advertising experiences and their link to family identity value. Family identity, according to Epp and Price (2008, 52; 2010) is "co-constructed in action," and when applied to our research, it involves solo or coviewing units at home, consumer practices linked to everyday household discourse, and broadcasts of television advertisements. Varman and Belk (2009) describe how the Gandhian notion of satyagraha is linked to peaceful consumer boycotts and active avoidance of well-known brands to preserve and emphasize an idealized notion of the family and the family home. Family identity value, as such, is located in marketplace objects and sites through which a separation of the domestic from the public, commercialized

sphere is experienced. Our observations suggest, however, that family identity value may be effectively negotiated through commercial sites at home and experienced by consumers through particular advertising responses. Through their performance during the television program break, reclamation, deterritorialization, and time allocation strategies, for example, can be configured as valued family identity practices because they are performed through contextualized elements coconstructed by family members in the living room and advertisers. In these instances, experiencing television advertising material activates a cluster of domestically charged meanings, enabling family members to negotiate pro-family scripts and narratives through an advertisement's (and the program break's) potentially materialist-commoditizing orientation. By contextualizing processes that link television advertising to living room discourse, and personalizing ads by reworking their product sponsoring meaning, this perspective builds for researchers another sociocultural pathway that may enhance family identity value (Epp and Price 2008).

Advertising contexts have significance for engagement practices in the family living room. In both scholarly and applied research, engaged viewing practices are assumed to reflect the product consumption, focused attention, and forced "eyes on screen" measures that organize representations of advertising audience behavior in survey and experimental studies (Campbell and Keller 2003; Krugman 1977). Our research suggests, conversely, that the success of advertising engagement at home can be linked to a more mundane though potent contextualized viewing practice: reclamation. Our findings describe the way that particular advertising responses represent localized domestic meaning and associated family practices. Household discourse, for example, enables advertising engagement to articulate to domestic routines, family interaction, and sociohistorically developed perspectives linked to suburban family lifestyles and notions of good homemaking. Reclamation, for instance, captures quite succinctly the motivations behind quotidian family interaction during the television program break. With its own cultural history embedded in turn of the century debates around "work/family balance" and "quality family time" (Daly 1996; Kremer-Sadlik and Paugh 2007; Pocock and Clarke 2005; Southerton 2003), it finds its everyday expression in suburban opposition to the harsher elements of global capitalism. Despite Australian cultural nationalist rhetoric about egalitarian values and idealized family life, the lived experience of many suburban families is one constrained by depleted family time. Reclamation is adopted in the family living room and, as a practice long adopted in the Davies family to enhance family interaction, it is performed in opposition to consumer culture agents deemed destabilizing. This viewing practice is widely adopted by householders and is embedded within a compelling mix of advertising responses linked to ideas about family construction, suburban lifestyle, moral development, and household well-being. Reclamation practices performed during the program break are especially relevant for living room viewers

as they articulate a strong cultural contradiction experienced by family members—experiencing depleted time and struggling to produce quality family moments within a society that supposedly celebrates and upholds suburban family ideology.

Reclamation, however, is not embedded within frameworks of engaged advertising response as Krugman (1977) and Campbell and Keller (2003) would have it. The participants in our research do not locate advertisements as central to their everyday life, consumption patterns, or domestic experiences. Yet they interacted through reclamation strategies and incorporated advertising elements into their multimodal viewing practices. Engaged ad responses such as focused attention to advertising messages may therefore be thought of as extreme instances of contextualized reclamation in everyday viewing situations. We note that very few household ad viewing practices explicitly linked to traditional theoretical perspectives of advertising response and attention; nor did many advertising responses implicitly or explicitly connect to managerial notions of attitude or recall. Many advertising responses, nonetheless, may develop less information-specific yet still contextualized notions of engagement by articulating to householders' notions of appropriate domestic behavior.

From a practical standpoint, our analyses can aid scholarly and applied advertising researchers, particularly those in the fields of media planning and pretesting, where ad response and engagement is usually considered in terms of effectiveness measurements concerning brand attitude and ad recall, media context, viewing demographics, and multimedia viewing platforms. Media planners may benefit from paying closer attention to how interpersonal context elements are integrated into consumers' particular patterns of advertising response and viewing behavior in naturalistic viewing settings and situations. Similar to how different viewing times influenced Hector Richards's experience of the broadcast *Iron Man* TVC, media planning models may heighten or lower the valence of a particular context element within an ad viewing event. Our findings have additional relevance for media planners targeting both out-of-home and household-based viewers, where familiarity with both the social audience and physical viewing setting can largely influence advertising audience behavior. We also feel that recent advances in television advertising pretesting, such as the use of biometric and eye-tracking technology to gauge emotional engagement, can be strengthened to account for variances in consumer and household discourse. Just as Siobhan Williams's "pretend stares" are routinely conducted with minimal advertising engagement linked to message processing, we recommend that scholarly and applied ad pretesters calibrate their studies to account for the impact of everyday household discourse and interpersonal communication on consumers' emotional engagements with broadcast advertising, in ways not predicted by current pretesting techniques and assumptions. We echo recent comments that just as applied and academic advertising researchers have failed to account for the influence of social context in re-

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search situations, the broader interpersonal elements hitherto reduced and discounted from consideration in advertising modelling and experimental research may nonetheless impact reception measures without researchers even being aware of these contextual influences (Puntoni and Tavassoli 2007).

Limitations and Future Research

We limited our sampling frame to homes that fit normative television target audiences and suburban family lifestyle categories in Australia, and so selected two-parent family households with children aged 5–17 years. While we believe many of our findings are robust enough to travel across numerous household audience categories, more conclusive work about the ways advertising is actually received in everyday viewing contexts is required in homes that vary across demographic and lifestyle profiles. For example, how would television advertising responses differ in one-person, shared, and same-sex coupled households, which are becoming more commonplace in Australia and elsewhere, and which are structured by different ideologies, discourses, and patterns of household behavior than those found in more traditional family arrangements? Different lifestyle categories also imply different domestic viewing spaces, viewing platforms, and media multitasking environments, which we feel would impact the advertising response and engagement process. For example, if the household behavior of young professional singles living in shared house arrangements is less framed by family identity discourse than the Glenvale viewers in our study, then how do viewers in these shared houses respond to television advertising in media multitasking situations during the program break?

Our observations of advertising response were gathered in only one area of the family home, albeit a physical viewing space that is commonly occupied by all family members, either collectively, relationally, or alone: the living room. Within many family households, additional television sets are also placed in other spaces of the home, such as in kitchens and bedrooms. In Australia, however, the trend to place television sets in children's (as opposed to adults') bedrooms seems to have limited traction (Holloway and Green 2008). We call for future research to consider other physical viewing settings and observe and compare advertising responses and other associated interpersonal experiences from within multiple rooms within the same home.

Our study was also limited by our analysis of everyday media multitasking practices performed during the actual program break. It is increasingly common for many family households to own media technologies such as personal video recorders (PVRs), which enable viewers to erase or fast-forward through the program break during real-time advertising broadcasts. We encourage researchers to examine the impact of everyday interpersonal contexts on the increasing practice of fast-forwarding through the program break using PVRs. How does the strength of familiarity between members in the viewing audience influence the extent to which fast-forwarding occurs? What are the implications for the process of advertising engagement? We encourage consumer researchers to examine some of these issues involving everyday interpersonal viewing contexts and their influence on advertising response.

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