

The pedagogy of regret: Facebook, binge drinking and young women

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When she was 22 the future looked bright
But she's nearly 30 now and she's out every night
I see that look in her face, she's got that look in her eye
She's thinking how did I get here and wondering why
—Lily Allen, '22'

This paper introduces the idea of a 'pedagogy of regret' to illustrate some of the limitations in current policy discourse targeted at young people, particularly young women. In two separate and recent examples – British and Australian Government campaigns to address the problematic rise of 'binge drinking',¹ and ongoing concerns over use of the social networking website Facebook – a similar tendency can be seen to depict each activity in terms of risk. The additional assumption is that mobilising an appropriate level of *regret* among individuals will lead to greater mindfulness and responsible behaviour. Building on recent research into binge drinking and the night-time economy in both Australia and the UK,² this paper develops a cultural studies approach to understand young women's leisure activities, drawing attention to popular representations, lived experiences and their interplay. Acknowledging the significant pleasures to be found in social networking online (Driscoll & Gregg 2008a, Willet 2008, boyd 2007, Kelly et al, 2006), and practices of hedonistic drug consumption (Race 2009, Guise & Gill 2007), we suggest that both situations offer spaces of relief and respite for marginal identities,

namely young, working class women. Drawing on our own experience of using Facebook, we also outline some of the new pleasures that exist in the nexus between drinking cultures and online media. This *sympathetic* engagement with the preferred activities of young people can identify the practices of care and concern already at play among participants in apparently risky behaviour.³ These peer-to-peer models of performance and witnessing that can be gleaned through alternative economies of online culture offer useful parameters to inform safety messages for young people in future.

Nightmare visions

In 2008, the Australian Labor government launched the 'National Binge Drinking Campaign' as part of a five year National Alcohol Strategy running from 2006-2011. Pitched as a 'community level initiative', the Australian campaign aimed to 'address binge drinking among young people' (www.alcohol.gov.au). Key objectives of the campaign were to 'confront the culture of binge drinking', ensuring that young people take 'personal responsibility' for their behaviour and recognize its 'costs and consequences'. In these ways the approach echoed the British Labour party's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy operating since 2004 (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2004). The 'Safe, Sensible, Social' policy launched in 2007 sought to deal with the UK's 'alcohol problem', classifying binge drinkers as being between the ages of 18 and 24 (Department of Health 2007, 6). The British policy aimed to promote a 'sensible' drinking culture for which all citizens must take personal responsibility.

Both the Australian and British strategies devote particular attention to young people as the main perpetrators of problematic drinking. Analysis of the marketing attached to the campaigns makes this clear. In the Australian context, \$20 million worth of television, radio and poster materials advised young people not to 'turn a night out into a nightmare' (www.drinkingnightmare.gov.au). Filmed from the perspective of a young drinker, TV advertisements depicted a range of worst-case scenarios for drinking excessively – and they did so according to gender. The first 30 seconds of one such promotion⁴ showed a group of female friends arriving at a house party. The initially friendly atmosphere quickly gives way to a far more sinister scene, as a young woman is seen relocating to the garden with a boy. Standing over her as he undoes his zip, she lies on the grass removing her underwear. A sudden flash signals a digital photo being taken of the pair from somewhere nearby. Bystanders observing the scene whisper 'that's hilarious' and 'Oh my God' while a bleak message fills the screen: 'One in two Australians aged 15-17 who get drunk will do something they regret'.

The second half of the same advertisement (which sometimes ran separately) follows a young man as he sneaks a backpack of booze past his parents in the family home. He proceeds to a park to consume the alcohol with other male friends. The mood is one of lighthearted drunkenness and bonding until the group moves to another destination. On the way, the protagonist is caught in the middle of the street and hit by a passing car. Screams of anguish and fear are audible as the injured boy's perilous wheezing gains volume. Onscreen, viewers are informed: 'Four Australians under 25 die due to alcohol related injuries in an average week'.⁵

Both vignettes position the drinker as a regretful victim and perpetrator of lamentable behaviour. Each demonstrates a failure of comportment and competence without the requisite responsibility to drink sensibly. In the first 'nightmare' scenario, girls arrive together as a group, and the house party is a source of freedom and opportunity. By the ad's conclusion however the encounter between boy and girl is notably isolated. This lasting image of an apparently private seduction is placed in peril by the hidden camera. The particular burden of responsibility that technology places upon young women is taken for granted in this depiction. The ad's pedagogy is to inform young girls that they should be prepared for such unfortunate eventualities from their intimate actions, and conduct themselves accordingly.⁶

In contrast to the young gang of boys who take off in to the night, the girl is rendered passive. Something happens *to* her, and the risky outcome is the potential sharing of an embarrassing photograph. The ad suggests that had she avoided the temptations of alcohol she would not be with the young man in the bushes. Regret is the articulating force that links sexual activity, photo documentation, and the consumption of alcohol. In this moral economy, the motivations of the photographer are rendered irrelevant. Responsibility for the situation falls to the girl, and the outcome is hers alone to regret. What is unthinkable in the terms set by the representation is that the young couple may have enjoyed a pleasurable encounter had they been left to their own devices.

This is a far from isolated example in official depictions of young women drinking. A similar format was used by the Queensland Government's (2010) 'Every Drink Counts' campaign. The televised version centres on a group of attractive young women on a night out in licensed

premises.⁷ As the evening rolls on, things turn sour as one of the revelers finds herself on the ground in an alley. Night vision blurs the scene but a hand is shown on her breast and men kneel over her. She lies on the ground unconscious as a voiceover informs viewers: 'Excessive drinking leads to your chances of being abused, injured or assaulted...don't go too far'. Again the text positions women as responsible for actions performed by men. The rhetoric of regret absolves any consideration of the ethics or legality of men's actions independent of the woman's alcohol consumption. In these worst-case scenarios, young women's regretful behaviour is clearly linked to sex. Women render themselves available by drinking. The ad appeals to the notion that in the cold light of day they will regret 'letting themselves go' and 'lowering their standards'. Women's capacity for control and agency is forever at risk in these drinking scenes, requiring constant practices of diligence.

Respectable drinking bodies

The supposition that young women will lament their drunken actions hinges on ideals of normative femininity and heterosexuality, in which young women strive to appear 'respectable' to their peers and others (Skeggs 1997). The pedagogy of regret is in this way closely tied to the performance of ideal femininity, especially as this manifests in established standards of beauty and appearance. A further example of this in the British context is the 2008 campaign advising young drinkers to 'know their limits' (Home Office, Department of Health 2008). In the female storyline – for the pedagogy is again determined by gender – a young woman is shown in her

bedroom preparing to go out.⁸ Rather than applying make up or hairspray however, she rips her top, vomits in the bathroom sink and smears the mess over herself. Wiping eye makeup and lipstick over her face, she then pours red wine over her clothes. Heading for the door in anticipation of the night out, she triumphantly snaps the heel off her shoe. The ad concludes: 'You wouldn't start a night off like this, so why end it that way?'⁹

This narrative responds to just as it reinforces perceptions that the 'public face' of British binge drinking is a young woman. This is despite evidence that there has been a slight decline in women's drinking in the UK since 2000 (Measham 2009). Measham reflects on the now familiar image of an intoxicated young working class woman who frequents city centre bars and imposes her raucous behaviour on the civilised general public. In the British press, women bear the blame for a binge drinking 'culture' due to wider transformations that are reconfiguring gender and class identity. As Skeggs (2005) argues, white working class women have been refigured as the 'constitutive limit' to public morality. This is due to neoliberal styles of governance and 'value' predicated on notions of personal responsibility, investing in oneself and compulsory individuality. Displaying characteristics that are commonly associated with the working class, such as being loud, vulgar and excessively drunk, the body of the female binge drinker signals her immorality. She is a threat to the nation and also a threat to herself (Skeggs 2005).¹⁰

As with the Australian campaigns, the character in the British plotline is young and white, and the storyline centres on wayward individuals. Alcohol consumption is deemed risky, unfeminine and the source of regret – either in itself, or in relation to the behaviour that will inevitably

ensue. Constant interrogations – 'Where are your choices taking you?' and 'What are you doing to yourself?' – emphasise that binge drinking is 'all about you' (Australian Department of Health and Aging 2002, New South Wales Health Department 2009). Yet this personal interpellation contradicts a host of recent research showing that social and peer interactions are central influences in young women's choice to engage in drinking.

Drinking pleasures

For young people, the pleasures of drinking tend to be shared ones.¹¹ In their ethnography of working class young women in Wollongong, a regional centre on the south coast of NSW, Waitt et al (2011) find that young women's experience of 'going out' is very much based on the intimacy of bonding with friends. Key aspects of the night out include dressing up according to culturally valued norms of 'sexiness' – with protracted group preparations leading to an eventual public showing in local bars and nightclubs. For these women, increased sexual assertiveness, confidence, singing, fighting and even defecating in public are enjoyable dimensions of excessive drinking. They are not experiences to be regretted, so much as expected. The very 'best nights' for these young women are those that generate dramatic stories arising out of excessive drunkenness, leading to further pleasures in the retelling. Sheehan & Ridge (2001) also demonstrate the meaningful and positive role alcohol consumption has in the lives of Victorian teenage girls. They describe how negative incidents, including occasions of harm, are filtered through the lens of the 'good story'. Alcohol

consumption is linked to tales brimming with fun, adventure and friendship. So while vomiting and making a fool of oneself may be a part of the experience, a 'bad' story became a 'good' anecdote when it can be recounted later amongst friends.

Here the rise of online social networking sites in recent becomes paramount, and it is not incidental that ethnographic research of night-time leisure practices is beginning to employ methodologies to reflect this.¹² Before moving to discuss Facebook in particular, we should first note the anxieties attending this emergent social practice among young people and its overlap with the preceding discussion. The pedagogy of regret accompanying binge drinking, with its insistence on preparedness, propriety and foresight, also dominates popular and political discourse centred on social networking sites, not to mention academic interest in Facebook use among students.¹³ Initiatives like the Australian Government's 'NetAlert' program (complete with accompanying software with the telling title 'My Child My Values') have been quick to remind young people of the dangers of online networking with strangers (Gregg 2007). Indeed by 2009, the US President felt the need to petition high school students of the risks of posting 'stupid stuff' on the internet (AFP 2009). A welter of research devoted to understanding the motivations for young peoples' practices of online self-presentation¹⁴ has done little to overcome the default assumption that posting identifying information online poses explicit risk. And yet, young people continue to do it. With over 500 million users, and a Hollywood film mythologising its world domination (Fincher 2010), Facebook continues to triumph over these and many other threats premised on the notion of privacy. As with binge drinking, the

pleasures of using Facebook are seen to outweigh the risks, since it is one of the reliable ways to access shared intimacies between friends.

You have been tagged in a photo: The pleasures of drinking on Facebook

Any Facebook user acquainted with young women who enjoy going out drinking will recognise the register of activity that precedes, enhances and memorializes weekend binges. In keeping with our objective of providing sympathetic reading of online culture, here we include a sample of updates collected from our own Facebook 'friends' while writing this paper to illustrate these registers of mediated online drinking:

Ah god am never drinking again - Until tonight haha

had a fucking crackin night lastnight.. Suffering today though..

is out with the wifey and i can see it been a messy one...

bout to get ready to have total carnage with the girls,errr i mean social drinks.. hahaha..

cocktails, shots and friends = good times

was only out for 3 hrs was mortal.... bombs, buca's, sourz, wine to name a few I done

you proud!

There's no chance you go a weekend without drinkies!! It's like a sin! I'm up for

jägerbuca's Il carry you if you carry me haha!

Decided earlier I was going to be a good girl and not have a drink tonight.....That lasted
all of 1hour!!!!!! Hello Mr Blossom Hill :)

is, in the words of Calvin Harris, Ready for the Weekend!!

ive got that friday feeling!

Thank god - my weekend starts now :)

vodka jelly shots in the fridge girls, fingers crossed they work x

is off out with the girls tonight.

Me + vodka equals messy! I should not be allowed to take my phone out with me!

Girls Gone Wild starting.....NOW!

The anticipatory pleasures of drinking on Facebook pivot on the use of status updates to signify the intent towards mischievous adventure. As the weekend arrives, and preparations for the night out commence, updates are used to share the excitement for a wider audience – an audience which may also include others that will be joining in later at pre-publicised venues. This mix of absent and potentially physically present 'friends' online makes the performance of the night out part of the experience. The comments, feedback and encouragement received from online connections is one of the additional pleasures of the event.

The 'peak' of the night out is also routinely documented by the live post or photo update, as mobile devices allow a narrative thread to be maintained for onlookers. One of the

amusements (or 'lulz')¹⁵ for the Facebook audience is in discerning the moment of intoxication, either during or after the event. Tell tale signs are when words which may have been chosen carefully just hours earlier become careless, provocative or even incoherent. These insider jokes extend to amusement at witnessing a friend's suffering the next day, when they are 'dying'. Facebook and drinking are thus a twinned entertainment, in that the experience of each is mutually enhanced in combination.

With their documentary trail prior to and following the binge, social media updates, photos and commentary are evidence that question the figure of the isolated drinker left to arbitrate personal choices alone. Rather than being 'all about you', binge drinking on Facebook is a highly public display shared with a multitude of known and unknown participants and observers. Here new media platforms bear witness to the temporalities of preparation, anticipation and revision that accompany nights out, and they do this in an unprecedented way. Over time, Facebook reveals the mundane and routine place drinking occupies in the imagination of young people through the weekday and leading into the weekend. For young women in particular, Facebook's mode of witnessing allows an appreciation of the extent to which young women carefully organise the routes and the itineraries for hedonistic consumption. Using social media to indicate the location of the night's activities bears comparison with the way other minority groups ensure the safety of venues in advance.¹⁶ Mobile media devices allow updates to spread beyond the site of consumption. They offer a layer of surveillance and protection for young women who may not regard their position as one of vulnerability when drinking. These are just

some of the ways that Facebook can be understood as a 'security blanket' for mobile youth (Gregg 2011).

This context helps to explain that the ritual of uploading photos in the midst of and following drinking sessions is a further dimension to the pleasure of telling 'a good story' (Sheehan & Ridge 2001). Facebook extends the 'drama' of the night out for a longer period. Depending on the moment of upload, it offers a little slice of the weekend, an indefinite extension of its pleasures. These traces linger in spaces and times following the singular 'night out', counteracting the banality of everyday life. This is especially the case for young women whose 9-to-5 experience – or whose multiple commitments to work, childcare and study – prevent access to other kinds of fun and excitement.

Postfeminism and the limits of working class women's pleasure

She's got an alright job but it's not a career
Whenever she thinks about it, it brings her to tears
'Cause all she wants is a boyfriend, she gets one night stands
She's thinking how did I get here, I'm doing all that I can

If the pedagogy of regret captures the lessons to be learned about 'the propriety of consumption' (Race 2009, 17), in this final section we suggest that binge drinking can also be understood as a response to circumstances affecting women's participation in other sectors of

the public sphere, not the least of which is paid work. To appreciate the popular contradiction that positions women who drink as both overly aggressive and inevitably vulnerable (Day, Gough & McFadden 2004) is to apprehend the extent to which these characterisations are a result of the limited subjectivities currently regarded as economically productive. The rise of public drinking among women – and its official interpretation as a problem – comes in tandem with their greater participation in the paid labour market, which also explains why women now have the apparent 'freedom' to drink in public. What is of interest here is the extent to which young women with the least financial capital have become the primary targets for discourses of concern over alcohol. It is young working class women that are identified as problem drinkers, despite the fact that professional women are the highest alcohol consumers across this demographic (Measham 2009).

Within the current 'postfeminist' climate, young women are constituted as subjects of 'capacity' in terms of their educational and occupational attainment (McRobbie 2007). Education and employment are the privileged routes to female success and mobilisation and can only be capitalised upon by those positioned to do so. Not all young women benefit equally in these hierarchies of ability and attainment. Those from middle class families are more likely to become part of the new competitive 'career' elite, whereas lower and working class girls are resigned to more routine work and have 'jobs'. Yet these young women are still expected to get a degree and show flexibility, capacity and individualism in a labour market which otherwise deems them as occupational and educational failures.

McRobbie argues that within this reconfigured sexual contract, the 'phallic girl' emerges as the embodiment of the independent, successful neoliberal citizen (McRobbie 2007). This economic sensibility is embedded at the level of both governmental discourse and popular culture, and while relying on the language of feminism and liberation, it works subtly to re-stabilise gender inequity and structures of patriarchy. On the premise that she delays motherhood and is economically viable, the young phallic girl can assume the subject position of the pleasure seeker, one who is assertive and independent. In this gender regime, young women are fun and spontaneous rather than sensible and sober. Postfeminist consumer culture invites young women to be hedonistic and 'free', with alcohol playing a major part in defining the terms of pleasurable liberation (see also Griffin 2005).

For young women who are uninterested or unable to access the marketable characteristics of entrepreneurialism and enterprise, but who are still implicated within these neoliberal discourses, projecting a good time, sexualised persona on Facebook is a way of enacting social capital when the avenues for economic and cultural capital are not equally open to them (see Schwarz 2010). In contrast to popular culture examples – which so often focus on women 'in high-paying, high-status professions' (Leonard 2007, 104) – these performances of 'fun' are a way of inhabiting and escaping day-to-day mundanity. Weekend antics are acknowledged as the key opportunities for pleasure and hedonism available, even when these practices directly contravene the middle class imperative for sobriety and comportment. Whether it is uploading drunken photos or using status updates to show mocking regretfulness about a hangover or

loss of memory, young women demonstrate their sassy and spontaneous nature, all the while allowing them enough time to recover in time to be back at work on Monday morning.

Conclusion: Mediated ecologies of care

It's sad but it's true how society says her life is already over

There's nothing to do and there's nothing to say

'Til the man of her dreams comes along

Picks her up and puts her over his shoulder

It seems so unlikely in this day and age¹⁷

The pedagogy of regret underpinning scare campaigns targeted at youth underestimates the cultural dynamics of leisure practices, including the longer narrative that surrounds the binge-drinking event. Rather than deterring young women from heavy drinking, the depictions typical of official awareness campaigns may actually glamorise the practice – acting as advertisements for alcohol rather than deterrents (Waitt et al, 2011). As we saw in the process of writing this essay, comments attached to YouTube footage of government ads clearly indicate the range of 'oppositional readings' decoded from the text (Hall 1980). The Australian National Alcohol Strategy not only overstates the case for problematic drinking, its heavy-handedness works against its effectiveness for its target demographic. When alcohol use is only framed negatively it cannot allow for any notions of pleasure or positive use (Keane 2009). Moreover, as with the

British policy, the rhetoric of 'sensible' and 'moderate' consumption takes the drinking practices of an older (and, we would argue, wealthier) audience to be the 'normal' and 'good' way to use alcohol (Hackley et al, 2008).¹⁸

In a wider cultural and policy environment dominated by risk management, enjoyment of intoxication cannot be admitted as a legitimate 'benefit' of alcohol consumption. Noting the interplay between intoxication, its accompanying experience of pleasure, and the further pleasures to be gained through its witnessing on sites like Facebook, is to realise the wider dimensions accompanying young people's drinking habits. Isolated from social and cultural contexts, a number of which this paper has outlined, anti-binge drinking campaigns presume that a rational calculating agent can be sufficiently schooled to recognise danger signs and prepare to avoid them in advance. The pedagogy of regret takes it as read that binge behaviour will be subject to subsequent revision and remorse, and that nightmare scenarios are a matter of one right or wrong choice.

Constituting the alcohol problem as a youthful problem is a significant ideological achievement. It dilutes and obscures a range of structural influences, such as the responsibility of governments and the liquor industry to provide adequate security for participants in the profitable night-time economy (Hackley et al 2008, Hayward & Hobbs 2007). Tax-payer funded advertising interpellates young drinkers as if they have sole discretion in amending their consumption levels when industry deregulation and alcohol advertising directly address this same demographic. Drunkenness and excess are the obvious externalities of legislated policies

that otherwise welcome the mass expansion of the after dark leisure industry (Measham & Brain 2005).

In this context, drinking alcohol and maintaining a Facebook page can be considered similar in the sense that they are 'necessarily re-creational' (Race 2009, 9). Race's hyphenated phrasing emphasises the double meaning and function of leisure practices: they are fun, creative, and also potentially transformative events. For young working class women, drinking and online social networking provides experimentation and temporary relief from seemingly fixed selves and relationships at a time when actual opportunities for liberation may be limited. Both experiences offer a chance to escape the confines of inherited, embodied identity, and that is their pleasure.

By contrast, if there is anything that shows cause for regret in this complex and contradictory landscape it is the amount of pressure placed upon young people to limit their few avenues for excitement and enjoyment. It is surely lamentable when governments are compelled to inflect scenes of youthful hedonism with the spectre of threat, physical violence and exposure. In the case of young women, the dominant prerogative in postfeminist cultures appears to be developing strategies of resilience in the face of equity citizenship's chronic disappointments (Berlant 2009). If binge drinking is one such strategy, we must wonder at its long-term sustainability as an expression of discontent. And we must certainly focus efforts on widening the number of outlets through which alternative hopes and aspirations can be expressed.

Governments show a failure of imagination and compassion when they place the shortcomings of wider society on the shoulders of young people (Grossberg 2005). The growing popularity of social media platforms provides new insights on youthful re-creational activity, demonstrating the cultures of care that are emerging to compensate for the sometimes risky spaces of public leisure. If future policy makers are genuinely concerned to improve the safety of their young, they would do well to better understand these peer-to-peer networks that have developed in recent years that are central to the pleasures of online and offline consumption. It is these communities that will continue long after the night before, and the morning after.

Notes

¹ Despite driving alcohol policy in both Britain and Australia, 'binge drinking' is a vague and ambiguous concept that is widely contested. In the public imagination, binge drinking is associated with risky and hedonistic drinking styles linked to violence, disorder and excessive intoxication, predominantly within the licensed precincts of the night-time economy. Official definitions of binge drinking are typically numerical and vary across nation-states but the term is also used interchangeably with descriptive definitions such as heavy drinking, episodic drinking, sessional drinking and, more simply, drinking to get drunk (see Gill, Murdoch & O'May, 2009). Binge drinking has therefore been described as a 'confused concept' (Herring et al, 2008). Critics of this emotive and negative label have described how binge drinking rhetoric is used in political manoeuvres which unfairly target the drinking practices of the young, thereby

obscuring the state's responsibility in regard to the deregulation of the alcohol industry (see Hayward & Hobbs, 2007, Measham & Brain, 2005). For these reasons, Martinic & Measham (2008) suggest replacing the unhelpful and pejorative 'binge drinking' with the more positive and productive 'extreme drinking'. While acknowledging these wider debates, we use the term binge drinking throughout this paper to refer to contemporary drinking styles which policy discourse deems problematic.

² The British and Australian examples in this paper emerge from the current doctoral project of one of the authors. As a British citizen completing her PhD in Australia, Rebecca is conducting empirical research in both countries to investigate the drinking practices of working class young women. While there are sociocultural and political differences to be expected between the UK and Australia, similarities link alcohol discourse in both locations, specifically to the extent that the respective governments locate the problem of binge drinking as one of young people getting irrationally drunk. Debate on both sides of the globe revolves around themes of moderation and responsibility. While there is a more developed history of public and academic discourse on binge drinking in the UK, for example regarding the relationship with violence, urban regeneration, concerns over licensing hours and gendered media representations (Day, Gough & McFadden 2004, Measham & Brain 2005, Plant & Plant 2006, Hayward and Hobbs 2007), similar concerns emerge in Australian literature (see Tomsen 1997, Bavinton 2010, Kypri, Jones, McElduff & Barker 2011, Waitt et al, 2011).

³ This is the latest in a series of articles (Driscoll & Gregg 2008a, 2008b, 2010; Gregg 2009) seeking to develop examples of 'sympathetic criticism' for online cultures in the sense described by Meaghan Morris (1988).

⁴ Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkScHtrowM8>. Accessed April 26, 2011. The advertisement was originally hosted at an official site that is no longer available but at the time of writing is archived at:

<http://www.drinkingnightmare.gov.au/internet/DrinkingNightmare/publishing.nsf>.

⁵ While we are conscious of the complexities surrounding the terms 'youth' and 'young people', we use the term broadly in the spirit of this special issue. The shifting age ranges in these commercials are part of a wider set of issues about how data is used strategically to represent the risks of drinking to young people. Also worthy of mention is that the younger age of the female protagonist in this ad accords with the age range that is the source of moral panic in relation to our other object of interest, online media. See Driscoll and Gregg (2008b).

⁶ A similar tendency appears to be colouring recent debates about "sexting", as discussed in Albury et al (2010).

⁷ Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYwu-MPPwrU>. Accessed April 26, 2011.

⁸ Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jftfU30xJg&feature=related> (Accessed April 27, 2011).

⁹ Similar tactics underpin another British local health authority campaign entitled 'Bloody Mary' (Derbyshire Primary Care Trust 2009) which shows a group of boisterous young men in a British high street at night. After sizing up a group of women the boys would like to 'tap', the men come across an intoxicated and unkempt young woman urinating in public. The ad's message – that the night has been ruined by alcohol – pivots on the girl's lack of control. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuo5xrpEDCA> (Accessed April 27, 2011).

¹⁰ In their analysis of British newspaper representations of women's alcohol consumption, Day, Gough & McFadden (2004) find further evidence that problem drinkers are female. Journalists were found to draw on discourses of natural femininity, motherhood and sexuality to present women who drink as transgressing gender norms. Women who drink were considered unfeminine or overly masculine. At the same time however, women who drink were simultaneously portrayed as vulnerable and at risk in the context of the act itself, since drinking rendered them susceptible to male aggression and sexual abuse. Meyer's (2010) analysis of rapes reported in the *Daily Mail*, a notoriously conservative middle-brow British newspaper, shows similar patterns of hypocrisy and disapproval in describing women's alcohol consumption.

¹¹ In addition to the studies discussed in this section, see Guise & Gill (2007), Lyons and Willot (2008), Szmigin et al (2008), Griffin et al (2009), Rudolfsdottir & Morgan (2009), Cullen (2010).

¹² Wait et al's study uses Facebook as part of the methodology for the project, as does Moore (2010). Meanwhile Van Doorn's (2009) study of social networking in the Netherlands found that

the main themes in young people's conversations were the hedonistic activities of night life, sex and drugs. Friendship bonds were strengthened through the shared desire for deviance and transgressive behaviour.

¹³ A reviewer of this paper requested further recognition of the apparently obvious fact that young people would regret their leisured use of Facebook *in future*, i.e. once they reached the age for the job market, pointing to available studies Facebook use on university campuses (e.g. Aleman & Wartman 2008). Such studies may be valuable to non-participants of online culture but they also continue a certain myopia in academic studies of social networking sites (SNS) which use university students as convenient research subjects. The insistence that SNS *must* be read in terms of privacy concerns and other middle class anxieties is precisely the point of contention that this article's 'pedagogy of regret' is intended to highlight. Impression management is often important for those entering the market for white collar jobs (Gregg 2011) yet it is less significant for the wider demographic of Facebook users who may not hold the same desires or have access to the same cultural capital that underpins them.

¹⁴ The literature in this field is now staggering, but samples from a range of disciplines include Manago et al (2008), Walther et al (2008), Buffardi & Campbell (2008), Bortee (2005), Walker (2000), Schau & Gilly (2003), Dominick (1999) and Livingstone (2008), who specifically focuses on 'risk'.

¹⁵ Doing it 'for the lulz – LOL short for 'Laugh out loud' – is one way that online discourse reifies and celebrates posts that contain useless, silly and even embarrassing material. In this sense,

Obama's warning to kids that they should avoid posting risky material online fundamentally misrecognises the economy of fame, recognition and community operating in these spaces.

¹⁶ Race (forthcoming) describes this in the context of queer communities in Sydney.

¹⁷ Lily Allen's '22' acts as a refrain throughout this article since both the song and the artist capture a number of trends our analysis ascribes with significance. Allen was among the first crop of young, female artists who rose to fame on the strength of recordings hosted on her MySpace page, showing some of the affordances of participating in new media economies and communities. The importance of online 'friends' is also nicely captured in the title of Allen's subsequent BBC chat show, 'Lily Allen and Friends', which recruited audience members from the show's website. Allen's typically cynical, melancholy lyrics bear witness to many of the narratives that take shape during or following a girls' night out – as well as providing material for group sing-a-longs.

¹⁸ This lends weight to the idea that anti-binge drinking campaigns are actually designed to placate the concerns of parents – that their ideal viewer is actually an adult. Here an apt analogy is the anti-piracy ads that open cinema screenings, which can only ever be a performance for the benefit of viewers who remain willing to pay for films.

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