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Circulating Suburbia: Locating a Transnational Suburban Imagination in Post-War Periodicals, 1945-1970

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CIRCULATING SUBURBIA: LOCATING A TRANSNATIONAL SUBURBAN IMAGINATION IN POST-WAR PERIODICALS, 1945-1970

by

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B.A. University of Central Florida, 2019

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I argue that a suburban cultural imagination developed transnationally during the post-war period (roughly 1945-1970) rather than as a cultural phenomenon largely associated with the 1950s United States. I situate the suburbs—in both their physical and cultural constructions—as my primary focus and discuss the suburb’s influence on hegemonic culture by performing an in-depth comparison of the U.S. with another country with a long history of suburbanization—Australia. Given that the suburbs structure several social, cultural, economic, political, and historical vectors—which all in turn inform issues of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nationality—I focus on how the suburbs inform gender; in particular, I identify how the suburban imagination has contributed to the creation of the housewife figure. To locate these suburbs, I turn to the mass-circulation magazines of the mid-twentieth century whose advertisements, editorials, and short fiction disseminated the rhetoric and iconography of the suburb. Magazines like Ladies’ Home Journal and Harper’s helped form a U.S. suburban imagination through “housewife writers” such as Shirley Jackson. Comparing these suburban texts to the Australian Women’s Weekly, we can see continuities and variations between suburbia in the U.S. and Australian cultural imaginations. I conclude this thesis by sketching potential coordinates for future investigation, including in Asia, Europe, Latin America, and Africa. While the process of suburbanization may vary in each country, a suburban imagination exists which transcends national experience and instead forms transnational lines that connect nations throughout the post-war period. These insights provide new ways of thinking about suburbanization, transnationalism, and globalization and the role that magazines had in shaping the cultures being constructed inside these suburban developments.
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INTRODUCTION

Following the conclusion of World War II in 1945, an era of rapid suburbanization captured the imaginations and pockets of soon-to-be ‘suburbanites’ in the United States. This explosion of development, in both physical construction and cultural production, has had a lasting impact on the image conjured when we think about suburbia: sparkling streets, petal pink and turquoise steel appliances, cul-de-sacs of bright colored identical houses, and the nuclear family sat inside its papered, private walls. Suburbia captured the cultural gaze of the U.S. as much as it enraptured its people; suburbia became the backdrop of films, television, fiction, advertisements, comics, and almost any imaginable cultural text or production in-between. This iconography of suburbia speaks to a particular stereotype of suburban life. In *The Routledge Companion to the Suburbs*, Richard Harris writes on suburban stereotypes that “they help us make sense of our world, expressing the aspirations of people at particular times…They have been articulated and reproduced in various ways: by the media, and by private agents, including land developers, whose purposes they serve. Even when a stereotype serves no purpose, or is indeed counterproductive, it may persist through sheer inertia” (29-30). This North American variety of the suburban stereotype has persisted into the present day from the inertia of not only media, but also in scholarship surrounding suburbs and suburban culture.

Yet this development of a suburban culture was hardly a North American phenomenon, and in reality, this cultural imagination exists outside U.S. national borders. So why has a serious consideration of suburbia’s transnational cultural significance yet to be undertaken? Several scholars have noted that suburbia remains relatively unconsidered as a space of cultural production because its critics have accused it of uniformity, blandness, and as void of any
aesthetic value (Dingle 2003; Harris and Larkham 2003; Huq 2013; Freestone et al. 2018). This negative perception has led to poor considerations of suburbia as it has developed in different cultures globally. However, the proliferation of suburbia has much to tell us about the cultural, social, economic, and historical vectors of life in the post-war period in the U.S. and abroad. Suburbs became a topography of gender, class, race, and nationhood that altered the physical landscape and structured gender roles, family values, and the distribution of wealth. While some work has been done to begin tracing these suburban coordinates in U.S. literary and cultural texts, an expansion from our understanding of suburbia as a U.S. cultural phenomenon to a definition that considers suburbia as transnational will further the discourse around suburbanization as a major cultural, social, and historical force of globalization.

This thesis will explore the iconography of the suburban cultural imagination in the U.S. and Australia to argue for suburbia as a transnational cultural development. Scholars such as Robert Freestone, Bill Randolph, Simon Pinnegar (“Suburbanization in Australia,” The Routledge Companion to the Suburbs), Angela Yiu (“‘Beautiful Town’: The Discovery of the Suburbs and the Vision of the Garden City in Late Meiji and Taishō Literature”), Eric Petersen (“The Life Cycle of Johannesburg Suburbs”), and Gelka Barros (“Beautiful and Healthy! The Women in the Pages of Alterosa Magazine (1939-1945) During the New State and the Americanization Process of Brazil”) have noted that traces of U.S. suburbia can be found across the globe in cultural and physical constructions of suburbs, yet a comparative study that tracks the continuities and variations of this suburban iconography has yet to be conducted. This need for a comparative approach has been corroborated by Harris and Larkham in Changing Suburbia: Foundations, Forms, and Functions, who state that “[a]s with culture, comparative studies of suburban form have been few: yet this is rich territory for exploration” (17).
purpose of this thesis will be to perform a comparative investigation of the development of
suburbia in U.S. and Australian cultural imaginations. To achieve this, I will turn to the popular
or ‘mass circulation’ magazines of the mid-twentieth century whose role in the production and
dissemination of mass culture has been well noted by scholars in the field of periodical studies.
The magazines selected represent some of the highest circulating magazines of the post-war
period, including *Ladies’ Home Journal* (1883-2016) and *Harper’s Magazine* (1850- ) for the
United States and the *Australian Women’s Weekly* (1933- ) for Australia. Given that the suburbs
structure several social, cultural, economic, political, and historical vectors—which all in turn
inform issues of gender, race, class, sexuality, economy, and national identity—this thesis
focuses on gender and depictions of suburbia written by women and advertisements directed
towards women in these magazines. This provides a specific framework for evidence collection
given the large volume of potential magazine issues to choose from, as well as provide structure
for a sustained analysis of how gender is informed and constructed by suburbia. The suburban
imagination’s relationship to class, race, and sexuality are all equally deserving of attention and
is fertile space for future inquiry but will not be the focus of this thesis. The questions that will
drive this thesis include: does a suburban imagination as prominent as the United States’ exist in
Australia or any other countries in the post-war period? Is there any evidence of a transnational
suburban imagination that exists between countries? Where a suburban imagination is present,
do the specific social, cultural, historical, and national variations in suburban development affect
how that transnational imagination is filtered? To what extent do these suburban imaginations
create, fortify, or inform gender roles—and in particular the housewife figure—in the historical
reality of these nations? How might thinking about the relationship between suburbia and
transnationalism further our understanding of suburbanization as a technology of globalization and the role of the suburban imagination in creating shared cultural consciousnesses?

**Defining Suburbs**

An adequate definition of what exactly a suburb is remains elusive to scholars who study them, and this lack of definition is partly why suburbia remains a peripheral object of study. Anthologies on studies of suburban development and on suburbia in popular culture dedicate entire chapters to working through the multifaceted approaches that scholars have taken in attempting to locate a definition of the suburb¹. In *Making Sense of Suburbia Through Popular Culture*, Rupa Huq writes that “Suburbia is something that we have an intrinsic feel for yet exactly what passes for it seems to have varied from place to place and time to time: specific locales that are considered as suburbs have changed over time with suburban expansion” (6). In etymological terms, suburbia “comes from the Latin suburbium, or ‘under the city,’ with a plural suburbia” (Forsyth 18). From this definition, we know that suburbia is intrinsically connected to a spatial definition; but space does not only equate to physical place in suburbia. In the chapter “Defining Suburbs” of *The Routledge Companion to the Suburbs*, Ann Forsyth states that “Suburb could mean both a literal place as well as the figurative outskirts of something such as a place, idea, or event (examples include the “suburbs” of Lent, of a narration, of sense)” (18). Forsyth’s comments on suburbia point to its occupation of both a physical, geographic place as well as its potential to occupy more abstract space, such as culture and the imagination. Huq

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supports this conception, writing that “in some ways suburbia is metaphorical rather than a literal or geographic term, a mindset as opposed to a term of strict definition” (6). This spatial and cultural conception of suburbia is central; however, even though the focus of this study is the textual constructions of suburbia, the geographic dimension of suburbs is as important as its cultural dimension to understand the socio-cultural development of suburbia across national borders.

Considering suburbia and suburban development along dimensional axes has become a common way of creating criteria for assessing a location as a suburb. In Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form, and Function, Richard Harris and Peter J. Larkham provide a comparative view of definitions on suburbia. Harris and Larkham state that “[t]he difficulty [in defining suburbs] is that, to most people, suburbs are characterized along more than one dimension,” and they provide five dimensions commonly considered when attempting to identify a development as suburban or not: “1. Peripheral location in relation to a dominant urban centre; 2. A partly (or wholly) residential character; 3. Low densities, often associated with decentralized patterns of settlement and high levels of owner-occupation; 4. A distinctive culture, or way of life; 5. Separate community identities, often embodied in local governments” (Harris and Larkham 8). While these definitions were intended for defining physical suburbs in fields such as urban studies and sociology, they could also be applied to defining suburbs as they are constructed in literary and cultural texts. Other scholars have turned to a similar method for defining suburbs against dimensions or criteria. Ann Forsyth traces definitions through a variety of hallmark texts written about the suburbs, census manuals, and catalog searches to identify which ‘dimensions’ of the suburb could make for a productive framework. These dimensions include Location; Built
Environment Characteristics; Transportation; Activities; Political Places; Sociocultural; Styles of building, design, and planning; Time; Critical assessments; and Indices.

For my own criteria of identifying suburbs in the literary and cultural texts used in this study, I will largely draw from Harris and Larkham’s dimension of a distinctive culture and Forsyth’s dimensions of location and time. My analysis will consider how suburbia as a cultural space was constructed alongside the physical suburban development in various locations during a specific time period; this approach is in line with Forsyth’s recommendation to researchers of suburbia, stating that a dimension like time would “focus on development after a certain time period... This is often in combination with some other dimension such as location...” (24). For this project, my dimension of time will range from 1945-1970; this period captures a broad post-war era, when suburban development proliferated\(^2\). The dimension of location serves two purposes: the location of the suburb as described in the text, and the location of the production of the text itself. The site of production provides context for understanding to what extent suburbanization, and the subsequent suburban imagination, was informed by the national history and contexts specific to each country.

**Suburban Subjects: The United States and Australia**

For this project, I am primarily interested in two countries: the United States and Australia. Most studies of suburbia and suburbanization in urban/sociological studies and

\(^2\) Although suburbs have culturally become associated with the 1950s (at least the model popularized in the United States), it should be noted that suburbs have been around since the Middle Ages in some capacity; Harris and Larkham state that suburb, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, first appears in *The Canterbury Tales* in 1380 (5). Given its first attested appearance, it is unsurprising that the word has eluded definition and continues to do so for researchers of suburbia today.
cultural studies have focused on the U.S. For these studies of suburban development, authors have often looked at specific cities and time periods to understand suburban development in locations in the U.S., such as *Surrogate Suburbs: Black Upward Mobility and Neighborhood Change in Cleveland, 1900–1980* (2017) and *Alabaster Cities: Urban U.S. since 1950* (2006). The field of suburban development within urban studies represents a large global discourse that has studied suburbs in several countries across continents\(^3\), but suburbia in popular culture remains primarily located in studies of U.S. suburbia. Several authors have looked at the filmic and television depictions of the U.S. suburbs in this period (George 2013; Vermeulen 2014). Others, such as Bernice M. Murphy in *The Suburban Gothic in American Popular Culture* (2009) and Lynn Spigel in *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs* (2001) account for the development of a suburban culture across mediums and popular culture. Murphy traces the Suburban Gothic, a sub-genre of the American Gothic, as it has appeared in film, television, and fiction from the mid-twentieth century to the present. In defining the Suburban Gothic, Murphy writes that it is a “tradition that often dramatizes anxieties arising from the mass suburbanization,” and these anxieties manifest in the form of suburban horrors featuring evil children, alien invaders, serial killers, witches, and more (Murphy 2). Spigel takes a similar approach in investigating depictions of suburbia in popular culture through fiction, film, and television, as well as in material cultures such as toys and print cultures like the magazine. Spigel’s study is primarily interested in the role of suburbia in defining social and gender structures, such as the public and private spheres and spaces of domesticity. Importantly, Spiegel also discusses the “invisible” aspects of suburbia, including issues related to race, class, and

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\(^3\) See *The Routledge Companion to the Suburbs* (2018), which includes chapters on the U.S., Ireland, Australia, Korea, India, Egypt, Sweden, Indonesia, and Latin America.

From the cultural studies output alone, it is clear the U.S. suburban imagination has captured critical attention. Comparatively, studies of suburban culture in Australia are slim. This lack of scholarship is somewhat surprising given that scholars have referred to Australia as “the first suburban nation” and that “Australia has been a deep-seated suburban society since the European takeover in the late eighteenth century” (Freestone et al. 72). Given this moniker, it is curious that suburbia in Australian popular culture has yet to be the subject of a sustained academic study; no collection on Australian suburbia in popular culture like Murphy or Spiegel’s exists, and few articles have been written that discuss the suburbs as a specific object of study in Australian popular culture4. The analysis of suburbia in Australian culture would allow for an expansion in our understanding of how suburbia developed in cultures outside the U.S. Locating these suburbs in Australian fiction will create a dialogue on how the spread of suburbia is affected by the filters of a country’s existing historical and socio-cultural structures.

The little scholarship on suburbia in popular culture in Australia that does exist suggests that there is a connection to the U.S. suburban cultural imagination. Huq states that “Popular culture…serves as a means to connect the reader/listener/viewer to suburbia whether they live there or not, making it part of their lived experience” (25-26). A comparative examination of suburbia in the popular cultures of these countries will reveal how these connections to suburbia

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4 See Do Rozario (2011); Manganas (2018); Rooney (2013); Turner (2008).
were created in transnational contexts. Additionally, an analysis of the continuities and deviations across developments in each country will help to sever the criticisms of uniformity that have been linked to suburbia. For the scope of this project, attempting to survey several forms of popular culture to compare the suburban cultural imagination in these countries is not feasible. Given the criticisms towards suburbia of it being the result of mass production, and since “[t]hose who use ‘culture’ in the ‘high’ sense have usually deplored its virtual absence in bland, middlebrow suburbs,” a fitting medium to study suburbia would be one that has faced similar criticisms of mass circulation, production, and ‘middlebrow’ aesthetics (Harris and Larkham 15). If considering these criticisms as criteria, no texts would be as appropriate as the mass circulation and middlebrow magazines for locating a suburban imagination in these countries.

The Magazines: Periodical Studies, the Middlebrow, and Mass Culture

The growing field of periodical studies has demonstrated the value of the magazine in defining major aesthetic and cultural movements; for example, ‘little magazines’ have become essential to our understanding of modernism’s development globally and has created a vibrant field of modernist scholarship. The magazine’s potential to similarly inform our understanding of the creation of a transnational suburban cultural imagination provides a rich field of inquiry. In particular, the ‘middlebrow’ magazines and popular or “mass culture” magazines will be most relevant to an understanding of suburbia. It is worth briefly sketching definitions of middlebrow and mass culture to demonstrate why they are useful genres for considering popular culture, and in particular, the position of suburbia in popular culture.
In “Investing in ‘Modernism’: Smart Magazines, Parody, and Middlebrow Professional Judgment,” Daniel Tracy writes that “middlebrow culture was not synonymous with mass culture but used the productive capacities of mass culture to capitalize on the new and growing obsession with cultural legitimacy” (40). In Tracy’s definition, middlebrow culture operates with the mechanisms of mass culture but seeks to achieve a different aim; the middle ground between high and low art. David Carter states in “Literary, But Not Too Literary; Joyous, But Not Jazzy: Triad Magazine, Antipodean Modernity and the Middlebrow” that “the novel concept of the middlebrow, of a distinct middle range between higher and lower taste cultures, depended on something new: the simultaneous presence of high modernism, on one side, and the new media and technologies of ‘mass-commercial culture,’ on the other” (248). Middlebrow culture sought to bring the high art of modernism towards a more general readership through the devices of mass circulation. Examples of middlebrow magazines include The New Yorker and Vanity Fair.

As argued by Tracy, mass culture created the space that allowed the middlebrow to proliferate. The study of mass culture, or popular culture, began with seminal writings from Raymond Williams and was continued by Stuart Hall and the scholars working at the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies. In studies of mass culture, the magazine represents one of the many mediums that became a vehicle through which mass culture could be created and disseminated. Richard Ohmann has argued the magazine represents a “development of world-historical importance” when advertising began to target a wide circle of consumers, and thus constituted “the invention of the mind industry or, more commonly, of mass culture” (365). Ohmann continues, stating that
the formulas of mass culture work as smoothly as they do, in part because they incorporate dense historical understandings and reduce them to comfortable ideology...[r]eaders must feel broadly content with their place in the world, so that the flow of their anxieties may be channeled into smaller concerns like the need for a healthy breakfast or for a laundry soap that won't shrink clothes—worries that may be allayed by purchasing commodities. (373)

The supposed reduction of anxieties related to the external world was a major draw of the suburban lifestyle, and the consumption of both mass-produced products and mass-produced culture found its home in the complex cultural and textual object created by the synthesis of advertisement and text in the magazine.

Sean Latham and Robert Scholes have spoken at length about the need to read these magazines as complicated cultural print objects, writing in their article “The Rise of Periodical Studies” that “high literature, art, and advertising have mingled in periodicals from their earliest years” and as scholars “we must continue to insist on the autonomy and distinctiveness of periodicals as cultural objects (as opposed to ‘literary’ or ‘journalistic’ ones)” (519). In this same article, Latham and Scholes posit the importance of advertising materials to the study of these magazines: “The culture of the past is alive in those advertising pages—as alive as in the texts they surround” (520). In discussing the “hole” in the periodical archives when it comes to advertisements not being included when periodicals are archived, they state “this has been the consequence of a distinctly modern bias against the commercial aspects of aesthetic production” (521). The subject of aesthetic production, and the negative view when words like ‘commercial’ and ‘mass produced’ are in vicinity, is just as frequent in discussions of the cultural void of
suburbia as discussed earlier. Given that both the mass circulation magazine and suburbia have been dismissed as void of aesthetic or cultural value by their critics in the past, I intend to demonstrate the opposite is true through a sustained study of the relationship between the development of suburban culture and mass circulation magazines. For the United States, I will use *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Harper’s* and for Australia the *Australian Woman’s Weekly*. This collection of periodicals represents magazines with high circulation between 1945 and 1970, and are primarily products of mass or popular culture.

There is plenty of space for a project considering suburbia and the magazine. Periodical studies have flourished in its research output, yet studies dealing specifically in suburban culture and the magazine remains slim. Valerie Korinek’s *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (2000) remains one of the few studies dedicated to researching suburban culture specifically in the magazine, in this case the Canadian magazine *Chatelaine*. While studies that situate suburbia as the subject of study are few, several of the magazines I will work with have been recipient of critical attention. *Ladies’ Home Journal*, a journal curating a distinctly women’s mass culture which ran from 1883 to 2016, has been the focus of much feminist scholarship, including discussions around motherhood (Odland 2010), gendered space (Kimble 2011), famous women writers publishing in the magazine such as Sylvia Plath (Bryant 2002) and Amy Tan (Vechinski 2015), and Rachel Alexander’s recent study where she introduces a transnational framework in her discussion of gender in *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Canadian Home Journal* (Alexander 2021). Several scholars have similarly studied *Harper’s Magazine*, and in Thomas Lilly’s “The National Archive: *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* and the Civic Responsibilities of a Commercial Literary Periodical, 1850–1853” he states that *Harper’s* “achieved its popularity through identifying and reproducing an educational system on
how, locally, readers should encounter, identify, and consume literary materials distributed nationally: by proscribing certain modes of writing for certain kinds of authors, who fit certain ways of reading for different types of readers, who belonged to an audience constructed as national” (143). Given Harper’s mission of speaking to audiences at particular national moments, the magazine provides a snapshot of popular culture curated by the editors for its reading audience. This cultural apparatus provides ample terrain for exploring how suburban ideals were portrayed and disseminated through a middlebrow magazine.

Unlike the periodicals of discussion published in the U.S., the Australian Women’s Weekly has received less attention. Hannah Viney has discussed the integration of Cold War politics into the magazine from 1950-1959, arguing that the inclusion of political coverage encouraged conservatism as a way of alleviating anxieties about the changing role of women in Australian society post-WWII (Viney 2020). Kirra Minton has also studied the magazine during the post-war era in her article “How to Be a Girl: Consumerism Meets Guidance in the Australian Women's Weekly's Teen Segments, 1952-1959,” where she argued that the magazine’s newly introduced teen segments were designed as a form of pedagogy for teaching traditional feminine ideals; however, evidence from interviews and response letters sent to the magazine by teen readers indicate a countercultural clash with the ideals being advertised by the magazine, thus complicating what Minton has called an “often oversimplified decade” (5). The scholarship on this magazine during the post-war era is indicative of issues related to gendered spaces and their subsequent social functions, which were in part made possible by the structures of suburbia and the divisions of gendered public/private spheres it enabled.
Chapter 1 will examine suburban popular culture in the United States. Given the explosion of cultural texts and products in/for suburbia during the post-war period, this chapter will focus on a single author publishing in several middlebrow and mass circulation magazines: Shirley Jackson. While commonly associated with her short story “The Lottery” (1948) and her novels *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (1962), Jackson’s bibliography includes over 50 short stories, children’s books, four novels, two memoirs, and dozens of essays. Her work has appeared in popular and literary magazines of the time, including *Playboy, Charm, Mademoiselle, Good Housekeeping, Woman’s Day, Specter, Woman’s Home Companion, Syracuse, The New Yorker,* and the magazines of interest in this project, *Ladies Home Journal* and *Harper’s.* Jackson also provides the perspective of someone with an intimate understanding of suburbia as a housewife writing from the suburbs and disseminating her writings through the magazine, yet whose contributions to the literary canon from her magazine writing remains largely unrecognized. Angela Hague has maintained that Jackson writes in “pathological terms the position of many women in the 1950s” and creates a “faithful anatomy” of the era (74). Benjamin Mangrum has added that “Critics praise the subtleties of Jackson’s literary art, while the supposedly inferior, commercially tainted work of her magazine writing has been neglected, apparently for associating with the disreputable circle of masscult” (59). This chapter will continue the reevaluation Jackson deserves for her contributions towards defining, and in many instances critiquing, suburban culture in U.S. magazines.
After establishing the U.S. perspective on suburbia through the North American magazines, Chapter 2 will transition to discussing representations of suburban culture in the *Australian Women’s Weekly*. This chapter will explore a variety of content published throughout the post-war era, including short fiction, editorials, weekly series, and advertisements. Similar to Chapter 1, the materials of discussion will primarily be texts authored by women and advertisements that are directed towards a primarily female market. To provide a framework for understanding how suburbia developed in Australia, the chapter will begin with a brief overview of the history of suburban development in Australia in the post-war period. I will then turn to the magazines, drawing connections between the content encountered in the Australian magazines with content being published in North America. The similarities and variations between depictions of suburban culture in these magazines will further my argument on suburbia’s development in transnational contexts.

Finally, in Chapter 3 I will further extend the dialogue on the suburban imagination by locating additional coordinates for future research on the transnational suburban imagination I identify in chapters 1 and 2. These coordinates will include countries and periodicals in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. While this transnational grid that I map will emphasize breadth over depth in laying out a line of inquiry for future research, the magazines have proven through existing scholarship to be valuable potential sites for analyzing the rhetoric and iconography of the suburbs in their varied national (and as I demonstrate transnational) manifestations. I conclude this thesis by theorizing why we should think about suburbanization, transnationalism, and globalization as a triangulation rather than as separate entities. Additionally, I discuss why periodical studies in particular is a valuable discipline and methodology for illuminating this relationship.
“We wouldn’t belong in the suburbs or some kind of colony; we’re real people”

– Shirley Jackson, “Home” (1965)

Introduction: Shirley Jackson’s Reassessment

If considering the intersections of suburbia, gender, and the magazine in the United States, no author might be more suited for this triangulation than the ‘Housewife Writer’ Shirley Jackson (1916-1965). In the words of Jackson scholar Bernice Murphy, Jackson’s work “anticipated the most prominent themes and settings of the wave of suburban-related fiction that appeared during the post-war period by several years” (7). Jackson rose to national notoriety when on June 26, 1948, her now widely famous and anthologized “The Lottery” was published in The New Yorker which “caused such a stir” that Jackson became “the unwitting recipient of hundreds of (mainly hostile) letters from disgruntled readers who objected to the tale’s brutal climax and air of studied ambiguity” (Murphy 104). Yet elsewhere in Jackson’s readership, hostility is tempered with admiration for her success as both a ‘writer’ and a ’housewife’ (a combination which led many critics, including the second wave feminist critic Betty Friedan, to condemn Jackson’s work). In Jessamyn Neuhaus’s “‘Is it ridiculous for me to say I want to write?’ Domestic Humor and Redefining the 1950s Housewife Writer in Fan Mail to Shirley Jackson,” she posits that “Jackson’s work, with its dark undercurrent of both gothic mystery and modern alienation, may have been particularly provocative in inspiring her readers to imagine the possibility of somehow challenging the limits of domesticity, but she also received many fan
letters that simply described their appreciation of good writing” (118). What’s clear from her famous reception of “The Lottery” and from the reception of her lesser known “domestic” writing in these magazines is that they had an impact on those readership circles who consumed her work; a reaction strong enough for her readers to engage in a dialogic relationship with Jackson’s texts by responding to both the works and the author herself through their own writing.

In approaching suburbia as a cultural phenomenon, the magazine—both general audience magazines such as Harper’s and the more targeted women’s magazines such as Ladies’ Home Journal—is clearly a valuable medium through which to study the rise of that suburban imagination over the course of the post-war period through both the texts and advertisements printed and disseminated. Jackson’s prolific career as a contributor to these magazines and as a ‘housewife’ herself writing from suburban spaces positions her work to be especially illuminative to understanding these cultural shifts and the varied reactions to them. The influence of suburban space and movement through those spaces is clearly located in Jackson’s mid-twentieth century magazine writing, and Jackson’s nuanced writing reflects the growing suburban imagination while simultaneously subverting these gendered spaces. Jackson achieves this by collapsing the boundaries of public/private both in her fiction through her female characters as well as her own housewife public image. She leverages the magazine, an object itself which blurs the demarcations of the public/private both in its production and consumption, to enact this subversion.

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5 Jackson’s ‘domestic’ writing refers to her semi-autobiographical stories and essays about her life, children, and husband, many of which were collected and edited into memoirs after their initial publications.
Even though Jackson’s “The Lottery” remains one of the most well-known short stories in the canon of American short fiction, and as her work has been brought to contemporary culture through adaptations of her novel *The Haunting of Hill House* and the fictional biopic *Shirley*, Jackson remains a relatively peripheral figure; or, we might say, she occupies the suburbs of the literary canon. Benjamin Mangrum has posited that “Critics praise the subtleties of Jackson’s literary art, while the supposedly inferior, commercially tainted work of her magazine writing has been neglected, apparently for associating with the disreputable circle of masscult” (59). Bernice Murphy also highlights the magazine’s role in the diminishment of Jackson’s historical literary reputation, writing that “critics have not quite known what to make of her, a problem caused by the fact that she operated in two popular yet frequently marginalized genres: those of horror and the gothic and the so-called domestic humor that appeared in women’s magazines during the 1950s” (11). Perhaps Jackson’s most famous and scathing critic is Betty Friedan, whose landmark feminist text *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) criticized Jackson’s occupation of the ‘housewife writer,’ with Friedan writing:

‘Laugh,’ the Housewife Writers tell the real housewife, ‘if you are feeling desperate, empty, bored, trapped in the bedmaking, chauffeuring and dishwashing details. Isn’t it funny? We’re all in the same trap.’ Do real housewives then dissipate in laughter their dreams and their sense of desperation? Do they think their frustrated abilities and their limited lives are a joke? Shirley Jackson makes the beds, loves and laughs at her son—and writes another book…The joke is not on them. (108-09)

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6 *The Haunting of Hill House* was adapted—albeit loosely—into a Netflix miniseries in 2018 with a subsequent haunted house experience at Universal Studio’s Halloween Horror Nights in 2021, and *Shirley* is a biographical fiction film directed by Josephine Decker in 2020 based on the 2014 novel *Shirley* by Susan Scarf Merrell.
Critics such as Friedan interpret Jackson’s signature humor and wit discussing the experience of being a woman in the mid-twentieth century as trivializing the suffering of housewives and other women isolated to the suburbs from the wider social world. However, new reassessments of Jackson’s fiction are proving that this signature humor is far from trivializing but rather satirizing and at times subversive.

While Jackson may have until recently been left behind in the history of American literature, scholars have finally taken notice of Shirley Jackson. In the introduction to the first edited collection of scholars working on Jackson’s texts, *Shirley Jackson: Essays on the Literary Legacy* (2005), Bernice M. Murphy writes that “[t]he admittedly small but steadily growing body of criticism on Jackson and her works over recent years seems to suggest…her significant contribution to American literary culture in the postwar period” (6). However, these early stages of reassessment of Jackson’s oeuvre continues to attend to her more well-known works with Murphy positing that “The Lottery,” *The Haunting of Hill House*, and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* continue to be the subject of most scholarship (6). She posits that “very little has been written on *The Road Through the Wall*, *Hangsaman*, *The Bird’s Nest*, and *The Sundial*7, and while Friedman’s book8 devotes a chapter to the family chronicles9, they are otherwise largely overlooked” (6). Even more neglected are Jackson’s short stories and semi-autobiographical works published in a myriad of magazines in the mid-twentieth century, which included

8 The book referenced here is Lenemaja Friedman’s *Shirley Jackson* published in 1973, which according to Bernice Murphy was “the earliest (and for a long time, only) full-length critical study of Jackson’s work” (Murphy 6).
9 The “family chronicles” refer to Jackson’s two memoirs, *Life Among the Savages* (1953) and *Raising Demons* (1957). Both texts were collections of Jackson’s semi-autobiographical work that had been printed in various magazines and was subsequently edited into episodic memoirs. These memoirs became bestsellers and Jackson earned more from these memoirs and their previous existence as individual magazine articles than from her more conventional novels (Mangrum 51).
publications such as *Playboy, Charm, Mademoiselle, Good Housekeeping, Woman’s Day, Specter, Woman’s Home Companion, Syracusan, The New Yorker, Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Harper’s*.

Scholars Angela Hague, S.T. Joshi, Benjamin Mangrum, Bernice Murphy, and Jessamyn Neuhaus have started to look with greater nuance at Jackson’s bibliography to reevaluate these magazine writings and the criticisms toward Jackson of being a ‘housewife writer.’ Hague’s “‘A Faithful Anatomy of Our Times’: Reassessing Shirley Jackson” surveys Jackson’s novels and short stories to understand how Jackson wrote in “pathological terms the position of many women in the 1950s” and creates a “faithful anatomy” of the era through her themes of privacy, nuclear fear, demonic children, conspiracy, and the alienation and isolation of the housewife (74). While Hague does not necessarily speculate the magazine’s role in Jackson’s work, many of the stories discussed appeared first in these magazines and Hague’s detailed survey tracks several of Jackson’s prominent subversive themes related to living in the suburbs. S.T. Joshi similarly locates Jackson’s subversion in their article “Shirley Jackson: Domestic Horror,” where through an analysis of Jackson’s semi-autobiographical domestic humor pieces for women’s magazines, they posit that “[e]ven if many of these tales are written with the sort of coy, innocuous, and resolutely cheerful tone expected in contributions to women’s magazines in the 1950s, they nevertheless contain certain disturbing undercurrents that may subvert their surface hilarity” (187).

Other scholars have started to incorporate broader theorizations of print culture and readership into their studies of Jackson’s magazine writings, such as critic Benjamin Mangrum who also turns to Jackson’s domestic humor in his article “Market Segmentation and Shirley
Jackson’s Domestic Humor.” Mangrum contextualizes and historicizes Jackson’s magazine writing alongside the changes in print culture during the 40s and 50s, and in particular, to changes regarding models of segmented readerships that move away from an aggregated consumer body and how authors such as Jackson capitalized on these changes. He posits that “the satirical work of domestic humor exemplifies but also challenges the patriarchal norms structuring the public sphere. These essays reveal how a certain strain of feminist writing was absorbed within the market forces of print capitalism,” a position taken up by scholars such as Joshi and Hague but enhanced through his parallel discussion of a changing magazine print culture (52). Shifting focus from producer to consumer, Jessamyn Neuhaus’s “‘Is it ridiculous for me to say I want to write?’ Domestic Humor and Redefining the 1950s Housewife Writer in Fan Mail to Shirley Jackson” studies the myriad letters Jackson received from fans who “turned to Jackson…for advice; these women wanted to know how Jackson succeeded as a writer while at the same time maintaining a home and raising children” (120). Neuhaus’s analysis of these letters challenges Betty Friedan’s criticisms of Jackson as she demonstrates that these fans “responded to the feminine mystique not with an overt challenge but an attempt to find ways to incorporate the domestic into a public career, thus using their proscribed social role to actually challenge and expand that role” (121). Her argument demonstrates that rather than simply writing to maintain a hegemonic order of gendered public/private spaces, Jackson’s success as a writer and housewife instead provided a template for how one could operate within both public and private contexts through writing and outlets like the magazine. While the work of Mangrum and Neuhaus have laid the foundation for considering Jackson’s texts and the magazine as influential to U.S. culture in the post-war period, there is plenty of space to still consider how the
intersection of Jackson’s complex subversive writings and the magazine contributed to inherent tensions within the suburban imagination in U.S. magazines.

**Post-War Suburban Sprawl in the United States**

While scholars have contested the clean historical breaks in eras of suburbanization (such as the “crude division into pre- and post–World War II periods”), briefly sketching some key developments and features of suburban sprawl taking place after 1945 will provide historical and temporal context to Jackson’s writings and the magazines those writings circulated in (Lang et al 65). In identifying these common developments, I am not attempting to argue that all suburbs contained or were informed by these features; instead, I identify these features to provide coordinates with which to locate elements of the suburbs and the suburban imagination in U.S. magazines. Contemporary scholars of U.S. suburbs have debunked the myth that the suburbs lacked diversity; in reality, suburbs varied greatly both in type and inhabitance and “the stereotype of an affluent, homogeneous-white, politically conservative, consumerist and conformist settlement is simply false” (McManus and Ethington 326). Yet we know of the power of suburban stereotypes from the work of Richard Harris10, and as McManus and Ethington corroborate in their article “Suburbs in Transition: New Approaches to Suburban History,” this cultural stereotype “even if not at all typical, has nevertheless driven much of US urban development for 130 years or so” (326). Identifying how these recurrent elements of suburbs are portrayed in the popular magazines of the U.S. after WWII can help identify what ideological

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function these stereotypes served and how the magazine provided a space where individuals could negotiate these ideologies.

There were several historical factors that contributed to the increase in suburban construction and migration from the urban center to these budding suburban neighborhoods. According to Rupa Huq, “[h]ome ownership rocketed from 40% of the population at the start of the Second World War to 60% by 1960” and “[f]rom 1945 to 1960 gross national product grew by 250%, particularly under President Eisenhower” (8). Margaret Marsh posits the increase in home ownership can be attributed to “housing demands brought on by wartime shortages [which] were abetted by the federal mortgage subsidies—the Federal Housing Administration and the Veteran's Administration had made financing suburban housing, for white Americans¹¹, easier than renting—and resulted in the late 1940s and early 1950s in massive residential construction on the outskirts of most American cities” (581). The increase in national product was spurred by the growth of new technology, primarily the “[t]he advent of assembly-line construction, pioneered by the Levitt brothers” (581). These advancements in technology and the migration to suburban homes provides context to several recurrent themes in Ladies’ Home Journal and Harper’s.

The first feature is the widely documented creation of public/private spheres through the architecture and spatial planning of suburban houses. Strong-Boag et al. write that “[i]n constructing post-war suburbs, estate agents, government housing agencies, and financiers helped to entrench ideologies of (suburban) homes as ‘private’ havens, away from the harsh

¹¹ Marsh also makes an important intervention that the practices of the Federal Housing Administration promoted racism and segregation in suburbs “by refusing to make loans in redlined areas to whites, and by refusing to lend to blacks in areas where whites predominated” which “institutionalized the racist practices already in existence in many suburbs, and helped to condemn inner-city areas to further decay” (Marsh 593).
realities of ‘public’ life” (174). These private/public spaces became inherently gendered in the cultural imagination, where suburbs “exists as gendered space: where a code of good housekeeping prevails as women tend to the nest (i.e., household and children), while their men are out in the big bad city earning a living” (Huq 133). The very architecture of the houses gendered these spaces according to ideological divisions of public and domestic labor, a process which “fatally hampered feminist attempts to create a physical environment of equality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (Marsh 596). Lang et al. have noted that the dominant housing style “was the one story ranch-style home with a minimally classic exterior and a modern open floor plan” (68). Architectural historians have argued that home design in suburbanization “reflected and reaffirmed traditional gendered divisions of labour” through “modernist-inspired designs and layouts” and that typical features such as “large windows, open-plan settings, fire-places, and galley kitchens added to housework’s visibility and simultaneously helped raise standards. Much of this space was to be supervised by women from kitchen ‘headquarters’” (Strong-Boag et al. 175). The kitchen in particular becomes a prolific image in these magazines and as a headquarters for the housewives in Jackson’s fiction.

The separation of private/public spheres is largely enabled by changes in transportation, and in particular the move to privately owned cars, which in turn facilitated commuter culture and the ability to live outside of the city. From 1948 to 1959, there was a 67% increase in car registrations in the United States (Huq 6). The move towards automobile-based transportation had a major impact on the construction of suburbs and facilities within suburbs, and as Pierre Filon states in their article “Enduring Features of the North American Suburb: Built Form, Automobile Orientation, Suburban Culture and Political Mobilization,” this new wave of car ownership led to a change from “central-city multi-storey to suburban single-storey
manufacturing” housing (5). He goes on to say that “the need to accommodate cars at every origin and destination, translated into an adaptation of buildings and the introduction of new architectural concepts: for example, single-family homes with garages and driveways, the shopping mall with its sea of parking, various forms of drive-in and drive-through formats” (5). These spaces became meshed in the iconography of the suburbs, yet the proliferation of automobiles also helped shape the public/private binaries through both enabling and restricting movement in and out of the suburbs. Strong-Boag et al. have noted that “[c]hanges from a walking to a public transport and thence to a private car city occurred at similar times, in the process providing women with new opportunities and constraints,” and the simultaneous opportunities and constraints provided by car ownership appears in both the suburban cultural imagination and Jackson’s textual depiction of it (170-171).

The integration of automobiles was one of many new technologies changing the landscape of the United States. Home technology brought the industrialization and efficiency of factory labor to domestic labor and these home technologies dominated advertising (alongside health and beauty products) in women’s magazines. Using the new wealth and purchasing power that facilitated their move to the suburbs, suburban residents “purchased refrigerators, automatic washing machines, and other household appliances for the first time” (Nickles 584). These technologies—what were once “former luxuries that became mass consumer items”—became permanent residents both in the suburban home and the magazine (Huq 16). With manufacturers now catering to the purchasing habits of largely middle-class suburban spenders12, “Women

12 The distinctions of class and the effects of class on manufacturing practices is taken up by Shelley Nickles in “More Is Better: Mass Consumption, Gender, and Class Identity in Postwar America.” In their article, they discuss the importance of the “more is better” working-class aesthetics as influential to manufacturing practices that displaced the upper middle class simple and modern aesthetic with the extravagance, chrome, and color desired by
acting as families’ chief consumers were targeted by advertisers, and they helped to construct a suburban culture with remarkable world-wide similarities” (Strong-Boag et al. 175). These new electronics and mass-produced goods are catalogued in women’s magazines such as Ladies’ Home Journal.

This mass-produced material culture that is frequently associated with suburbia is an apt physical metaphor for the most common criticisms of suburbs—that they encourage a hegemony of conformity and uniformity. In the introduction of this thesis I discussed these charges against the suburb, and while many scholars of suburbs have debunked these critics and argued for the clear diversity of suburbs in their historical reality, the magazine still largely serves the function of promoting a specific hegemonic vision. In this vision we can locate issues of class, race, heteronormativity, and of interest to this thesis, gender. By turning to Shirley Jackson’s work in Ladies’ Home Journal and Harper’s, we can see the complex suburban imaginary created through the combination of advertisement and Jackson’s writings, which often incorporates the very materials advertised on the page in her fiction and semi-autobiographical stories. In doing so, we will see the ways in which the magazine can function as a dichotomy—both upholding and subverting the gendered constructs inherent in the hegemonic vision of the gendered U.S. suburb.

the working-class who had transitioned to life in the suburbs in the 1950s. In Nickles’s words, since “mass production aimed at the largest possible market, working-class taste influenced design standards for purchased goods by working-class and middle-class women alike. Rather than assimilating…members of the working-class…reformulated the mainstream material world of suburbia commonly understood as a middle-class creation” (583).
Ladies’ Home Journal (1883-2016)

*Ladies’ Home Journal*—which began circulation in 1883 and ran until 2016—had been described in the early twentieth century as “the monthly Bible of the American home” and through a “winning but sometimes confounding formula of promoting both traditional values and social change” became the best-selling magazine in the first decade of the twentieth century in the United States (Scanlon 12). Myrna Blyth, the magazine’s editor from 1989 until the magazine’s final issue in 2016, described the three words that comprise the title of *Ladies’ Home Journal* as the three tenets of the magazine:

First of all, it has always been concerned with those particular interests a woman has, whether in current fashions or in understanding her most intimate feelings. The magazine has also focused on the reader’s home, helping her cope with family’s needs, helping her keep her domestic life efficient and satisfying. Finally, the magazine has been a true journal, bringing the reader news that most directly affects her, showing her how she can find her own place in an exciting and challenging world. (3)

The language of Blyth’s description of the magazine is immediately mappable to the language used when discussing the construction of gender norms in the spaces of suburbia, including highlighting the importance of family, the home, domesticity, and how women might “find her own place,” which for many of the women readers in this era, was framed as aspiring towards a “suburban good life.”
The rise in suburban development and the rise of Ladies’ Home Journal coincided at roughly the same time\(^\text{13}\), with the magazine seeing a steady increase and peak in circulation in the 1960s with a circulation of over seven million (“Circulating American Magazines: Visualization Tools for U.S. Magazine History”\(^\text{14}\)). It was during this time of both suburban expansion and the mass popularity of Ladies’ Home Journal that Shirley Jackson was publishing in the magazine. Reading Jackson’s short fiction in tandem with the advertisements that largely dominate the pages of Ladies’ Home Journal demonstrates how this popular magazine was contributing to the rise in suburban culture, and in what ways Jackson’s short fiction both aligned with and pushed against this project of developing a suburban culture through the magazine.

While Jackson published several times in Ladies’ Home Journal (from here abbreviated as \(LHJ\)), one of her publications in the magazine came in the 1960s during the magazines peak and this short story went on to later be anthologized as one of Jackson’s best works in post-humorous collections.

The May 1960 issue of \(LHJ\)’s contains Jackson’s short story “Louisa, Please…” This story follows Louisa Tether after she runs away from home to live in the city of Chandler and assume the identity of Lois Taylor; to achieve this, she calculates a plan that includes developing a fictitious backstory, travelling between several towns to disorient her seekers, changing clothes, and living in a rented room while working at a local stationary store. Throughout the narrative, Louisa is concerned with one thing: utilizing conformity to mask her identity. The

\(^{13}\) While Ladies’ Home Journal peaked in circulation the 1960s, it should also be noted that this magazine was a long-time front runner in circulation numbers. In fact, this magazine was the first magazine in the U.S. to reach 1 million subscribers (Koslow).

\(^{14}\) The “Circulating American Magazines: Visualization Tools for U.S. Magazine History” is a National Endowment for the Humanities Digital Humanities Advancement project started in 2017, which provides circulation data and corresponding visual graphs for circulation records reported by various American periodicals to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (A.B.C.) from 1919 to 1972.
story weaves in and out of suburban and urban spaces through a variety of transportation methods as Louisa closely watches others and uses material goods to strip and rebuild her identity. In many ways, Louisa is attempting to culturally suburbanize herself while moving towards the urban center.

One of the major spatial motifs of the story is the movement in and out of suburban and urban spaces. Louisa’s hometown, while never explicitly described with the word ‘suburb,’ is nonetheless associated with suburban culture and as a suburban location to Chandler and Crain; her hometown is described as being outside these cities and needing a vehicle to get to. Aside from the location of Louisa’s hometown in relation to the city Chandler, there are several architectural attributes that associate Louisa’s hometown and home with the new trends in suburban housing. For one, the actual house itself is described as a “handsome, luxurious home” with a garden and driveway to match (Jackson 139). While this may seem like any normal description of a nice house, we can actually locate several important distinctions meant to highlight this as a suburban space as compared to Louisa’s urban space. The inclusion of a driveway implies private car ownership and the garden where her sister’s wedding is hosted implies the ownership of land, both of which were popular reasons as to the spread of suburban versus urban living. We can also compare Louisa’s description of her childhood home as handsome and luxurious against her description of Mrs. Peacock’s home (the women she is renting a room from in the city) as “old, and comfortable” (141). These emphases on aspects of the house are further illuminated by an advertisement elsewhere in LHJ of a schematic of a “Garden Spot House” (Brenneman 146). This advertisement shows an architect’s drawing of a house layout with a garden and driveway, and in this description the architect highlights the adequate parking the house allows and the spacious garden. Advertisements of home schematics
like this were a result of the increase in speculative building during suburban expansion in the mid-twentieth century, which Harris states was the dominate mode of home construction by the 1950s (Harris 105). According to McCann (in reference to Canadian magazines, although his claims also track with advertisements like the “Garden Spot House” in U.S. magazines) “a potential suburban homeowner of even moderate means was able to peruse house plans in any number of popular magazines or pattern books and then consult with a carpenter builder” to have the house built (121). The schematic for the garden house provides a visual representation to readers that associates Louisa’s own home with the luxury of suburban homeownership, which facilitates privacy, the ability to own a car, and access to land in the form of gardens that are all incompatible with city living.

Privacy becomes another paradox explored in the suburban imagination; there is a benefit to having privacy in your own home, but then that same privacy insinuates that there is something you want to hide. Scholars like Angela Hague have noted how surveillance culture during this time heightened fears within neighborhoods about what was going on in the privacy of the suburban house, and these fears of watching and hiding show up in “Louisa, Please…” When Louisa is in her hometown, she is afraid of everyone watching her. When she first leaves, she is spotted by her neighbor Paul who lives next door and almost ruins her plans to leave. When Paul eventually runs into her in Chandler and forces her to return home, Louisa wonders as she walks up to the house “if they were watching us from the window” (Jackson 142). Louisa’s fear of being seen is a major obstacle she works around while in the city, but unlike the suburb where fears of nosey neighbors and surveillance are afoot, Louisa feels unseen in the city: “It’s funny how no one pays attention to you at all. There were hundreds of people who saw me that day…and yet no one really saw me” (Jackson 139). Louisa finding privacy in the urban
space but publicness in the suburban space reverses the public/private polarities of the suburban cultural consciousnesses permeating suburbanites and their desire to have privacy in the suburb. The fear of things hidden behind these private walls is also emphasized when Louisa (who is now using a fictitious identity of Lois) and Mrs. Peacock theorize that Louisa never left her family home and that “maybe the family had her locked up somewhere because she was a homicidal maniac” (139). These juxtaposing conceptions of what privacy allows and the public speculation that privacy promotes becomes a major cultural element of suburbia, which persists as a stereotype of suburbia into contemporary culture with TV shows like *Desperate Housewives* and the film *Edward Scissorhands*, where the gossip and watching from the suburban home and the secrets housed within are major narrative foci.

Conformity being a major fear of suburban critics is preyed upon by Jackson in “Louisa, Please…” where Louisa’s total attempt at conformity results in the erasure of her identity completely. The conformity Louisa pursues is facilitated by the products she buys and the idea that purchasing mass consumer goods provides personal privacy through a public conformity to the mass. Clothing, and in particular a raincoat, becomes a symbol of conformity and mass consumerism in the story. When Louisa first gets the raincoat, she narrates “I had to fight my way through the crowd until I found the counter where they were having a sale of raincoats, and then I had to push and elbow down the counter and finally grab the raincoat I wanted right out of the hands of some old monster who couldn’t have used it anyway because she was much too fat” (Jackson 139). The description of this shopping center and the suffocating crowds Louisa had to physically fight through to purchase the product alludes to mass consumerism, with hordes of people after the same products. But this raincoat also represents more than a product; it represents Louisa’s access to a hegemony of conformity. She states that “I had stopped being
Louisa Tether the minute I got rid of that light coat my mother bought me” (139). By donning the new raincoat—which throughout the story she meticulously counts and points out in the narrative whenever she sees other girls wearing similar raincoats—Louisa can conform to the mass. With this raincoat, she “looked like a thousand other people when I walked down the street carrying my suitcase and my raincoat over my arm” (140-41). Louisa puts effort into choosing clothing that allows her to strip herself of the identifiable features that make her Louisa Tether, which connects her personal identity with the physical products she purchases. Through purchasing power and mass-produced goods, Louisa is able to un-Tether herself and assume the role of Lois Taylor.

Through her purchases, “Before [she] had been away from home for twenty-four hours [she] was an entirely new person” (Jackson 141). This association of mass-produced goods as an essential part of her identity formation and the amount of time Louisa spends observing other people who are dressed and look like her is amplified by the magazine the story is published in. The pages of LHJ are filled with advertisements for new fashion, cosmetics, and home appliances. With LHJ being the most widely circulated magazine during this period, these advertisements promoted the consumption of massed produced goods as a way of improving the lives of the women reading the magazine, much like the goods Louisa purchased facilitated her own acquisition of a supposed good life. In one instance in the story, Louisa talks about her pair of old shoes that do not look great but are comfortable; sharing this same page is a half-page advertisement for new shoes, creating a rhetorical link between Louisa’s old comfortable shoes that look unattractive with new shoes that are stylish and comfortable (140-141). This ‘newness’ is also emphasized in another advertisement for long-distance calls in the magazine, where one of the listed benefits of calling long distance is to share “new things you’ve bought for the
house” with friends and family. These links between the fiction and advertising serves a rhetorical function to strengthen the magazine’s message that old comforts can be replaced by the new and improved versions being mass produced. The sheer volume of commercial goods is demonstrated by one full-page advertisement in the magazine for refrigerators, which reads “Gambles bought 30 trainloads of freezer-refrigerators to bring you these sensational buys!” Lower on the add, other household appliances like mixers, brooms, and trash cans are listed under a tagline of “100 Best Buys.” Jackson’s story is filled with shopping centers, clothing, and other products which reflects the volume of purchasing options catalogued in the magazine, all connected through the thread of purchasing these goods to be like everyone else. Advertisements like this, which boast the volume of products ready to be purchased, highlights the mass consumerism that led to the critics of suburbs—which themselves were often products of assembly line manufacturing and spec building—that they curate conformity and are stripping both people and spaces of their individuality.

This criticism of conformity locates an interesting dichotomy in the purpose of Jackson’s story and the function of the magazine. Jackson’s story concludes with Louisa returning home after three years, only to find that her family no longer recognizes her as Louisa Tether but believes she is an imposter and sends her away; Jackson’s horrific twists are a staple of her fiction, and her critique of conformity through mass consumption is clear—it strips you of your identity. The title of the short story is “Louisa, Please…” and the tagline added by LHJ for the

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15 I would like to note that while the original title of the short story is “Louisa, Please…,” the story would later be titled “Louisa, Please Come Home” when published in her various short story collections. The removal of the ellipsis and the addition of ‘Come Home’ removes some of the ambiguous power of the rhetorical plea of the title; the request to come home is made more explicit which heightens the horror when she isn’t allowed to return home, yet reduces the stories critical edge by more closely associating Louisa’s horror with only the return home and not the wider issues of conformity, consumerism, and mid-twentieth century U.S. life that the ellipsis opens up as the true horrors of Louisa’s story.
short story is “What kind of women would do this?” (49). These linguistic signposts indicate a plead to readers to not fall victim to conformity and mass consumerism which will lead you to suffer the same fate as Louisa. Yet this message conflicts with the magazine’s myriad advertisements, which advocates for how much better your life can be if you purchase these products that fill nearly every page of the magazine. What Jackson frames as horror the magazine frames as something to strive for; this contradiction is what frames Jackson’s writing in its critical, subversive sharpness.

Harper’s (1850- )

If Ladies’ Home Journal represents one of the largest popular platforms Jackson was publishing in, then Harper’s represents one of her smaller, yet important, forums. Started in 1850, Harper’s—often described as a general interest but largely literary magazine—curated both notable and up-and-coming artists and writers in its pages. Throughout the magazine’s history, its aims adapted to the changing U.S. socio-cultural and political climate, and during the periods of suburbanization of interest to this thesis (roughly 1945-1969), the magazine went through three editors: Frederick Lewis Allen (1941-1953), John Fischer (1953-1967), and Willie Morris (1967-1971)16. By 1965, the magazine had reached a circulation of 411,445 (Lapham). In their article “‘Good Bad Stuff’: Editing, Advertising, and the Transformation of Genteel Literary Production in the 1890s,” Michael Epp describes Harper’s as a quality17 magazine that was “living two separate lives: the first as the purveyor of good literature in the interests of enduring

16 For a detailed history of Harper’s, contextualized alongside major turns in U.S. history, see Harper’s editor Lewis H. Lapham’s “Hazards of New Fortune: Harper's Magazine, Then and Now.”
standards of good taste, and the second as the purveyor of bad literature in the interests of enduring standards of profit” (187). These conflicting objectives led to *Harper’s* navigation of privileging written content to curate quality art while also meeting the business demands of printing advertisements to bring revenue and thus profit to a magazine that saw far less circulation than a magazine such as *Ladies’ Home Journal* (whose circulation was nearly 17 times greater than the circulation of *Harper’s* in the mid-late 1960s). In comparing issues of *Harper’s* to *Ladies’ Home Journal*, there are substantially less advertisements that span the pages of *Harper’s*; those that do appear often highlight deals on various educational books and services subscribers can purchase. Instead, the focus is placed on the writing found within the magazine and the advertisements are relegated to the first dozen or so pages of each issue rather than dominating each page as was standard in *Ladies’ Home Journal*.

Shirley Jackson published in *Harper’s* starting in the late 1940s and frequently in the early 1950s. Jackson’s writings in *Harper’s* represented a roughly even blend of fiction and her semi-autobiographical “domestic writing” that has earned her such scorn from the annals of literary history. Although often overlooked as valuable texts in mid-twentieth century literary history, Jackson’s domestic writing in magazines like *Harper’s* provides a unique look into suburban life and changes happening in the U.S. during post-war recuperation and simultaneous suburban sprawl. Much of Jackson’s fiction in *Harper’s*, rather than sharply critiquing conformity as she did in “Louisa, Please…,” deals with providing a portraiture of the myriad responsibilities and tribulations of a woman balancing her own identity with the cultural perceptions of mother and housewife. Indeed, Jackson’s domestic fiction in *Harper’s* often engaged in a dialogic relationship between Jackson’s lived reality and the reality that the suburban culture imagination signified onto her. This negotiation is explicit in her story “The
Third Baby’s The Easiest” in the May 1949 issue, where her author bio reads: “Shirley Jackson, author of a novel (The Road through the Wall) and a volume of short stories (The Lottery), is the wife of a literary critic and mother of—until recently—two children” (Harper’s 58). Jackson’s brief bio positions her two major responsibilities—to her craft and to her family—with relative balance. Yet in the story itself, Jackson has the following exchange with a nurse:

“Age?” she asked. “Sex? Occupation?”

“Writer,” I said.

“Housewife,” she said.

“Writer,” I said.

“I’ll just put down housewife,” she said (Jackson 61)

After more questions about her husband’s name and how many children she has, the nurse asks for her husband’s name and address and Jackson simply replies “‘Just put down housewife’ I said” (61). In contrast to prioritizing her identity as a writer like her brief bio did, Jackson concedes (albeit due to struggling through labor pains) to the cultural expectation of her as housewife rather than as a writer. Jackson is aware of the complex identities women in the mid-twentieth century form as a result of the suburban experience, and fiction such as “The Third Baby’s The Easiest” is where Jackson puts her reality in conversation with the cultural stereotype to yield comedic (and to a contemporary reader, biting) effect.

In the February 1952 issue of Harper’s, Jackson published “The First Car Is the Hardest,” a short story about (at the bequest of her children) her learning to drive a car and subsequently purchasing one for her family. Jackson’s short story reads as an episode of a suburban comedy,
which predates what would soon become a popular genre of television and fiction. Like in “Louisa, Please…,” Jackson never explicitly describes the location of her home as suburban, yet we can locate the signifiers of the suburban imagination in her short story. Additionally, we can read Jackson’s short story for how she subverts some of the gendered expectations of her relationship to the private/public spaces after conjuring these suburban signifiers.

The first signifier relates to the “kitchen headquarters” where housewives had visibility (enabled by modern open spaces) of the house, and where Jackson’s story begins and ends. “The First Car Is the Hardest” begins with Jackson’s narrator cooking at the stove while her two children play within her sight; during this opening scene, one of her children (Laurie) asks “Why don’t we have a car?” (Jackson 79). The rest of the opening scene is a back-and-forth of questions with Jackson’s narrator explaining that neither she nor her husband can drive, with the kids then continuing to ask over and over again why they don’t have a car and where they would want to sit if they did have a car. After the narrator gives in and learns to drive, they purchase a car and spend a large sum of money for it to be repaired. The story concludes back in the kitchen with the narrator once again at the stove cooking and her kids playing. This time, Laurie asks “Why’d we get a car?” and the narrator’s other child Joanne says “I wish we had an airplane,” which sends them back into a conversation which parallels the conversation they had about getting the car (83). The purpose of this cyclical narrative structure is to underscore the monotony of routine created by the suburb and the home environments that led to women such as Jackson’s narrator (and since these stories are semi-autobiographical, Jackson herself) to be trapped in a cycle of tedium which led to weariness. Jackson’s narrative structure displays the suburban stereotype Harris has argued as a leading factor of the psychological distress that entered the discourse around life as a housewife, positing that women became responsible for the
every-day functions of the home. He states these functions are “notably those of food preparation, childrearing, and home decoration, while being confined to home and neighborhood. Part of the social stereotype, then, was the neurosis that conformity created. Accordingly, suburban life was typed as comfortable but bland, and unhappy because it was devoid of larger meaning” (Harris 32). By beginning and ending her story in the kitchen, Jackson links the tedium of her experience as a housewife and mother microscopically to the domestic space and macroscopically to a gendered suburban culture.

Jackson’s story also emphasizes a major technological development that was changing the physical social patterns of populations and facilitating the rise of the suburbs—the proliferation in private car ownership. The story’s opening line of “Why don’t we have a car?” is asked by Laurie, whose question implies (based off of the story later revealing that Laurie’s friend’s parents have a car and drive) an intended question of “Why don’t we have a car” like everyone else (Jackson 79). Laurie’s questioning represents the line of suburban thought driving the social narrative of car ownership in the U.S. As part of his reasoning for his mother and father purchasing the car, he tells his mother that with the car “‘...we could go anywhere we wanted...And we wouldn’t have to walk, or drive with other people, or take taxis’” (79). At first Jackson’s narrator initially resists conforming by learning to drive and purchase a car, telling her son “‘No,’ I said sharply, ‘I can not drive a car. And I do not, furthermore, intend to learn. And I also do not want to hear one more—’” which is where she is then cut off by her kids talking over her (80). Over time, however, Jackson’s narrator eventually gives in and agrees to learn to drive the car.
While at first this may read as giving into the conformity that elsewhere—such as in “Louisa, Please…”—Jackson was critical of, we can still locate the nuanced subversion that complicates Jackson’s fiction. Even though the narrator gives into conformity by getting a car, she disrupts the gendered private/public spheres of the home and the outside world by making her female narrator the one learning to drive and the one negotiating the cost of the car and its repairs. Rupa Huq writes that “In the popular imagination, [suburbia] exists as gendered space: where a code of good housekeeping prevails as women tend to the nest (i.e., household and children), while their men are out in the big bad city earning a living” (133). Yet in Jackson’s fiction, this narrative is reversed: the husband is never considered to be the one to learn to drive, and while Jackson’s narrator is out learning to drive, “Laurie and Joanne and my husband holding the baby stood on the front porch cheering and waving as I rode off…” (Jackson 81). This image reverses the imagery in the popular imagination by temporarily swapping the wife and husband positions, with the father caring for the kids and watching from the home as the mother drives off and gains mobility to the outside world. While conforming to the wave of changes that suburbanization has fostered—such as the need for car ownership—Jackson also resists this suburban popular imagination by having Jackson’s housewife narrator being the actor in both the public and private spheres.

**Conclusion: Signifying Suburbia**

While Jackson may not always refer to the spaces of her characters as the suburbs, her fiction in magazine such as *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Harper’s* is clearly linked to the growing suburban imagination; Jackson creates this link through signifiers such as domestic space, cars, mass-produced goods, and the relationship between towns and cities (one of the central concerns
driving what is and isn’t a suburb in sociological and urban studies). Jackson’s writings in these magazines oscillates between promoting conformity to changes brought on by suburban sprawl and criticizing those very changes. Even if Jackson’s ‘domestic humor’ was initially received as conformist to critics such as Betty Friedan, reassessing Jackson’s fiction for the sharp nuance of her subversion demonstrates that Jackson’s work often criticized this conformity driving suburban development by using these signifiers of conformity as textual camouflage.

The magazine thus serves as an important forum where Jackson worked through these complex dichotomies. As this chapter has shown, the magazine had a major impact in shaping suburban development both physically and culturally—such as promoting house designs, advertising mass produced products, and using gendered language/imagery in advertisements to associate women with domestic labor. The iconography and suburban signifiers in these magazines and in fiction such as Jackson’s continues to persist as contemporary stereotypes from this era of suburban development in the United States. This suburban imagination lays the groundwork for considering how this imagination began to manifest outside of the United States. Strong Boat et al. have posited that “Women acting as families’ chief consumers were targeted by advertisers, and they helped to construct a suburban culture with remarkable world-wide similarities” (175). In the next chapter, I will track these suburban cultural coordinates located in this chapter in Australia during this same mid-twentieth century period; in doing so, we will begin to see how this suburban culture manifested as a transnational phenomenon and what this tells us about the power of suburban culture as a force of globalization. Additionally, this analysis will reveal whether this Australian imagination is also concerned with ideologies of conformity and the negotiation of modernity in an increasingly suburban existence.
“What the Australian cherishes most is a home of his own … as soon as he can buy a house … he moves to the suburbs … A person who owns a house, a garden, a car and has a fair job is rarely an extremist or a revolutionary”

Introduction: “The First Suburban Nation”

While the wildlife of the bush and outback have become cultural signifiers of Australia as a nation, the suburban developments that dot the continent are as prominent in the nation’s historical and cultural reality as their famed natural landscapes. Much like the United States 9,000 miles across the pacific, Australia looked towards a socio-cultural model that saw suburbs become the idealized dream of Australian life after the devastating nightmare that was World War II. Yet the turn towards suburban life was not a new development but rather a reemphasis of an existing form. Donald Horne described Australia as “the first suburban nation” in his 1964 book *The Lucky Country* (qtd. in Freestone et al 72). This assertion has been corroborated elsewhere in Australian studies, with Tony Dingle positing that “[a]lmost from the beginning of European settlement, people chose to live in suburbs, giving Australia strong claims to being the pioneer suburban nation (Davison, 1994)” (190). Pioneer, suburb, and nation are terms frequently deployed when discussing the emergence of Australia as a country.

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These three terms provide a jumping off point for considering how a suburban imagination developed in the cultural consciousness of Australia. They become especially salient when we turn to the rhetoric of Robert Menzies, whose appointment as Prime Minister of Australia between 1949 and 1966 gave him a strong socio-political hand on the wheel which would guide Australia as a nation during the post-war period. His time in office represents a return to home as an ideal for Australia, with a strong “middle-class bias…permeating all aspects of public culture, and attempting to assimilate all social strata to the sociopolitical disposition – the ways of being, thinking and feeling – of the middle class” (Allon 22). Yet this mission of returning home is complicated by another shift in Australia, which was post-war “transnational migration” which “created new kinds of cultural landscapes where established assumptions about what constitutes ‘culture’ and ‘place’, as well as ‘home’, no longer hold” (Allon 14). To understand this post-war climate and what “home” might now mean in relation to the suburban imagination in the context of a transnational cultural consciousness, we can once again look to the magazine as a site where these political, material, social, economic, and cultural dilemmas were put into conversation with the Australian public. The Australian Women’s Weekly (1933- ), a publication that represents “the most popular mid-century women’s magazine in Australia by far,” is one such forum where we see how the suburban imagination attempted to codify a national identity for an Australia that was negotiating the cultural shifts happening because of transnational migration and globalization broadly (Viney 370).

In this chapter I survey several editions of the Australian Women’s Weekly (from here abbreviated as AWW) starting in 1948 and through 1967—a range that represents both a post-war era and Menzies’s time in office, bookended by the years immediately before and after his appointment as Prime Minister. During this post-war period, the AWW undertakes a project of
both promoting the middle-class concept of home and suburban good life while simultaneously exposing Australians to cultures outside of the continent which allows that suburban imagination to form transnationally; in doing so, the magazine both amplified a specific vision of the Australian suburb while also infusing the pages of the magazine with the types of transcultural diversity that would undoubtedly come to define Australian suburbia in its historical reality. For my methodology, I apply an adapted form of distant- and close-reading methods as advocated by scholars such as Jeffrey Drouin in his article “Close- and Distant-Reading Modernism: Network Analysis, Text Mining, and Teaching the Little Review” (2014). Drouin writes that “Literary study in the digital humanities tends either to distant-read enormous data sets or microanalyze the linguistic features of single works,” with distant-reading the practice of “text mining” for certain patterns or frequencies of words or images, and the microanalysis is the close-reading more typical to traditional literary study (110). I draw my primary materials from the digital Australian archive Trove19, which allows a distant-reading through several decades of Australian Women’s Weekly issues to identify trends and patterns; with these patterns identified, I will zoom in on specific examples of these trends to perform a close-reading of how those examples support my argument of a suburban imagination and how they compare to the U.S. through a transnational lens. This combination of distant- and close-reading methods identifies major trends in suburban cultural development in Australia while simultaneously providing the ability to demonstrate the nuance of subversion, contradiction, and juxtaposition that frequently texture these patterns when closely inspected.

19 Trove is an open-access digital aggregate of materials from libraries, archives, and museums across Australia which is supported by the National Library of Australia. This archive features digital scans of the Australian Women’s Weekly with full-text searchability.
Menzies, Mothers, and Migrations: Australian Suburbanization After World War II

The conformity of Australia to the model of middle-class suburban family—with conformity being a site of contention in both Australia and the United States—was championed by Australia’s prime minister Robert Menzies. Menzies first served as Prime Minister from 1939 to 1941 and then again from 1949 to 1966. Menzies, having been Australia’s longest Prime Minister to serve in office, was responsible for both entering Australia into World War II and then leading the effort of recovery after the war’s conclusion. Several of Menzies’s initiatives were designed to return Australia to the home after their global exposure in World War II, a time when he “envisioned Australian households as a site for political negotiation” (Viney 377). For Menzies, the home was “not only [seen] as a site for individual peace and prosperity but also an emblem of a flourishing democratic society” (378). His emphasis of returning home after the war spoke not only to the return of Australian soldiers to Australia, but the return to the very concept of home and home ownership itself as a means of unifying the nation.

During his time in office, Menzies’s government made several moves to promote the development of suburban communities and encourage the continued proliferation of the middle-class nuclear family in privately owned housing. One such effort was the “restructuring of taxation and welfare policies in the 1950s” which “directly rewarded the middleclass, single-income family and penalised households that deviated from this norm. Households with dependent spouses and children received significant tax deductions, as did families who demonstrated the middleclass values of self-reliance by taking out private health insurance and

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20 In September of 1939, Menzies gave the authorization to allow Australia to join the Allied Powers in World War II.
other self-help measures" (Allon 26). Menzies efforts undeniably had an impact on the move to privately owned homeownership and suburban sprawl. Fiona Allon states that the “housing policies at both federal and state levels” led to increased home ownership in Australia, which was 71% of Australians by 1966 (a large increase from the ownership rate of 53% in 1947) (26-27).

The increase in demand for home ownership inevitably led to large scale suburban planning efforts to accommodate a growing population. While suburban style developments outside of the city had been a staple since the early pioneering of Australia by European settlers, Tony Dingle writes that “[i]t has often been noted that Australian suburbs were not well planned (Boyd, 1987, p. 129). The pioneers frequently went without made roads, sewers and other basic facilities because developers were not forced to provide them when they subdivided; but this also meant that land was cheaper” (194). This cheap land and the Menzies housing incentives would lead “young men and women used their savings to buy subdivided suburban building land and to put a deposit on the dream home they would buy or build once they were married” (191). As greater regulation began to dictate how these suburbs were being developed, Australian suburbs began to borrow a similar model to the United States suburbanization efforts. One major parallel we see between U.S. and Australian suburban sprawl was the important role the car

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21 Susan Sheridan states that “[b]etween 1947 and 1973 the population nearly doubled (from 7.5 million)” (121). By the 1991, the population had reached 17,292,000 according to census data (Dingle 188).

22 It is interesting to note that while Australia’s history is largely associated with British settlement, Australia borrowed its suburban planning from the U.S. Tony Dingle states “Britain, for example, chose to create new towns and also to build high-density accommodation within existing cities; while, in the United States, low-density suburbs of detached homes were built outside city boundaries. Australia, whose urban population grew at a faster rate than Britain’s, chose this latter approach” (189).
played in dictating how infrastructure was being built. In discussing the impact of the car on post-war development, Dingle states:

Australia’s post-war suburbs have been shaped to the requirements of the car...Every house needed a driveway from the street and a garage or carport; so house blocks had to be widened to make room for the car as well. Streets, too, were widened, and car-parking spaces had to be provided wherever the car stopped; aerial photographs demonstrate vividly the massive acreages turned over almost exclusively to car use. The corners of busier suburban streets acquired petrol filling stations. Drive-in movie theatres, motels and bottle shops followed. Australia’s first drive-in shopping centre was at Chermside in Brisbane, built in 1957 in conscious imitation of American models. (192-93)

Just as the U.S. began to build their communities around the commuting culture facilitated by the car, we see Australia too was largely impacted by this technological advancement and even at times would recreate “American models” through “conscious imitation.” Like in the U.S., the Australian suburbs began to exude a clear uniformity and “[i]n any locality, block sizes and house sizes and styles tend to be similar” (Dingle 194).

If we zoom in from a broad suburban development to the individual suburban home, we continue to see parallels to U.S. homes during this same period. Like in the U.S., the “challenge [of suburban design] was to squeeze as much as possible into a small house. This provided an opportunity for Modernist architects to offer clean, simple, functional, box-like designs, ‘machines for living in’ in Le Corbusier’s famous phrase23, in place of the traditional house”

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23 Le Corbusier (born as Charles-Édouard Jeanneret) was an architect and urban planner whose designs combine “functionalism of the modern movement with a bold sculptural expressionism” and was sought after by nations throughout the twentieth century (Encyclopedia Britannica).
(Dingle 195). These uniform house designs were amplified by magazines such as the AWW, whose “Architect-Directed Home Plan Services” series would provide house schematics that could be purchased and built by future suburbanites who owned land to build on. The U.S. went through a similar move to a spec building model and the “do-it-yourself” construction of the post-war era; this model was even more prevalent in Australia, with Dingle describing the long history of Australians building their own homes in his essay “Necessity the Mother of Invention, or Do-It-Yourself.” Housing shortages after WWII reinvigorated the desire to build your own home after the residential building industry collapsed prior to the war as a result of the Great Depression (Dingle 66). Dingle has stated elsewhere that even with “serious shortages of materials and labour for at least a decade after the war, this initial burst of post-war spending kick-started the building industry” and this do-it-yourself home building attitude is frequently depicted in the AWW (Dingle 191).

Outside of these physical similarities which point to a transnational exchange of suburban planning and home design between Australia and the U.S., the cultural depiction of Australian suburbia also finds parallels to U.S. suburbia in terms of the negative stereotypes that are signified by images of the suburbs. Fiona Allon has stated that the general depiction of suburbia being driven by Menzies during this era “was rigid and exclusionary, dependent on the violence of assimilation, premised on class, sexual and racial hierarchies, and reliant upon a gendered division of labour” (15). This “violence of assimilation” is clearly visible in the return of women to the role of mother and housewife after the war. During the war “with the men away fighting, women had been needed in the workforce” and “[t]hough nothing new for working-class women, the increased presence of middle-class women in paid employment challenged ideas about the gendered distinctions between the public and private spheres” (Viney 376). These challenges to
the public/private spheres were a direct challenge to the middle-class nuclear family. According
to Viney, after the end of WWII “around 30 percent of women were in paid employment outside
of the home,” and this disruption of the nuclear family “contributed to a generalized anxiety
about the decline of Australian society, and many suggested that women who still worked after
the war were depriving their children and their household of the moral guidance of mothers,
leading to unhappy or damaged families and the destabilisation of society itself” (376). This
anxiety would lead to a reemphasis of the mother and the housewife as the aspiration for
Australian women. Yet forums like the AWW also recognized an agency that exists outside of the
role of mother, and many issues of AWW negotiate between promoting the government-
encouraged nuclear family and providing women with the imaginative space to envision
themselves as more active participants in the world outside the home.

The suburban culture defined so far reads remarkably like suburbanization in the United
States, but one major difference between U.S. and Australia suburbanization during the post-war
period is the types of migration happening in each nation. While in the U.S. migration was
mostly internal (that is, moving from city to suburb), in Australia transnational migration was
quickly raising population numbers and increasing the cultural diversity in the nation. In
Australia “[b]etween 1947 and 1973, the population nearly doubled (from 7.5 million) and more
than half of the population increase was due to immigration (i.e., postwar immigrants and their
Australian-born children)” (Sheridan 121). This wave of cultural diversity would come into
conflict with the conformity being sought after by Australia to unify the country into a coherent
national identity, and this desire for uniformity would lead to further government regulation.
According to Susan Sheridan, immigrants were required to conform to the “Australian way of
life” due to “the assimilation policies of the 1950s and 1960s. They were expected to break with
their language and culture of origin. No special services were provided by government, for fear that this might shore up their differences and contradict the ideology of sameness” (123). By forcing this assimilation, the effort towards curating a homogenous Australian identity could be preserved even among the growing diversity in the Australian population. Those who could successfully assimilate were “distinguished from those who are deemed to constitute a social problem because of their continuing difference” (Sheridan 131). This othering of immigrants against Australian identity was what Sheridan identifies in Australian culture (and in AWW) as an “ambivalence: between desire for the other’s difference and desire that they should forego it and assimilate into sameness” (131). Indeed, in the AWW we see this sort of ambivalence manifest through the portrayal of the Australian woman as white, middle-class, and conformist with this hegemonic suburban rhetoric and iconography being embedded within spreads about exotic locations, foods, and cultures. As we will see, the inclusion of this othering can be interpreted as serving polyvalent functions within the suburban imagination: as a contrast used to amplify the supposed “suburban good life”, as a textual outlet to imagine life outside the suburb, and as evidence of a cultural diversity that resists the pull of conformity sweeping Australia in the post-war period.

*Australian Women’s Weekly* (1933-)

The *Australian Women’s Weekly* is a prime candidate for considering the magazine’s role in cultivating a suburban imagination due to its wide readership and its depiction of an Australia negotiating a changing population and culture while trying to define its national identity. According to Hannah Viney, the *Australian Women’s Weekly* was “the most popular mid-century women’s magazine in Australia by far” (370). Barbra Lemon emphasizes the magazine’s
importance not just in the mid-twentieth century but across all of Australian history, asserting that “the Australian Women’s Weekly is the most widely read magazine in the history of Australian publishing.” In terms of circulation numbers, “[b]y 1956, it sold around 805,000 copies per week, almost double the figures of its main competitors, Woman and New Idea, combined” (Viney 371). AWW served a multifaceted purpose as an important source of news and cultural opinion for Australian women, and “[i]n articles on fashion, cooking or current affairs, the Weekly pledged to present news in each piece it published. Indeed, considering its editorials, the Weekly was stylistically more like a newspaper than a women’s magazine” (371). One defining feature of this magazine was its early effort to encourage Australian society to consider the possibilities of what a woman could be in their society:

Early editions of the Weekly bravely and critically broached the subject of the status of women in Australian society. A series called Careers For Women encouraged women to consider all sorts of employment opportunities: as lawyers, chemists, or even engineers. In addition to the more predictable fashion pages and social notes, the publication included book and theatre reviews, stories of women of achievement, and articles that ‘sniped at the prevailing sexism’ or advocated equal pay. (Lemon)

This critical edge would soften as it approached the mid-twentieth century and Lemon states that by 1934 the magazine moved toward “more feminine, less feminist.” By the 1950s, “the magazine adopted a safe, unthreatening tone, while ‘the emancipated woman had almost disappeared’ from its pages. Emphasis was once again squarely on the family, and notions of the ideal wife and mother” (Lemon). Lemon’s description of the magazine’s turn to the family, wife, and mother aligns with the ongoing political and social trajectories of returning home. Even
during this period of intense focus on establishing the nuclear family the magazine, at times, carefully approaches but does not explicitly cross a line of subverting this suburban structure.

The cultural shift that takes place between 1945 and when Menzies champions for the return to home in 1949 is evident if one compares the editions of AWW in 1948 and the editions that begin to appear at the start of the 1950s and into the 1960s. What is clear in these 1948 issues is that the mother or housewife figure, while still present in the magazine, is far from a central figure and instead the ‘Australian woman’ is shown in most instances separated from the home or focused on fashion and appearance rather than child rearing or housekeeping. Many of the advertisements in these magazines are directed at current fashion trends and cosmetics, and the short stories tell of romance and extravagant honeymoons rather than the sorts of “domestic” fiction that authors like Shirley Jackson were contributing to U.S. women’s magazines. Advertisements include cosmetics and medicines aimed at improving their overall health and appearance, ads which focus on the well-being of the individual women rather than on the health of the entire family (which will dominate these types of ads in later decades). Some of the most striking ads in these 1948 magazines are the TAA airline advertisements, which often show women travelling alone. In the January 17th, 1948, issue we see a woman standing alone preparing to board a busy plane (Australian Women’s Weekly 6). In another issue in July of 1948, we see a woman travelling with a young girl who looks out onto a colorful coastline, with the ad copy stating “things to tell Tom,” implying that the woman and her daughter are travelling on their own (14). These advertisements disrupt several foci of what would become part of the suburban imaginary after Menzies is reelected, including the disintegration of the public/private gendered binaries by having women travelling freely outside of the home and by showing that these women can travel and enjoy these experiences on their own. The Australian woman
presented in 1948 is dressing in the current trends, travelling, and focusing on her own health and appearance.

**The Return of the Housewife**

The magazine noticeably begins to shift as the AWW enters the 1950s, with the mother and housewife becoming dominant figures in the magazine. In these issues, women are far more frequently depicted performing household chores, caring for their children, and being doting wives to their husbands. This shift does not mean that the images of women from the earlier 1948 issues and their interests disappeared completely. The magazine would still include articles and images that highlighted other possibilities for the “career” women, but often these articles are treated with cynicism rather than as an emphasis the great accomplishments and personal benefits that come with forging a path outside of the nuclear family. One such instance of this is in the August 11th, 1965, issue which includes an article titled “What it takes to become a Woman Doctor.” The introduction of the article states the following, which sharply deflates the “imaginative wanderings” of women considering becoming a doctor:

Any association of the woman doctor suggests education, wisdom, prosperity, and social standing. What has been completely overlooked by you in your imaginative wanderings is about to be unfolded in this article, but retain your romantic visions, because these may be the only clear-cut criteria on which to base your final opinion as to the desirability of a young girl embarking upon a medical course. (39)

By addressing the reader as “you,” the author is linking the reader to the magazine’s audience—the Australian woman—and attacks the possibility of “education, wisdom, prosperity, and social
standing” brought on by a medical education as only “imaginative wanderings” and “romantic visions.” The article is a seven-page spread which asks the reader to imagine they are progressing through medical school and then opening a practice. Throughout the piece, the language is rooted in a cynicism that largely expresses the tedium, boredom, and difficulty of being a woman trying to work in a field dominated by a male ego. Articles such as “Woman Doctor” are designed to create a stark contrast between the colorful and romantic visions of housewives living in the suburbs against the dreary, difficult, and stressful world of a public career. This rhetorically emphasizes the suburb as the good life worth aspiring towards rather than aspiring towards the “romanticized” life of a career.

The depiction of these suburban spaces began to exponentially increase in the 1950s and through much of the 1960s and the iconography of home building becomes a prominent marker of Australian suburbanization. The increased incentives and demands for housing which led to more speculative and do-it-yourself building can be traced throughout the advertisements, editorials, and fiction of the AWW. House schematics would frequently be featured as part of both home design contests as well as the AWW’s “Architect-Directed Home Plan Services.” One example of this is in the January 6th, 1951, issue where one of the schematics submitted for a “design a home competition” emphasizes the house as perfect for “suburban living,” with the house explicitly marking features in the schematic that relate to idealized suburban life; this includes specific references and notes on gardens, kitchens, and areas where the children can play (49). Nearly a decade later these house schematics continue to be a staple in the magazine, and the designs noticeably change alongside the housing demands. Due to the poorly planned suburbs which resulted in small and narrow lots for houses, the designs of the magazine begin to account for these physical changes. In a May 4th, 1960, installment of their “Home Planning
Services,” a house schematic emphasizes that it is perfect for the “narrow suburban block,” with the home cleverly designed to be spacious even with a small amount of square footage and which features new suburban necessities, such as a car port and a separate washing room for washers and dryers (61). In the May 25th, 1960, issue the “great demand for a home for a narrow site” is reiterated, this time also highlighting how the open concept allows for housework to be minimized (41). In all these schematics, emphasis is placed on both the needs of the family in the home as well as on the specifications of the physical suburban land itself. Some schematics, such as the August 18th, 1965 issue, highlight smaller houses with one bedroom perfect for “retired, or as a young married’s first home” and with “simple extensions” could be “developed…into a family-sized house” (61). With these schematics, the home appeals to the “young men and women used their savings to buy subdivided suburban building land and to put a deposit on the dream home they would buy or build once they were married” (Dingle 191), as well as encourages these couples to imagine their home in the context of one day expanding it to include a family; this stimulates both an interest in home ownership as a long term investment as well as strengthens the continued fortification of the nuclear family as the ideal trajectory for Australian life.

The inclusion of these architect-designed schematics is meant to streamline the process of creating a home, encouraging more do-it-yourself building based on schematics that can be purchased and altered if necessary (in the August 18th, 1965, issue, the Home Planning Services states that “All these plans can be modified to suit individual needs,” a disclaimer that consistently appears alongside home schematics (61)). This do-it-yourself attitude encouraged by the schematics is strengthened by advertisements in the magazine related to self-made home improvements, building materials, and ways to renovate existing rooms and furniture. One
articulate example of these advertisements is seen on January 6th, 1951, where an ad for CSR Building products shows a man renovating his home with images of newly remodeled kitchens and foyers; the ad copy reads “Is the home you’ve dreamed of for so long—still only a dream?” (32). Another advertisement on July 18th, 1951, for home insulation shows a man constructing his home and another in the May 25th, 1960, issue for Hardie’s Fibrolite Building Materials shows a man working on his home while his wife and children watch from a distance. In these ads we see the husband figure actively involved in constructing the home while women are largely absent or removed from the image altogether, with the ads utilizing language of dreaming and the imagination to appeal to the reader. Yet advertisements related to home renovation also frequently appeal to the role that women can have in furnishing, designing, and renovating their home. This agency has been recognized in scholarship related to the role women played in the physical aspects of suburbanization and home building, with Hannah Viney writing that “Justine Lloyd and Lesley Johnson, for example, have convincingly proposed that women who were involved in household renovation, budgeting and suburban development demonstrated a ‘capacity to shape (their part of) the world’ during this period, thus making them participants in the public sphere” (Viney 368). This position is corroborated by the AWW which frequently features editorials, articles, and photo essays aimed at helping women renovate and furnish their homes; one example would be on July 11th, 1951, when the AWW features an entire special supplement called “Things to Make for the Home” related to home making and how to decorate interiors and refashion furniture and materials for new uses.

While in most of these home-building advertisements and articles women are not depicted as performing the physical labor themselves (although many would have certainly performed some of this home renovation labor), the magazine does frequently feature ads,
articles, and short fiction targeted at the work that facilitates the suburbs continued existence: domestic labor. Much like Ladies’ Home Journal in the U.S., the AWW is largely filled with content directed at ways to improve aspects of housekeeping, childrearing, cooking, and homemaking. The sheer amount of labor that goes on in these small suburban spaces is made explicit in a May 4th, 1960, issue in an article titled “Six miles of ironing—and a 5000-mile hike,” with ad copy that asks the reader “Did you know that a housewife's innumerable trips to the sink, kitchen table, and pantry add up to nearly 5000 miles walking in a year? That her hands travel six miles over the ironing-board in an average weekly session?” (55). This enumeration puts the physical demands of labor into a quantifiable and measurable value, and the intensity of these figures speaks to domestic work as a demanding form of labor. The amount of time and energy required by this labor is paralleled in the space of the AWW, where many issues are preoccupied with new ways of thinking about, completing, and enhancing this domestic labor.

Much like in Ladies’ Home Journal, in the 50s and 60s advertisements related towards appliances for the kitchen and house cleaning created a catalogue of domestic goods available for purchase as a way of improving the lives of homeowners. In a July 1951 editorial, the editor writes on these new technologies that “In a life daily becoming more difficult for the housewife, refrigerators, washing machines, electric cleaners, mixers, and ironers can hardly come under” the heading of being “luxury” goods (14). Indeed, these goods are presented in the magazine not as luxury but as a necessity to suburban existence. These technologies became embedded culturally as intensely as they were in the magazine; in the issues in May of 1960, washing machine manufacturers advertised that May was “National Washing Machine Month,” a month that, perhaps not coincidentally, aligns with when Mother’s Day takes place in Australia. Many ads take advantage of this cooccurrence, such as the ad in the May 4th, 1960, issue for Simpson
Washers which states “What a wonderful moment for mother! A gleaming new Simpson Washer to make the occasion her day of days…the very model she had always admired so much—talked about—always dreamed of owning” (28). Unlike the dreams of becoming a doctor or career woman which are treated with cynicism in the magazine, the washers are depicted as something mothers “dream of owning.” These ads also tend to emphasize the benefits of these technologies not for their own personal satisfaction but as a gift given on Mother’s Day that celebrates the entire family instead. In the same May 4th issue, another advertisement for Hill’s laundry products describes them as a “Family Benefit Products” and that purchasing them will “[g]ive Mother easier washdays from now on” (14). In the advertisement, we see images of a woman sitting exhausted in front of laundry baskets, and then happily outside hanging clothes to dry in front of a colorful house using a newly purchased laundry hamper. These advertisements for a Mother’s Day gift hardly celebrate the important role that mother’s play in Australian society, but instead highlights how buying these products will make her a more efficient worker for the benefit of the family.

Cyclical Existence as Oppression in “No Hours Between” (1951)

The imagery of the suburbs discussed thus far offer colorful, happy depictions of housewives leading lives caring for their homes and loving family; yet the AWW would also not shy away from publishing works that contrast this image of the ‘suburban good life’ with stories of women who feel trapped in these suburban spaces. One such story is titled “No Hours Between” written by Greta Lamb in the July 25th, 1951, issue of AWW. This story follows Fenella, a newly married housewife who recounts the hours in her day between when her husband leaves for work and when he returns at the end of the day. Throughout the narrative,
Fenella expresses anxiety and sadness over the monotony and loneliness of her life in the suburbs. Fenella believes her days “already had taken on their pattern,” where she made a “ritual” of each morning which involved her preparing her husband’s breakfast and then having her coffee and reading the newspaper before beginning the chores for the day (Lamb 5). As she begins her work:

Already, monotony had crept in and her mind wandered as her hands worked. She tried to keep the thought of Jack uppermost in her mind. She was doing it all for love of him, she must remember that. They mustn't, mustn't become merely boring duties to be got through. She tried to think of herself as a home-maker, not a housewife; the different words conjured up such diverse pictures. Never, never would she let herself become merely a housekeeper. (5)

Fenella’s insights here are illuminative of the messages being sent to women in magazines such as the AWW; the work of the housewife and these daily tasks are in service of creating a home and are completed to bring happiness to the family (and husband) that dwell within it. Yet this work becomes a routine pattern of monotony, and even “in only three months of marriage” her life had taken on a routineness that leaves her to struggle with the labor expected of her.

To try and cope with these feelings of monotony and the anxiety of being stuck at home, Fenella reminisces on her time before marriage when she worked in an office. During her housework, “[s]he found that lately she often thought of the girls at the office. They had seemed ordinary enough when she was with them every day, but now . . . she wondered . . . Their lives seemed full of excitement, small, unexpected happenings” (5). Fenella experiences the type of imaginative dreaming of life outside the home that the author of “Woman Doctor” criticizes,
thinking about how she took for granted the simple pleasures of even receiving a phone call or talking to people she knows. Upon this reflection, Fenella experiences an “overwhelming loneliness settled upon her” (5). In a desperate attempt to feel some sort of connection to the outside world, “She crossed the room and flung up the window. Outside was the quiet suburban street. A child went by, wobbling on her trike, mother calling out warnings to take care. A butcher’s boy cycled past whistling as though hypnotised. That was all. She had a mad desire to shout suddenly; shout out into the quiet of the street” (5). The image of Fenella standing at the window looking out onto the suburban street wanting to scream is a striking image; she’s trapped both physically and metaphorically behind the walls of her suburban existence, with her emotions repressed and desperate for some kind of release from the isolation she’s feeling. After this episode, Fenella returns to her chores until coming across a romantic novel where she becomes jealous of the “heroine languishing in a background of luxury liners, luxury hotels, and luxury love” and throws the book in a fit of rage (42). The fantasizing she once did to escape her reality no longer appeases her distress, and the narrative builds this repressed frustration until Fenella finally decides to go into town to shop in an attempt to feel human connection.

Fenella leaves the home to shop, buy groceries, and eventually go to the cinema so she can engage with the outside world. Even as she passes people on the street, sees children at a park, and talks to the grocers, Fenella cannot escape her feelings of isolation. As she sits in the cinema, “A wave of self-pity engulfed her as she sat there. Nearly everyone was alone. She was alone. The whole world was alone, unloved, unwanted. Tears sprang at the bark of her eyes. She realised that she had hardly spoken to a soul all day, except Celia, shop people, and the horrid little boy in the park!” (42). Even among people, Fenella cannot escape the isolation that has encapsulated her existence since moving to her suburban home. She leaves the cinema “almost in
despair” and heads home in the rain (42). When she arrives home, she begins to prepare herself with new clothes and does her hair in anticipation of her husband Jack’s return. When he does finally come home, Fenella’s face is “bright with newfound happiness that came in the door with him” and remarks that “Time had not been there between Jack's going and his coming home again. There had been no hours between at all” (42).

This final scene highlights that Fenella’s existence and happiness has come to rest solely on her husband; when he is not present, Fenella feels as those she ceases to exist as if “[t]ime had not been there.” Although supposedly living the suburban good life where she is happily married, has a home to care for, and is free to go out and shop and see movies when she pleases, Fenella’s story is threaded with unhappiness, loneliness, and monotony. The immense despair, anger, and isolation Fenella feels is amplified as the narrative ends and emphasizes this existence is a cycle set to repeat the next day. In Dorothy Hobson’s “Housewives: Isolation as Oppression,” she writes that

The separation of the sphere of work from the privatized sphere of the home under the capitalist mode of production, and the designation of those realms to men and women respectively, has meant that women are at one stage primarily located within the home performing domestic labour and child-care. It is the isolation of women within the home and the privatized nature of the work which they perform which some women have articulated as being a site of oppression for them. (Hobson 85)

“No Hours Between” can be mapped along Hobson’s analysis of housewife isolation as a site of oppression, yet Fenella never admits to feeling oppressed by her work; she instead feels an obligation as homemaker and in many ways believes it to be her duty to complete this work and
live this life for her husband. While Fenella may not explicitly state she is oppressed due to the socio-cultural expectations of gendered suburban life, when she looks out the window onto the street Fenella experiences an unexpressed oppression. Under this oppression, she feels as if her life ceases to exist when her husband leaves and the routine of her days alone takes hold.

While the image of Fenella looking out onto the street from her window emphasizes her oppression, the image of looking outwards can also be read (in tandem with the AWW) as an act of imagining life outside of the confines of home. This interpretation of the act of looking outside of the suburbs is textually emulated in the AWW through its inclusion of international culture in its pages. Susan Sheridan has looked at the representation of the ‘Other’ in the AWW and posits that “the Weekly’s representations of the migrant ‘Others’ [were] in relation to whomever her Australianness was to be defined,” or in other words, that the Australian Woman was defined by contrasting it against what it is not (131). Although the 50s and 60s assimilation efforts attempted to reduce these differences and unify a coherent Australian identity, the AWW still represented and encouraged embracing the multicultural. This is perhaps most apparent in the advertisements for different international cuisines and recipes which frequently appeared towards the end of each edition of the AWW. This multicultural awareness was also highlighted in special articles dedicated to international events and the experiences of Australians travelling abroad. An article titled “Look What We Found in India” in the August 18th, 1965, issue is one such example of this attempt to expose the Australian readership to cultures outside of their own forming national identity.

This inclusion of multicultural articles and cuisine marks a unique break with the kind of content published in a similar women’s magazine like Ladies’ Home Journal in the United
States, where any form of an ‘other\textsuperscript{24}’ that is not a white, middle-class American is scarcely found. This fact points to a difference in U.S. and Australian suburbanization in that Australia was becoming a home to a much larger variety of transnational migrants after World War II. While in the U.S. migration was taking place primarily from the city to the suburb, Australia was experiencing both internal migrations to new suburban developments and immigrations from other non-British nations. This historical reality is discussed by Fiona Allon, who states that “[t]he desire to install a particular vision of the Australian way of life as a social and cultural norm assumed a uniformity that suburban cultures had perhaps never truly had, creating a monochrome image of suburbia as predominantly white, middle-class and conformist”; in reality, the large influx of non-British migrants coming into Australia meant that “Suburbs once decried as bland and nondescript were now sites of multicultural difference and diversity” (28-29). The AWW negotiates a balance between these two poles, both advocating for a specific middle-class vision of a suburban good life but exposing that imagination to new cultures (through primarily travel articles, news, and food recipes) that were diversifying those suburbs that Menzies hoped would structure a uniformed Australian way of life.

Conclusion

In many ways, contrast and juxtaposition play critical roles in the formula the \textit{Australian Woman’s Weekly} used during the post-war period. Contrasts such as Fenella’s story in “No

\textsuperscript{24} ‘Other’ here is meant to indicate individuals who are not the “ideal” of the hegemonic suburban vision; in this case, it predominately refers to those who are not white and those who come from a lower-class. It is worth mentioning that in the U.S. middle-brow periodical culture and commercial modernism there is a tendency for writers to ‘other’ themselves as being of part of an elite group of high-brow artists. This form of othering is also an exclusionary practice, but in this context these high-brow modernists sought to become an ‘other’ as a way of separating themselves from middle-brow culture.
Hours Between” and the suburban good life promoted in the magazine creates a tension that the AWW deploys frequently to provoke thought among its readerships. These contrasts can be seen to promote the suburban good life (such is the case of “Woman Doctor) or showcase the dark reality of this supposed “good life” for many women (such as in “No Hours Between”). Shirley Jackson and the housewives who responded to her work expressed a similar tension in their own relationship to suburbia, at times resisting it and at times passively relinquishing to it as Fenella does. These contrasts also speak to the complex socio-cultural shifts taking place in Australia that led to a huge increase in diversity in a time when the government was stressing conformity and uniformity. This landscape is mapped into the Australian Woman’s Weekly, where there is a definite tension within the issues of promoting this conformity or embracing the cultural diversity that was inevitably reshaping the Australian way of life.

Fiona Allon speaks to this changing Australia when she writes that “[p]hysical boundaries no longer served to delimit the nation’s ‘natural’ borders, with both shot through by transnational vectors that stretched across the world” (29). One of these transnational vectors that can be explicitly traced is that of suburbia. The similarities in not only the suburban iconography but additionally in stories such as Fenella’s parallel experiences expressed by Jackson and her readers in the U.S. These similarities taking place in vastly different locations within the same period speak to the growing power of globalization and suburbia as one system of this new globalized world. The content in the AWW and in Ladies’ Home Journal demonstrates that in many ways the experiences of women in suburbia was not a solely individual or even national experience; the Australian and U.S. suburbs operate using similar gendered divisions of private/public spaces which result in similar lived experiences that transcend national demarcations. Even as these suburbs are being developed across vast distances, the
communication and exchange of suburban aesthetics and structures is occurring and forming a transnational suburban imagination—an imagination that is documented and disseminated in the pages of magazines such as the *Australian Woman’s Weekly*. 
CHAPTER 3 – TOWARDS A GLOBAL SUBURBIA: CONCLUDING COMMENTS ON THE SUBURBAN IMAGINATION, TRANSNATIONALISM, AND COMMERCIAL PERIODICALS

This final chapter serves two primary purposes: to identify additional coordinates for further inquiry into the relationship between suburbia and commercial periodicals, and to theorize why a transnational understanding of their relationship opens productive ways of thinking about suburbanization as a critical technology of globalization. While chapters one and two provided an analysis of U.S. and Australian periodicals read using both distant- and close-reading techniques, this final chapter will instead consider a wide range of countries and periodicals at a distance to map a transnational network of suburban imaginations across the globe. This process will emphasize breadth over depth, but this list of potential periodicals will be far from comprehensive and instead highlight major players in the mass-circulation magazine markets across the globe that are thematically and demographically similar to the magazines discussed for the U.S. and Australia. After this suburban planetary grid has been mapped, I will conclude this thesis with a discussion of the relationships between transnationalism, suburbanization, globalization, and the commercial periodical. In doing so, I intend to show the importance of reading both the suburbs and the magazine as productive ways of thinking about how our physical and cultural suburbs inform and shape our historical reality in ways that transcend individual or national experience. This also serves the purpose of diversifying the North American suburbia as the predominant cultural imagination when considering the word ‘suburb’ as it exists in its global contexts throughout the post-war period and continuing into present day.
Europe: *Woman’s Life, Elle, and Vogue*

The vibrant and prolific periodical cultures of continental Europe provide a wealth of potential research subjects for suburbia in the magazine. Hesse and Stefan write that “many European countries,” much like the U.S. and Australia, “also entered the 21st century as ‘suburban nations’, in the sense that the majority of their populations had become suburban by the 1980s or 1990s” (99). Like the U.S. and Australia, the suburbs of continental Europe have also been recipient of urban and suburban sociological studies, with major collections on suburban studies such as *The Routledge Companion to the Suburbs* (2018) and *Suburbanization in Global Society* (2010) having chapters dedicated to European suburbanization. In Ruth McManus’s chapter “Suburbanization in Europe: A Focus on Dublin” in the *Routledge Companion*, she writes that in the nineteenth century Dublin was undergoing a suburban trend that was exemplative of other suburbanizing European cities. This “suburban trend was generally associated with the increasing separation of home and workplace, the expansion of the middle classes, the desire to move from the increasingly polluted and impoverished industrial city, advances in transport technology that made commuting more feasible, and the ongoing speculative development process, facilitated by mass production in the building industry” (89). As discussed at length earlier, these same trends appear in the suburban histories of both the United States and Australia, creating an immediate link to conceptualize how culturally these suburbs might compare given their trends in suburban development.

There are several potential women’s magazines in continental Europe that could be considered and that have started to receive critical attention. If we return to McManus’s example of Dublin as “typifying the standard Western suburban history model,” we can locate several
magazines that have been excavated by scholars as potentially rich sources of understanding the experience of women in suburban spaces. Two such magazines are *Woman’s Life* and *Woman’s Way*, which represent two high circulating magazines in Ireland during the mid-twentieth century. Scholar Catriona Clear has written frequently on these magazines and what they can tell us about the lives of women, including in her book *Women’s Voices in Ireland : Women’s Magazines in the 1950s and 60s* (2016). In her introduction, she describes the important role that a magazine such as *Woman’s Life* played in defining the “trade” of domestic labor, writing that “the terms of employment of this trade were established by the magazines themselves, which told women how to cook, dress, decorate their houses, engage with their boyfriends and spouses, and rear their children. And while women did not always slavishly follow consumer propaganda, advertising always influenced editorial content to some extent” (3). We see these same educative qualities in magazines such as *Ladies’ Home Journal* and the *Australian Women’s Weekly*, where the performance of this “domestic trade” is enacted in the spaces of suburbia. Elsewhere in her work on *Woman’s Life*, Clear has also emphasized the fact that “Women—mostly single—were inhabiting the public sphere as never before” through holding jobs and in the increasing enrollment of women in secondary education (73). These negotiations were also visible in the *Australian Women’s Weekly*, whose own advertisements and editorials often tempered the possibilities of employment for women with the competing demands of a domestic trade that encouraged a housewife culture rooted in the aspiration towards a suburban good life.

Outside of the United Kingdom, we could look towards other countries such as France to find popular magazines that were balancing this suburban ideal with the new post-war reality that led to more women in the work force (something also seen in the United States and Australia, although in both countries large-scale efforts were made to return to a gendered division of
In Susan Weiner’s “Two Modernities: From ‘Elle’ to ‘Mademoiselle’.
Women's Magazines in Postwar France” she writes that

[f]rom 1945 to the late 1950s, Elle projected the image of a reader who was at the time
uniquely modern. She was a mother, a citizen and a working woman, whose wide-
ranging expertise in 'making do' during the Occupation carried over to her home in the
postwar years. The skill, ease, humour, and good sense she demonstrated in the domestic
sphere could be equalled only by her talents in her salaried job. There lay the novelty of
Elle: for the first time, a women's magazine displayed the fantasy of 'having it all', a
fulfilling career and a traditional home. (395)

Given this assertion, Elle would present a strong comparative periodical to both the Australian
Women’s Weekly and Ladies’ Home Journal. As discussed earlier, the Australian Women Weekly
moved into the 1950s with a new emphasis where the “having it all” mentality was omitted in
favor of returning to a focus on family and femininity; comparing Elle to the Australian Women
Weekly could illuminate those moments where the “having it all” mentality is renegotiated in the
Australian Women’s Weekly even as it largely encourages the Menzies return to home. Weiner
also highlights Elle’s explicit transnational ties to the American suburban imagination, stating
that “the housewife became a glamorous and stylish figure, the efficiency of her accessory
appliances a sign of both progress and pleasure. Such images of ultra-modern domestic space
were often fake: in the early 1950s, for example, commercials on French television for home
appliances were filmed in American suburban kitchens” (398). She then goes on to discuss how
this American imagination informed the French imagination (and as I argue here, a suburban
imagination) positing that “Sometimes flagrantly, sometime not, it was American-style home life
that constituted the postwar fantasy of glamorous domesticity in France. *Elle* magazine played a major role in generating American domesticity as the new French fantasy, just as it applauded the increased visibility of women in the public sphere” (398). This transnational link between “American domesticity” (which emphasizes the housewife over the career woman) and French working women creates a fascinating juxtaposition that is surely deserving of further investigation in future research.

Another potential magazine of interest between Europe, North America, and Australia saw publication throughout all three continents: *Vogue*. First published in the United States in 1892, new versions of *Vogue* would eventually be published as *British Vogue* in 1916 in the United Kingdom; *Vogue Paris* in 1920 in France; and *Vogue Australia* in 1952 in Australia. Several scholars have looked at the point of emergence for these magazines25, and often these studies highlight the important role that the original U.S. formula had in defining how the magazine would be published in these new readerships across Europe. While comparative studies of these magazines have highlighted aspects of the suburban imagination I have identified in this thesis, such as in Tinkler’s and Warsh’s “Feminine Modernity in Interwar Britain and North America: Corsets, Cars, and Cigarettes” who pair commodity consumption with feminine identity in magazines such as the *Vogue* variants, no work has been done to look at all four magazines simultaneously. Research can be done to examine the potential illuminative capacity these magazines provide to understanding how popular fashion magazines contributed

to female identity formation as informed by the types of suburban spaces that were proliferating across all three continents. Indeed, the Vogue magazine empire has been described by Kuipers et al. as “a global institution that potentially reaches transnational audiences” (2159). Given the wide circulation and the existing discourse on Vogue’s transnational occurrence, a comparative study of the various Vogue magazines in the post-war period could yield fascinating insights into the types of identity politics being negotiated like we see in other mass-circulation magazines such as Ladies’ Home Journal and Australian Women’s Weekly.

**Asia: Shufu no Tomo (主婦の友) and Shōjo Manga**

While perhaps not typically associated with the suburban aesthetics that the United States helped curate in the 1950s, many countries in Asia engaged in suburbanization processes just as vigorously. Their print cultures provide a rich catalogue to investigate if the suburban imaginations widely associated with North America, and as I have additionally identified in Australia, were finding an audience in Asia in the post-war period. Urban scholars have long tracked suburbanization throughout Asia; for example, in The Routledge Companion to the Suburbs alone there are three chapters dedicated to suburbanization in Asia (specifically related to suburbs in India; Jakarta, Indonesia; and Seoul, South Korea) compared to the single chapter treatments given to countries like The United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. This significant attention to suburbanization in Asia has provided a wealth of potential avenues for further investigation, but I will limit myself to briefly discussing Japan since the “sengyō shufu” or “professional housewife” aligns with the suburban housewife figure I have returned to throughout this thesis.
Many sociological and urban scholars have started to study Japan’s suburbs and the ways in which those suburbs provide structure to housewife culture. Some of these studies include Anne E. Imamura’s *Urban Japanese housewives: at home and in the community* (1987) and Eyal Ben-Ari’s *Changing Japanese Suburbia: A Study of Two Present-Day Localities* (1991). These studies cover eras after the post-war period that structures this thesis (the 1970s and onward), but the suburbs had been prominent in Japan long before the later twentieth century. In “Uneven Space of Everyday Modernity: The Colonial Logic of the Suburb in Tanizaki Jun’ichiro’s *A Fool’s Love*,” Kota Inoue states that “the modern suburb…became a major symbol of Japan’s modernity in the 1920s,” yet the suburb remains elusive in considerations of literary and cultural texts (189). Many considerations of the suburbs in scholarship on Japanese suburban culture comes from the Taishō period in the early twentieth century when garden cities began to be built on the urban fringe and the “burgeoning of these garden cities was in part precipitated by literary works that contributed significantly to the discovery of the aesthetic and poetic qualities of the suburb” (Yiu 316). Scholarship on these suburban ‘garden cities’ remains relatively unexplored territory in terms of its depiction in popular culture.

One magazine we could look towards to locate a suburban imagination is *Shufu no Tomo* (主婦の友), translated into English as *The Housewives’ Companion*. Little work has been done to understand the role of the magazine in the creation of the ‘professional housewife’ in Japan during the postwar period. In Kazumi Ishii and Nerida Jarkey’s “The Housewife Is Born: The Establishment of the Notion and Identity of the *Shufu* in Modern Japan,” they state that the establishment of the ideal of women as full-time, ‘professional’ housewives (sengyō shufu) has undoubtedly been a key aspect in the modernisation of Japanese society and
social structures. The Japanese sociologist Ochiai coins the term ‘shufuka’ (housewife-isation) to refer to this development, and suggests that it has been one of three closely related factors crucial to the formation of the modern Japanese family, particularly in the postwar era, along with the decrease in the birthrate (shoshika) and the transition to the nuclear family (kakukazokuka). (35)

They trace the development of the ‘shufu’ in Japan and the subsequent role that Shufu no Tomo played in popularizing the figuration. This development of the Japanese housewife and nuclear family, along with the Western stylizations of the garden cities that began to be built in Japan, are evidence of a suburban culture taking root in Japan during the post-war era. The continuities and breaks with western culture that can be located in these constructions would provide a framework for a comparative approach with the U.S., Australia, and Europe.

In thinking about comparisons, the explosion of shōjo manga—or manga created specifically for a female audience and pioneered by female artists and writers—correlates to the emphasis placed on teen and young adult readership in the Australian Women’s Weekly teenager supplement. These teen editorials began in 1952 and eventually would become its entire own monthly supplement by 1954 (Minton 3). In Passionate Friendship: The Aesthetics of Girls’ Culture in Japan (2011), Deborah Shamoon writes that “Prewar girls’ culture had largely developed in girls’ magazines, which in the 1950s and 1960s shifted to publishing shōjo manga” and that these manga were “generally published in monthly or weekly installments in thick anthology magazines that carry ten to twenty different stories per issue, along with a small amount of advertising and short letters columns or articles” (82). The inclusion of manga magazines would account for remaining focused on time and location as important dimensions
for understanding suburbia in different national contexts, as it roots the analysis in the popular print culture trends of Japan during this period. These manga also maintain a periodical format with texts, advertisements, and visual art that allows for a comparison across post-war periodicals that account for both the textual content and the advertising content that Latham and Scholes have argued are key to understanding the dynamic nature of periodical culture.26

**Latin America: *En Guardia* and *Alterosa***

Suburbs in Latin America differed from the suburbanization processes in the United States, but scholarship on Latin American suburbanization has highlighted the important role those transnational ideas played in shaping concepts of what modernity would look like in these countries. According to scholar Lawrence Herzog, in Latin America “[t]he first major development on the periphery of most Latin American cities was not U.S.-style ‘suburbs,’ but rather, the massive construction of spontaneous ‘squatter settlements’ or ‘shantytowns,’ which began in the 1950s” (63). These areas were often occupied by poor populations who migrated towards major cities in an effort to find better job opportunities (63). In the latter half of the twentieth century, we begin to see the type of massive suburbanization efforts seen in the mid-twentieth century United States as “a global diffusion of the American suburban model, or the idea of an American-type suburb (rather than its literal physical form) across the border to the Americas’ other nations” (62). These new suburbanization processes drew from the American suburban model, including an emphasis on designing around automobiles and the additions of shopping malls and private gated suburban communities (63-64).

To locate potential areas where a suburban imaginary is being constructed, we can turn to Mexico where “[t]he first experiments with suburban developments occurred” (Herzog 64). Two suburban developments that drew upon the U.S. suburban model were built in Mexico City and were called Ciudad Satelite and Jardines de Pedregal, and Herzog posits that since both were built in the late 1940s and 1950s, one could argue that if they did not outright physically copy the U.S. suburban model from that era (which was just then taking form to the north), they did embody the “suburban American imaginary,” the narrative of the American suburb, of a place where one could escape the density of the city to a neighborhood closer to nature, and where one could own one’s house and travel around with the modern convenience of the automobile. (64)

This “suburban American imaginary” has been located by scholars such as Monica Rankin. In her article “Mexicanas en guerra: World War II and the Discourse of Mexican Female Identity,” she discusses periodical propaganda and the transnational movement of American modernity into Mexico during World War II in the 1940s. While Rankin’s article discusses the war-time period rather than the post-war period, she does locate a suburban imaginary that draws upon transnationalism. For example, “the wartime magazine En Guardia…often published images that advertised the ‘American Way of Life’” which “featured photos of a ‘typical’ American middle-class housewife surrounded by a plethora of shiny appliances in her ‘modern kitchen,’ indicating that this was precisely what an Allied victory would bring not only to the U.S. but also to its allies” (103). These images of the kitchen, electronic appliances, and the housewife have been referenced throughout my analyses of U.S. and Australian periodicals. Given that this imaginary was already being formed transnationally during the war, looking towards periodicals in Mexico
post-war could help us understand what effect these U.S. inspired imaginaries had on the formation of modernity and suburbia in Mexico. Rankin states that after the war “[m]oral debates continued, as did bickering and blustering over foreign versus national trends” (105). This “bickering and blustering” that continued could serve as an emergent point for comparing the post-war depictions with the U.S.-centric depictions during wartime, which could illuminate the ways in which this suburban imaginary was filtered and adapted for a changing Mexican national identity after the war.

We could also turn to South America to see if their periodicals were encouraging a similar transnational suburban imaginary that drew inspiration from North America. For example, Gelka Barros identified the nuclear family and housewife (in Brazil, the “conjugal family”) in the Brazilian magazine Alterosa. This magazine published content of “literary and news character” and typically included “mainly short stories and essays, interspersed with economic, political and social reports about Minas Gerais State, notes about the mineira society, humor, poetry, hobbies, entertainment such as radio and cinema, prescriptions about health, beauty and fashion, as well as advertising” (212). The slogan of Alterosa would become “For the Family of Brazil” in 1943, and in the 1950s would reach a circulation of around 60,000 copies (212). In Alterosa, Barros identified North American influences on socio-cultural structures, including “the matrimonial bonds that emerged the roles defined for the white women, from middle and upper class: the mother, the wife and the housewife. Subjecting women to male authority was essential to the construction and maintenance of the family, which established the ‘natural’ order of society” (213). Just like elsewhere in Latin American periodicals identified by scholars such as Rankin, we can see the critical role that transnationalism played in shaping gendered structures. Where additional work can be done is to see how growing suburbanization
trends in these nations, which according to Herzog also drew from a U.S. model, contributed to shaping these gendered structures to see if a similar gendered public/private binary was strengthened like in the U.S. and Australia.

**Africa: The Drum, Sarie Marais & Fair Lady, The Townships Housewife**

According to scholar Eric Petersen, suburban history in Africa is systematically connected to the continent’s long-history dealing with the oppressions of colonialism (181). In his analysis of Johannesburg, South Africa in his essay “The Life Cycle of Johannesburg Suburbs” he generalizes that “the more extensive the colonization – particularly if settlement was made by the British – the more likely each country is to have suburbs” (181). The existence of suburbs was the result of “[t]he European settlers, primarily British, [who] imported their own values and prosuburban biases. Just as critically, they imported British planning practices and enough of the British legal systems to allow for the private transfer of land (critical to this early phase of suburbanization)” (197). Similar to Latin American suburbanization, the existence of “slums” on the outskirts of African metropolises makes up much of what might be considered the “suburbs” of African urban areas during the early half of the twentieth century (180). Where suburban development was most readily apparent in Africa in the post-war period was in South Africa, whose suburbs were largely dictated by government policies meant to deal with “racial fears” in apartheid South Africa (Petersen 188)\(^{27}\). During this post-war suburban development,

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\(^{27}\) Due to the scope of this project, I will not be discussing these South African suburbs extensively and thus will not be able to adequately contextualize how race impacted suburban development in South Africa. If I were to continue this thesis and returned to South Africa, discussing the historical context of apartheid towards not only political policy but the socio-cultural structuring of suburbs would be a necessity. For insight into some of this context, see Eric Petersen’s chapter “The Life Cycle of Johannesburg Suburbs” in *Suburbanization in Global Society* (2010).
South Africa borrows from the growing global suburban model spurred by the U.S. which included moving to automobile-based spatial planning (182).

Since South Africa’s suburban development in the post-war period features similar suburban trends with the U.S., I will briefly mention a few potential magazines that could be used to determine if a suburban imagination was also being formed alongside the implementation of these transnational physical suburban models. In general, little research has been done on South African periodicals in the post-war period which means that the field provides abundant potential for research on not only South African suburbs but on South African periodical culture broadly. One popular magazine which could provide insights into the suburban imagination is *The Drum* (1951-2000), which according to Petersen incited “a very brief cultural and literary Renaissance based in Sophiatown” in the 1950s (189). *The Drum* was published in 1951 as *The African Drum - a Magazine of Africa for Africa*, and according to Lindsay Clowes by the “mid 1950s circulation had climbed to about 70,000 in South Africa with another 30,000 distributed outside South Africa” (2). Although not necessarily a “women’s magazine,” Clowes states “[w]hile most of those who purchased the magazine were men – at least in the early years– copies were handed round and shared amongst friends and family and there is little way of knowing the gender breakdown of the magazine’s readership” (3). Since *The Drum* represents “one of the most popular magazines in Anglophone Africa in the 1960s and 1970s,” it would make for a compelling study of what kind of cultural impact the growing suburban development was having, if at all, in South Africa during this period (qtd. in Clowes 2).

In terms of popular women’s magazines, two magazines could be of interest: *Sarie Marais* (1949- ) and *Fair Lady* (1965- ). *Sarie Marais* (known today as *Sarie*) was a women’s
magazine published in Afrikaans beginning in 1949. *Fair Lady* is its sister magazine published in English that began to circulate in 1965. According to Nicolette Ferreira these magazines were primarily “white centred women's magazines” (65). Ferreira posits that these magazines frequently erased black women from its pages or included them in a “frequently demeaning stereotypical portrayal,” which could make for interesting parallels to magazines such as *Ladies’ Home Journal* (and to some extent the *Australian Women’s Weekly*), where women were also primarily depicted as white in the post-war period. Scholarship on South African periodicals often emphasizes *The Drum* over these women’s magazines, but even more overlooked are the magazines *Grace* and *The Township Housewife*, which only began receiving critical attention in 2011 with Ferreira’s publication “‘Grace’ and *The Townships Housewife*: Excavating black South African women's magazines from the 1960s.” These magazines could potentially provide a perspective on South African suburbanization that takes into account the experience of black South African women who are often excluded from the suburban imaginary. Ferreira locates a “conflict between dominant constructs of ‘modernity’ and ‘tradition’” in *The Townships Housewife* and that the “readers and writers negotiate their way between an acceptance of urban modernity and a rejection of a rural or traditional past” (62). This conflict could make for a comparative coordinate to locate elsewhere in the suburban imagination of other countries (especially in Australia and Mexico) where these same conflicts between a new modern woman and the traditional role of the housewife were being contested and juxtaposed in the editorials, fiction, and advertisements. This comparative analysis could reveal fascinating insights into the inherent contradiction in suburban development—it advocates for a modern commercial consumerism yet is rooted in the sustainment of traditional structures of gender, family, and home.
Suburbanization, Transnationalism, and Globalization

Throughout this thesis, I argued for a suburban imagination that is transnational in its formation. This transnational imagination is made possible through the shared models and similar processes that enabled suburbanization in the United States and Australia, and in many ways, in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Even so, I demonstrated that even with shared models these suburban processes were adapted and adjusted in the suburbanization projects happening throughout continents in the post-war period. As Clapson and Huttchinson corroborate, “while influenced by locality, the social, cultural, economic and political nature and consequences of suburbanization must be understood increasingly as global in nature and consequences” (2). Many of the scholars I cited noted that the suburban patterns of the United States inspired transnational action through the adoption and modification of those suburban models to meet the needs of various nations after World War II. What I show in this thesis is that along with that physical action there was cultural action which began connecting these nations through a shared iconography of suburbia and rhetoric of a “suburban good life.” In many cases, this suburban imagination seemed to be in conflict with the new opportunities brought on by modernity (especially for women) and the magazine was a site of contention between this transnational suburban imagination and the advancements of modernity that were appearing in U.S. and Australian periodicals, and as I speculate, in periodicals elsewhere across the globe.

These conflicts are best understood in the contexts of globalization; in particular, through what Ngaire Woods describes as the “people-centered” perspective on globalization\textsuperscript{28}. The

\textsuperscript{28} Woods also identifies a “market-centered” perspective, which “focuses on the expansion of capitalism—on the increasing depth and location of transactions in the world economy and on the qualitative changes occurring in the way firms produce and distribute goods and services” (6). While my interest in suburbia as a cultural imagination aligns more closely with the “people-centered” perspective on globalization, the “market-centered” could prove an
people-centered perspective is primarily interested in how globalization affects “cultures and values” across the globe, which proponents of globalization hope will eventually create a global culture (9). As Woods points out, however, there is a tendency for this global culture to be largely informed by ideologies of the West; due to this, we see “a contemporaneous, strong reaction against ‘the West’ and a reassertion of ‘counter’ national or religious identity. Globalization, thus, unleashes forces which transform global society but not in ways which can be easily controlled or managed from the prosperous zones of the industrialized countries” (9).

We see this reaction in efforts to resist Americanization in suburban cultures such as Australia where the maintenance of a unique national identity was a post-war objective. But in Australia, and many other nations, processes of globalization have weakened these rigid national boundaries and instead made them porous to the effect of a growing sense that our societies and cultures exchange ideas transnationally across national demarcations. The suburban imagination highlights this process as the global exchange, filtering, and implementation of suburbs and resultant suburban values creates a shared cultural consciousnesses that is located throughout the globe in the post-war period.

The Magazine as a Technology of the Transnational Suburban Imagination

The emergence of a transnational suburban imagination through globalization would not be possible without the “media, music, books, international ideas and values” that enable it to occur and disseminate (Woods 9). In this thesis I homed in on the magazine as an important and equally illuminative framework. After all, the rise of mass consumerism, household technology, automobiles, and even the commercial magazine industry are all in relation to the increase in these technologies and goods across the planet. The economic and class implications of suburbanization have long interested urban and sociological scholars and could prove a fertile terrain for an analysis of how the suburban imagination similarly informs these issues of economy and class.
illuminative technology that contributed to the creation of the suburban imagination. There are
several factors that support my position that the magazine is a valuable medium in the post-war
period for national identity formation; these factors include its potential for wide circulation,
mass-producibility, focus on promoting a modern consumerism, and the speed with which it can
reach consumers, all at a low cost. But aside from these technical factors that make it a
marketable and thus valuable product, the magazine has much more to offer scholars in several
different disciplines. I chose the mass-circulation magazines because they have been neglected in
scholarship until the recent rise of periodical studies. This is the result of criticism they received
for their commercialism and supposed lack of aesthetic value (which periodical studies has
proven to be far from true). In just the three magazines I closely analyzed in this thesis—Ladies’
Home Journal, Harper’s, and Australian Women’s Weekly—there is subversiveness, cultural
conflict, and nuanced juxtaposition between the suburban cultures promoted by advertisers and
the content curated by editors with rhetoric and imagery of suburbs that even today continues to
appear in film, television, fiction, and more. These periodicals were far from mere packets of
cataloged products and so-called commercial writing; they were dialogic forums where cultures,
histories, and people were put into conversation with each other to negotiate a world
recuperating from the devastations of World War II.

Conclusion

The potential for continued research on a transnational suburban imagination is
seemingly endless. I provided an example of the ways we can study the suburban imagination in
the contexts of historical suburbanization in the United States and Australia during the post-war
period, highlighting how we can read the advertisements, editorials, and fiction of periodicals to
understand the way suburban rhetoric, imagery, and values were shared across these countries. In this final chapter I provided coordinates to identify additional magazines for consideration, but even this focus represents just a fraction of the potential in elevating a suburban cultural studies as a major focus of periodical studies. I am primarily interested in the suburb’s structuring of gender in this project, but work could be done to understand the suburb’s relationship to race, class, politics, sexuality, and economy which have all become subjects in the field of urban sociological studies. Some of the scholars I cited in this thesis have begun this type of work in literary and cultural studies, but it is a field still gaining traction. Given that the history of suburbs extends prior to the post-war period and beyond into our contemporary existence, we can also look to different temporal periods to assess suburbs and their impact on all these issues throughout our history of moving to the suburbs.

As harshly as the suburbs have been criticized in the past, the world continues to transition to a largely suburban existence and our need to understand their origins and their continued development will remain a critical area of inquiry. Many of us call the suburbs our home, but the variations in suburban existence that relate to issues of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation means that for many this very idea of home has been deconstructed, withheld, or all-together unobtainable. When we study suburbs and their history, we see the ways in which communities were and continue to be excluded, marginalized, and isolated through the very structures of our lives and homes. Magazines provide one method of reading and interpreting these complicated histories and relationships. When we complete this work, we can identify how we ended up in our contemporary suburban existence and assess how suburbanization continues to impact communities, both positively and negatively. With that knowledge, we can move towards reshaping our suburbs to create both a physical reality and
cultural imagination that reflects the diversity suburbs have always maintained but have been erased due to a hegemonic vision that has largely promoted the white, middle-class, nuclear family as those who belong in them. Identifying the subversiveness and contradictions in the post-war magazines that helped to promote this rhetoric and iconography deconstructs this problematic hegemonic vision. With further investigation of this post-war period and others, we may finally be able to stop the inertia of the suburban stereotype that prevents the suburban imagination from reflecting the multicultural and social diversity that it has the potential of cultivating in the suburban communities that sprawl across our planet.
REFERENCES


