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**Image Illusion Reality: You Decide**

**Abstract**
This paper discusses the subjective and reflexive research processes the author encountered in selecting four photo images of pie carts for a retail publication within *The Great New Zealand Pie Cart* (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008). While the combination of image and text within narrative can both complement and contrast it, image plays a key role within the presentation of retail books, and their consequent sale. This position may be at variance to more academic forms of publishing that are often deemed ‘text-heavy’. The prevalence of image within retail text raises the question of how true are the images to the text within which they are presented. From one academic position, the marriage of descriptive text and image is deemed problematic, as academics including Hammond (1998); Ball and Smith (1992); and Gold (2007) suggest that text that explains image is to be avoided. However, the combination of descriptive text and image within retail texts is more positively perceived. This paper therefore blends the needs of the retail publishing requirement within an academic overview of images juxtaposed by the authors’ reflexive inputs.

**Keywords:** photograph, hospitality, image, reality
Introduction
This paper straddles two domains; hospitality and image and is best viewed through an academic gaze. The congruence of these domains is an important one, because retail books like The Great New Zealand Pie Cart (Neill, Bell & Bryant, 2008) rely on written narrative and image to enhance text discourse. This is an interesting phenomenon because within academic publishing descriptive text enhancing image is not always viewed as a positive attribute Hammond (1998); Ball and Smith (1992); and Gold (2007). Despite the fact that descriptive text that enhances image is central to academic publishing in many fields including Art History, Geography, (Landscape) Architecture, Geometry and Botany. Image within retail books is a point of sale difference which, in the case of The Great New Zealand Pie Cart (2008), evokes a combination of contemporary gaze as well as a nostalgic view from the reader/potential purchaser. Whether image is used in academic text or in more commercial forms Bryman (2008) suggests that image is employed on three levels; “illustrative”; in that image enriches the text, “as data”; illuminating the research, “as prompts”, invigorating the research participant’s narrative (p. 519). Barthes (1981, 76) suggests that "every photograph is a certificate of presence". Photo-images ‘speak to us’ because they are illuminations of both content and the photographer’s gaze, despite the fact that printed images are shown without the total context within which they were taken. Nonetheless, that they are removed from their context when published enables their potency because they “give us a sustainable image of events in which we were not personally involved. Beyond that as images of collective memory they comprise part of the visual imaginations that are shared with others" (Keilbach, 2009, 54). The detachment that photography allows provides the viewer an opportunity to ‘negotiate’ it.
Pink (2001) reminds us that image can promote realism via factual content or enable a more reflexive approach. Congruent to Pink’s (2001) position, that the researcher holds a sensitivity to what the image reveals and this position entails more than the constituents of realism, albeit the viewer will see the images from different perspectives, image is open not only to the researcher’s interpretation but also to those of its audiences.

Pink’s (2001) view is illustrated within Brickell’s (2008) reflection on the cover image of his seminal work Mates and Lovers, a History of Gay New Zealand. Brickell (2008) suggests, the image chosen for the cover holds meaning in which, while unproven, it maybe reflective of a contemporary gay family. The photograph used by Brickell (2008) was taken on the 17th March 1888, and features Mr. Collie, Mr. Green and a dog.

Brickell’s (2008) narrative is enhanced by several factors; clearly the men are not immediately related, they have different surnames; yet their pose is intimate. Brickell (2008, 7) notes various symbols; “the touching of knees, and the Roman columns on the photographer’s backdrop” that reinforce this intimacy. Brickell (2008, 8) believes this image projects a cross class friendship “an intimate egalitarianism”

Figure 1. The Cover Mates and Lovers. Source: Brickell (2008).

as noted within the differences in attire, seating and headwear. It was Brickell’s (2008) work that provided author impetus to reflect upon the images used within The Great New Zealand Pie Cart (2008), their impact, meaning and interpretation. This realisation forms the base of this paper.
The Great New Zealand Pie Cart Book

This book had three authors, Lindsay Neill, Senior Lecturer in Hospitality, AUT University, Auckland New Zealand; Dr. Claudia Bell Sociologist, University of Auckland, Auckland New Zealand, and Ted Bryant, Head of Summer School Education AUT University, Auckland New Zealand. The first edition of 6000 copies was published by Hachette Livre under the Hodder Moa impress and gained, in 2008, number two best seller status. Until this book was produced, there was no dedicated book on pie carts in New Zealand.

The publisher/authors had two intentions. Firstly, the book aimed to capitalise upon the publishing renaissance of New Zealand’s vernacular culture and kiwiana by relating participant narratives. In doing so the book achieved its second goal: to complement current knowledge within New Zealand’s culinary/hospitality history by adding data on fast food pie carts.

The Great New Zealand Pie Cart (2008) included eighteen chapters each dedicated to a specific cart. The authors were aware of having a geographical ‘spread’ of carts in order to maximise regional book sales. This meant that the authors included some carts within the book that had already closed. Other carts that were included were still operating, and these carts provided a continuum that the closed carts could not. A special section of the book was dedicated to ‘New Age’ carts. This section included, what the authors considered to be, contemporary carts selling products and delivering services that the more traditional carts did not. Within the book these aspects combined offer a past and present history, as well as a ‘view of the future’ for New Zealand’s pie carts.
The Great New Zealand Pie Cart (2008) contextualised pie carts within vernacular culture and kiwiana. While the history of pie carts can be linked to the mobile street food vendors of Asia, Europe and Great Britain (Civitello (2004); Fernandez-Armesto (2002); FitzStephen (1934, cited Spencer, 2003); Mason (2004), and Lashley (2004), pie carts have long been an integral part of New Zealand’s culinary history.

![Image of pie cart](image1.png)

Figure 2. The White Lady Pie Cart.
Source: The New Zealand Herald.

Figure 2, shows a pie cart, The White Lady. This business has survived competition and has traded continually in Auckland since 1948. This cart has gained iconic status with its stakeholders (Neill, 2009) and is considered part of kiwiana. Wolfe and Barnett (2007) assert that kiwiana includes, among other things, the everyday items of cultural significance to New Zealanders which are assumed to be uniquely New Zealand.
Hall and McArthur (1993, 3) believe “Australian and New Zealand societies are undergoing substantial self-examination in terms of identity and cultural composition”. Bell (2004) consequently suggests that within this examination the concept of kiwiana has emerged. Kiwiana has been addressed in a limited manner by Wolfe and Barnett (2007, 7); their work illustrating “the quintessential customs and artefacts this country has made its own”. Of the 26 mass-manufactured kiwiana artefacts listed by Wolfe and Barnett (2007), 17 are of commercial origin, reflecting the move from New Zealand’s culture of necessity toward a culture of consumption. Seven artefacts are food-based: two reflect flora and fauna. Pie carts do not feature on their list.

Growing interest in kiwiana has been fuelled by a postmodern/nostalgic retrospective view of the 1950s and 1960s and that period’s association as being the ‘good old days’. Wolfe and Barnett (2001, 12) suggest that “the good old days” were a period of economic buoyancy and according to them New Zealand was “remarkably free of problems” then. The problem free existence mirrored a simpler life style, yet, “away from the sports-field and public bar, the country had not yet developed a taste for things cultural,” Wolfe and Barnett (2001, 13).

Consequently, The Great New Zealand Pie Cart (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008) is a socio-temporal mirror of change within the narratives of the eighteen carts it includes. In publishing The Great New Zealand Pie Cart (2008) the authors believed they knew the ‘best’ content; the research participants believed they had the best narratives and resources, while the publisher believed they had the best knowledge to maximise retail sales, as well as the layout and graphical skill needed to achieve this. Clearly a balance was needed and achieved as the success of the book attests.
Reflexive Practice

Delanty (2005, 286) believes that reflexivity “suggests [a] self confrontation’, that involves the researcher questioning their position within the processes of research. Bryman (2008, 427-428) reminds us that image use within research “require[s] an ability on the part of the researcher to ‘read’ images in a manner that is sensitive to the context in which they were generated, the potential for multiple meanings that may need to be worked through with research participants and, where the researcher is the source of the images, the significance of his or her own social position”. For The Great New Zealand Pie Cart (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008) Bryman’s (2008) position was mediated by publishing ‘need’ as well as consideration of Scott’s (1990) position that caution with image use in research is necessary because over time images undergo both the dangers of survival and as time passes their selective retention by their various owners. The selection of images for The Great New Zealand Pie Cart (2008) was impacted by Scott’s (1990) position. Not all participants gave open access to their photo collections to the authors. Their position is understandable, many of the pictures are private and while they might depict interesting and complementary images the owners’ circumspection on what they will permit to enter the public domain was of paramount importance to the researchers.

Because of the publisher’s need to incorporate images with every chapter, Scott (1990) and Bryman’s (2008) positions were not the only factors impacting upon image choice. Sometimes necessity over-ruled choice and sometimes choice dominated necessity.
Four images were selected from *The Great New Zealand Pie Cart* (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008) for this paper. These items include; Johnny Coopers Pie Cart Rock and Roll (1957): Diverse clients at the White Lady (1970s): The Hereford Street [Christchurch] Pie Cart (1950s) and Kiwiana (2007).

**The Four Images**

1. *Johnny Coopers Pie Cart Rock and Roll (1957).*

This image shows a Country ‘n’ Western, rock and roll band Johnny Cooper and the Range Riders. For budding New Zealand musician Johnny Cooper, rock ‘n’ roll in 1957, provided an opportunity not only to imitate his American music idols but to indulge his gambling and music skills. Legend has it that Cooper bet the owner of his local pie cart that he could write a pop tune, get it recorded and have it listed on the New Zealand top ten. His reward upon achievement: free meals at the pie cart. Cooper achieved this and following Gold’s (2007) position the authors included this image as an adjunct to descriptive text in *The Great New Zealand Pie Cart* (Neill, Bell & Bryant, 2008).
This image reflects a now-dated rock ‘n’ roll band with western influence. The music they [and other bands of their era played] holds contemporary impact because the rock and roll era brought a new vibrancy to youth culture paving the way for the popular music of the 1960s. Rock ‘n’ roll music has been a focus of the sociological analysis of youth culture since the end of World War II (Frith 1981; Coleman, 1961; Parsons, 1949). Kotarba (2002, 399) suggests that the original generation of rock ‘n’ rollers were the baby boomers and “the music …has stayed with them and has become the soundtrack of American [and New Zealand] culture”. This vibrancy is not evident in this image. It is staid, posed and holds an element of uncertainty on the faces of the band. The lack of rock ‘n’ roll energy in this image does not blend with rock and rolls vibrant image. Perhaps this interlude will help your narrative and image interpretation providing a memory to take home ...you decide...

Two rock and roll dancers performed to Cooper’s “Pie cart Rock ‘n’ Roll”

**Pie Cart Rock ‘n’ Roll**

**Lyric and Music Johnny Cooper QSM**

You’ve heard ‘Rock-a-Beating’ Boogie’
‘Rock Around the clock’
‘See You Later Alligator’, ‘Don’t Knock the Rock’
But here's one beat, before we depart
Let’s rock and roll around the old pie cart

Oh ho ho rock-a to the rhythm of the pea, pie and pud
Jump-a to the rhythm of the pea, pie and pud
Shake-a to the rhythm of the pea, pie and pud
Hop-a to the rhythm of the pea, pie and pud
Rock-a to the rhythm of the pea, pie and pud
We’ve got the pie cart rock ‘n’ roll

We’ve got the pie cart rock ‘n’ roll m’baby

The pie cart rock ‘n’ roll m’baby
The pie cart rock ‘n’ roll m’baby
The pie cart rock ‘n’ roll m’baby
The pie cart rock ‘n’ roll m’baby
The pie cart rock

We were jumping all night to the big beat
Then we hurried down the road for something to eat
When along came a cop who said move on now
We said listen here man you don’t understand
We’ve got the pie cart rock ‘n’ roll
We’ve got the pie cart rock ‘n’ roll
We’ve got the pie cart rock
The pie cart roll
Doo, Doo, Doo, Doo, Doo, Doo, Doo, Doo, Doo, Doo
Given Kotarba’s (2002) position on rock ‘n’ roll, is Cooper’s work adequately represented in _The Great New Zealand Pie Cart_ (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008) or is it space filler designed to evoke nostalgia? Bearing in mind Mead’s (1938, 616) suggestion that “a past was never in the form in which it appears as a past. Its reality is in its interpretation of the present”, indicating something as vibrant as rock ‘n’ roll music and its dance expression could be presented in a more vibrant format that engages the reader on multiple levels. In this regard, depiction of Cooper’s band image and its sub-texts may be ill served within _The Great New Zealand Pie Cart_ (Neill, Bell & Bryant, 2008).

2. _Diverse clients at the White Lady (1970s)_

In researching and gathering information from pie cart operators in New Zealand, one theme became apparent. Pie carts enjoy and encourage a diverse customer base. This image was presented within a vast collection of White Lady memorabilia that had been accumulated since 1848, when Bryan Alfred ‘Pop’ Washer started the White Lady cart in Auckland. While the copyright is attributed to Peter Washer, the provenance of the picture is uncertain. Consequently, it raises questions…is it posed for, and, because the provenance is unclear, what is its history?
The image is fascinating; it shows workers ... working, debutantes clearly enjoying hospitality at the cart and a patched gang member enjoying his food. While this image conveniently reflects diversity at a pie cart, it additionally evoked author suspicion because of its extremes [and lack of provenance], yet delight from publishers who proudly boasted ‘we have found the cover picture’ [the image was finally used as a back cover].

As well as meeting the ‘diversity’ criteria, this image focuses attention on food consumption; each group is fixated by the food they either hold or share. In this sense the image evokes the contemporaneity of hospitality and the positivity that shared hospitality promotes. The decision to include this image held two rationales; it was an image ‘too good’ not to include, the diversity of customers, while extreme, conveyed a potent message. Further, it was hoped that through exposure in the public domain, feedback from the public may illuminate its origins.

3. The Hereford Street [Christchurch] Pie Cart (1950s)

Posing for the Camera at the Hereford Street Pie Cart, Christchurch, 1952.

Source: Canterbury Historical Association Collection, Canterbury Museum
This image is interesting because of what it does and does not ‘say’; its inclusiveness and exclusivity. The image is stark, black and white; the participant’s stern, uniformly dressed and male. The image evokes Wolfe and Barnett’s (2001, 14) observation that the New Zealand of the 1950s and 60s evoked a “ruthless, style-less efficiency”. This is noted within the hair styles...the classic short back and sides and the uniformity of men’s fashion. The participants are mediated. Who are the customers? Who is the staff by the counter’s surface? Yet the customers promote a familiarity with the cart as noted by their close proximity to it and their hand on counter position. This image reflects that food is a serious business and it notes the technology of the day. The image notes the dominance of the New Zealand male at that time in history within Bell’s (1996, 23) concept of egalitarianism which notes that historically New Zealand was hallmarked by “a strange sort of egalitarianism. It was one which gave total priority to men”. Keilbach (2009, 56) reminds us that "although photographs may contain a past experience that is often not possible from their depiction to make up the incidents captured or the situation in which they were taken". The situation can be mediated by the use of caption yet the relationship between the caption and the photo content may be a spurious one. Captions often contradict content via humour and because of this, it could be suggested they can devalue the integrity of the picture and its taker. Within the popular press, as exemplified by The Great New Zealand Pie Cart (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008), this is compounded by the need to hold audience attention with interesting captions. This reminds us of Barthes’ (1981) belief that captions for photographs anchor the meaning of an image for the reader.

This position is important, because, in the case of The Great New Zealand Pie Cart (2008), captions were determined by the authors and not in consultation with the owners of the images. They served to support image and narrative.
Consequently, this is where the caption aids the viewer in interpreting the image by either confirming or clarifying its intent, albeit skewed by author direction. Benjamin (1979, 256) reminds us of the importance that captions bring to photo-imagery; “will not the caption become the most important part of the photograph”? The potency of this image is enmeshed within male empowerment, defined gender roles and differentiation: who is the customer, who is not and who is not represented? Consequently the image is redolent of Wolfe and Barnett’s (2001, 12) “good old days”. These themes provided a rationale for its inclusion.

4. *Kiwiana: Staged or the Real Thing?*

![Image of glasses]

**Classic Kiwiana Collectibles: if you can find them.**

Source: L.Neill

The Eastern Southland pie cart in Gore was an iconic institution (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008). The cart has long since gone from Gore’s main street where it was parked up near the public toilets and close to the Cremota [porridge] Factory. Long term owner operators of the cart Clare and Bob Herron issued these glasses one year as a Christmas gift for cart regulars. The Herrons were significant contributors to *The Great New Zealand Pie Cart* (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008) book. As a token of appreciation and recognition of the cart’s inclusion in the book they presented an author with a set of two glasses.
These items are very collectable. A ready market of kiwiana collectors would not hesitate to purchase such limited edition items to add to their kiwiana collection. The glasses’ association with Gore’s cart made them a logical inclusion for the book. However, within the image used in *The Great New Zealand Pie Cart* (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008), have the authors contrived ‘more’ meaning from these items than the glasses alone suggest? Close inspection of this photograph reveals that the background used is an archetypical New Zealand image taken by renowned photographer Marti Friedlander. This inclusion evokes an iconic New Zealand image that adds geographical relativity to the Gore cart: the Friedlander image was taken at a farm near Balclutha, a short distance from Gore.

This image does more than identify items of kiwiana from a rural pie cart. The photographer has contrived extra meaning in the image by including the Friedlander background. The background evokes a masculine rural image that, while in keeping to the Gore region, demeans the glasses’ image because its background is fabricated in relation to the primary object; the glasses themselves. While photographers often stage image, this image draws together two disparate themes and links them spuriously via geography and topic. In doing so a sub-text is created for the reader that may be at variance with reality.
Conclusion

This paper discussed the selection of four images used within *The Great New Zealand Pie Cart* (Neill, Bell & Bryant, 2008) and reflects the integration of image and text formats popular within popular culture publishing. This discussion varied from the academic norm, because the four images were used in a retail book. While cognisant of the requirements of retail publication, this paper used an academic perspective to discuss image choice within this paper. This made for an interesting combination because Hammond (1998); Ball and Smith (1992); and Gold (2007) suggest that text is the normal form of narrative, and that the use of images to illuminate text/narrative is often at odds with content despite its current popularity, even in academic works. These processes underpinned the image/narrative relationship in *The Great New Zealand Pie Cart* (Neill, Bell & Bryant, 2008).

Key to the four images discussed in this paper was Brickell’s (2008) thoughts on his own image use and Bryman’s (2008, 520) suggestion that “the real problem for the user of photographs is that of recognising the different ways in which the image may be comprehended”.

While the first image of country ‘n’ western, rock and roll band Johnny Cooper and the Range Riders evoked the rock and roll era, the image is stilted and does not convey the excitement of the era, the band or their music. This was compensated for within the conference presentation by live rock ‘n’ roll dancing which gave participants an opportunity to engage Pink’s (2001) invitation so they ‘would indeed have a memory to take home’. The paper concludes that within modern media more could have been done within *The Great New Zealand Pie Cart* (Neill, Bell & Bryant, 2008) to enhance this image and bring to life the vibrancy of rock and roll for readers.
The second image, featuring diverse pie cart customers, shows how authors and publishers can decide upon an image and include it despite their concerns for the validity of the image itself. Simply, this image was too good to not include because of its content. The third image also reinforced stereotypes and the masculinity associated with pie carts. What is interesting about this image is its maleness and the fact that the pie cart text accompanying it ignores those not included in the image; namely female customers. Finally, the image of the glasses shows how photographers can manipulate image to enhance narrative and give more meaning.

Despite the underpinning narrative of each image, their use reflects Harvey’s (1989, 347-348) postmodern position that “image[s] dominate narrative”, and in the case of *The Great New Zealand Pie Cart* (Neill, Bell and Bryant, 2008) supports Strinati’s (2003, 207) suggestion of ”qualities such as artistic merit, integrity, seriousness, authenticity, realism, intellectual depth and strong narrative tend to be undermined” by the subjective interpretations of these images within this context. This position echoes Benjamin’s (1936, as cited in Kellner, 2005) proposing that, while the reproduction of image enhances public access to them, “that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art …the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition” (Benjamin, 1936, 223). These positions remind us that this research is grounded in postmodernism and as Rosenau (1992, 80) suggests “postmodernists offer readings [not] observations interpretations, not findings. Bryman (2008, 680) suggests postmodern research is “suspicious” of arriving at “definitive version[s] of reality” ….postmodernity “problematises and questions our capacity ever to know anything”; Image, Illusion Reality: You Decide.
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