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# **Making Kai in Godzone: New Zealand Food Programming, Nostalgia and National Identity**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements

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## Abstract

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This thesis investigates how national boundaries and shared belonging can be evoked through the mediation of food culture and the past. The dynamic terrain traversed is where food culture, nostalgia and collective national identity meet on the television screen. New Zealand is a compelling nation in which to undertake such a study as nation-making continues to take place against a backdrop of post colonialism, competing national visions, the impact of modernity, the centrality of food to national survival and increased global interdependence.

The key to accessing these insights are two highly popular local television productions which utilise food narratives; *Coasters* (2011) and *The Food Truck* (2012). This genre of television programming is becoming increasingly important with the growing global emphasis on utilising food as a language for telling stories about personal identity and collective narratives. This study provides a unique insight with an analysis informed by the principles of Michel Foucault and reinforced by first hand industry perspectives. Clear patterns of statements are identified in a study of narrative form, aesthetic signs and representations of food culture. There is also an exploration of what powers the making of these statements through an investigation of the unique business and institutional environment for television in New Zealand.

This thesis uncovers a number of key negotiations which take place through food and the use of nostalgia which reengage and redraw the legacy of colonialism and modernity. A fantasy food culture is evoked which attempts to re-forge the mythical link between food and memory and in doing so informs notions of shared identity. These statements of the past and food are reinforced by the industrial popularity for food narratives. However, this popularity also reveals risks to broader and more inclusive statements being made through food and the past which may provide “Kiwis” with richer insights into what it means to be New Zealanders.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction, Materials and Methods

### Introduction

Fewer environments are more highly charged than where notions of the past, food culture and national identity meet on television. This thesis explores key aspects of this highly energised dynamic in order to discover what it reveals about what it means to be a New Zealander and how “Kiwis” define togetherness and their unique place in the world.<sup>1</sup> The mediation of food culture through mass media provides a tool for identity creation and for reconstructing the past and how we relate to modernity and change. This thesis identifies how in the New Zealand context, food programmes utilise nostalgia to weave fantasy and myth around New Zealand’s past as articulated through its food culture. The power of the vision of these mythical pasts enables a complex negotiation of many of the social and racial tensions wrought by the twin shocks of modernity and colonialism.

Modernity has transformed traditional foodways through commodification, standardisation and the dominance of transnational corporations. New Zealand food culture expresses notions of freedom and independence and this thesis identifies how the relative loss of these aspects are reconciled through a negotiation which essentially uses nostalgia for a fantasy past to re-establish the link between food, freedom and independence. Once marginalised indigenous food practices are mythologised as a unifying food culture. The reformulation of a mythical past is exacerbated by the specific institutional and commercial structure of the television industry in New Zealand. A relatively small domestic market and limited commercial and state funding drive conservative programming choices which favour “safe” narratives such as food and nostalgia. However, it is this very commercial success which can limit access to the state funding which would allow these narratives to encompass broader multicultural notions of a shared food culture and more inclusive articulations of what it means to be a New Zealander.

The findings of this thesis have a wider application as individuals in many societies grapple with articulating a shared identity and reconciling this with many of the shocks that social, economic, political and technological upheavals of the past two hundred years present. This is reflected in the methodological approach taken and broad academic environment within which it intervenes. While care has been taken to obtain commentary from New Zealand television producers and administrators, textual analysis in this thesis is informed by the thinking of Michel Foucault whose guiding framework allows for an identification of regular organised statements as discursive themes. While there is a large body of work which focuses on aspects such as televisual mediation, food culture, self and national identity creation, shared memory

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<sup>1</sup> New Zealanders collectively refer to themselves as “Kiwis”.

and nostalgia, this thesis aims to unify these bodies of thought through highlighting how mass mediated food culture can present both immense opportunities for social healing and cohesion and yet present a number of dangers when exposed to specific institutional and cultural environments.

I will argue that nostalgia is a key mechanism for the creation of national boundaries. Food nostalgia on New Zealand television presents a specific utopian vision of New Zealand national identity and culture, articulated through food and its collective memory. My aim is to reveal the nostalgic tactics selected food programmes share in common and examine how they define “New Zealandness”. The critical importance of understanding this discourse is underscored by Alison Landsberg’s vision of an individual and collective relationship with memory which enables “...political alliances across chasms of difference” (2003, p.147). The potential benefit Landsberg sees for using nostalgia to help bridge the divisions within contemporary New Zealand society is tempered by the risks of the potentially destructive mix of nostalgia with politics and popular culture. An example of this is the nostalgic fantasy which fuelled the rise of intolerance in 1930’s Germany. As New Zealand struggles to balance funding priorities for social integration, health and national culture, questions are raised around whether the centrality of discourses focused on shared memory, food culture and identity creation is reflected in appropriate support.

Why focus on food shows and nostalgia in New Zealand? The answer is that food narratives underwrite a hugely popular genre of global cultural significance. By way of an illustration of the global cultural impact that food shows have had, to simply mention the names Jamie, Nigella, Gordon, Rick or Hugh for many around the world and in New Zealand creates an immediate recognition that these are global food personalities.<sup>2</sup> Food narratives can make compelling statements about the past, often articulated as food tradition, which inform both individual and collective identity. More than this, New Zealand has a specific set of historical, cultural and institutional conditions which make it an ideal platform from which to view how food and the past are wielded to create specific notions of cultural collectivity.

Food shows have long been a feature of domestic television and New Zealand has played its part in the evolution of this global media phenomenon. Three early food entertainment pioneers to achieve international success started their careers on New Zealand television screens. Graham Kerr, most famously known for his show, *The Galloping Gourmet* (1969-71) and Peter Hudson and David Halls camp food show *Hudson and Halls* (1976-1986). Today international food “stars” are joined on television screens in New Zealand by an increasingly diverse and prominent group of home grown food personalities such as Al Brown, Simon Gault, Annabel Langbein, Michael Van de Elzen, Nici Wicks and Peta Mathias who coalesce in a specific domestic mediascape.

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<sup>2</sup> Jamie Oliver, Nigella Lawson, Gordon Ramsay, Rick Stein and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall.

This genre of television programming is becoming increasingly important with the growing global emphasis on food as a mediator for personal identity and collective narratives. Food narratives have moved beyond the tradition of basic instruction as exemplified by pioneering shows such as *Fanny's Kitchen* (Fanny Cradock 1955, 1957, 1961), *The French Chef* (Julia Child 1963-73), or *Delia Smith's Cookery Course* (1978-81). Food shows now act as vehicles of national and personal discovery and fantasy, as devices for celebrity exhibition and as competitive spectacles that can capture the national imagination. The dominance of television shows using "food narratives" is illustrated by a quick browse through the *TV Guide*.<sup>3</sup> On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2013 there were eight hours of food shows broadcast on the main free-to-air, state owned channel, *TV One*, representing 44% of all programming for the channel on that day (2013, April 13-19).<sup>4 5</sup> This was no unique event; any Saturday reveals similar programming flows. It seems Kiwis just love watching food, or to use the popular Māori term, "Kai", on their television screens.

Despite the large number of imported food programmes on New Zealand television, particularly from the UK and Australia, many of the top rated shows in the food genre are local productions and there is strong industry support for the development of food narratives as they deliver strong audiences and attract advertiser support. These narratives and the powerful link between food and culture characterise an emerging discourse of national significance centred on what it means to be a New Zealander. As such, the government plays a key role in this process through its intervention in the industrial infrastructure in which these programmes are produced. Many programmes are broadcast by state owned TVNZ and programme production and development funding is available through the government broadcast funding agency New Zealand on Air (NZoA), whose cultural obligations are determined by legislation.<sup>6</sup>

Nostalgia and appeals to collective memory feature prominently in a number of the more popular local productions. The cultural power of televised food narratives when allied with highly nuanced notions of the past creates a phenomenon that can transform how individuals relate to a shared past. Nostalgia is today a much used term but its origins stretch back to the late seventeenth century where it emerged as a

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<sup>3</sup> The *TV Guide* is New Zealand's biggest selling magazine with an average ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation) weekly issue circulation of 123,218 copies for the twelve months to 30/06/13. <http://magazine.abc.org.nz/audit.html>

<sup>4</sup> In 2013 a channel share analysis by TV website *Throng* has *TV One* with an estimated audience share of approximately 25% (*Throng*, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2013 from 9.00am, food shows broadcast in a continuous flow included *Chinese Food in Minutes*, *Come Dine With Me*, *Chef on a Mission* and *Heston's Mission Impossible*. These shows were joined from 7.00pm by *MasterChef MasterClass*, *Come Dine With Me UK* and *MasterChef New Zealand*.

<sup>6</sup> The New Zealand Broadcasting Act 1989 (Section 37 (b) (i)). "To promote, in its funding of the production of programmes and content, a sustained commitment by (i) television and radio broadcasters to programming reflecting New Zealand identity and culture". <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0025/latest/DLM158016.html>

medical term for extreme homesickness (Davis, 2011, p.446). This term now has widespread cultural currency as a means, "...to convey the somewhat eerie sense in which we carry our own past and of its meaning for the present and future" (Davis, 2011, p.447). Nostalgia is a means of packaging the past in a way which for many makes it comforting and more approachable. Nostalgic narrative energises collective memory through its self-consciously emotional appeal to both personal and group memory. It is this ability of nostalgia to engage a mass audience in the narrative of a shared past which makes it such a powerful and compelling force in culture. Nostalgia theorist Svetlana Boym helps summarise the multi-faceted nature of nostalgic discourse, "Nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups and nations, between personal and collective memory" (2011, p.452). In this context, how shared history is packaged and delivered to a society is a critical component in how individuals create and feel comfortable with their identity.

However, identity is created within a political arena and care needs to be taken to understand what is powering and making certain nostalgic statements about "New Zealandness" and a shared national past sayable. More than this, what delineates what is remembered and what is forgotten? Sociologist Michael Schudson points out that, "The past becomes contested terrain. Some individuals, organisations, classes and nations have more power than others to claim the territory of memory" (2011, p.290). Historian Alon Confino adds that memory moves from the realms of culture to the political when we ask the question "Who wants whom to remember what and why?" (2011, p.198). Food can be seen as a powerful instrument through which to make statements about the past. As a mechanism for bringing a society together it is able to convey a widely shared experience and to do this in an almost benign, non-threatening context which can make it a particularly effective agent for evocation.

New Zealand is a particularly compelling culture within which to undertake this study. Its modest size as a nation makes it susceptible to the influences of modern global capitalism with the dominance of transnational corporations and economic dependency on larger economies.<sup>7</sup> In addition New Zealand, or "Godzone" as Kiwis often lovingly refer to their land, has a relatively recent colonial history where nation making has to take place with the back drop of conflict and continuing social division along race lines. There is an ongoing national debate around the nature of independence for a small nation in a global economy, the reconciliation of a colonial past, and the perceived threats to food supplies through the impact of modern food production and transnational capitalism.

The importance of the dialogue centred on identity and food is amplified in New Zealand due to the centrality of food to national survival and sustainability. Hand in hand with an increase in the use of food

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<sup>7</sup> According to the OECD (2012), New Zealand is globally ranked 21<sup>st</sup> by GDP per head of population. <http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=558> The International Monetary Fund ranked New Zealand the 63<sup>rd</sup> largest nation by national GDP in 2012. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2013/02/weodata/index.aspx>

as a vehicle for entertainment and cultural storytelling is a global narrative of anxiety around food. International news stories centring on food safety, such as the BSE scare and the recent horsemeat scandal in Europe have been major headlines in New Zealand.<sup>8</sup> More recently food scares such as the allegedly tainted baby formula ingredients dominated national news headlines for weeks and resulted in a number of official enquiries and much diplomatic activity with New Zealand's global trading partners.<sup>9</sup> The reason for this sensitivity is that food relationships have underpinned New Zealand society since the early days of British colonisation in the 1840's. In the words of the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries, "Agriculture is how New Zealand earns a living and together with the food and forestry sectors, generate 70% of New Zealand's merchandise export earnings and around 12% of Gross Domestic Product. New Zealand is the world's largest dairy and sheep meat exporter" (2013, accessed online).

However, the link between food and national survival is paradoxical as New Zealand is increasingly reliant on imported processed foodstuffs. The growth of offshore influences on domestic foodways heightens awareness of possible insecurities around the integrity of national boundaries and how these relate to self, national and cultural identity. In this light, it is no surprise that the resolution of such paradoxes and the easing of anxiety around food and national identity is a key dynamic of local food programmes. These factors make the national need to articulate visions of the past and shared national culture particularly acute in New Zealand. I argue that nostalgia in food programming articulates a developing sense of what "New Zealandness" means and as such the path to achieving this should be of interest to other national societies which face the dual needs of developing or maintaining social cohesion through national identity and healing old wounds in order to move forward together.

### **Academic Environment and the Nature of Intervention**

The path to discovering national identity through local food cultures is well worn. A less studied subject is how television food shows can mobilize nostalgia to construct shared identities. There are some notable fellow travellers on this path for whose insights I am greatly indebted. From a New Zealand perspective Sarina Pearson and Shuchi Kothari of Auckland University explored local television as a site for food and cultural politics in their paper *Menus for a multicultural New Zealand* (2007). The link between television food shows and nostalgia has been explored by David Sutton and Leonidas Vournelis in their paper *Vefa or mamalakis: Cooking up nostalgia in contemporary Greece* (2009) which investigated the use of nostalgia in two popular Greek cooking shows and offers a strong precedent for scholarly work on national memory and food programming. This thesis intends to build on the work of Pearson & Kothari and Sutton

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<sup>8</sup> BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) or mad cow disease is a precursor, transmitted through the food chain, of the human degenerative brain disorder Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease. The UK outbreak was widely publicised in the early 1990's.

<sup>9</sup> Milk powders used in baby foods and produced by New Zealand's largest corporation, Fonterra, were feared to be potentially contaminated with a botulism pathogen.

& Vournelis through a broader investigation of the relationship between food, television, and the tensions created in New Zealand society by the forces of modernity and European colonisation. In particular this thesis will identify the formation of utopic visions of a nation woven through very specific negotiations of the past and the creation of fantasies linking food and collective culture. Interviews with producers and administrators working in the television industry within which these texts are created, funded and broadcast helps determine the role this aspect plays in the ability of texts to make and sustain statements about food culture and collective pasts. Critically this thesis outlines how two popular local television food shows, *Coasters* and *The Food Truck*, attempt to re forge the mythical link between food and memory and how this reformulation informs notions of shared nationality.

This thesis draws on a number of distinct bodies of academic literature. Collective memory and the articulation of national boundaries are covered by Andreas Huyssen, Wulf Kansteiner and Paul Connerton who build on the seminal works of Maurice Halbwachs. Alison Landsberg's influential concept of "Prosthetic Memory" is important as the mediated memory of events not directly experienced by an individual helps connect representation with collective notions of belonging (2003, p.146). Central to this thesis is nostalgia's relationship to modernity, postmodernity and articulations of new utopias. This field is covered in detail by Svetlana Boym, Jill Bradbury, Susan Holak & William Havlena, and Fred Davis. The relationship food has with the past and identity has been explored by Jon Holtzman and Jean Duruz. There is a growing interdisciplinary body of work on the emergence of food programming as a significant genre which focuses on representation of food on television and how this links to healthy living, individual, cultural and national identity. This is by no means an exhaustive list but along with Pearson & Kothari and Sutton & Vournelis, I have drawn on significant contributions to this field from Amy Holdsworth and Charlotte Brunson.

In the New Zealand context, insights into national dynamics of food and memory are accessed through a number of diverse avenues. Notable commentators on the role of food culture in New Zealand society which I have accessed include Otago University's Helen Leach and Ian Carter of Auckland University. The tensions around commerciality, state funding and public service in New Zealand television has been explored by Victoria University's Trisha Dunleavy whose insights help foreground the industry interviews undertaken.

### **Some Definitions**

Underpinning this thesis is our relationship with food. This term is itself not as straightforward as we would like. Jon Holtzman reminds us that, "Thus, food—like the family, gender, or religion—must be understood as a cultural construct in which categories rooted in Euro-American experience may prove inadequate" (2006, p.364). This leads me to use a terms that defines the broader context within which food is situated. Throughout this thesis I will refer to "foodways" to describe a broader relationship with food. The concept

of foodways is defined by Signe Rousseau as, "...how individuals negotiate and perform their identities through food" (2012, p.185). My conception is in line with Rousseau's formulation and acknowledges the fact that these identities can be performed through an extremely broad range of contingencies. For example, foodways encompass notions of how food is gathered or purchased, how anxiety is heightened or reduced through the relationship with food and how and where food is produced, presented and consumed. Foodways have political and economic implications as well as cultural and social signification. Reflecting on Holzman's views above, there is also a need to be clear that how European New Zealanders make their identity through food may be very different to the way through which other ethnic groups and in particular indigenous Māori make theirs.

Defining nostalgia requires some focus as this thesis centres on understanding the use of nostalgia to articulate a national fantasy centred on foodways. Nostalgia has recently been the object of much study within many disciplines and has become subject to a wide range of definitions. It is seen as helping to create individual and shared identity from memories within a person's lifetime (Holbrook & Schindler, 1996) yet has a broader relationship with "history" beyond lived life (Landsberg, 2003; Megill, 2011) and that it has positive and negative evocations (Boym, 2011; Holak & Havlena, 1998). To complicate the phenomenon, nostalgia is considered a legitimate leisure activity and distinct form of entertainment (Pickering, 1997; Holdsworth, 2011). In this latter guise nostalgia is at risk of simplistic applications that can, "...complicate the notion of nostalgia as being essentially inauthentic, ahistorical, sentimentalising, regressive and exploitative (particularly in commercial terms)" (Holdsworth, 2011, p.103). We are also faced with a profusion of terms relating to projections of the past including; history, collective memory, shared pastness, autobiography, recollection and commemoration. It is of course all of these things and more, there is no unanimity on how to define the term nostalgia. Unfortunately this does not help us get a grip on this notoriously slippery term.

Nostalgia is a process located within memory but it is not directly linked to history and history's claims to empiricism and truth. Notions of truth however can be construed by the presentation of artefacts and statements that lay claim to the past, either from within a lifetime or beyond. More than this, these artefacts and statements can be presented in such a way as to convey a belief that they are shared by others within a community and provide a point of reference to belonging within a society. That these artefacts and statements may be termed as, or relate to, "history" or "memory" or "pastness" somehow misses the point that these terms are the building blocks for a more comforting form of memory that we might term as nostalgia. This thesis will use terms such as "collective memory" and "shared pastness" but this use only recognises their contribution to a more enveloping feeling of nostalgia.

The comforting elements of nostalgia beg scrutiny. Nostalgia is clearly what Holak & Havlena term as "bittersweet" (1998, p.222). The bitter elements are derived from a sense of loss for something that cannot

be recreated, a sense that something was better in the past, that the passage of time has somehow diminished a state of being. The sweet element comes from the warmth and contextualisation that comes with much recollection. Through remembering we can once again be temporally transported to those “better” times and make more sense of the present and possibly the future. That nostalgia is a positive emotion is borne out by Holdsworth’s earlier observations about how it can be adopted and adapted by the entertainment industry, that there are pleasures to be derived from its consumption. The understanding of what nostalgia means in this thesis concurs with Holak & Havlena’s view that it is, “A positively valenced complex feeling, emotion, or mood produced by reflection on things (objects, persons, experiences, ideas) associated with the past” (1998, p.218). Throughout this thesis nostalgia is on the whole regarded as a positive phenomenon which actively engages an audience in shared remembering.

### ***Coasters and The Food Truck***

My key to unlocking the nexus between televisual mediation, collective memory, food and national identity is an interrogation of two highly popular and on the surface, quite different New Zealand narratives underpinned by food. The first series of *Coasters*, broadcast on *TV One* in early 2011 and the second series of *The Food Truck*, broadcast on *TV One* between April and June 2012.<sup>10</sup> These texts were selected for their popularity as well as their differences, which reflect the diversity of food and nostalgic programming. *Coasters* is situated in rural coastal settings and focused on encounters with people and landscapes. The narrative is delivered at a leisurely pace and favours a focus on a past of early pioneer settlement. This is in contrast to *The Food Truck*’s urban setting where more recent commodity culture is highlighted and time-bound challenges around food are utilised to drive narrative pace.

*Coasters* is a seven part series broadcast on *TV One* between 22/01/11 and 05/03/11 in the 7.00pm-7.30pm time slot on Saturdays. *Coasters* is produced by television and natural history film maker Peter Young through his Christchurch based company Fisheye Films Limited. State broadcaster TVNZ commissioned the programme but additional production funding of NZ\$384,138 was secured in 2010 from the government television funding agency New Zealand on Air (NZoA), who classified the production as a documentary series (NZoA, 2010, p.52). The show’s narrative construct is described by the publicity statement from the producer,

“Renowned chef and keen fisherman Al Brown circumnavigates New Zealand exploring the connection Kiwis have with their Coasts [*sic*]. As he travels our stunning and varied coastline he visits iconic landmarks, meets colourful characters and hears rich tales from past and present, influence on our lifestyle and culture” (Fisheye Films Limited, 2013).

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<sup>10</sup> *TV One* is the flagship channel of the state owned broadcaster TVNZ. A channel share analysis on television information site *Throng* found, “Of all the individual channels in New Zealand, *TV One* is by far the most watched. On average, about a quarter of all television viewing across the day in New Zealand over the last four years has been on *TV One* (*Throng*, 2013, accessed online).

When *Coasters* was first broadcast, Al Brown was a well-established media personality, food author and restaurateur of note. *Coasters* producer Peter Young told me the choice of Brown as host for *Coasters* was a function of their prior work together and Brown's, "Real affinity for the coast" (personal communication, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2013). The body of Brown's preceding works on New Zealand television is impressive. Although *Coasters* was Brown's first solo series, previously he had presented three series of the award winning food show *Hunger for the Wild* (2006, 2007, 2008) also produced by Peter Young.<sup>11 12</sup> *Hunger for the Wild* was co presented with his business partner Steve Logan with whom Brown co-owned nationally renowned award winning Wellington restaurant Logan Brown.<sup>13 14</sup> In 2009 Brown had also authored the multi award winning book *Go Fish*, described by the publisher as, "...fish cookbook and nostalgic ode to the New Zealand coastline and our love of all things coastal" (Random House New Zealand, 2013).<sup>15</sup> A nod to Brown's credentials as a chef is in the opening sequence of *Coasters* with a shot of him expertly emptying food from a pan and garnishing a plate. Peter Young conceived *Coasters* primarily as a "Heartland based documentary series", not as a food show, yet the narrative is underpinned by food gathering (personal communication, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014). A central narrative theme in each episode of *Coasters* is the sourcing of ingredients and at least one dedicated food preparation segment where Brown instructs the audience as well as those who are often enlisted to help in the meals preparation.

*The Food Truck*, featuring Michael Van de Elzen, is an eight part series broadcast on *TV One* between 15/04/12 and 03/06/12 in the Sunday 7.00pm-7.30 pm time slot. *The Food Truck* concept was developed by producer Nick Ward and his business partner, director James Anderson of Auckland-based Two Heads Ltd. It was commissioned and funded by TVNZ. The show's narrative construct is well described on Van de Elzen's web site,

"*The Food Truck* follows Michael Van De Elzen, owner and head chef of Molten Restaurant and Liquid Molten Bar in Mt Eden, Auckland, as he attempts to create healthy, restaurant-quality alternatives to New Zealand fast food favourites from the back of a 1970 Bedford truck.... Part cooking show and part factual series about the fast paced, highly competitive world of fast food,

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<sup>11</sup> Brown's second solo series *Get Fresh with Al Brown* aired seven months later in September 2011 and this was followed in 2013 with *Dishing up Australia with Al Brown*.

<sup>12</sup> Series one of *Hunger for the Wild* won the 2007 NZ Screen Award. Series three won best lifestyle series at the 2009 NZ Qantas Media Awards.

<sup>13</sup> Steve Logan went on to present the second series of *Coasters* broadcast on *TV One* between June and August 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Logan Brown was supreme winner of authoritative New Zealand food magazine *Cuisine's* Restaurant of the Year 2009.

<sup>15</sup> In 2010 *Go Fish* won best single subject book award at the IACP Cook Book Awards and also two awards at the NZ Post Book Awards. In 2011 *Go Fish* won the Culinary Quill award.

*The Food Truck* is essential viewing for the whole family and a perfect accompaniment to Sunday night takeaways” ( Van de Elzen, 2013).

Van de Elzen was less well known than Brown having completed just one prior series of *The Food Truck* in 2011. Van de Elzen light heartedly outlined the origins of *The Food Truck* and his selection as presenter in an interview with Fiona Rae of *New Zealand Listener* magazine,

“The original idea came from James [Anderson] and Nick [Ward], the producers of *Two Heads*. They thought up the concept of making fast food better and they interviewed 30 or maybe 40 chefs, and I ended up getting the role through my wit and charisma and terribly good looks ... I dunno” (2011, accessed online).

His credentials as a chef are presented to the audience fifteen seconds into the opening sequence for each show with the lines, “Michael Van de Elzen is a fun loving gourmet chef with a passion for fresh food. He’s back with his faithful Bedford truck to challenge the way we eat” (“Sea food”, 22/04/12). These lines are accompanied by shots of him expertly plating and garnishing restaurant quality dishes. The show is centred on his food preparation within the professional mobile kitchen of the 1970’s Bedford food truck but each show also typically has sequences of him working through solutions in the kitchen of Molten restaurant.

New Zealand audiences responded positively to *Coasters* and *The Food Truck*. Both shows were highly successful in attracting large audiences and provide strong and compelling texts for study. Television audiences in New Zealand are measured by the Nielsen television audience measurement (TAM) panel which follows the global practice of installing television viewing monitors in a statistically robust and demographically representative sample of households.<sup>16</sup> The TAM measure is the currency used by New Zealand media agencies to plan and buy commercial airtime for advertising campaigns. The first series of *Coasters* was the sixth most popular programme to receive funding from the government agency New Zealand on Air (NZoA) in 2011 with an average viewership of 524,900 per episode (New Zealand on Air, 2011, p7). As an example of the popularity of *Coasters*, the final episode of the series, “Taranaki” broadcast on Saturday 05/03/11 was the second highest rating television programme in New Zealand on that day with an audience of 651,500 (or 16% of the population aged over five years of age), (*Throng*, TV Ratings: 05 March 2011).<sup>17</sup> <sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Nielsen is a global market research organisation with expertise in audience measurement and tracking. There are 600 New Zealand household on the TAM panel to model a universe of 4,090,820 (Individuals aged 5 years plus in television households).

<sup>17</sup> *Coasters* “Taranaki” was only exceeded in viewership by *One News* in the key 6.00pm slot (669,800 viewers ) and rated significantly higher than the third placed programme *American Idol* (387,700 viewers), (*Throng*, TV Ratings: 05 March 2011).

<sup>18</sup> All audience ratings represent the total estimated audience aged over five years of age.

*The Food Truck* series two was the most popular food show and tenth most popular show overall on New Zealand free-to-air television in 2012 (StopPress, 2012). Each episode of *The Food Truck* was viewed by an average of 14.7% of the population over five years of age (StopPress, 2012). The final episode of series two of *The Food Truck*, "Sushi", was broadcast on Sunday 03/06/12 and was the second highest rating show of the day with an audience of 546,160 (Throng, TV Ratings: 03 June 2012).<sup>19</sup> The scale of this audience response makes these shows key texts for analyzing what statements and mechanisms are employed to articulate a shared past through food and any resulting notions of collective identity.

## Methodology

The research methodology comprises of two components, the use of semiotics and narratology and industry data and interviews with salient producers and administrators. Textual analysis will primarily take the form of a discourse analysis to identify the key statements being made through the use of nostalgia and appeals to collective memory. While discourse analysis can cover a wide range of meanings and activities, I intend to focus on a semiotic deconstruction of the signs within the texts in order to uncover themes and patterns of meaning. Discourse analysis provides a vehicle for analysis which is sensitive to the institutional and cultural constraints on the production of cultural texts. To augment this analysis I will be focusing on a poststructuralist approach informed by the thinking of Michel Foucault as a guiding framework to the identification of regular organised statements as discursive themes.

Foucault's focus on the search for unities and the treatment of power (as both positive and a means of managing culture) offers the best possibility of identifying and integrating repeatable statements within the texts and what is powering their repetition. Foucault's conceptualisation of power as a relationship which denotes ways of, "keeping things going [sic]" proves particularly useful (Kendall & Wickham, 2000, p.49). In addition, the Foucaultian focus on contingencies provides a framework for avoiding overgeneralisations and the reduction of complex cultural phenomena to simple cause and effect.

There is a risk that applying a Foucaultian framework to semiotics can lead to mapping deeper humanistic meanings and motivations onto these texts. This is a particular weakness identified by Gavin Kendall and Garry Wickham in their critique of structuralist deconstructions of texts which employed Foucaultian principles (2000, p.118-119). I will be focusing on identifying sign systems or systems of meaning within the texts and the interpretation of signification at the level of appearance. I will avoid generalising theories which may imply the primacy of one identifiable contingency over another. Secondly there are more specific critiques of semiotic narratology. These centre on the risk of determinism around one meaning. As Alison Landsberg adroitly puts it in echoing earlier insights by Christian Metz, "And yet, as

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<sup>19</sup> *The Food Truck* "Sushi" had a similar rating performance to *Coasters* in that viewership was only exceeded by *One News* (662,170 viewers) and achieved significantly higher ratings than the third placed (movie) *The Karate Kid* (1984), (447,210 viewers), (Throng, TV Ratings: 03 June 2012).

poststructuralism has taught us, texts are polysemic. There is no way to assure a particular reading of a text, no way to completely stabilise meaning” (2003, p.155). My approach will be to recognise this and focus only on the most obvious reading of signs whether narrative, aesthetic or thematic in order to find patterns of statements that are powered by repetition.

Interviews were conducted with the New Zealand government television funding agency New Zealand on Air (NZoA) and with New Zealand television and film producer Peter Young. These interviews were subjected to the same Foucaultian framework and semiotic approach as the texts under study. The Massey University Human Ethics Committee was notified of these activities and the interviews were fully compliant with the procedures and principles of Massey University’s human ethics procedures and guidelines (see Appendices A, B, C and D for Massey University MUHEC notification, participant information sheet and interviewee authority and transcript release documentation).

The structure guiding chapter headings for this thesis is driven by the most overtly identified characteristics of the texts where organised systems of statements are most likely to be observed. This is in the narrative form, aesthetics, themes and the food discourse. Chapter two focuses on identifying statements which are driven by how the narrative structure relates notions of the past to modern living. Nostalgic narratives in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* are charted on two key binaries, the premodernity-postmodernity and Svetlana Boym’s restorative-reflective construct (2011). A key finding is that while a preliminary reading of both narratives often places them at opposite ends of these binaries, they also highlight greater unities which directly negotiate tensions around national independence and homogeneity. Negotiating the shock of modernity is also a key discursive theme and both texts present visions of a utopic New Zealand enabled by nostalgia for a mythical past which either negates or sidesteps the realities of modern foodways.

Chapter three focuses on how aesthetic and thematic statements are employed by *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* to weave a fantasy past. I find that aesthetics are reinforced by production environments and that the repetition of certain themes helps bind viewers to a shared vision of national character and continuity. Chapter four identifies how these food narratives redefine food culture in New Zealand and reforge the link between food and identity. The loss of diversity and independence which results from the commodification of modern foodways are negated through the texts’ assertion of tradition in commodity forms and the articulation of nostalgia for differing forms of a lost Eden. The negotiation of racial tensions are also explored in chapter four through the identification of a mythical and predominantly bicultural food culture largely based on indigenous food practices and to which all others are subservient.

The fifth chapter investigates the degree to which the ability of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* to make compelling statements about the past and what should be remembered and forgotten by New Zealand

audiences is powered by the institutional environment. This chapter includes commentary from producers and funding administrators which illuminate how the very success of food and nostalgic narratives perpetuates myth building in the light of strong commercial interests. Strong commercial success means limited state funding finds a home in other television genres and where it is applied to food programming, it is often in order to provide a broader and more inclusive representation of food culture within a multicultural state. I find however, that the nature of programming for these alternative voices can have a significant effect on the impact on how these alternative visions of society may be received.

This thesis confronts the threats to the homogeneity of national cultures and the concept of the nation state. Challenges driven by technology, transnational capitalism and the aspirations of smaller distinct groups threaten national fabric. As Andreas Huyssen contends, "In an age of emerging supranational structures, the problem of national identity is increasingly discussed in terms of cultural or collective memory rather than in terms of the assumed identity of nation and state" (1995, p.5). How do individuals form stable identities in these contexts and how can shared national identities be sustained within the framework of a nation state? In an attempt to address these questions, this thesis investigates some mechanisms which help forge and sustain that identity. These emerge from a highly energised and dynamic cultural landscape encapsulating television as the dominant cultural transmitter, food as a widely shared and unifying cultural experience and evocations of the past to create myth and visions for the future. Critically this investigation is undertaken within the context of New Zealand, a relatively small and young nation where food is central to national survival, facing the dual challenges of reconciling modernity and a colonial past with present day challenges to the nation state.

**Chapter 2. “In New Zealand Baked Beans and Watties Go Together Like Black Singlets and Stubbies”:** Modernity and the Narrative of the Past (*The Food Truck*, “Takeaway breakfasts”, 06/05/13)

*Coasters* and *The Food Truck* utilise narrative frameworks that provide an ideal jumping-off point to explore the relationship between the use of nostalgia, modernity and how we make our identities through food. The structure of these narratives reveals a powerful negotiation of the changes wrought in New Zealand society by the forces of colonisation and modernity. At the heart of this negotiation is the displacement of the shock of change through the use of nostalgia to create a national story that coheres perceived discontinuities and lost futures.

*Coasters* and *The Food Truck* present quite different narrative forms and in this light Foucault reminds us that they presents immense opportunities for discovery. Foucault warns us that, “Unity is variable and relative” and highlights that beyond the identification of immediately apparent unities we should look for “...points of diffraction” in discourse” (1972, p.25, 72-3). This diffraction can be seen in tensions and incompatibilities, which can enable us to form new, larger, discursive unities. It is in the revelation of these new larger unities that insights can be gained into how these popular contemporary cultural texts approach using the past to define individual and national identities in the present. I have chosen two primary frameworks of analysis which illuminate visible unities and diffractions and which offer subtly differing yet intersecting insights, the premodernity-postmodernity binary and the restorative-reflective binary. These frameworks are highly logical choices to apply to a relatively young nation which has been subject to the impulses of colonialism and modern industrial development. Both binaries can encompass these agents of change which have arguably had the greatest impact on contemporary New Zealand society.

The premodernity-postmodernity binary enables me to identify how nostalgia is used to drive three compelling forms of negotiation. Firstly challenges to independence from the globalising forces of transnational capital are negotiated through the weaving of a fantasy which negates their influence. The past is employed to endorse notions of traditional consumer empowerment and independent foodways which in effect redraw boundaries around New Zealand society. Secondly, the experience of the shock of modernity is lessened by recasting change as inherently a positive part of the New Zealand experience. Thirdly time and space are recontextualised in both texts to conform to differing utopic visions of a past New Zealand. These visions offer up a shared past of comfort and security from which to make individual and collective identity. Nostalgia is central to all of these forms of negotiation in providing the primary basis on which to build a mythical past and through which to articulate hopes for the future.

Svetlana Boym's restorative-reflective binary allows me to gain insights into how nostalgia is used in both texts to renegotiate the powerful and compelling visions of the future which were embodied within the dreams of modernity. *Coasters* displays a strong restorative urge and *The Food Truck* an equally compelling reflective urge, yet they are united in a nostalgia for how powerful past visions of the future were. Both texts lament the loss of the power of these past visions of a modernist utopia and their failure to deliver. This loss is negotiated by a reformulation of what those past hopes might have been. Memories of the power and urgency of social and industrial modernisation are replaced with mythical past hopes of environmental splendour and national differentiation in a globalised environment which fit comfortably with current preoccupations and concerns.

### **The Premodernity–Postmodernity Binary: Nostalgia and a Renegotiation of Modernity**

Placing the narratives of both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* on a binary stretching from notions of premodernity through to postmodernity identify both texts as superficially set in broad opposition to each other. Yet through the lens of this framework we can identify larger shared unities which utilise nostalgia to renegotiate the relationship with modernity, a critical step in finding common cause. The experience of modernity has had potentially shocking and dislocating effects on identity. This is hinted at by Davis (1979), Appadurai (1996), Duruz (1999) and Landsberg (2003). Historian Allan Megill reminds us of the centrality of modernity to the twentieth century experience and that articulations of the past in media texts are directly linked to a search for comfort following its perceived failures,

“It may be that memory has emerged in part as a response to an anxiety arising from the failure of modernity, with its focus on the pursuit of the new, to provide an adequate account of what is past, yet continues to haunt the present” (2011, p.196).

Within my binary construct, premodernity can be regarded as a state prior to the full force of capitalism and commodified forms and relationships being felt. This encompasses relationships mediated by bonds of kinship and foodways which exhibit greater adjacency between production and consumption. At the other extreme of the binary structure, postmodernity can be considered a state where relationships are almost entirely mediated through capitalist exchange. Foodways exhibit highly commodified forms with a greater detachment between food production and consumption. The means of production is obscured or may be veiled by artificial notions of adjacency to the source.<sup>20</sup>

The nostalgic narratives of both texts approach the relationship with modernity and the attendant evolution of capitalist forms in differing ways. *Coasters* avoids it and *The Food Truck* embraces it. *Coasters* focuses on a pre-capitalist, premodern New Zealand society of early pioneer settlement. The show's narrative underpinnings are of a chef travelling through New Zealand coastal landscapes, meeting local people,

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<sup>20</sup> Food producers often achieve artificial adjacency through the development of “Craft”, “Cottage” or artisanal product ranges.

recounting the lived history and collecting, preparing and consuming foods from that landscape. Part of the opening sequence for each episode helps set the tone as sweeping aerial views of the New Zealand coastline are accompanied by sparse, relaxing piano chords and Al Brown's words,

"The coast is a place unto itself. Since people first arrived it's played a huge part in our lives, sustaining us, transporting us. A place of work and play that has shaped not only our land, but who we are as New Zealanders. In this series I travel seven different coastlines exploring the connection that Kiwis have with the coast and meeting the characters that are the coasters" ("Island Bay to Pencarrow Head", 22/01/11).

Food is featured in a way that avoids capitalist exchange through its gathering from nature in the context of "traditional" and survival foods. This is nicely illustrated in a scene from the final episode of *Coasters* as Brown wanders along a deserted beach and says, "After being well sustained by land and sea I leave my friends and continue south down this magical part of the coast" ("Taranaki", 5/03/13).

*The Food Truck* focuses on contemporary New Zealand but with a nostalgic focus on many of the notions of comfort and security which are popularly associated with a period stretching from the 1950's to 1970's. The show's narrative underpinnings is of a chef wishing to replicate fast and processed food forms with enhanced health benefits (in a food truck kitchen no less) which he then hopes to persuade consumers to buy at public events. The opening for each episode helps set-up the narrative proposition where images of commodity brands such as Coca-Cola and McDonalds are merged with shots of obese people walking or eating. These shots are accompanied by gentle banjo music and the lines, "Kiwis love their food and they love it fast. But with more than a third of Kiwis tipping the scales it's time for a tasty new menu" ("Sea food", 22/04/12). Each show's narrative centres on overcoming challenges as Van de Elzen struggles towards a deadline by which he has to have formulated and tested his innovative healthy alternatives to common fast foods. He then faces a final challenge as his creations are tested in a competitive food marketplace to see if he has been able to deliver a healthy, popular and value for money fast food offering. Nostalgia is wielded subtly throughout the narrative as we are asked to think warmly about our early encounters with branded commodities, modern forms of consumption and the construction of "Kiwi traditions" associated with them, even though their deleterious effects on health are acknowledged and "corrected."

While we have a case for placing these texts in broad opposition on the premodernity-postmodernity binary, I have identified three main areas of unity which negate the impact of modernity through the articulation of mythical pasts and their projection as guides to the future. These take the form of differing visions of a utopic New Zealand which have three epicentres; the restoration of independent foodways, the amelioration of the shock of change in modernity and the restoration of time and space. *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* use visions of the past that suppress certain realities in order to construct, "...a fantasy of

utopia for its audience” (Dika, 2003, p.127). Andreas Huyssen provides an insight into the link between how memory of the past reflects our hopes for the future when he says,

“Nostalgia itself however is not the opposite of utopia, but, as a form of memory, always implicated, even productive in it. After all it is the ideology of modernisation itself that has given nostalgia its bad name and we do not need to abide by that judgement” (1995, p.88).

Utopic visions of New Zealand society recontextualise modernity and comfortably absorb it into a national fabric. These comforting visions of New Zealand culture manifest themselves in how both narratives handle the loss of independence and the freedom that comes with “Big Food” (and global transnational dominance generally) and the whole-scale commercialisation of foodways.

### **Using the Past to Negate “Big Food” and the Globalisation on New Zealand Foodways**

New Zealand’s independence is particularly vulnerable. It is a small and isolated island state adjacent to a powerful Australia and increasingly dependent for trade on the developing economic powerhouse of the wider Asia-Pacific region. The New Zealand economy is still transitioning from its historic trading ties with Britain (and the gateway this provided to wider European markets) and increasingly its financial and commercial interests are foreign owned.<sup>21</sup> These threats to perceived independence are negotiated within the texts by using nostalgia to help create a number of compelling myths. Firstly, that there is a lineage of consumer empowerment and choice that persists to this day. Secondly, that there is a tradition of independence in national foodways which is reasserted in the narratives to sidestep or demonise “Big Box” supermarkets and “Big Food” corporations. Thirdly past notions of time and space which relate to specific periods of comparative independence, freedom, wealth and security are reconjured as a means of smoothing over the realities of living in present day New Zealand.

The first myth is underpinned by fairness in exchange. This is a concept that utilises the notion that in the past there is a form of reciprocity, negotiation and engagement in the way that we transact for food, goods, services or knowledge in society. My contention is that forms of exchange differ as we move along the premodernity–postmodernity binary. There is a move from gifting and obligation sharing where forms of negotiation can take place to more formalised capitalist exchange mechanisms such as the use of currency for transactions where pricing is set, often without individual debate or input. Superficially, we can place both texts in opposition to one another within this binary construct. *Coasters* weaves a vision of sharing and gifting where capitalist exchange mechanisms appear to be sidestepped. *The Food Truck*, in opposition, turns modern consumption into a celebration of consumerism. The exchange process is handled differently in both texts yet to the same end in their attempt to reflect a utopic vision of fairness and empowerment within contemporary New Zealand society.

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<sup>21</sup> For example all of New Zealand’s main trading banks with the exception of the comparatively new state owned KiwiBank are owned offshore (particularly by Australian parent banks).

In the narrative of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck*, “fairness” is exhibited as highly mythologised fantasy. In *Coasters*, food is sourced in order to be prepared and shared. Food is never purchased and retailers are never visited. Rather, any exchange is based on gifting. Examples would be Al Brown filmed pulling herring, turbot, blue cod, snapper and crayfish from the sea or gathering shellfish such as kina, pupu, pipi and cockles.<sup>22</sup> Where Brown is not actively involved in catching or gathering the food it is gifted to him. For example, he is given a bucket of whitebait in episode two and a parcel of hangi in episode three.<sup>23</sup> <sup>24</sup> This theme is summed up in episode five when Brown is collecting cockles in the Purangi estuary on the Coromandel Peninsular, “You look around us, it’s just so Kiwi you know. Bending over and getting a feed, it’s so simple, it’s so New Zealand” (“Coromandel”, 19/02/11). The fairness of exchange on display and its pre-capitalist lineage is symbolised by Brown’s preparation of the food in return for the tales and experiences of his hosts, with whom he is sharing the food.

*The Food Truck* on the other hand is a narrative based on the primacy of choice and the agency of consumerism in providing fairness in exchange. It presents a reality reflective of Huysen’s view that “There is no pure space outside of commodity culture, however much we may desire such a space” (2003, p.19). The utopic vision of an enfranchised and regent consumer base within New Zealand society is precisely echoed in the narrative structure for each episode. We are provided with statistics on the amount or value of consumption of the fast food commodity in question. Van de Elzen then does homework with corporate suppliers and consumers. After formulating some healthy alternatives Van de Elzen tests these on members of the public who provide feedback on taste, pricing and value for money. Ultimately Van de Elzen puts himself in competition with other fast food suppliers in order to prove his healthier options can attract consumer expenditure. The narrative overtly embraces commodity fetishism in food exchange which is neatly summed up by David Sutton as, “...the process by which objects are compared based on a price derived from their market value rather than on the history of labour relations that went into producing them” (2001, p.64). Fairness is embedded in notions of consumer sovereignty that are expressed as freedom of (consumer) choice. This freedom is implied as one that has existed since the advent of modern commodity foods in New Zealand.

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<sup>22</sup> Snapper is a type of fish found in New Zealand Waters and most tropical and sub-tropical ocean regions. Kina is a sea urchin endemic to the New Zealand coastline. Pupu is an indigenous shellfish also known as “Cats eyes”. Pipi is a shellfish native to New Zealand and found in tidal sandbanks.

<sup>23</sup> Whitebait are immature fish typically between 250mm-500mm in size that spawn in the river estuaries of New Zealand.

<sup>24</sup> A hangi is a traditional Māori way of preparing food where it is wrapped in leaves and buried in a hole with hot stones to cook. The nature of the food preparation dictates that this is usually a social occasion involving a large number of people.

The expansion of transnational commodity foodways in New Zealand can be traced to the 1950's. As examples of the arrival of global food brands, Kellogg's breakfast cereals and Unilever food brands first arrived in the 1950's.<sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup> Global food giant Nestle first started selling the popular local food brand Maggi and Nescafé instant coffee in New Zealand in 1952 and 1958 respectively.<sup>27</sup> The increasing prevalence of these global brands walked hand in hand with developments in food retailing during this period. New Zealand's first supermarket "Foodtown" opened in the Auckland suburb of Ōtāhuhu in June 1958 (New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2013).

The evolution of consumerism and consumerist sentiment was a common reaction to globalised foodways and increased commodification in other nations. Notions of consumer empowerment can be highly seductive and a consumerist focus on weaving fantasies has been found by British television theorist Charlotte Brunson to be key development in the U.K. lifestyle television genre (in which she includes food programming) (2003, p.10). Yet in embracing notions of fairness and the agency of choice in capitalist exchange mechanisms *The Food Truck* walks a perilous line in any articulation of utopian fantasy centred on commodity transaction. This was highlighted by Sutton and Vournelis in their study of food shows on Greek television (2009, p.149). They investigated audience responses to televised foods and the myths they weaved and found commodified nostalgia could reside in these shows which was suggestive of, "...a much more complex integration of these ideas into their everyday lives" (2009, p.162). *The Food Truck* implies a tradition of consumer empowerment and recasts this as a core component of its narrative. In doing so it papers over many of the tensions and limitations in consumer choice implicit in a small economy.

It is apparent that notions of fairness in exchange have become one of the hallmarks of a mythical New Zealand. Kiwis share, give and receive and where money changes hands they are empowered consumers with choices and an active role in the development of commodities. Notions of the past ways of exchanging food are brought to the fore in *Coasters* and are negotiated in *The Food Truck* through an implied tradition of "Kiwis" as more than passive consumers of marketed commodities. This impulse may not be unique to New Zealanders, however, it is perhaps more compelling when the relative vulnerability of a small an isolated economy is taken into account. This leads directly to a consideration of how notions

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<sup>25</sup> Kellogg's did not establish offices in New Zealand until thirty years after it did in neighbouring Australia. <http://www.kellogghistory.com/history.html>

<sup>26</sup> Unilever had been selling soap in New Zealand since 1919 but food brands such as Streets, Rosella and John West did not appear until the late 1950's. <http://www.unilever.co.nz/aboutus/ourhistory/history-australasia.aspx>

<sup>27</sup> The Nestlé trade mark was first registered in New Zealand in Wellington in 1885 and a sales office in Auckland in 1913. Despite importing some Australian made product and an interest in local confectionery business Heards Ltd., mainstream consumer brands did not entered the New Zealand market in any force until the 1950's <http://www.nestle.co.nz/aboutus/history>

of the past can reconcile the reality of how individuals source food in New Zealand, which is overwhelmingly via a trip to the local supermarket.

The second myth created is that the broad and independent foodways of the past still exist. This is created by recasting how food is sourced and how it is produced. A key element of capitalist exchange within New Zealand foodways is the relationship with supermarkets.<sup>28</sup> If nostalgia for pre-capitalist gifting or notions of consumer agency are hallmarks of a utopic New Zealand, how do these constructs reconcile themselves with supermarket shopping? Supermarkets are New Zealand's main source of households food and in 2011, New Zealanders spent NZ\$11.6 Billion on packaged products in supermarkets, the majority of that being food (Nielsen, p.14, 2012). Also frustrating notions of fairness and freedom is the fact that New Zealand is serviced by a supermarket duopoly between the Australian owned Woolworths Group and a home grown cooperative, Foodstuffs New Zealand. When we consider the premodernity-postmodernity binary we can see that both show's narratives work to overcome a fundamental contradiction between notions of freedom of choice in traditional sourcing and the relative, powerlessness and uniformity of modern food sourcing in New Zealand. *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* employ the same tactics to negotiate tensions around supermarkets and commodified foodways by demonizing this food source and reconjuring more traditional notions of foraging.

*Coasters* approach is to sidestep any notion of shopping or capitalist exchange in its nostalgic offering of fresh foods gathered or caught at the source. There are only two exceptions where supermarkets are acknowledged, but in doing so only to highlight the inferiority of their offering and their role in alienating us from traditional notions of food sourcing. In episode one Brown is in a conversation with commercial fisherman Dan Dellabarca, who sells fish directly from his fishing boat. After it ties up to the wharf in the Wellington suburb of Eastbourne, Brown comments,

“This fish will eat twice as good as any fish you'll buy from a supermarket and at half the price and you're getting the whole relationship thing going as well. Filleted in front of your eyes, talk to the guys that caught it , they can take you through what the species are about... it's just brilliant “  
 (“Island Bay to Pencarrow Head”, 22/01/11).

In episode seven Brown has just picked organic ingredients for a salad from the Taranaki garden of Christina Cawley and addressing her states, “Unbelievable the taste difference between something from your garden and something from your supermarket , I mean it's like two completely different things” (“Taranaki”, 5/03/13). This latter statement helps frame how *Coasters* goes beyond gathering fish and shellfish to a broader range of ingredients.

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<sup>28</sup> The distinction between a large self-service grocery store and a supermarket is blurred. However, a supermarket can be defined as a large, stand-alone, self-service store with car parking around it. They generally have large selling areas, self-service and many check-out lanes. <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/food-shops/page-6>

*Coasters* also sidesteps “shopping” for any ingredients via its choice of ingredients. In episode five guest Susan Grearson is seen picking herbs directly from her Coromandel garden to accompany the snapper dish. In episode six Brown visits a Mahinga Kai cultural garden “A community resource where people can connect to food sources” and where guest Matakiwi Wakefield states, “We love quality in our foods ...we can’t get it any better” (“Banks Peninsular”, 26/02/11). In episode seven Brown and Christina Cawley pick salad vegetables from her garden and in the following exchange highlight how utopic New Zealand foodways do not include supermarkets,

AB: “I can’t believe it, it so perfect isn’t it, all organic [as Brown carries a bowl of rocket and picks tomatoes]”.

CC: “I know, not a trace of a spray and it’s living the dream, absolutely living the dream and being self-sufficient and having all these organic vegetables never having to buy any, or fruit, it’s fantastic” (“Taranaki”, 5/03/13).

This notion of direct sourcing and nostalgia for pre-capitalist gifting exchange, as an antithesis to supermarket shopping, has also been identified by Sutton,

“Food exchanges serve as a generalised reminder of a community life in which the roads of obligation are constantly open, not having been short circuited by the spectre of balanced reciprocity, buying food in a supermarket, which is really not reciprocity at all” (2001, p.160).

It is clear how *Coasters* sidesteps supermarket sourcing, and this is made easier by its narrative positioning in a form of premodernity, but how is this issue tackled by *The Food Truck* with nostalgic temporality coinciding almost perfectly with the advent of supermarkets in New Zealand?

*The Food Truck* responds to the tension between traditional notions of fairness in exchange and the dominance of supermarkets in our foodways by making the connection between supermarkets, packaged goods and unhealthiness. Supermarkets are dismissed throughout the narrative and avoided as a location for purchasing products. A good example is in episode three where Van de Elzen needs to make healthier potato crisps and corn snacks. Forty seconds into the show we are presented with images of someone hand harvesting potatoes from the earth accompanied by angelic classical music and a narrated voice-over extolling the nutritional virtues and vitamin content of potatoes. The narration then asks, “So how could something so beautiful become.....so crisp?” The imagery switches to shots of potato crisp packs on supermarket shelves and packs being placed in supermarket trolleys. As the music changes to an imposing jazz horn ensemble the voice-over states,

“Us Kiwis munch our way through sixty four million bags of chips a year, and that’s just the potato ones.<sup>29</sup> There are corn chips and rice snacks, all of which are at least thirty percent pure

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<sup>29</sup> In New Zealand “chip” is used as an alternative term for a “crisp”.

fat and loaded with artificial flavours and preservatives. New Zealand is headed for a chip-wreck” (“Potato chips”, 29/04/12).

Constant imagery of supermarket shopping is deployed throughout this monologue making a clear and unambiguous connection between the location of sale, packaged food and unhealthy outcomes. Later in the same episode Van de Elzen sets out to make a hummus dip and further demonises the channel, “I want to make mine better and more nutritious than what you’ll buy in the supermarket” (“Potato chips”, 29/04/12). In episode seven Van de Elzen is set the challenge of making healthier ice creams. This episode creates a discursive juxtaposition where supermarket imagery of ice cream tub buying and a narrative of unhealthiness is set against his own efforts to create healthy ice blocks made from vegetables. Van de Elzen is at length to highlight the health benefits of an ice block he has developed using vegetables “I’ve never seen a vegetable block in a supermarket for sale” (“Ice cream”, 27/05/12).

*The Food Truck* also offers narratives of nostalgia around more traditional retail formats. In episode two, Van de Elzen reminisces about buying fish from roadside carts and in episode six he visits a butcher’s shop with the traditional signage and layout of a New Zealand butchery of the 1950’s to 1970’s. *The Food Truck* asks us to rethink foraging not as a browsing of different natural sources, but as a browsing of alternative retail channels. Van de Elzen visits a wide range of retail formats including dedicated ice cream parlours, petrol stations, markets and convenience stores, but assiduously avoids the predominant mode of supermarket shopping. This then begs the question of how nostalgia handles commodity food products in light of increased global standardisation. In particular how this standardisation impacts on our notions of independence. Nostalgia operates within both texts as a mechanism to restore a form of adjacency which once existed between food production and consumption. The narratives negotiate our increasing global interdependence through appeals to notions of free and independent national foodways.

New Zealanders are particularly sensitive to global foodways, the business of food and threats to that business. The modern state of New Zealand is and always has been a society based on the production of food. New Zealand’s largest company, responsible for 25% of all national exports and the world’s largest dairy corporation is the Auckland-based Fonterra.<sup>30</sup> Paradoxically, despite the economic focus on food production there is an increasing risk to the security and safety of local foodways. Winsome Parnell, associate professor of nutrition at New Zealand’s Otago University was quoted in a *New Zealand Listener* magazine article by Joanne Black as, “...becoming increasingly concerned about New Zealand’s lack of sustainability in food production, as more New Zealand consumed food is sourced offshore” (2011, p.19).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Fonterra Co-operative Group Limited is a co-operative with the majority of New Zealand’s dairy farmers as members. It has a turnover of approximately NZ\$20 Billion and is responsible for approximately 30% of global dairy exports.

<sup>31</sup> *New Zealand Listener* is a popular weekly current affairs and entertainment magazine first published in 1939.

The centrality of food to New Zealand society mean that threats to its quality and supply has the potential to cause great anxiety as it calls directly into question one of the underpinnings of the modern New Zealand state. It is of little surprise that both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* obscure this difficult paradox by drawing on mythical past notions of independent foodways and purity.

Despite the basic premise of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* being in opposition on the premodernity-postmodernity binary, both articulate a shared vision of Independent local foodways. *Coasters* emphasises independence through the construction of continuity around natural foraging. Nostalgic notions of food gathering in the past are cast as an activity New Zealanders can still freely indulge in. This sensibility is revealed on a number of occasions, for example, in episode one, Brown fishes for mullet (herring) with two friends (Lucky and Magan) and states, "You can pick up a feed very quickly.... After fifteen minutes of fishing there is enough mullet for Lucky and Magan's family and lunch for the next coaster I'm meeting" ("Island Bay to Pencarrow Head", 22/01/11). In episode two Brown passes a whitebaiter on a river bank, "She's got enough for a feed" or in episode five where guest Bruce McLaren looks out over the Purangi river estuary on the Coromandel Peninsular and states, "You can just go out there and catch a fish...it's just magic" ("Westport to Charleston", 29/01/11; "Coromandel", 19/02/11). A key component of the construction of a fantasy around traditional foraging is an articulation of a process through which foods are de-fetishised by revealing the means of production and personalising the producers and their local heritage.<sup>32</sup>

Premodern notions of foodways exhibit adjacency, with direct and unobscured relationships between production and consumption. *Coasters* negotiates modern, commodified, transnational foodways and mythologises them by placing Brown directly within the means of production. In *Coasters* commercial food harvesting is featured alongside more traditional notions of foraging, the labour process is revealed and time is spent talking to "producers" about this. In episode one Brown spends time gutting fish on a commercial fishing boat with Dan Dellabarca. Episode two finds Brown on a commercial trawler, working the machinery and catching turbot with Jack Devine. Episode four and six finds Brown on professional lobster fishing boats, lifting pots with Mark Pychers and then with Garry Brittendon. In each case Brown closes the proximity between mechanised food harvesting and consumption by retrieving the food to be eaten directly from the net or pot, literally the moment it is pulled from the sea. In this process *Coasters* demystifies modern foodways and replicates traditional notions of transparency and adjacency in food gathering.

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<sup>32</sup> In this sense the fetishisation of food is derived from a form of commodity fetishism. This is the process by which objects are compared based on a price derived from their market value rather than on the history of labour relations that went into producing them.

An additional narrative used in *Coasters* to convey notions of pastness and trust to these mechanised foodways is where producers employ examples of personal nostalgia as emblematic of tradition and collective identity. This acts to further smooth over anxieties around modern foodways. Good examples of this process are afforded by Dellabarca and Devine who both describe the tradition of fishing that has been in their families for generations. Accompanying black and white family photographs help create a patina of nostalgia and tradition around the production process being revealed. Brown tells us, “Dan Dellabarca is the latest in a long line of Eastbourne Italian fishermen” (“Island Bay to Pencarrow Head”, 22/01/11). In episode one, a three minute sequence at the end of the show is rich in personal history, featuring Dellabarca and his boatbuilding uncle, all accompanied by shots of old black and white photographs. As Annette Kuhn has identified, “Personal and family photographs figure importantly in cultural memory, and memory work with photographs offers a particularly productive route to understanding the social and cultural uses and instrumentalities of memory” (2007, p.283). The access to collective memory and identity that these illustrated personal narratives provide is glimpsed in the commentary of Dellabarca as he guts fish on his fishing boat and tells Brown,

“Just sort of carrying on. Dad sort of went fishing and my uncle as well, now they’re getting on a bit I’ve taken over. My grandparents came over, eh... the early nineteen hundreds I think [cut to shot of an old woman with young children on the beach with fishing nets behind her] and settled in Eastbourne, had a family [shot of two moustachioed trilby wearing fishermen holding up nets in a small fishing dinghy] and we’ve been fishing the area ever since [shot of men pulling a lobster pot over the side of a boat, then to another of cloth capped men on a fishing boat at sea]. My grandmother had [shot of an old woman in a garden with boats pulled up behind her] an old butter knife she’d sharpened up and she’d fillet [view returns to Dellabarca talking] all the fish and put it in a basket, walk round Eastbourne and sell it” (“Island Bay to Pencarrow Head”, 22/01/11).

A further example of how personal nostalgia is used to help restore traditional notions of the adjacency of foodways and hence ease anxieties around modern food sourcing is in episode two when Brown stands on board a modern fishing trawler off New Zealand’s West Coast. He asks owner Jack Devine, “So how long you been fishing here? “, to which Devine replies, “The first time I crossed the bar I was six days old.<sup>33</sup> Me father ran a trawler out of Westport here, me mother was the crew” (“Westport to Charleston”, 29/01/11). As this commentary takes place there are black and white shots of Devine’s mother and of an old drawler tied-up alongside. At this point I need to highlight that beyond the direct association with food, personal nostalgia is deployed widely throughout *Coasters* as a means of associating personal pasts with collective identity and shared pasts.

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<sup>33</sup> “The bar” is a notorious sand bar that sits across the mouth of Westport harbour on the South Island’s west coast. In rough weather or adverse tidal conditions it can make entering the harbour an extremely risky enterprise.

The use of what influential collective memory theorist Paul Connerton sees as “life histories”, enables wider social remembering as, “The narrative of one life is part of an interconnecting set of narratives; it is embedded in the story of those groups from which individuals derive their identity” (1989, p.18,21). These individual reminiscences about early family connections with New Zealand are often accompanied in *Coasters* by black and white photographic vignettes which bring these personal narratives to life. There are acknowledged risks in using archival footage within narratives in this way. Media historian Anton Kaes has pointed out, “The sheer mass of historical images transmitted by today’s media weakens the link between public memory and personal experience” (1992, p.317). However, the narrative’s direct linking of this imagery to individual personal history goes some way towards restoring this link.

The use of personal histories is a particularly powerful route to enabling the creation of fantasy and myth. Altaf Merchant and Gregory Rose, who when looking at the relationship between nostalgic messages on brand choices, found that personal statements that led to self-referencing were important in, “...facilitating fantasies about past eras and emotions” (2012, p.6). In *Coasters* personal referencing to ease food anxieties is helped by the narrative structure of a food travelogue, however, the narrative of challenge which underpins *The Food Truck* requires a subtly different approach to ease anxieties around the independence of New Zealand foodways and culture.

*The Food Truck* negotiates anxieties around independence by weaving mythical notions of national foodways based on the recontextualisation of modern commodity foodstuffs. The narrative utilises two mechanisms to achieve this, firstly the elevation of branded commodity foods to the status of national icons and secondly through weaving a web of distrust around “Big Food”, the transnational food corporations that dominate modern food supply in New Zealand. To my first point, we are reminded of, “Kiwi icon, Rashuns” and that “In New Zealand baked beans and Watties go together like black singlets and stubbies” (“Potato chips”, 29/04/12; “Takeaway breakfasts”, 06/05/13).<sup>34 35 36</sup> Flavoured ice blocks “Fruju” are recontextualised as “After school classics” and to the accompaniment of old archive photographs we are reminded that, “L&P has been a true Kiwi Icon since a spring was found in this paddock in 1907” (“Ice cream”, 27/05/12; “Soft drinks”, 15/04/12).<sup>37 38</sup> *The Food Truck* reflects on

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<sup>34</sup> “Rashuns” are a cheese flavoured extruded corn snack manufactured by Bluebird foods, part of the New York based PepsiCo Corporation.

<sup>35</sup> Watties are a New Zealand based pre-packaged foods company owned by the Pittsburgh based H.J. Heinz Company.

<sup>36</sup> “Stubbies” is a colloquial term for shorts or short pants.

<sup>37</sup> “Fruju” is a fruit flavoured ice block manufactured by Tip Top Ice Cream, a subsidiary of the New Zealand owned Fonterra Dairy cooperative.

<sup>38</sup> L&P (Lemon and Paeroa) is a soft drink manufactured by the Atlanta based Coca-Cola Company.

consumption of everyday branded commodities and in doing so evokes nostalgia for everyday food pleasures. These products of modernity and their more recent situation in the postmodern are projected as comforting and known. An example of this is in episode four when Van de Elzens stands outside the Watties factory and extols the virtue of, "That can of baked beans that we all know and we all trust and we all recognise" ("Takeaway breakfasts", 06/05/13).

In the New Zealand context, casting an aura of comfort and trusted pastness around branded commodities uncovers a tension which highlights this as a high risk approach to projecting visions of national independence. The overwhelming majority of branded commodities that *The Food Truck* asks us to feel nostalgic about, although once locally owned, are now produced by transnational corporations. However, the narrative negotiates this by casting a web of mistrust around transnational corporations which reinforces national boundaries and helps negotiate the standardising impulse of modernity and the threat to national identity and independence. The subtle (and in some cases not so subtle) weaving of distrust and anti-corporate sentiment is aided by an ongoing David and Goliath narrative between Van de Elzen and the packaged food industry.

In a 2012 radio interview, Van de Elzen stated that the show's premise was to "...take on the fast food giants", however, he was not against the fast food industry and it was not the show's intention to "...ditch them", "It wasn't that sort of show" (The Mike Hosking Breakfast, 2012). Despite this assertion a strong theme of distrust is constructed in Van de Elzen's encounters with "Big Food" corporations. In episode one there is a two minute segment where Van de Elzen visits the Coca-Cola plant in Auckland in order to get some insight into the ingredients of L&P soft drink, which he then intends to replicate in a healthier form. The managing director of Coca-Cola New Zealand, Irishman George Adams, is placed in a discursive framework which constructs notions of distrust and obduracy,

VdE: "What is your most key ingredient?"

GA: "Oooo I can't tell you that, you would genuinely be shocked"

VdE: "So the ratio of sugar syrup to water?"

GA: "I'm not going to give that one away"

VdE: "Bubbles, big small?"

GA: "Big, small, I'm not going to tell you exactly"

VdE: [as he smells a bin containing the flavouring] "Smells like essential oils. I'm getting more orange than I am lemon..... You're just going to agree with me anyway!"

GA: "Ye probably, probably"

VdA: "There's probably no orange in there anyway!"

GA: "I'm not going to make it too easy for you. I'll take the secret to my grave probably" ("Soft drinks", 15/04/12).

Likewise in episode four Van de Elzen visits the Watties baked bean factory and ask an unnamed spokesperson for some insights into the sauce used to mix with the cooked beans,

VdE: "How many (spices) are in here [looking into a bin of ingredients]? Can you tell me?"

Watties: "No..no..no I can't"

VdE: "Is that paprika?"

Watties: "Maybe"

VdE: "I'm thinking a little bit of ginger?" -

Watties: "Possibly"

VdE: "I'll say there are nine different spices"

Watties: "I'll leave you guessing"

This is not to suggest that either corporation should be obliged to forfeit their intellectual property. Coca-Cola's secrecy around ingredients and recipes is legendary and understandable. It is more that these corporations are represented as distrustful according to the show's discourse. This discourse of distrust is also aided by the weaving of a narrative where these corporations are cast as Goliath to Van de Elzen's David.

The text uses statements of doubt from these corporations which casts them as arrogant and also creates a further impulse of empathy towards Van de Elzen as a "Kiwi battler".<sup>39</sup> This is reinforced by Van de Elzen's own articulations of opposition. In episode one George Adams of Coca-Cola states "I don't think he'll get L&P right. Why is that? Cos it's a secret, that's why" ("Soft drinks", 15/04/12). In episode four the Watties spokesperson states, "If Michael thinks he can make baked beans that are tastier and better than Watties, good luck to him. I don't think Michael will succeed" ("Takeaway breakfasts", 06/05/12). In episode seven where Van de Elzen is set the challenge of selling more ice creams in ninety minutes than Mr Whippy<sup>40</sup>. Mr Whippy's Carl Russell states, "I'm pretty confident. There's nothing more joyful than having kids run out like I'm a God or something [he is then seen laughing]" ("Ice cream", 27/05/12). *The Food Truck* also articulates this direct opposition in the dialogue. Examples of these statements include, "Maybe I can do Coke better than Coke", "I think I can beat Mr Whippy at his own game" or "One man and one truck have a mission, to overtake and beat the packaged snack industry" ("Soft drinks", 15/04/12; "Ice cream", 27/05/12; "Potato chips", 29/04/12). It is clear that the premodernity-postmodernity binary helps identify how the tensions between modern foodways and national independence are defused. If the narratives of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* left these tensions unresolved they would destabilise both texts' ability to make statements about a strong and independent New Zealand springing from a mythical past.

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<sup>39</sup> "Kiwi battler" is a term often used by New Zealanders describe someone who embodies what manly regard as national traits such as fierce independence and tenacity in the face of adversity.

<sup>40</sup> Mr Whippy is a van based mobile ice cream seller.

## Nostalgia for Discontinuity and the Promises of the New

This leads us to a second set of unities that can be identified which centre on the treatment of change and discontinuity. Despite a superficial reading of these texts indicating opposition on the premodernity-postmodernity binary, I have identified that both texts unite in a nostalgia focused on our ability to embrace and live comfortably with the discontinuities attendant to modernity and to appreciate change. Kessous & Roux (2008) identified a distinction between nostalgia for the everyday, something that is established in life (fed by continuity) and concepts of nostalgia for the first time, or a moment that changed lives (instigated by discontinuity). It is not unreasonable to extend this thinking further to contend that there is nostalgia in both texts focused on the experience of change and discontinuity.

Discontinuity is a defining feature of human existence in New Zealand which stretches back into premodern times. Māori lore relates to an arrival, a new beginning, a discontinuity with an earlier time on the mythical homeland of Hawaiki. Change and discontinuity also describes the Māori experience of colonisation. European colonists and indeed settlers from other cultures have also been subject to the same notions of change and discontinuity with a past existence. While this can be treated as a time of great fear and threat, particularly by indigenous Māori, it is arguably more compelling for this break to be remembered by society as a time of new beginnings and opportunity. This is particularly pertinent today as the most recent top-line census results show that in 2013, a quarter of New Zealanders were born overseas (New Zealand Department of Statistics, 2013). This shared change and discontinuity is allegorically hinted at in the comments of artist John McLean in the final episode of *Coasters* where, in his nineteen painting series called *The Abandoned Farmer*, the mythical farmer settler finds happiness,

“He took to the sea, which in terms of this sort of allegory is he’s changing his element, you know he’s getting off this firm footing and um... he got onto the water, which is unfamiliar, to take himself into this another zone – he’s having arrived with people who’ve found joy” (“Taranaki”, 05/03/11).

In addition New Zealand national culture has, like many others, seen traditional social structures besieged by the impulses of modernity. My argument is that while each text may be focusing on a differing form of discontinuity relating to premodernity and modernity, both utilise nostalgia as a means for viewers to reflect warmly on the notion of change which is effectively recast as an inherent part of the New Zealand experience.

The emphasis that *Coasters* places throughout the narrative on premodern, pre-capitalist forms of encounter, while emblematic of signs of temporal continuity if traced to the present day, can also be read as nostalgia for discontinuity. Within the narrative, settlement and cultural encounter are at the epicentre of this change. This nostalgia is on the whole constructed as collectively held although it predominantly focuses on the experience of early European settlers transplanted from their original homeland.

Reflections on the Māori experience of discontinuity are mixed. There is an articulation of nostalgia for founding traditions but less comfort around the impact of initial British sovereignty. Nevertheless, the nostalgic discourse in *Coasters* can be read as a means of normalising the change that comes with colonisation undertaken at different times by, Māori, the colonial forbearers of many Pākehā New Zealanders and more recent arrivals from other global cultures.<sup>41</sup> It is nostalgia for the change that was required to settle one of the most isolated significant landmasses on the planet. This trend continues with such a significant proportion of the current population being born overseas into other cultural backgrounds. Change and discontinuity associated with modernity, and by extension, with globalization, are coded as unifying features of a shared past and an essential part of the experience of living in New Zealand society.

*The Food Truck* displays nostalgia for a different form of discontinuity that is more directly linked to the challenges of modernity. Within the narrative food is at the epicentre of this change. The transience of food commodity consumption, particularly in its fast and convenient form establishes a discontinuity with any conception of traditional foodways. There is nostalgia for the break with traditional foods and the incorporation into national foodways of new, pleasurable and convenient commodity forms such as canned drinks, frozen ice creams, burgers, and pre-packaged snacks. This nostalgia for change and discontinuity is also illustrated in *The Food Truck's* treatment of more recently introduced food styles from Asian cultures and their recontextualisation as embedded within New Zealand national food culture, albeit in the very recent past. Examples of this include reminding us in episode five that, "Indian takeaways did not arrive in New Zealand until the late 70's. Now we simply can't survive without that spicy stuff" or in episode eight, "Modern Sushi as we know it, didn't make its way from the land of the rising sun to the land of the long white cloud until the 1990's. Since then we've learned to love Sushi" ("Indian", 13/05/12; "Sushi", 03/06/12). So rather than preaching a reactionary dismissal of the changes accompanying modern and globalized foodways, *The Food Truck* attempts to celebrate their incorporation into New Zealand food culture.

*The Food Truck* is overt in its adoption of nostalgia for discontinuity wrought by modernity by, in essence, recasting notions of continuity within a much more bounded time frame for temporal reflection. The narrative asks us to reflect on a past that appears with few exceptions to go no further back than the 1940's and encompass commemoration for events as recent as the early 2000's. I argue that this exclusive focus on the changes of the latter twentieth century to the exclusion of a more comprehensive history of New Zealand makes the shocks of modernity more palatable. The narrative achieves this by avoiding a comparative time frame. There is no before or after modernity, we are asked to reflect on a past entirely encompassed within modernity. This last point leads directly to how *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* treat time and space in the context of modernity and a third set of discursive unities.

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<sup>41</sup> Pākehā is an indigenous Māori expression to describe people originally from Europe.

### Time, Space, Modernity and the Past

The third set of insights gained from the premodernity–postmodernity binary is how nostalgia is used in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* in order to create myths around our past relationship with time and space and how this is reflected in the present. The fact that these critical elements can be handled quite differently in both narratives highlights the importance and flexibility of nostalgia as a tool for handling the shock of modernity and maintaining notions of social cohesion. These fantasies ease anxieties about current and future lifestyles and the continuation of the New Zealand dream. Huyssen recognises the impact modernity has on conceptualisations of time and the imperative to use memory to reconfigure it when he states,

“The faster we are pushed into a global future that does not inspire confidence, the stronger we feel the desire to slow down, the more we turn to memory for comfort” (2003, p.25).

When we consider the presentation of time and space in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* they initially appear in opposition on the premodernity– postmodernity binary. *Coasters* presents a fantasy of time and space as plentiful, empty and unencumbered by modern notions of pace and privatised space. *The Food Truck* uses time to enable the narrative to replicate the tempo of modern life and uses spaces cast within the clutter of modern suburbia or collective spaces such as entertainment events. However both narratives are united in weaving differing forms of nostalgia to create myths around what time and space used to be and how this relates to the present. I will outline these by making a decisive division between time and space as each is effected differently by New Zealand’s relatively recent settlement and the desire for land which drove much of the European and earlier Māori immigration.<sup>42</sup>

I will first turn to how *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* reconfigure time. Narrative time within *Coasters* is constructed in two forms, it is linear and it presents past living as time rich. To my first point, time in *Coasters* is presented as linear in that it expresses a continuum from settlement through to the present day with a focus on the future most clearly articulated through hopes for future ecological restoration. Historian Michael Schudson (2011) highlights that there is much power derived from historic constructions centred on origination and this is reflected in its nostalgic repetition in *Coasters*. Episodes one, three and six open with discussions around initial Māori settlement and tradition. Episodes two, four and five start with a focus on early European contact either as farmers, hunters, prospectors or explorers. Beginnings are powerful nostalgic phenomena but as Foucault (1972) points out, we must be cautious in our treatment of them. Beginnings that are historically situated, “... can never be more than recommencements or occultation” (1972, p.27). Beginnings are thus artificial frameworks which when

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<sup>42</sup> New Zealand historian Michael King estimates the likely arrival of the first wave of human settlement (Māori) is within 100 years of 1350 and European settlement only began to take place in any numbers after 1842. (King, 2003, p47, 172).

superimposed on original stories can obscure or distort. This is precisely the quality which makes beginnings such a compelling element in the structuring of time, myth and fantasy woven by nostalgia.

Secondly, *Coasters*' leisurely pace echoes mythical conceptions of the availability of time in premodernity. Nostalgia for a perceived different pace of life in premodernity is powerfully constructed and it is reinforced by emphasising the memory of leisure time. There is the rebellion against time observed by Boym, "In a broader sense, nostalgia is rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress" (2011, p.452). Narrative temporality is constructed as a journey through the day, but more importantly, this journey is literally made at a walking pace reminiscent of premodernity. Brown is seen making his way on foot across beaches, over the cliffs and along coastal tracks from one encounter to another, able to spend his days gathering food, having leisurely conversations, cooking and eating. Where vehicles are used, the episodes largely subscribe to premodern modes of transport.<sup>43</sup> Although Brown uses ferries, fishing boats and modern charter vessels, he also paddles in sea kayaks, punts on traditional river skiffs and sails in the tall ships that would have brought early European settlers. Jean Baudrillard provides a useful intervention at this point as he articulates both the commodification of time which *Coasters* attempts to avoid and the treatment of time in primal societies whose temporality *Coasters* tries to emulate. *Coasters* rejects any notion of time as scarce or commodified and expresses a utopic counterpoint to Baudrillard's view that, "Divisible, abstract, measured time thus becomes homogeneous with the exchange-value system: it forms part of that system on the same basis as any other object" (1998, p.153). However in emphasising the abundance of time and rejecting objectification, the premodern narrative of *Coasters* fits neatly with another of Baudrillard's observations around the treatment of time in primal societies untouched by the imperatives of modernity,

"In primitive societies there is no time. The question of whether one 'has' time or not has no meaning there. Time there is nothing but the rhythm of repeated collective activities (the ritual of work and of feasting)" (1998, p.152).

Time is also recontextualised as luxuriant and ample through the construction of analogies between time and leisure. This construct is reflected in the focus on summer holidays, its evocation of childhood and the time wealth and relaxation this implies.

*Coasters* often situates the memory of time within leisure settings. For example in episode three Brown mixes with holidaymakers at a holiday camp ground on Urapukapuka Island in the Bay of Islands, "Will you look at that, that's why we live in this country. Camp ground on an extraordinary bit of beach, lots of kids, families, laughter, colour" ("Bay of Islands", 05/02/11). Episode five sees Brown mixing with holidaymakers enjoying Coromandel's Hot Water Beach and the adjacent camp ground where, "...great

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<sup>43</sup> Road vehicles are only used twice and briefly in the entire series.

summer holiday memories were made" ("Coromandel", 19/02/11). In this same episode Brown clearly articulates this reformulation of time and a yearning for slowed temporality with his statement,

"The Holiday Coast clings to that great Kiwi tradition, it's a place to get away to where memories of long hot summers are made and like the bays and the beaches stretch on and on for ever"  
("Coromandel", 19/02/11).

This is what the recontextualisation of time within the narrative of leisure does; it stretches notions of time away from the regimented construct associated with modernity.

Narrative time in *The Food Truck* is also cast in two forms. Firstly the nostalgic timeframe is on the whole, situated within the realms of living memory and the structures of modernity and secondly time is utilised as a device to power the narrative. To the first point, *The Food Truck's* temporality is bounded by the evolution of the fast food and modern packaged food commodity form. As I outlined earlier, the widespread availability of branded commodity foods in New Zealand stems from the 1950's and more recent food narratives enabled by multicultural influences stem from the 1970's (Indian foods) to the 1990's (sushi). Articulations of pastness prior to the 1950's are limited to only two examples.<sup>44</sup> The overriding temporality of nostalgic referencing has its epicentre in conceptions of New Zealand society during the late nineteen fifties through to the nineteen seventies. This collective popular memory of the 1950's in New Zealand, as with much of the western world, is associated with, "...full (male) employment, increased access to housing and consumer goods" (Duruz, 1999, p.238). There is a nostalgic return to the security and safety of childhood for a large proportion of the population that we could classify as "Baby Boomers".<sup>45</sup>

To the second point, time is cast as representative of the urges of modernity in its use as an engine to drive narrative structure and tension. In doing this it defuses the modern tempo of life and anxieties around time poverty by reducing these to less threatening entertainment forms. An example of how modern tempos are adopted by the narrative for entertainment is in episode seven. Viewers are reminded of the comforting past pleasures of ice cream consumption and this is linked to a well-known and nostalgically evocative brand Mr Whippy. This then sets up a time-bound challenge where not only does Van de Elzen have to develop and test healthy alternatives by a certain deadline, but he then has the challenge of selling more frozen treats than Mr Whippy in a consumer contest lasting only ninety minutes. The reformulation of the relationship with these branded products as in some way "traditional" help set up the

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<sup>44</sup> The first example is an image collage in episode two which discusses oysters being, "New Zealand's first fast food fad" in the late 1880's and the second is in episode four where a reconstructed newsreel collage highlights the origins of Watties who, "...began canning baked beans for soldiers during World War Two" ("Sea food", 22/04/12; "Takeaway breakfasts", 06/05/13).

<sup>45</sup> "Baby Boomers" are classified by the US Census bureau as those born mid 1946 to 1964.  
<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-09.pdf>

extent of the challenge that faces Van de Elzen and amplifies the drama of each episode's time bound narrative. In essence the fast pace and urgency of modern living and the impact this can have on modern lifestyles is diffused by co-opting this tempo as an engine to drive entertainment values for the viewer.

I now need to consider how space is reformulated in both texts and how nostalgia plays a role in smoothing over the contradictions of life in a landscape of open spaces yet where ownership and land usage patterns limit access. Once again nostalgia is used in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* to create a fantasy past with a freedom of space which is implied to continue to this day. Within a New Zealand context, the relationship of space and the past is highly complex. Indigenous people's spaces were characterised by a greater prevalence of native bush and wild spaces yet they were bounded by Iwi or Hapū territoriality.<sup>46 47</sup> Early settlers would have come to New Zealand precisely in search of space. The carving up and privatising (or indeed confiscation) of the land progressively excluded both Māori and later settlers from access to the open spaces that had been part of the appeal of the early colony. The fact that today New Zealand is overwhelmingly an urban society pays testament to the progressive exclusion that took place hand in hand with advanced agricultural development. Nostalgia is used in both texts in differing ways as a tool to weave a myth around the availability of space in the past and how this relates to present and future conceptions of it in New Zealand. Social scientist and geographer Doreen Massey (1994) has argued, nostalgia is a multi-faceted response to a fear of the loss of both time and space wrought by the spread of globalisation and technology. *Coasters* presents a vision of a past of unhindered access to largely rural space and nature which continues unabated to this day. By comparison *The Food Truck* embraces nostalgia for a picturesque suburbia and a legacy of happy memories that the shared spaces of traditional entertainment events provide.

*Coasters* expresses an idealised sense of space based on mythical conceptions of its availability, proximity and utilisation in the past. Brown walks freely across open spaces, vast tracts of beach and rolling hills. Modern urban environments are consciously avoided and where inescapable, as in the episodes based around the coastlines of Wellington and New Plymouth, urban scenes are utilised to highlight where once open space and shorelines had been. In episode one Ray Ahiene Mercer drives past Wellington airport (in a 1930's American Dodge car) towards Moa Point, "Fifteen minutes from The Beehive you can sit down here and civilization seems to be a long, long way away" ("Island Bay to

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<sup>46</sup> This is not to imply that the pre-European Māori population were not highly agrarian. Their skills were such that with the introduction of European crops and iron tools in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century they were able, "...to move rapidly from subsistence gardening to commercial agriculture" (Te Ara: Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, 2014, accessed online).

<sup>47</sup> Iwi is a Māori term for a tribal group, while hapū is a smaller sub-tribe or clan.

Pencarrow Head”, 22/01/11).<sup>48</sup> This narrative focus on space and separation is further nuanced by notions of encroachment and threats to space. In episode five Brown visits the holiday resort of Hahei Beach on the Coromandel with the lament, “As recently as the 1960’s, the only settlement at Hahei was a single farm” (“Coromandel”, 19/02/11). In the same Coromandel episode guest Rod McLaren is featured as the custodian of the Stella Everett Memorial Park and in looking out over the rolling hills to the estuary laments,

“The whole area you know is just developing at such a rate, that they need little places like this at the end of the road where people can come, access the beach. I mean this is what Coromandel used to be like” (“Coromandel”, 19/02/11).

The use of past notions of space, the outdoors and its relationship to food are also utilised in *Coasters* to help reconcile a fantasy of space in New Zealand with its limited availability. Food is often consumed outdoors and in presenting this, *Coasters* is attempting to re-establish the premodern link between the outdoors and food consumption.

Notions of space in *The Food Truck* are dominated by the landscape of suburbia and shared public spaces. The setting is focused in the greater Auckland area with much of the *mise en scène* in traditional suburbs such as Mt Eden and Sandringham rather than newer more intensive housing developments. This narrative focus normalises this space as traditional and comforting. Homes, when featured, give the impression of traditional New Zealand quarter acre development reminiscent of the spread of suburbia as the population expanded.<sup>49</sup> Whereas *Coasters* delivers a fantasy vision of natural space and freedom in premodernity, *The Food Truck* articulates a fantasy suburban space of cosy streets and pretty houses which many New Zealanders aspire to live in. Implicit in the narrative construction of *The Food Truck* is its focus on competition in public spaces as Van de Elzen pitches his food truck at events and competes with other takeaway food providers. However the shared spaces chosen help provide triggers to memory and togetherness through their collective nature and the nostalgic framework in which they are situated. Sites of traditional rurality such as the Puhoi Axmen Festival, the Tuakau cattle saleyards and the Onetangi beach races are augmented by festivals which entertain notions of togetherness such as the Bloom family festival in Matakana.

In summary, it is clear that despite the apparent differences in approach, both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* use nostalgic conceptions of time and space to weave a fantasy which recalibrates time and defuses anxieties around its perceived contraction in modernity. A utopic vision of space is also presented

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<sup>48</sup> “The Beehive” is a descriptive term for the executive wing of New Zealand’s parliament building and is a colloquialism for the centre of national government.

<sup>49</sup> Michael King highlights, “The nation [New Zealand] bred at an unprecedented velocity. From 16 births per 1000 population in 1935-6, the rate rose to over 26 per 1000 by the late 1940’s and that was maintained until 1961” (King, 2003, p.412).

of free access to open spaces and the conjuring of aspirational suburban environments. These visions negotiate the limited access to much of the land resulting from modern agrarian ownership patterns and normalise the overwhelmingly predominant mode of suburban living. The premodernity-postmodernity binary helps reveal how nostalgia has enabled three key negotiations of modernity and helped build the resultant visions of a utopic New Zealand. Firstly, the articulation of independent foodways in the light of their increased commodification and offshore ownership. Secondly, the casting of change and discontinuity as an essential part of the New Zealand experience and lastly the reformulation of time and space to ease anxieties around time poverty and increased exclusion from the landscape. Now I will turn to my second binary which helps highlight how nostalgia for the powerful visions of modernity reinvigorate national visions by recasting these powerful impulses as having been centred on the concerns and preoccupations of the present.

### **The Restorative – Reflective Binary: Redefining the New Zealand Once Hoped For**

This second binary construct harnessing nostalgia's relationship with modernity is provided by Svetlana Boym (2011). Like Sutton and Landsberg, Boym sees nostalgia as being prospective and linked to progress in a mirror image relationship similar to that of "Jekyll and Hyde" (2011, p.452). Boym articulates two predominant modes for nostalgia and how they operate to negotiate our relationship with the past. She sees "Restorative nostalgia" as reflecting an attempt to restore the "lost home". This form of nostalgia sees itself as an earnest carrier agent of truth and tradition and is comprised of two main components, the return of the original and the simple narrative of good's triumph over evil, which enables it to erase the contradictions of modernity. "Reflective nostalgia" on the other hand is a more playful formulation, delaying the return of the home and revelling in the contradictions of modernity. Rather than truth as absolute, reflective nostalgia questions truth and the restoration of the "lost home" and enables us to question the teleology of traditional historicity. As with the premodernity-postmodernity binary explored above, we can chart *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* on Boym's restorative-reflective binary in a search for unities. A reading of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* places them in opposition on this binary with their narrative forms full of tensions and incompatibilities in relation to one another.

I have already highlighted *Coasters'* narrative focus on preservation. However, preservation can be recast on Boym's binary as a restorative discourse and there are signs of this subtle shift when we consider that the conservative focus is not just one of protection and resistance to change but is also directed towards regeneration and restoration. If I combine this impulse with *Coasters'* grounding in the premodernity of early settlement and development I can identify this nostalgia as reminiscent of what Renato Rosaldo has termed "Imperialist nostalgia" a romanticised nostalgia for the worlds that colonialism has destroyed in the process of settlement, modernisation, urbanisation and industrialisation. Where, "...agents of colonialism long for the very forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed" (1989, p.107-108). Examples of this narrative impulse are plentiful. The return of foreshore life to Island Bay in Wellington following the

establishment of a marine reserve, the restoration of Northland native forests to "...bring their life force back again", the "marked increase" in measured sea life in the marine protection zones in Fiordland and "restoring the food chain" through the regeneration of silted up Lake Forsyth on the Banks Peninsular ("Island Bay to Pencarrow Head", 22/01/11; "Doubtful Sound", 12/02/11; "Banks Peninsular", 26/02/11). Emblematic of this restorative theme are Brown's comments in *Coasters* episode four to Pete McMertry, a trapper eradicating rats and stoats on Secretary Island in Doubtful Sound, "All Kiwis should be very proud that there are guys like you out here doing this and getting it back to exactly what it was" ("Doubtful Sound", 12/02/11).

*The Food Truck* deploys overt signs of nostalgia more sparingly and often as a reflective impulse. It is sometimes deployed as playful entertainment, such as when a retrospectively stylised children's birthday party is staged for the testing of healthier potato chips in episode three, but critically, also as a form of Duruz's "dark territory" against which to project hope and the possibilities for a healthier future (1999, p.239). Good examples of this nostalgic counternarrative are from the first minute of the first episode in the series where viewers are warmly reminded, "Us Kiwis have had a soft spot for soft drinks for nearly a hundred and fifty years" ("Soft drinks", 15/04/12). This commentary is accompanied by black and white imagery of 1960's branded bottles, which then become interwoven with shots of obese people forcing food into their mouths. Likewise in episode seven, when despite Van de Elzen's fond childhood memories of Mr Whippy, he likens the van to, "...a sweet shop" and sees, "...nothing good in the back of the truck apart from maybe some almonds and some peanuts" ("Ice cream", 27/05/12). This counternarrative is amplified by the show's narrative underpinnings as a challenge to reformulate fast, convenience and takeaway food products. Van de Elzen highlights that soft drinks are, "...all about sugar", that potato chips and corn snacks are, "...loaded with fat and artificial flavours and preservatives" and that ice creams are, "...sugar and cream, sugar and fat!" ("Soft drinks", 15/04/12; "Potato chips", 29/04/12; "Ice cream", 27/05/12). The narrative presents a constant tension between on the one hand the established pleasures of instant gratification, taste, and enjoyment and on the other the unhealthy attributes of modern food such as excess sugar, fats and chemical additives and the consequences of these features (such as unhealthiness and obesity). In *The Food Truck* we can see reflective nostalgia's metaphorical urge to delay the recreation of a lost home as viewers would be returning to an inferior world of careless food choices and cultural eating habits detrimental to personal and national wellbeing.

Within this context, nostalgia can be claimed to raise anxiety about foodways through highlighting how these have evolved to represent poor outcomes for today's society. As I have noted, New Zealanders have every reason to be sensitive to many of the anxieties around modern foodways. This is illustrated by a 2010 survey by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) that found that over half of New

Zealanders wanted more information on what was in their food (2010, p.9).<sup>50</sup> *The Food Truck's* use of the past to highlight issues with the present has been noted in the televised food narratives of other nations. In the UK Jackson, Watson & Piper (2012) highlighted how food and other anxieties can be reproduced and circulated through texts such as Jamie Oliver's *Ministry of Food* (2008). They identified that food anxiety was seen to be linked to a "...series of other concerns about class, gender and place-based identity formation" (Jackson et al., 2012, p.25). It could be argued that the use of nostalgia in *The Food Truck* can be seen as a means of fuelling anxiety that the narrative eventually attempts to reconcile.

This reconciliation in *The Food Truck* poses some issues and highlights the entertainment emphasis in most contemporary food narratives. *The Food Truck* makes use of comparatively expensive ingredients and advanced techniques in its search for health alternatives and this has been one of the main criticisms of what has otherwise been received as a worthy show. In an interview Van de Elzen gave on *The Mike Hosking Breakfast* show on the New Zealand radio station Newstalk ZB, the host points out that the techniques required to prepare Van de Elzen's recipes require a high level of skill and specialist ingredients, "Some recipes you gotta work at.....there are some ingredients in there you got to hunt and find" (2012).<sup>51</sup> Van de Elzen acknowledges this issue and contends that people want to put more effort into their food. This highlights that certain assumptions are made by *The Food Truck* around social income and mobility and that while the text on the one hand emphasises the modern evils of fast foods, it is on the other hand normalising its consumption. Playful nostalgia negotiates these discursive tensions through its high entertainment values and critically by placing these food forms in a nostalgic field that frames their consumption as part of a shared collective experience.

The question remains, to what degree does the nostalgic treatment of the pleasures of fast foods normalise and valorise them where before the viewer may not have made such a connection? There is no debate about the honourable aims of *The Food Truck's* presenters and producers who are clearly focused on providing healthier alternatives to popular fast food forms with the hope of better social outcomes. *The Food Truck* uses a form of reflective nostalgia to make breakfast at McDonalds, cans of sugary carbonated beverage and fat filled ice creams part of the traditional food culture of New Zealand. This runs the risk of normalising consumption of commodity fast foods as part of a shared food culture which is at odds with the New Zealand government's ongoing attempts to curb what is perceived to be an obesity epidemic. The part fast food is regarded as playing in this "epidemic" is amply illustrated by the ongoing debate around the introduction of a "fat tax" levied on fast and unhealthy foods as a means of deterring

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<sup>50</sup> The New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) is part of the Ministry for Primary Industries. The research was conducted by Auckland based UMR Research to determine attitudes to food safety.

<sup>51</sup> *The Mike Hosking Breakfast* is one of the top rating radio shows in New Zealand.  
<http://www.newstalkzb.co.nz/auckland/shows/breakfast/highlights/newstalk-zb-number-one-4apr2012>

these food choices in New Zealand.<sup>52</sup> The depth and breadth of this debate is a discourse on a global scale and is perhaps indicative of the extent to which commodified processed foods have come to dominate global foodways.

Despite oppositions on the restorative-reflective binary, *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* mutually reflect the first element of anthropologist Jon Holtzman's view that, "Past ways of eating can alternatively contrast the present to a better past, or an inferior past to an enlightened modernity" (2006, p.371). There is however a relationship with the later part of Holtzman's statement which unifies the use of nostalgia in both narratives. This unity takes the form of nostalgia for the power and excitement with which society used to think about the future. Modernity came armed with its own visions of a utopic future and these were the narratives which drove a fledgling New Zealand society for many decades. These visions of an advanced industrial society can be argued to have reached a crescendo with the visions of prosperity and independence which drove the "Think Big" projects of the 1970's. The New Zealand government invested heavily in large scale civil works to provide transport infrastructure, self-sufficiency in energy and production capacity for raw materials such as steel and aluminium. This involved a significant amount of overseas borrowing which must have been underpinned by an articulate vision of New Zealand as a strong, confident, wealthy, world leading modern society embracing the promises of industrial progress that modernity provided.

If nostalgia can be seen as an emotionally charged look back at the past to create identities in times of change and dislocation, by extension it implies not just a relationship with the present but also with visions of the future. Returning to Boym's binary I argue this opposition can be frustrated where a desire for restoration of the home (restorative) is satisfied by a return to a radically different home (reflective). This is achieved in the narratives of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* through the transplanting of current concerns and preoccupations for earlier visions of a modern New Zealand and its focus on industrial development. This is a phenomena that Boym hints at when she says, "The imperative of a contemporary nostalgic is to be homesick and sick of home – occasionally at the same time" (2011, p.457). Recasting the power of past visions of the future as having been focused on ecological conservation and national differentiation creates a compelling myth that goes a long way towards obscuring the failures of the promises of these earlier visions and once again energising New Zealand culture.

Examples of how the New Zealand Kiwis once hoped for is mythologised are plentiful and help negotiate the crisis Andreas Huyssen sees in the "...imagination of alternative futures" (2003, p.2). *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* avoid a return to past visions of a utopic New Zealand driven by enlightened modernity.

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<sup>52</sup> Current New Zealand Health Minister Tony Ryall has to date ruled out a general "fat tax" for New Zealand similar to what is now in place in Denmark and Peru. Hungary has a more specific "junk-food" tax and France has a tax on sugary soft drinks.

There are few references to how we used to envision a future focused on modern transport networks and industrial output. Instead the representation of what was hoped for is centred on a continued celebration of the landscape and natural environment. Where once national boundaries and independence were envisioned as being built through economic strength, the narratives of both texts reformulate this as one where differentiation was and is created through notions of the unique beauty of the space Kiwis live in.

A reformulation of the past is seen in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck*, where the vision is constructed of a New Zealand that has been highly successful in protecting and expressing independence through a unique, pristine and pure environment. Despite its predominantly urban setting, *The Food Truck* hints at this in its use of beach settings and one minute into episode two Van de Elzen stares out of the windscreen of his truck and reminds viewers how lucky they are to be living in New Zealand, “Just look at it!” (“Sea food”, 22/04/12). *Coasters* is far more focused on asserting this vision with a narrative of uniqueness often driven by referencing the global travels of New Zealanders and the experience of recognised “foreigners” within New Zealand. There are plentiful illustrations of how the narrative utilises “foreignness” to highlight notions of uniqueness and how this creates perceived national boundaries, and hence feelings of independence. These help ease the social pain resulting from the failures of the visions of industrial modernity by replacing them with the myth of visions that have been successful. In *Coasters* episode three, after discussing Captain Cook’s first arrival in the Bay of Islands, Russell Harris the skipper of the reproduction tall ship *R. Tucker-Thompson* stands on deck and states,

“People come from vast cities who’ve never seen anything like this. I bring them around the corner and you can just see their jaws dropping, the awesome light, shape and colour of this wonderful landscape ...Unequaled anywhere else in the world” (“Bay of Islands”, 05/02/11).<sup>53</sup>

In the same episode, Brown comments on how a local Iwi saw the opening of a tribal walkway as “An opportunity to share their piece of paradise with visitors from all over the world” (“Bay of Islands”, 05/02/11). In episode four, Ruth Daly co-owner of the ketch *Break Sea Girl* who runs ecotours in Doubtful Sound tells us about the landscape, “Well I’ve sailed a lot of the world, I have done some solo sailing and there is nowhere quite as spectacular. I think it’s the merging of the shades and the grandeur isn’t it” (“Doubtful Sound”, 12/02/11). Episode five finds Brown on Hot Water Beach on the Coromandel Peninsular and he talks with tourists from Germany, Australia, the United States, England, France and Poland,

“This is all about people from all over the world getting together and enjoying what the beach has to offer and I think it’s pretty cool. Before the world discovered Hot Water Beach it was a playground for generations of Kiwis” (“Coromandel”, 19/02/11).

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<sup>53</sup> After the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman “discovered” New Zealand in 1642 there was a significant gap before Captain James Cook RN visited in 1769. During this voyage and subsequent visits in 1773 and 1777, much of the New Zealand coastline was charted for the first time.

Later, on arriving at Cathedral Cove Brown states, "Welcome to paradise....I bet the tourists just can't believe it" ("Coromandel", 19/02/11). In episode six Brown meets artist Josie Martin and she states, "I've travelled the world and seen a lot of coastal scenes but this is the best in the world" ("Banks Peninsular", 26/02/11). The envisioning of this utopia goes some way towards enabling a boundary to be drawn by focusing on differentiation. It also helps reconcile the sense of loss resulting from the failure of past utopic visions centred on modernity.

I am not alone in seeing the possibilities for nostalgia to be used to change conceptions of what a society once hoped for as a means to refocusing the present. South African psychologist Jill Bradbury's (2012) study of the uses of nostalgia for healing the deep wounds in South African society provides some backup for my observations. Bradbury aptly states "Perhaps nostalgia is the desire not to be who we once were, but to be, once again, our potential future selves" and she explores the notion of recapturing lost futures as a means of enabling the past to play a role in reconciliation and nation building (2012, p.341). Bradbury sees the possibilities of turning Boym's reflective nostalgia towards the future and this is particularly evident in *Coasters*. There are powerfully utopic visions articulated at the level of narrative discourse driven by displacing a failed past vision of the future with one that has succeeded in the light of contemporary notions that New Zealand has found a unique place in the world based on its environment.

To conclude this chapter, the use of two key binary structures to identify tensions between both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* has been useful in uncovering larger shared systems of statements about the past which reconcile the relationship with modernity. *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* negotiate insecurities over loss of independence, both in terms of sovereignty and local foodways, in a globalised world. The threats to independence from transnational capital are negated through appeals to nostalgic notions of fairness and consumerism, by redefining postmodern foraging and by creating an air of distrust around "Big Box" supermarkets and "Big Food". Ultimately the products of "Big Food" become acceptable through their recasting as somehow a traditional part of New Zealand's cultural capital. This is particularly poignant for New Zealanders who make their way as a small trading nation with a speciality in food production. Both narratives normalise the changes that the experience of colonisation and modernity brought through the weaving of nostalgia for change and discontinuity and their centrality to the New Zealand experience. I have also demonstrated how time and space are reformulated with reference to idealised pasts and how the link between food and memory and freedom is re forged. This manipulation of the past and how it relates to the future can only take place if the texts change notions about how we thought we used to think about the future. By focusing on Boym's restorative-reflective binary I have identified how *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* displace the utopic visions of modernity and their focus on a better life through industrial and economic development with notions of past visions centred on national differentiation through the environment. The reinvention of the New Zealand once hoped for enables the past to have had a fruitful and successful outcome and imbue Kiwis with a renewed sense of purpose and identity.

## Chapter 3. “Look At This, It’s So Kiwi Eh?”: The Aesthetics of Nostalgia

(Al Brown, *Coasters*, “Coromandel”, 19/02/11)

I have investigated how the narrative of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* help construct what it means to be a New Zealander but this is also powerfully articulated through the aesthetic and thematic elements presented by both texts and it is to this which I now turn. It is essential to establish how aesthetic and thematic appeals to nostalgia help balance and reinforce the narrative structures we explored in chapter two. Narrative constructs cannot stand on their own within a television text. Equilibrium between narrative and aesthetic form is essential in any televisual discourse. Somewhere between aesthetic signs and narrative constructs are thematics. Thematics represent a recurring intrusion into the narrative which have a discourse of their own. In this thesis they take the form of two recurrent emblematic themes which provides texture to both the narrative and other aesthetic signs; the repetition of national traits and the presentation of the imagery of childhood. In the context of this study, which focuses on *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* as primarily food narratives, food is clearly a critical thematic discourse and this will be explored in detail as a separate entity in chapter four.

A key insight is the identification of what aesthetic and thematic elements allow nostalgic statements to be made, particularly those which enable articulations of a utopic New Zealand or help negotiate failed utopias. How do the aesthetics and repeated themes on display inform notions of the past and hopes for the future? How are these notions powered and given energy? In exploring this field and answering these questions I will first investigate how aesthetic signs are used in the texts to convey pastness and a shared sense of identity and belonging. Firstly I find that archival paintings, photographs, moving pictures, music, props and settings are all extensively drawn on to convey a shared and comforting past. The production environments for both texts also lend them inherent features that help activate nostalgic remembering. Secondly I find the repetition of key themes throughout *Coasters* and *The Food Truck*, make powerful statements about how “Kiwi” is defined and provide some comfort for future cultural continuity.

### The Image Archive

The past is often illustrated in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* through the use of photographic vignettes. These help weave a sense of depth, continuity and through early images of Māori, inclusiveness, in a comparatively young nation state. Within the construction of *Coasters* the use of archival photographic evidence of the past is augmented by images of premodern, pre-photography paintings and drawings. An example of this is provided in *Coasters* episode one where six minutes into the show Ray Ahiene Mercer discusses the importance of the coast around Wellington to Māori. His commentary on the link between the coast and survival is accompanied by early drawings of Māori coastal settlement. The scene returns to

Brown and Mercer walking along a beach and Brown says, "It always amazes me when the tide goes out. It takes away the footprints but the history is still there" ("Island Bay to Pencarrow Head", 22/01/11). Three minutes later nostalgic imagery again punctuates the flow and is woven into a rich collage of black and white photographs that form the backdrop to local architect Ian Athfield's conversation with Brown,

"The edges of settlement are really important. And if you look at the historical relationship between settlements and sea, [shot of steam ship tied to a pier] on the edge there were the wharves and the jetties [steam ships in Wellington port]. The fishermen were down at that edge [fishermen standing in a small rowing boat fishing in the harbour c1920], they were tough [fishermen bringing catch ashore on a beach], they survived those conditions, and towns and settlements developed around that [horse drawn carts carrying cargoes from the docks]. The toughest part of them was the front. The traders took the space one street back [cut to another shot of horse drawn carts moving cargoes from the wharfs] where you could trade on both sides. Takes pretty gutsy people to live on the edge of water [cuts back to Brown and Athfield walking leisurely down a path carrying their catch of fish], because complacency is not part of the equation" ("Island Bay to Pencarrow Head", 22/01/11).

A further three minutes on and we are again presented with a collage of nostalgic imagery as Brown discusses the foundation of Wellington with local historian Jock Phillips. Phillips tells Brown that they are standing on the site where a stream used to flow into the sea on Lambton Quay, a street which today runs through the heart of Wellington's central business district,

"This was once a place where local Māori collected kaimoana [cut to two successive early drawings of Māori settlements] and were really central points before the Europeans arrived.... This is called Lambton Quay as it is literally the quay along the side of the beach" [cut to shot of a mid-nineteenth century watercolour of the quay, then moves on to a shot of a panoramic watercolour looking down on the early settlement, which morphs into a sepia tone photograph of the fledgling city taken in the nineteenth century and then another of early buildings on one of Wellington's bays] ("Island Bay to Pencarrow Head", 22/01/11).<sup>54</sup>

Further collages of nostalgic imagery are presented which punctuate the narrative flow of episode one of *Coasters* at minutes fifteen, sixteen, eighteen and twenty. This mixing of painted, drawn and early photographic imagery on a single sequence collage helps convey the linear continuum of settlement through time commented on in the prior chapter. The composition of this collage also pays homage to Roland Barthes' contention that "Photography has been, and still is tormented by the ghost of painting" (1981, p.30). These "ghosts" however, play an important role in establishing a sense of historicity and establishment that the relatively recent introduction of photography from the 1850's cannot. This is particularly important in the New Zealand context due to the relative youth of the country and the need to

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<sup>54</sup> Kaimoana is a Māori term for seafood and shellfish.

convey a past for Māori which can attempt to compete with the antiquity of the oral tradition within which they hold much of their history.

The inclusive nature of the way imagery is deployed for all national stakeholders is achieved in the way that the imagery is interwoven to represent a form of family photo album where the family is envisioned as a national family. There is a careful verbal and visual seamlessness created between settler and Māori subjects enabling a powerful and compelling link between photographs and the transmission of cultural memory. Media historian Annette Kuhn in her exploration of the relationship between photographs and cultural memory noted, "Not only do photographs operate as props and prompts in verbal performances of memory, but the collection of photographs that makes up a family album itself also follows an 'oral structure'" (2007, p.285). In the context of *Coasters*, the repeated use of photographic vignettes is reflective of how a family photo album both aids memory and tells a story inclusive of both predominant cultures in New Zealand. The construction of a shared memory through a mingling of indigenous and settler cultural images in one site articulates a shared past which helps bind individuals and cultures into a cohesive national society.

*The Food Truck* also makes use of vignettes of black and white imagery, albeit more sparingly and almost entirely in assigning historicity to food commodities and reminders of past pleasures from their purchase and consumption. Pack shots are utilised with archive images stretching from the 1950's to 1980's, featuring brands such as Watties baked beans, Coca-Cola and L&P soft drinks. The blending of these differing aesthetic signs brings us into line with the views of Pearson & Kothari who investigated New Zealand food programming through the prism of multiculturalism. They see national identity as expressed through television as being, "...predicated increasingly upon the everyday, the domestic, and the consumer oriented" (2007, p.47). This is reflected in other visual elements of *The Food Truck* where the use of old print and television commercials aids a reflection on the unifying nature of commodities and their marketing in an age of mass media.

Barthes tells us that photographs are more authentic than language and that, "Every photograph is a certificate of presence" (1981, p.87). It is in this light that they are deployed in both texts as signposts to a shared past. As a technology of memory, old photographs punctuate the narrative flow of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* as if to act as a stamp of authenticity for the statements about a shared past that are made. Barthes notes that "From a phenomenological viewpoint, in the photograph, the power of authentication exceeds the power of representation" (1981, p.89). It is precisely the power of authentication that these photographic images provide that allows statements of shared pastness and notions of nostalgia to be given the power of repetition within the texts.

*The Food Truck* and *Coasters* both make use of moving imagery, particularly archival footage from the NZBC and the National Film Units *Weekly Review* and *Pictorial Parade* newsreels of the 1940's to 1960's.<sup>55</sup> Like the construction of vignettes from still photography, drawings and painting, the use of archival film and television as mnemonic technologies of memory support the narrative flow of both texts. An example of the playful way that these are deployed within *The Food Truck* is provided in episode four where Van de Elzen visits the canning factory of long established local food processor Watties. This sequence blends a number of historical media styles, newsreel and more recent popular television commercials to create a complex sense of nostalgia through the skilful interweaving of the aesthetic signs. Archive colour film of the canning process is followed by film of vintage trucks being loaded and leaving the factory. These shots are accompanied by a soundtrack that combines 1940's swing music with the sound effect of a cinema projector. The link with national fabric is established when an imitation newsreel commentary reminds the viewer that, "Watties began canning baked beans during World War Two for soldiers... Total victory and millions of farts later, the rest of the country caught on" ("Takeaway breakfasts", 06/05/12). The imagery then jumps to a popular 1993 Watties television advertisement featuring former All Black captain Sean Fitzpatrick in which his parents talk about the long family tradition of All Blacks in the family and how Watties baked beans were also part of that tradition.<sup>56</sup> Likewise in *The Food Truck* episode one and two, 1970's NZBC footage is utilised to remind us of the giant seven metre tall soft drink bottle erected in the town of Paeroa and of the once ubiquitous roadside seafood stores. These specific examples help draw together phenomena that represent strong unifying forces within New Zealand society, the national effort in the Second World War, shared pride in the national team who play the national game and local pride and identity often symbolised in New Zealand by the erecting large sculptures or town icons in or at the entrance of many small towns.<sup>57</sup>

The treatment of photographs, drawings, painted imagery and archival film and television is in line with cultural historian Peter Burke's view on the media's manipulation of the image archive in that, "Material Images have long been constructed in order to assist the retention and transmission of memories" (2011, p.189). However, these encounters with historically situated media forms are not only acting as memory agents for the themes featured but also illustrate the self-referential nature of television itself. Amy Holdsworth (2011) highlights the concept of "televisual memory". The memory of watching television is highly nostalgic in itself, "Archive or old television, particularly news and current affairs footage, forms the

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<sup>55</sup> New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC). An antecedent of the current New Zealand state broadcaster TVNZ.

<sup>56</sup> This advertisement is popularly remembered for Brian Fitzpatrick's heartily delivered line "We grew up with Watties in Gisborne, they lived over the back fence!" (Gisborne is a small city on the east coast of New Zealand's North Island).

<sup>57</sup> Examples of giant sculptures include a brown trout in Gore, a carrot in Ohakune, a gumboot (Wellington boot) in Taihape, a cow in Hawera, a Kiwi fruit in Te Puke, a paua shell in Riverton, a crayfish in Kaikoura a sheep shearer in Te Kuiti and a border collie dog in Lake Tekapo.

basis for much popular modern history on television. Nostalgia emerges here as the dominant framework through which television remembers and refers to itself" (2011, p.96). There is then a double process in play. Images, either still or moving, authenticate statements of the past. They are placed in a framework that is highly inclusive in acting as a form of national family photo album. Encounters with popular moving imagery also remind viewers of the shared experience of its consumption and how it relates to a shared identity as a Kiwi.

### **Nostalgic Statements through Props, Soundtracks, Settings and Production Environments**

*Coasters* and *The Food Truck* utilise signs other than still or moving imagery to denote pastness. Annette Kuhn describes "memory texts" as, "...characteristically collagist, fragmentary, timeless" and providing "...a sense of what remembering feels like" (2000, p.189). This "sense" is constructed in the texts through the use of other aesthetic fragments which help generate strong notions of the past and their nostalgic inference. *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* use settings, props and music as elements in the collage of memory. Vintage transport, historic buildings and "traditional" events are often deployed. Michael Van de Elzen drives a 1970 Bedford truck and visits historic gatherings such as the one hundred year old Onetangi beach races on Waiheke Island and the equally aged Tuakau livestock saleyards south of Auckland. Al Brown enjoys a drink in New Zealand's oldest public house, the Duke of Marlborough in Russell, stands on the wharf at Ferry Landing in the Coromandel, the oldest in Australasia and explores the renovated ruins of a 1927 dairy factory. However, these settings, while denoting a historic link with the past, can also be seen as a function of the production environment.

A key question is if there is anything implicit in the production form of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* which also makes the linking of nostalgia and national identity a likely outcome? A means of accessing this is through an exploration of the production ecologies of both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck*. By production ecology I am focusing on the relationship that the production form has to its production environment, whether the ways in which these shows are staged and who stages them is likely to lead to aesthetics which are more likely to result in nostalgic expression?

*Coasters* is filmed as a travelogue through key areas of coastal New Zealand and clearly draws on Christchurch based Peter Young's experience as a natural history film maker and his background in capturing rural filmscapes.<sup>58</sup> Young gave me the background to what inspired him to write and produce *Coasters*,

"Coaster was an idea that I had bubbling away ever since I worked on a series called *Explorers* (2004) which followed the journeys of early European explorers. I flew over long stretches of

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<sup>58</sup> Peter Young has filmed over 50 episodes of the long-running New Zealand television series *Country Calendar* (1966- ). This show focuses on rural lifestyles and businesses.

coastline and thought it would be good to base a series around that. It timed perfectly with the end of *Hunger for the Wild* and Al's book *Go Fish* - so it was natural for us to do it with Al" (personal communication, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013).<sup>59</sup>

Shots of beautiful and spectacular scenery are augmented by the use of aerial camerawork. There is a generic precedence for this form of nostalgic production in television food narratives. Food studies academic Krishnendu Ray tells us, "There are two kinds of [food] tours, the national tour in search of tradition and familiarity and the exotic tour in search of difference" (2007, p.60). In addition to any inherent nostalgia within national travelogues, the production form of *Coasters* lends itself to nostalgic signalling through both single narration and the rurality of the setting.

The one camera perspective on Al Brown and his first person narration lends itself to personal story telling and reminiscence both by himself and in discussion with others. This harks back to forms of remembering in a pre-media world where, as sociologist John B. Thompson points out, people's sense of the past was shaped primarily by symbolic content exchanged in a "face-to-face interaction" (2011, p.349). Brown's narrative drives an aesthetic encounter with the landscape through his tendency to draw attention back to the spectacle of the scenic backdrop with regular comments such as, "Mate I'm just gobsmacked, it's beautiful, absolutely beautiful" ("Taranaki", 5/03/13). These comments along with his on camera pauses for effect are reflecting the producers own proclivities as well as providing a dramatic backdrop for self-referencing.

The landscape is a key component in the weaving of a nostalgic fantasy. As I identified in chapter two, the reconfiguration of space is particularly comforting. *Coasters* use of a predominantly rural backdrop, particularly when allied with food, has been seen as a formula for making nostalgic statements and audience appeal. This phenomenon is identified by Australian social anthropologist Alison Leitch as the, "... objectification and commodification of rural and proletarian nostalgia" (2000, p.105). In association with this, Leitch coined the term "Tuscanopia" to highlight how Tuscan peasant cuisines and picturesque rurality "...seem to have become key fantasy spaces of modern urban alienation" (2000, p.105). The power of this fantasy's appeal to a New Zealand audience may also be reinforced by the fact that New Zealand is a highly urbanised society. According to the 2006 census, 86% of the population was living in an urban environment with 72% in the main conurbations (New Zealand Department of Statistics, 2013).

The production environment for *The Food Truck* differs significantly to *Coasters* yet also facilitates the making of nostalgic statements. The producer, Nick Ward and director James Anderson are owners of

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<sup>59</sup> Peter Young wrote *Coasters* with input from New Zealand writers and producers Tracy Roe and Andrew Gunn. Brown's contribution to scripting was limited, "Al would occasionally tweak scripts in the voice booth" (personal communication, 4th February 2014).

Two Heads Ltd, based in Kingsland, one of Auckland's older inner city suburbs. Two Heads Ltd is, "...an ideas company specialising in TV production and branded entertainment" (Two Heads Ltd, 2013). The series is filmed primarily in and around the suburban environs of Auckland with excursions to festivals, events and sites within easy reach for most Aucklanders.<sup>60</sup> The geographical specificity of production does not limit making implicitly strong nostalgic statements for all New Zealanders. Auckland is home for 33% of New Zealand's total population; however the visual impact of a 1970 truck driving through leafy old established suburbs is an evocative scene of national life that could be recreated in many of New Zealand's larger towns (New Zealand Department of Statistics, 2013). Traditional suburban space is being presented which, as I outlined in chapter two, evokes a sense of shared comfort and security. What I have identified in both texts is that there is some determination on nostalgic statements that results from the production environment being reflective of the lineage and situation of the producers. These aesthetic environments of rurality and early suburbia help drive fantasy identification which many New Zealanders will strongly associate with a vision of a comforting past and the implied security of continuity.

The aesthetics of nostalgic remembering are not purely visual. I have found that the musical soundtracks which accompany *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* are integral to the construction of a collagic memory text and help power strong evocations of a shared past and identity. The musical score that accompanies *Coasters* and sets much of the mood is by Dianne Swann and Brett Adams, otherwise known as *The Bads*. Their score is a bluesy folk style arrangement with acknowledged country music roots and influence.<sup>61</sup> The use of country music has been seen by commentator Geoff Mann as providing, "the voice of nostalgia" (2008, p.73). Although Mann is focused on contextualising country music in America, drawing on this musical aesthetic has currency in New Zealand as shorthand for traditional rural and working class values. However, New Zealand presents a differing context for the implied statements of country music. Whereas Mann sees country music and its nostalgic appeal as linked directly to "whiteness", in New Zealand many of the genres most notable stars are Māori and this is why its use can help signal cohesion and shared identity. Leading New Zealand country music stars, Denis Marsh and Saelyn Guyton are both Māori and feature in New Zealand's only current country music television programme *My Country Song*, which airs exclusively on Māori Television.<sup>62</sup> In the New Zealand context there is a clear link between the use of country style music in *Coasters* and its ability to evoke traditional working class values that are shared by large elements of both Māori and Pākehā society.

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<sup>60</sup> These locations include Waiwera, Waiheke Island, Puhoi, Matakana, Ardmore and Tuakau.

<sup>61</sup> The musical aesthetic of *The Bads* is revealed in an interview with David Welch for *NZ Musician Magazine*. Adams comments on their, "Faux country harmonising" and "We have to say the 'C' [Country] word, the 'alternative C' [Country] word... there's a certain amount of country influence [in what we do]" (Welch, 2005, accessed online).

<sup>62</sup> Māori Television is broadcast free-to-air and is fully funded by the New Zealand government through the funding agency Te Māngai Pāho which has specific statutory responsibility for the promotion of Māori culture and language.

*The Food Truck*'s sound track is more eclectic as it changes pace and style to reflect the ebb and flow of the narrative. The fragmentary application of differing past music styles in the text correlates with Kuhn's hallmarks of "memory texts". This is perhaps highly reflective of what remembering feels like and a key ingredient in the construction of memory and nostalgia. The sound track of *The Food Truck* is usually playful and often utilises more retrospective styles such as folk, Jazz and marching bands. In particular nostalgic feelings of amusement are signalled by the use of light and playful newsreel style music, firmly rooted in late 1950's to early 1960's which reinforces the show's aesthetic and narrative links with this period. An example of how a fragmentary sound track of the past is woven in to the aesthetic is afforded by the first four minutes of episode one. Within a minute a synthesised form of early 1960's Mersey beat is used to accompany black and white footage of a soft drink canning line, this is followed by shots of the food truck driving through traditional suburbs to the sound of 1920's style Jazz.<sup>63</sup> This sequence is followed by Van de Elzen sampling soft drinks to the strains of a 1970's, Roger Whittaker style whistle and guitar arrangement. The scene moves on to explain the history of the L&P soft drink and the archival footage is accompanied by a form of 1950's to 1960's newsreel orchestration. Although the use of past styles of music is fragmentary compared to the single composition theme of *Coasters*, it can nevertheless be as evocative of the past through the heavy layering of past styles. These musical styles are not New Zealand centric, they could be deployed by a number of cultures to the same effect, but they express a form of local journey through past cultural movements and styles. This collage of styles is a reminder of national unity through the shared experience of offshore cultural influences.

What can be clearly identified in both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* is the use of the aesthetics of the past to structure and power the narrative flow. Media historian Wulf Kansteiner tells us, "Collective memories are based in a society and its inventory of signs and symbols" (2002, p.188). With Kansteiner's view in mind it is clear that *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* deploy a mix of aesthetic artefacts which are both specific to New Zealand society and shared by others. This observation is a direct reflection of Andreas Huyssen's view on the weakening of the geographical basis for national traditions through, "the process of cultural globalization" (2003, p.4). What this mingling of local and foreign signs and symbols of the past highlight is the degree to which aesthetics can manufacture mythical national narratives.

The performance of myth and the articulation of visions of a utopic New Zealand through the narrative are critical. Barthes tells us that, "Perhaps we have an invincible resistance to believing in the past, in history, except in the form of myth" (1981, p.87). The myth presented through the use of these aesthetic signs and settings is of New Zealand as an ostensibly unique, broadly homogenous national society revelling in the

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<sup>63</sup> Mersey beat is a musical form of global popularity specific to the period 1962 to 1965 and was typified by popular British bands such as *The Beatles*, *Gerry and the Pacemakers* and *The Searchers*.

splendour of its surroundings with a shared past which is building towards a secure shared future. The aesthetics of sight and sound along with the narratives explored in chapter two are not the only elements of the text which construct a mythical past in order to build shared national identity. There is also a role played by the constant repetition of statements centring on two thematic elements, articulations of what are considered to be “Kiwi” traits and the emblematic use of children and childhood imagery. These two themes articulate and entrench the building blocks of the New Zealand national character and provide a vision of their continuity and hence New Zealand’s ongoing independence and unique character.

### **“Kiwiness” and the “Sovereign Good of Childhood”**

*Coasters* and *The Food Truck* both make copious references to what are considered to be shared national traits. These traits create a notion of differentiation from the rest of the world and draw a boundary around what is considered to be quintessential “Kiwiness”. These traits are touched on by Pearson & Kothari, who identified, “qualities such as independence, humility, competitiveness and resourcefulness in the face of extreme adversity (commonly referred to as Kiwi ingenuity)” but also highlight that “This sense of unique identity is offset by occasional despondence over what has been expressed as a virtual lack of unique cultural identity”(2007, p.48). *Coasters* uses the analogy of the rugged coastal dweller and *The Food Truck* the ingenuity and persona of Michael Van de Elzen as embodiments of national identity. This mechanism helps weave the vision of a strong, resourceful and unique shared national character in the face of encroachments on independence by globalised culture and transnational capital.

*Coasters* articulates “Kiwiness” by drawing analogies between the, “Strong and gutsy character... typical of those who live along the coast of New Zealand” and broader notions of national characteristics (“Island Bay to Pencarrow Head”, 22/01/11). This analogy is not hard to recognise considering the majority of New Zealanders (65%) live in close proximity to the coast and that this is growing in significance.<sup>64</sup> *Coasters* episode two is a good example of this analogy being played out. We are reminded by Brown that West Coasters, “Needed determination, courage and self-reliance” and John Green of the Department of Conservation adds, “I think, if a job needed to be done, they just got stuck in and did it” (“Westport to Charleston”, 29/01/11). In summing up the episode, Brown highlights that, “Those who made it over the bars and across the rivers became a really resilient and resourceful lot. Underlying that was that can-do attitude and that awesome West Coast hospitality” (“Westport to Charleston”, 29/01/11). There are plentiful examples on this theme. Episode five talks of a “...true Kiwi D.I.Y. spirit”, in episode six Brown stays the night in a “pioneering cottage” on the Banks Peninsula and states, “Everywhere you look you see the great mix of ingenuity and practicality” and “That quintessential creative Kiwiness is alive and well

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<sup>64</sup> New Zealand Department of Statistics state that, “Sixty-five percent of New Zealanders lived within five kilometres of the coast in 2006, compared with 61 percent in 1981. The proportion living within 10 kilometres of the coast also increased, from 72 percent to 75 percent” (2013).

around this part of the peninsular" ("Coromandel", 19/02/11; "Banks Peninsular", 26/02/11). There is little of the self-doubt identified by Pearson & Kothari evident. Brown's summing up in the last lines of the penultimate episode in the series reasserts the overall confidence in New Zealand's special place in the world when he raises a glass and states, "it's lovely being a Kiwi. Let's drink to that" ("Banks Peninsular", 26/02/11). The repetition of themes that are considered as pioneering traits helps perpetuate a narrative of independence and self-reliance that is increasingly at odds with the interconnectedness of New Zealand in a global society.

Themes of "Kiwiness" emerge from the narrative premise for *The Food Truck*. Van de Elzen can be identified with as the self-deprecating battler, the can-do-Kiwi who improvises solutions to what appear insurmountable problems in his challenge to the might of global corporation. He asserts his independence and in doing so he is seen as an embodiment of the adaptability and resourcefulness that are hallmarks of the Kiwi self-portrait. This is summed up in the final words of the last episode of the series, "...he won't rest until he's changed the face of all fast food and truly achieved the impossible" ("Sushi", 03/06/12). The public also plays a role in articulating notions of "Kiwiness". As I highlighted in chapter two, part of the narrative framework utilises public (consumer) feedback on Van de Elzen's healthy food ideas. New Zealanders are portrayed as being independent of mind and uninhibited in expressing their views. This "straight talking" trait and its link to rurality, pastness and notions of national characteristics is exemplified by the commentary in episode six where Van de Elzen is reformulating the classic roast dinner and this is being tested at the Tuakau stock saleyards. The narrator tells us, "Local farmers won't be shy to tell him what they think of his modern meat" and after the sampling, "All in all mixed reviews and as straight-up as a high country road" ("Roasts", 20/05/12).

*The Food Truck*, like *Coasters*, emits few signs of cultural self-doubt; even negative stereotypes of certain groups within New Zealand society can be recast as embodying what are recognised as universal national traits. Ten minutes into episode two, seafood dishes are tested on a young Māori or Polynesian skateboarder. The young man is wearing an American basketball shirt and baseball cap. He replies to Van de Elzen's greeting in the language of American street culture "Hey man. Good thank you buddy" ("Sea food", 22/04/12). On display is black American youth culture with a Māori accent. The stereotype is set up loaded with negative conceptions of Māori or Polynesian youths, crime, gangs and the accompanying lower educational and economic outcomes. After constructing this powerfully negative stereotype, the show then shatters this as the young man goes on to provide an insightful, articulate and skilled critique of the complex flavours in the oyster shooters Van de Elzen presents to him. In wielding this cultural stereotype and then shattering it there is an articulation of the notion that no matter what the perceived background, every New Zealander is capable of embodying national traits such as honest straight talking, independence and a degree of humility. In summary, both texts utilise recognisable national characteristics and these are often grounded in the past, but there is a confidence in what these "Kiwi"

traits are that is not undermined by any significant signs of self-doubt in the texts. This confidence in the security of national culture is reinforced by a further repeated theme, which perhaps more than any other, utilises the strength of memory and nostalgia to project hopes for the future, that of childhood.

The recollection of personal childhood memories is strongly nostalgic. The evocation of children and childhood are repeated in both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* to help power myth. The power of childhood imagery is twofold. Firstly, in enabling personal recollection and nostalgia for childhood there is an association with the simplicity, relative purity and truth of childhood. Secondly the manifestation of collective traits through their embodiment in children (and the truth this implies) has a direct link with visions of continuity and the future. To the first point, I am reminded of Bathes' view that in images of children you can, "...stare intensely at the Sovereign Good of childhood" (1981, p.71). This sovereign good is on ample display in both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* as a thematic element of the aesthetic composition. Both texts overtly utilise children as evocative of days gone by and as an aid to viewers own childhood memories. Laughing children playing in the sea are featured in the opening sequence for each *Coasters* episode. Other examples in *Coasters* include, episode three where there are lingering shots of children playing on Urapukapuka Island camp ground as Brown discussed the generations that have camped on the island and tells us "Will you look at that, that's why we live in this country" ("Bay of Islands", 05/02/11). In episode five black and white and vintage film footage of children playing at camp grounds are deployed as Brown tells us that this was where, "...great summer holiday memories were made" ("Coromandel", 19/02/11). In episode six Brown visits Le Bons Bay and as the scene centres on children playing cricket in a sun drenched garden he tells us, "This holiday haven has been enjoyed by generations of *Coasters*" ("Banks Peninsular", 26/02/11).

The aesthetic focus on children in *The Food Truck* is often a result of the narrative focus on fast and convenience foods. For example soft drinks, potato crisps, corn snacks and ice creams are all childhood favourites. One particular example which utilises children in the artifice of a past setting is in episode three, where Van de Elzen tests his healthier vegetable snacks during a seven minute sequence at a traditional back garden children's birthday party. The aesthetic triggers for nostalgic connection are plentiful and signs are used that are universal to ideals of past childhood birthday parties in many societies and as such attempt to bridge cultural gaps within New Zealand society. The setting is decked out in balloons, brightly coloured children's tables and chairs, children are entertained by a clown and the background music sometimes resembles Tchaikovsky's *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy* and at others the playful sounds of a German oompah band. As well as triggering nostalgic memories of childhood, the scene also places children as the heirs to recognisable "Kiwi" traits such as truthful straight talking and incorruptibility. Van de Elzen illustrates this well with his opening remarks at the party,

“I think the kids are going to be my greatest critics. Cos they’re going to be harsh, they’re going to be real, they’re not going to hold anything back, they’re either going to say these chips taste great or ...yuck, these chips are horrible..... Bring it on!” (“Potato chips”, 29/04/12).

This example highlights how the aesthetics of childhood are linked to memory and the national traits ascribed to “Kiwiness”, explored above. This introduces the second role which the repeated use of childhood imagery plays, to reinforce collective traits as somehow bred into “Kiwi” children. This provides a sense of continuity and a future embodying uniqueness and continued independence.

To my second point, *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* project many of the traits of “Kiwiness” explored earlier directly onto children as a clear articulation of hopes and aspirations for cultural continuity. The embodiment of collective identity within children is particularly powerful. In *Coasters* episode one, Brown walks wind and rain battered along a beach and encounters a group of children sailing small competition dinghies. He tells us,

“Wellington is well known for its wild weather. Being this close to Cook Strait there is a certain freshness to the air [sarcastic understatement], but it’s part and parcel of life here and as I make my way towards the inner harbour there is a hardy bunch making the most of it” (“Island Bay to Pencarrow Head”, 22/01/11).

Brown then interviews a boy and asks, “What do you like about it?”, the boy replies confidently, “I kind of like the wind in my face” (“Island Bay to Pencarrow Head”, 22/01/11). Hardiness is reinforced by notions of humility and community service. In episode five, Brown comments on children training to be lifesavers on Coromandel’s Hot Water Beach, “Look at this, it’s so Kiwi eh? No Xbox, no PlayStation. It’s just the beach, it’s just good clean fun and learning to save lives” (“Coromandel”, 19/02/11). Also featured are notions of continuity through past food practices, children and healthy food outcomes in the future. In episode six the community (including shots of children), tends an organic garden on the Banks Peninsular. Spokesperson Maatakiwi Wakefield tells us “manaaki” means, “Like nurturing and caring of the land. So primarily manaaki to visitors, to our children, and to ourselves, it all flows through”, as we see shots of young children playing, Wakefield adds, “It’s important to us and more importantly to the generations that follow” (“Banks Peninsular”, 26/02/11).<sup>65</sup> We can detect a similar theme and the juxtaposition of children, tradition and hopes for the future a little later when people gather to eat a traditional communal meal of eel and vegetables from the garden. Māori elder Robin Wybrow tells Brown, “The proximity of the land that we own and the coastline, you couldn’t get any better. You know? For our children’s children, it’s just all out there for them going into the future. It’s fantastic” (“Banks Peninsular”, 26/02/11). We see in *Coasters* that New Zealand children are referred to as tough and rugged and already contributing to the national community.

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<sup>65</sup> Manaaki is a Māori term that means to support, take care of, or provide hospitality to people.

They are used as a mechanism through which continuity with a mythical unique and shared past can be maintained into the future.

*The Food Truck* positions children as savvy consumers able to assimilate the elements that make up a value proposition, to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy options and to articulate sophisticated views on food tastes. Projected onto them are hopes for a sophisticated renegotiation of the power positions within modern capitalism based on consumer power and healthy scepticism. Throughout the series, children are given equal time to adults in voicing considered opinions on the flavour and value of foods as diverse as raw monkfish, oyster shooters, baked curly kale, muscle fritters, black pudding muesli bars and banana sushi. They are framed as mature and articulate consumers, not easily duped by claims or pressure to conform. In the children's birthday party example illustrated above there is an example of how Van de Elzen needs to justify his offering to a well-informed child. Van de Elzen offers the birthday girl (maybe 5-6 years old) some of his rice bubble cheese snack; she asks "Did you make these in the food truck? Are they healthy?" to which Van de Elzen replies "All natural" ("Potato chips", 29/04/12). As if to highlight a high level of awareness of the often negative link between snacks and health, the young girl takes another bite and seeming to enjoy the taste states, "I don't believe you" ("Potato chips", 29/04/12). In episode four, it is children who are presented as savvy in that they are the first to see the value and health benefits in the fruit smoothies Van de Elzen is offering for breakfast at the Puhoi axmen festival. A stereotype is again deployed, of the undiscerning and gluttonous teenager, in order for it to be shattered by the presentation of a savvy, articulate and logical young adult. A teenage boy (approximately 12-13 years old) approaches the food truck and asks for a smoothie, Van de Elzen looks down on the teenager from his serving hatch then accusingly asks "Why are you going for a smoothie? Why don't you go for a big baked potato?" to which the boy responds incredulously, "Because I've already had breakfast!" ("Takeaway breakfasts", 06/05/12). Van de Elzen's retort, "Ahh so this is your after breakfast, breakfast," is laughingly responded to with, "Pretty much!". Children freely tell Van de Elzen that his sherbet ice cream has "no flavour" and that his dried vegetable crisps taste "gross" ("Ice cream", 27/05/12; "Potato chips", 29/04/12). Hopes for a future are cast as a vision of a utopia in New Zealand where there is the confidence in the next generation to reject standardising impulses and assert choice.

In summary, aesthetic signs and recurrent themes support the narrative of a shared past and collective identity articulated in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck*. These signs are often fragmentary and collagist and in this respect can be seen as reminiscent of how we may remember the past. Archival imagery of early New Zealand of social and personal significance, coalesces with the soundtrack to deliver a vision of a shared history and the implication of the continuation of a shared journey into New Zealand's future. Themes operate, like aesthetics to help propel and reinforce the narrative of nostalgia and shared identity. There are repeated statements of the traits Kiwis believe they embody which act to weave a patina of uniqueness and the strength to stand independently in the world. The repetition of the imagery and

themes of childhood emphasise national characteristics and act to both trigger individual nostalgia for childhood as well as evoking notions of truth, innocence and purity. The result is to convey a sense of continued national differentiation and cultural independence into the future.

It is however food which provides the richest vein from which to identify repeated statements of collective tradition. Food lies at the heart of *Coasters* and *The Food truck*, defining genre, propelling narrative, shaping aesthetic and thematic interventions and ultimately enabling powerful statements about a shared past to be made. The narrative of food is used to bind culture to concepts of nationality and a unique place in the world.

**Chapter 4. “When it Comes to Bringing People Together, There’s Nothing Like a Great Feed”: The Narrative of Food and the Forging of a Nation** (Al Brown, *Coasters*, “Bay of Islands”, 05/02/11).

**Food and Identity**

Food is intrinsically tied to notions of identity. Understanding the way food makes this identity and how this links to the past is a critical component in helping to bind national communities such as New Zealand where homogeneity needs to be constructed within the context of a pluralist post-colonial society. How does a comparatively new society find ways to appeal to notions of collectivity and a shared past in order to construct common ground, heal old wounds and move on? The power of food in nostalgic narratives and appeals to collective memory cannot be underestimated and there is a wide body of academic thought articulating the close links between food production and consumption, cultural production and consumption and self-belonging and identity. With so much at stake it is not surprising that food is a cultural site that attracts heated contestation among competing groups within and between societies. Examples of such heated food debates are those existing between New Zealanders and Australians over the origins of the pavlova dessert or between Greeks and Turks on who can lay claim to the kebab.<sup>66</sup> This is clearly a highly charged environment. If food traditions can differentiate on a global scale they can inherently unite on a local scale. However, to unite there must be some form of consensus on what constitutes national food culture and it is through the way that both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* mythologise the past that this is achieved.

My contention is that *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* utilise a highly complex process which results in a mythical national food culture. In play are three distinct themes, the wedding of tradition to consumer culture, the construction of New Zealand as a Garden of Eden and the co-opting of indigenous foods as representative of a shared national food culture. The mythical food culture constructed obscures many tensions in society through appeals to the fantasy of a past utopia. These utopic constructs obscure issues centring on the racial and cultural structure of contemporary New Zealand society by fostering a sense of collective food tradition. Before I go on to explore these three themes there is a need to outline the processes and relationships that *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* rely on in order to make strong and repeated statements about the past and shared identity through food. In particular how the theories of Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm help illuminate the artificiality of national constructs. I will also highlight how the link between food and memory is under threat as a result of its increased mediation and changes to food consumption patterns. I will outline how these challenges to food memory can be negated

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<sup>66</sup> The pavlova dessert is meringue cake often topped with cream and fruits.

through the pleasures of vicarious consumption and the seductive power of myth and fantasy about food and the past. This clears the way for my exploration of the three distinct themes identifiable in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* which create a strong and compelling mythical national food culture.

*Coasters* and *The Food Truck* are television formats which employ food narratives and as such are in powerful positions to make statements about how food underwrites notions of individual and collective identity. This phenomenon is noted by Pearson and Kothari in their study of multiculturalism in selected New Zealand food shows who comment on the fact that, "Prime-time food television produced in New Zealand self-consciously deploys food as symbolic of cultural politics, particularly in terms of national identity" (2007, p.46). Cultural anthropologist John Holtzman provides us with a link to two broad theories that help to contextualise the link between food and the formation of modern national identities when he states, "Many studies consider the creation of nation through the invention, standardization, or valorization of a national cuisine, often drawing on Anderson's (1983) conception of the imagined community and Hobsbawm's (1983) conception of invented tradition" (2006, p.368). This debt needs acknowledgement and some extrapolation on order to contextualise the role myth and fantasy play in national identity.

Benedict Anderson's contention is that notions of nationality are imagined by individuals and that there are certain aspects of shared culture which came to represent that imaginary unity (1991). Food plays an important role in this imaginary unity with few national communities unable to present certain foods as emblematic of their shared identity. Japanese sushi, Italian pizza, English fish and chips, German sauerkraut, and Spanish paella are just some prominent examples that spring to mind. The importance of this link between food and notions of shared identity is reinforced when some nations actually invent cuisine as a means of articulating their nationhood. A prime example is that of recent Belizean attempts to create a national cuisine to aid in the development of a national spirit following independence from the UK in 1981 (Wilk, 1999). Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm also brings food into the debate over national identity through his contention that tradition is often invented and mythologised and is directly linked to the creation of collective identity within the framework of the modern nation state (1983).

Good examples of these Hobsbawmian invented traditions in food are seen when considering "traditional" British cuisine. Modern New Zealand owes much to British culture due to its role as the original colonising power.<sup>67</sup> Fish and chips only became a staple in Britain with the development of steam trawlers and railways, with the term "chip" first coined as recently as 1859.<sup>68</sup> The ubiquitous "Ploughman's lunch" is

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<sup>67</sup> Contemporaneous with the very first British settlers were those from France. It was however Britain which ultimately annexed New Zealand under pressure from the large number of settler ships arriving as a result of the commercial activities of Edward Gibbon Wakefield's New Zealand Company.

<sup>68</sup> The earliest mention of "chips" in the sense of deep fried slices of potato, appear in Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). [http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Fish\\_and\\_chips.html](http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Fish_and_chips.html)

regarded as traditional fare and often consumed in the setting of a British Pub, yet the term was first coined in the 1950's as a means for the UK Milk Marketing Board to increase the consumption of cheese.<sup>69</sup> Food and foodways perform clear roles in collective national consciousness through their functions as markers of tradition, either through the valorisation of specific food types, means of production (or sourcing), or style of consumption. The ease with which food traditions can be created in more established cultures such as Britain, pays testament to how virulent this creative cultural urge can be in newer cultures such as New Zealand. This brings directly into question the malleability of memory. *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* rely on a key process which enables unifying statements to be made through the mediation of food. Principally the ability to forge an enduring link between food and memory is reliant on the phenomenon whereby food pleasures are derived as much through mediated fantasy as they are through physical sensuality.

Food has a complex and highly evocative effect on many of our senses through the act of consumption. There are memories of smells and tastes and their association with people and places. This "sensory memory" has been discussed by David Sutton who regards this food phenomenon as having a "whole structure of associations" (2001, p.83). I need to acknowledge, however, that the power and nature of this link is increasingly questioned, particularly in the light of changes in food consumption patterns which are taking place in parallel with increased consumption of mediated food narratives. There is a disconnection wrought by mediation which is further affected by modern time pressures redrawing traditional meal times and healthy consumption patterns.

Food can make statements about shared pasts and national identity due to the link food has to notions of authenticity and reality. Food however, has an increasingly troubled relationship with reality, particularly in a world of digital mediation. Krishnendu Ray sums up the issue when he states that, "Flavor cannot be witnessed. Appearance can. Flavor is momentary. Appearance endures" (2007, p.57). The mediation of food creates a disconnection between the sensual experience of food consumption and its direct trigger to memory. John B. Thompson adds his voice to that of Ray's and observes that, "...with the development of media (and especially television) the capacity to experience was increasingly disconnected from the activity of encountering" (2011, p.349). The focus *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* place on food and myth is complexed by the relationship between watching mediated food, healthy living and obesity. Both texts are underpinned by notions of "fresh" and "healthy" yet there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that this

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<sup>69</sup> A Ploughman's lunch is typically comprised of pickles, chutneys, cheese and bread. It is popular fare in British Pubs (public houses), establishments selling food and alcoholic beverage on the premises. "The most likely modern origin of the ploughman's lunch lies in the late 1960s, when the British Milk Marketing Board and the Licensed Victuallers Association actively promoted the ploughman's as a vehicle to increase the sales of its main ingredient, cheese, to the British public through the public house trade". <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/place-london/plain/A5649285>

proposition may also be increasingly mythical. Bodenlos & Wormuth found that the consumption of mediated food imagery actually increased calorific intake (2013). More people are choosing to spend time watching food than actually preparing food, illustrating how fantasies centring on food are powerful enough to change the physical nature of our relationship with it. As such, articulations of nostalgia for shared cultural foodways may on the one hand heal social divisions, while on the other create national health issues by driving viewers into the arms of the high fat, high sugar, high salt diet that *The Food Truck* and by implication *Coasters* work actively against.

Increased time poverty has also put pressures on the sanctity of the main meal as a site for nourishment and family interaction. This traditional interaction over a table of food is collapsing in the face of the tendency towards non ritual eating or snacking. This is identified by Sutton who interestingly does not see snacking as “eating” and hence is less likely to leave memory traces (2001, p.121). This is perhaps why *The Food Truck* tries so hard to ascribe notions of nostalgia and associated ritual and tradition to this form of consumption. Culinary anthropologist Pauline Adema ties Sutton’s observations on time poverty to the popularity of nostalgic narratives, particularly those centred on food. Adema’s contention is that as shared family activity becomes rarer, there is an increased value placed on collective family food preparation and consumption and this increased rarity leads to the application of a nostalgic value (2000, p.118). This, “nostalgia for the real” is a compelling sensibility that can be argued to underwrite much of the current popularity of food narratives (Sutton, 2001, p.5). Nostalgia has become a key component in the weaving of a fantasy which is as satisfying as the actual process of food preparation and consumption.

Despite these issues associated with mediation and modern consumption patterns, my contention is that this connection between food and reality is restored in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* through the creation of fantasies strong enough to overcome many of the tensions caused through the disconnection of mediation. The strength of this link between food and memory is built on the fact that there is another, highly satisfying form of consumption taking place. Adema has provided one of the seminal works on the vicarious consumption of food programming, she states , “I submit that growing numbers of viewers are tuning into and watching food television because it feeds a hunger for emotional and physical pleasures vicariously gratified by watching someone cook, talk about and eat food” (2000, p.114).<sup>70</sup> The pleasures of vicarious consumption in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* are made more real through a focus on guests and the public reacting to their consumption and this could be considered as providing some closure for the audience of a food programme. The emotional comfort of myth, fantasy and belonging conjured by

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<sup>70</sup> I am not suggesting *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* are subject to the type of hyperconsumerism Adema draws on in reference to American food celebrity Emeril Lagasse, as the term implies a far greater degree of celebrity than is embodied by either Al Brown or Michael van de Elzen. Rather, I am highlighting the phenomenon that watching food prepared and eaten does not necessarily lead to a viewer preparing and eating it, this is not the source from which the satisfaction is primarily derived by the viewer.

food can be regarded as highly satisfying. There are few fantasies that provide as much emotional pleasure as appeals to a nostalgic past. I have outlined how food is able to encourage and engage notions of collective identity through its role in national myth making and of pleasures derived through mediated consumption. This leads me to consider the first major theme identified in the texts which helps construct a mythical national food culture, how food is hardwired to concepts of ritual and the wedding of traditions to consumer culture.

### **Tradition in Media Texts and its Wedding to Consumer Culture**

Historically food traditions and rituals have been significant elements in any cultural and religious way of life (and in many cultures still are) and were embedded into the rhythm of community life. Food traditions act as markers of a strong and enduring society and as such are integral to the articulation of uniqueness and independence. *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* overcome many of the impulses that threaten the link between food and identity through differing reformulations of the link between tradition, food and memory. *Coasters* reinterprets the role of food in New Zealand identity by revisiting past practices and placing them in the present. *The Food Truck* on the other hand, takes the opposite approach by identifying current practices with commodity foods and placing them in the past. *Coasters* weaves a fantasy of shared food tradition by making a direct connection between collective food rituals, traditional foods and their link to current identities. Food is seen consumed in the context of ritualised gatherings which involve the family or hapu in contemporary settings such as back yard barbeques.<sup>71</sup> There are also culturally specific rituals which are reapplied to the whole of New Zealand society as an attempt to utilise food tradition and ritual as a unifying force. A prime example is in *Coasters* episode three where Brown helps prepare a hangi. This is a highly traditional Māori method of preparing food presented by guest Blandy Witehira as something that unites all New Zealanders, “We’re eating a hangi, a blend of both cultures coming together”, this is reinforced a few minutes later by Brown who states, “The moment everyone has been waiting for, hangi time..... When it comes to bring people together, there’s nothing like a great feed” (“Bay of Islands”, 05/02/11). While *Coasters* revisits past practices and contemporises them with a broader meaning of tradition and identity, *The Food Truck* focuses on commodified foods and recontextualises their consumption as a unifying form of tradition shared by all New Zealanders.

*The Food Truck* embraces and encodes the ritualisation of commodity consumption. The narrative focus on eating away from home reflects the fact that New Zealanders are spending increasingly more on restaurant meals and ready-to-eat food, with weekly household expenditure on these categories increasing from NZ\$38 in 2006/07 to NZ\$43 in 2009/10 (up 12.7 percent), (New Zealand Department of Statistics, 2010). This increase in commodified and standardised forms of food can be seen as actively

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<sup>71</sup> A hapu is an extended Māori family unit.

working against both food knowledge and collective historical memory. However, Sutton identifies a role for these forms that we see enacted in *The Food Truck* when he states, "Even commodified food can be transformed through active purchasing" and, "... suggests complex potentials for the reappropriation of the global through local meanings and practices" (2001, p.161). *The Food Truck* negotiates this by reminding us of a new order of commodity food rituals in New Zealand. In chapter two I outlined the elevation of branded products to the status of national icons, but this also extends to the ritualisation of their consumption in everyday life. Examples of new rituals of consumer culture are when we are told there is, "...nothing like buying an ice cold soft drink from your local dairy on a hot summers day, cracking it open and just nailing it ...Ahhh", or that ice blocks should be eaten after a day at school, "The old school, after school classic" ("Soft drinks, 15/04/12; "Ice Cream", 27/05/12).<sup>72 73</sup> As well as the ritualising of commodity consumption a second feature of these traditions is that they are essentially banal in nature and this is a key insight into their ability to be perceived as part of the fabric of everyday national life.

*The Food Truck* embraces the ability to reformulate aspects of food tradition through a focus on statements around the everyday and widely shared experience of consumption within a culture. Snacks, instant breakfasts, quick lunches and takeaway dinners embody the everyday nature of modern foodways. Ian Carter in his exposition on food and popular New Zealand culture highlights the interwoven relationship between everyday foods, branded commodities and notions of tradition and nationality when he states, "Proud Kiwis munch meat pies, vegemite sandwiches, beetroot burgers, pavlovas, Jaffas and Sniffers" (2004, p.89).<sup>74</sup> The establishment of the link in *The Food Truck* between national identity and the recontextualisation of everyday commodity products and their ritualised consumption as traditional and emblematic of being a "Kiwi", makes it easier for unifying statements to be made through them. Wulf Kansteiner reminds us that "low- intensity" collective memories can be powerful through their non-confrontational nature (2002, p.189). This is a key insight and may help explain the success of the food show genre. It is this everyday nature which makes the link between food and memory such a comforting and non-contentious one and it provides particularly rich and fertile ground within which to plant nostalgic notions of the way we were and by extension, what we are.

Examples of this ritualisation of the trivial in *The Food Truck* are provided when baked beans are seen as a traditional component of a New Zealand "big breakfast" and that bacon and egg slices are synonymous

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<sup>72</sup> In New Zealand a "Dairy" refers to a small local convenience store. These are becoming less prevalent as they come under pressure from the convenience operations of large petrol company sites.

<sup>73</sup> An ice block is frozen fruit juice on a stick.

<sup>74</sup> Jaffas are orange flavoured sugar coated chocolate balls manufactured by Cadburys a wholly owned subsidiary of the Deerfield Illinois based Mondelez International Corporation. Sniffers are mint flavoured sugar coated chocolate balls that were manufactured by Cadburys. Since production ceased in 2008 there have been a number of news media and social media campaigns in New Zealand to have production resumed.

with national takeaway breakfast habits (“Takeaway Breakfasts”, 06/05/12).<sup>75</sup> Viewers are informed that New Zealanders eat roast meals on Sunday evenings and a food tradition forcibly espoused by a member of the public in the same episode was, “I’m a Kiwi and we have our roasts with potatoes and gravy” (“Roasts”, 20/05/12). The question then arises around how the discourse manages some form of Sutton’s “nostalgia for the real” in the context of commodity consumption (2001, p.5)? Hints of a subtle mechanism taking place are provided by examples of *The Food Truck* making some commodities less “real” than others. Van de Elzen, sees a McDonalds “McMuffin” as an acceptable part of everyone’s breakfast repertoire (since 1972) and that its, “...got everything you need” (“Takeaway breakfasts”, 06/05/12). On the other hand Sanitarium’s Up&Go is, “Terrible...its taste is just so fake” (“Takeaway breakfasts”, 06/05/12).<sup>76</sup>

It is clear that in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* taking differing approaches to encoding food and tradition they achieve the same aim in creating myths around a New Zealand food culture that is held up as emblematic of shared national identity. *Coasters* displays older indigenous traditions and earlier notions of collective consumption while *The Food Truck* creates tradition by making an explicit link between tradition and commodity consumption. This is enabled in *The Food Truck* by the everyday, non-confrontational nature of this form of consumption. This recalibration of memory and reality leads me to the second theme utilised to construct national food myths, the contextualisation of food in the light of New Zealand as the Garden of Eden.

### **New Zealand as the Garden of Eden**

The Garden of Eden is a powerfully evocative analogy encompassing utopic notions of innocence, purity and plenty in a heaven on earth. What constitutes Eden is constructed differently in both texts. *Coasters* returns viewers to an Eden emblematic of a prelapsarian natural paradise while *The Food Truck* places food in the context of a more recent idealised Eden of the relative security and prosperity of the 1950’s and 1960’s. The food narrative of *Coasters* is driven by the coastal setting for the text. Seafood is deployed in the narrative as symbolic of tradition and orthodoxy. Foods presented as traditional “Kiwi” fare include whitebait fritter sandwiches, steamed shellfish, hangi, crayfish, snapper, and muscle fritters (many of these foods are also acknowledged as “traditional” in some of *The Food Truck*’s recipes). In part *Coasters* is portraying the process identified by Sutton, “Food has the power to symbolize general social transitions between ‘modernity’ and the good old days, gifts and commodities, community and atomism, holism and fragmentation“(2001, p.42). Yet *Coasters* diverges from Sutton’s view of the process in that a

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<sup>75</sup> A bacon and egg slice is a square shaped thick slice of quiche sold in cafes and convenience stores.

<sup>76</sup> Up&Go is a liquid breakfast sold in a tetra pack with straw, produced by the Australasian food manufacturer Sanitarium.

fantasy is constructed that attempts to ignore modernity and this is most powerfully articulated through the placement of food in the context of a prelapsarian, premodern Eden. This process reinforces the mechanisms explored in chapter two where past hopes are recast in the light of current concerns and preoccupations around purity and the environment. There is an overt articulation of this utopic construct in *Coasters* episode seven which finds Brown picking fresh vegetables in Christina Cawley's garden and he states, "I look at this and I'm incredibly jealous. It's like the Garden of Eden here". In episode three, Brown is eating freshly gathered kina on a sun-drenched white sand beach in the Bay of Islands with Māori elder Blandy Witehira. Brown asks, "This is normal?" to which Witehira replies wistfully "Yea yea" Brown asks again "This is everyday living?" Witehira replies "Everyday living" ("Bay of Islands", 05/02/11). In episode four Brown cups his hands and drinks water from a pool beneath a waterfall in Doubtful Sound and states "It's Gods wine, straight from the mountain. It's pure, it's cold, it's soft, it's delicious" ("Doubtful Sound", 12/02/11). The narrative focus on ecological regeneration and notions of natural purity is currently a cultural force in New Zealand and other developed economies.<sup>77</sup> The sense in *Coasters* of a return to a prelapsarian Garden of Eden is powerfully projected and draws a comforting analogy between this mythical conception and utopic visions of what New Zealand once was and can be again.

"Eden" in *The Food Truck* is recast very much in the light of a more recent times gone by, redolent of the full employment, security and progress embodied by the 1950's and 1960's. This is reflected in the narrative and aesthetic focus we have explored in chapters two and three. This link between food, nostalgia and the negotiation of change has been charted before. Notably this mechanism is seen at play by Jean Duruz in her exploration of food as nostalgia. Duruz explored how Australian food memories of the 1950's and 1960's created a strong set of identity codes. She reminds us that in the 1990's there was a clear sense of a "lost Eden" represented by memories of past foods, the fantasy object of the nurturing "magical" figure of "Fifties Woman" and her relationship with "...the products of desire" (Duruz, 1999. p.233, 250). This period draws on the childhood memories of many New Zealand viewers who are classified as "Baby Boomers". The appeal this period represents is well summed up by Alex Bevan (2012) in her investigation of nostalgic constructs in the American television series *MadMen* which is set in the early nineteen sixties. Bevan articulates the memory dynamics of this periodic Eden, "nostalgia for the boomer past relies on its presumed naïveté and wholesomeness that have been lost" (2012, p.9). I have discovered that while the placement of the Garden of Eden and the form its fruits may take is treated quite differently in both texts, they are united in how Eden is underpinned by Bevan's notion of "wholesomeness" or more specifically a return to the whole.

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<sup>77</sup> This impulse in New Zealand has been observed in food trends generally by Peter McClure the current managing director of Fonterra Brands, one of New Zealand's largest processed food manufacturers. He stated in an article in the *New Zealand Listener* magazine by Joanne Black that the, "...underlying shift is towards purity and naturalness, as opposed to organic – and safe food is the number one concern for consumers" (2011, p.19).

The concept of returning to the whole was notably explored by anthropologist James Fernandez who describes it as an attempt to “recapture the totality of the old way of life” (1982, p.9).<sup>78</sup> This is particularly evident in the construction of pastness on display in *Coasters*. Wholeness and its utopic implications are coded in *Coasters* through the direct linking of a pristine environment with direct access to a pure and healthy food chain. This mythical vision attempts to bind New Zealanders in a nostalgic construct of past purity and innocence represented by the Garden of Eden. This construct is reflected in how New Zealanders have been marketing themselves to the world. The “100% Pure New Zealand” campaign run by Tourism New Zealand since 1999, has been highly successful with ballooning tourism numbers a testament to the global appeal of this vision of purity and wholeness.<sup>79</sup> How a society expresses itself to the outside world also reflects how it feels about itself with “100% Pure New Zealand” becoming a central fantasy in visions of a New Zealand utopia. The words of Tourism New Zealand could easily be superimposed over the mythical national food culture expressed in *Coasters*,

“100% Pure New Zealand tells the story of how this country’s unique combination of landscapes, people and activities cannot be found anywhere else in the world - it is a ‘100% Pure New Zealand’ visitor experience” (Tourism New Zealand, 2013).

Central to this utopic vision is the weaving of a sense of togetherness and shared cultural purpose; however, critically this obscures the realities of the early European settlement of New Zealand. It is in this context that we need to explore the third theme through which *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* articulate a mythical national food culture. Food is used as a vehicle for a form of cultural authority driven by notions of a shared past and a shared food heritage. This papers over many of the tensions still endemic in the cultural matrix of New Zealand society and locks relationships behind the egis of biculturalism.

### **The Co-Option of Indigenous Food Traditions**

The mythological reformulation of food tradition in the texts and the weaving of a fantasy of some return to Eden mask the cultural terrain of New Zealand. I argue that the formation of a national food culture allows for cultural rifts to be obscured. This reformulation takes place through two mechanisms. Firstly the construction of food traditions that encompass indigenous foods within wider notions of “national” food practices. Secondly the resultant creation of a primarily bicultural national food culture accommodates multicultural influences only through their full assimilation into the symbolic bicultural food order. To understand the nature of our first mechanism we need to consider the realities of past New Zealand food practices in order to appreciate that what these texts hold out as “traditional” has a tenuous historic basis.

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<sup>78</sup> Fernandez’s initial study was among the followers of the Bwiti religious movement in West Africa. Movement followers aimed to completely reconstruct a lost world and way of life as a means of returning themselves to a whole (as opposed to fragmentary) existence.

<sup>79</sup> Tourism New Zealand is a government agency tasked with promoting New Zealand as an international tourist destination.

Tony Simpson's research into the origins of New Zealand cuisine provides some key insights. Despite *Coasters*' contention of shared tradition, Simpson reminds us that early New Zealand European settlers regarded fish as plebeian food and wanted to eat meat (1999, p.144-59). This was evident in Judith King's 1959 study of household diets in Otago in New Zealand's South Island, where she found that only 4% of households did not eat meat every day, 20% served meat once a day, 59% twice a day and 17% three times a day (as cited in Carter, 2004, p90). King's work furnishes a vivid encounter with the reality of "traditional" New Zealand food practices fifty years ago. There are few signs of whitebait fritters, seafood dishes or recognised commodity brands. As Carter goes on to comment, "...a whopping 89% of her sample ate meat with potatoes and one or two vegetables for dinner, the main meal. A further 7% flicked the veggies – but never the meat" (Carter, 2004, p.90). Oysters were certainly popular with pioneer settlers and culinary fresh water fish varieties such as trout and salmon were introduced into New Zealand from the 1860's but it is meat which dominated (Galletly, 2010, p.116). *Coasters*, through the nature of its premise, focuses on seafood as traditional and completely puts aside this early European food tradition centred on meat. *The Food Truck* dedicates an episode to meat (as it does to seafood) with episode six featuring takeaway roast meals. However, even in *The Food Truck*'s acknowledgement of meat, the narrative is focused on forgetting old roast meats through their reinvention using brisket or "modern meat" ("Roasts", 20/05/12).<sup>80</sup>

The traditional Māori diet on the other hand was marked by a scarcity of meat proteins due to an evolutionary lack of mammals present on the islands that make up present day New Zealand. Ian Carter tells us that,

"Accounts of nineteenth century Aotearoan diets show omnivorous Māori exploiting every food resource which their land offered. Animal protein came from the sea and freshwater fish, from shellfish, birds and kiore (rats); vegetable protein and starch came from roots, shoots, leaves, berries, pollen and seaweed" (2004, p.89).<sup>81</sup>

Many elements of indigenous foodways mark out what is now being offered as "traditional" gastronomic terrain in both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* (rats excluded!). This is a remarkable turnaround when we consider the observations of New Zealand food anthropologist Helen Leach when she states in her study of New Zealand cookbooks from 1908 to 1975, that they, "give the impression that if Māori culinary tradition still existed, it had embraced the recipes and techniques of the European majority" (2010, p.51-52). This begs the question of how has this turnaround happened and why are viewers being asked to forget some traditional foodways and remember others?

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<sup>80</sup> Brisket is traditionally a low value, particularly tough cut of meat requiring either extensive braising or slow cooking in order to make tender.

<sup>81</sup> Aotearoa is the traditional Māori term for the islands that make up New Zealand and remains in widespread use.

In essence *Coasters*, and to a lesser degree *The Food Truck*, have co-opted traditional Māori foods and recast them as traditional to a shared nineteenth century diet as means of papering over the cracks in the bicultural relationship. Peter Burke brings the issue to a point when he outlines that, “To understand the workings of the social memory it may be worth investigating the social organization of forgetting, the rules of exclusion, suppression or repression, and the question of who wants whom to forget what and why” (2011, p.191). The founding of the modern New Zealand state in the nineteenth century was tumultuous for many, particularly indigenous Māori. The signing of treaties and European colonisation was accompanied by open intercultural warfare and land confiscations which has left a legacy of strained relationships and cultural friction between elements of Māori and Pākehā.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, the widespread clearing of native bush and its transformation into pasture for meat (and dairy) production was often at the expense of traditional Māori land holdings and methods of tenure. Meat is thus a food of contention; its widespread historic availability to early settlers is in a direct relationship with the loss of Māori lands and forced confiscation. It may be supposed that to de-emphasise this tradition in favour of one that is less socially and culturally abrasive is in the interest of national cohesion and the maintenance of the existing social hierarchy and structure. Memories of meat can be divisive, memories of seafood a means of defusing long standing intercultural tensions.

Basing a shared food tradition on indigenous foodways illustrates how the politics of appropriation is played out in the arena of food and national identity. This phenomenon is not a unique to New Zealand. Anthropologist and social critic Ghassan Hage (1994) has investigated the appropriation of the cultural products of indigenous and “other” cultures in Australia and regards this mechanism as a means of strengthening existing power hierarchies. The New Zealand context for this differs in that it recognises and articulates bicultural plurality. The acknowledgement of a bicultural investment in the modern nation is notable in *Coasters*. As outlined in chapter two, the episodes are equally divided between those opening to Māori traditions and those who open with a focus on early European pioneers. The weaving of a shared national investment is well illustrated in episode three when Brown tells us that after Captain Cook’s arrival in 1769 there was, “the forging of a relationship between two cultures and the beginning of the new New Zealand” (“Bay of Islands”, 05/02/11).

The bicultural construct also gives voice to a degree of separation which at first glance appears at odds to notions of togetherness, yet they are contained within a strong discursive framework which emphasises the primacy of a shared cultural investment in the modern nation state of New Zealand. A good example is in *Coasters* episode three where Blandy Witehira discusses the fact that Māori understood the 1840

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<sup>82</sup> Recent New Zealand governments have gone a long way towards finding ways to redress these perceived injustices through mechanisms such as the treaty claims process enacted through the Waitangi tribunal. The tribunal hears cases for compensation by the crown from aggrieved Māori iwi or hapū.

Treaty of Waitangi as a partnership with the British but laments that ultimately it was a, “take over attempt to quash Māori culture”, moreover, he expresses his desire to maintain separate cultures (“Bay of Islands”, 05/02/11).<sup>83</sup> But the airing of these aspirations of separation are always couched within the discursive framework of the dominant culture and cast as subservient to the concept of a single sovereign nation state. For example Witehira’s commentary on the Treaty of Waitangi is preceded by Browns comments that, “Cape Brett is the gateway to the Bay of Islands, otherwise known as the cradle of the nation. In 1769 Cook sailed through here, and that’s where the nation was forged” (“Bay of Islands”, 05/02/11). Witehira’s statement is followed by a brief history of the earlier Māori discovery and settlement in the Bay of Islands which is treated as subsidiary in the narrative of national identity to Cook’s arrival and the advent of British sovereignty. In addition and despite Witehira’s dystopic views on the Māori experience of European colonisation, the narrative sequence concludes with him wistfully telling Brown, “We’ve all got to live together. It’s a beautiful country” (“Bay of Islands”, 05/02/11). There is a sense that the narrative asks viewers to put aside and forget any notions of an Aotearoa outside of the New Zealand state. In returning to Burke there is a need to identify the rules of exclusion, suppression or repression. What needs to be forgotten in order to successfully make a system of statements about shared identity and nationality?

Is forgetting simply a case of omission, such as the neglect in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* for traditional European settler food culture or does it go beyond this? Is there a need for active suppression of memory? A point well made by cinema academic Vera Dika when she investigated the reinvention of 1950’s America in media texts such as the movie *Grease* (1978) is that the suppression of some facts are required to in order construct a fantasy of utopia for an audience (2003, p.127). The utopic vision of New Zealand painted in *Coasters* highlights a shared food tradition and on the whole avoids any reference to conflict; despite open warfare between the cultures in the nineteenth century simmering on until the defeat of Te Kooti in 1872.<sup>84</sup> While the raising of flags is strongly featured, the significance of their lowering is marginalised. A good example of this subtle form of suppression is seen in how significant intercultural conflict is treated. In episode three Brown visits the early capital of New Zealand, the town of Russell in the Bay of Islands. Despite Russell being the epicentre of what is often referred to as “the flagstaff war” and being burnt down in the conflict, Brown makes no reference to this in his historical discussion on the town’s colourful nineteenth century history.<sup>85</sup> Later Brown is reunited with Māori elder Blandy Witehira , who tells Brown about the chopping down of the British flag pole above the town of Russell in 1845 by

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<sup>83</sup> The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi between the British crown and a confederation of Māori tribes is regarded by many as the founding document of the modern New Zealand state.

<sup>84</sup> Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki carried out a guerrilla style campaign against British and colonial forces predominantly in the East Cape and central regions of the North Island of New Zealand. On being pardoned he founded the Ringatu religious movement which still has several thousand followers today. He died in 1893.

<sup>85</sup> The Flagstaff War is another name for The Northern War or The First Māori War. It raged in the lands north of modern day Auckland from March 1845 to January 1846.

Māori chieftain Hōne Heke which helped initiate the outbreak of conflict. This event is recounted by Witehira and portrayed in the show as an almost humorous episode. Brown and Witehira laugh as Witehira outlines that the flagpole had been cut down three times before the British finally sheathed it in metal, “It took em two or three times to latch on to it” (“Bay of Islands”, 05/02/11). The light heartedness helps obscure the uncomfortable fact that an estimated 500 combatants were killed or wounded in The Flagstaff War (Belich, 1988, p.67).

The necessity of this process of forgetting has been identified by Wulf Kansteiner whose critique of the methodological basis for collective memory contends that visions of the past originating in trauma cannot retain that quality if they are to become “successful collective memories” (2002, p.187). It is clear that the co-opting of Māori food traditions is a means of reinforcing a bicultural national construct which can be firmly contained within notions of a single nation state with a single shared origin and development. Cultural memory theorist Liliane Weissberg argues that statements which reconstitute the past can only be made in a receptive environment and must reflect a degree of hegemony, “Events can be recalled only if they (or their mode of narrative) fit within a framework of contemporary interests” (1999, p.15). It is clearly in contemporary interests to embrace mechanisms that allow many of the cultural tensions hinted at to be smoothed over. This also helps answer Burke’s (2011) question of, “who wants whom to forget what and why?” as in essence it is most New Zealanders who want to put a difficult past behind them and united, move confidently into the future. However there is a further tension created through forgetting bicultural conflict and the reformulation of a traditional national food culture in the light of indigenous food practices. How can articulating a strong bicultural identity be reconciled with the realities of a multicultural New Zealand?

*Coasters* and *The Food Truck* reconcile this apparent incompatibility through the second mechanism by which food is given cultural authority. The primarily bicultural construct reformulates multicultural influences to ensure they can be annexed by and accommodated in the symbolic bicultural food order. The fusion of different culinary traditions and food cultures is not a new phenomenon and since the late 1970’s “Fusion Cuisine” has been a well-recognised gastronomic genre both in New Zealand and globally.<sup>86</sup> However, in both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* we again see Hage’s (1994) observation of the appropriation of the cultural assets of the “other” by the dominant cultural hierarchy acted out. There is a two-step process used to annex multicultural food styles and this is well illustrated in *The Food Truck*. First, traditional foods are re-evaluated and are reformulated in a way that takes ownership of foreign cultural food traditions and recasts them in the light of local foodways. Second, traditional foods from other

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<sup>86</sup> “Fusion Cuisine” can be defined as the combination of differing food traditions into one dish. Peter Gordon, arguably New Zealand’s most internationally acclaimed chef and restaurateur eloquently states, “Fusion Cuisine refuses to adhere to politically or geographically drawn borders, created generations ago by men in robes or suits” (2007, accessed online).

cultures are challenged by these local adaptations. The results are then often tested on members of the cultures from whom the food tradition has been appropriated as a means of exhibiting the superiority of the New Zealand variant. These processes reinforce notions of New Zealand cultural hegemony as well as a cultural confidence.

The two step process exhibited in *The Food Truck* to assert hegemonic independence and authority is formulaic. First, Van de Elzen questions the quality of traditional fare. For example, whitebait fritters are described both as a “Kiwi icon” and at the same time they are, “overrated as all they taste of is eggs”, that the essential bacon and egg slice has unpleasant fatty pastry and that traditional roasts sold in takeaway stores are, “all the same and boring” (“Sea food”, 22/04/12 ; “Roasts”,20/05/12). These “traditional” New Zealand foods are then adapted using food traditions appropriated from other cultures. Muscles are substituted for whitebait in a fritter and turned into an Americanised burger, the classic bacon and egg slice transforms into a Mexican tortilla, and a traditional roast becomes a Mediterranean kebab. A similar, but less overt construct is evident in *Coasters* where in episode four a “classic French omelette” is combined with traditional boiled crayfish and in episode six where crayfish, crab and tuatua are combined in an Italian spaghetti dish.<sup>87</sup> Thus global food cultures are annexed through their integration into a mythical New Zealand national food culture, a culture that is strong and confident enough to appropriate them. This process then moves on to the second step. Not satisfied with mere appropriation and “Kiwiisation” of the food traditions of other cultures, the narrative then asserts the primacy of local adaptations over the originals.

Challenging the food traditions of other cultures is a means of asserting nationhood and rejecting broader notions of multiculturalism. This process makes a subtle link between foreignness and unhealthiness and conversely “New Zealandness” and healthiness. This is seen clearly in both the Indian takeaway and Japanese sushi episodes of *The Food Truck*. In episode five, Van de Elzen rejects traditional Indian notions of curry to create a “Mongrel curry combo” lacking sugars or fats and also rejects the Indian tradition of using white flour in naan breads in favour of healthier wholemeal flour (“Indian”, 13/05/12). The narrative presents the professional Indian chefs who have been instructing him in their traditional cooking methods as sceptical. Van de Elzen then tests his “Kiwiised” Indian foods on Indian chefs where they are favourably received.<sup>88</sup> Another example of the challenge to the food traditions of other cultures and the assertion of the supremacy of the local adaptation can be found in episode eight where Japanese sushi is tackled. The narrative format is similar to episode five. Van de Elzen is given instruction by Japanese chefs; he challenges their tradition through his assertion that he can make better, healthier sushi using

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<sup>87</sup> Tuatua is the name of a native shellfish that can be found buried in sand and harvested from coastal and estuarine beaches.

<sup>88</sup> This test sampling takes place at the side of Sandringham Road, a street in suburban Auckland known for its concentration of Indian restaurants.

more vegetables, less fried foods and brown rice. This is doubted by both Japanese chefs and food retailers who tell him the latter adaptation is impossible. They are then eventually won over by Van de Elzen's New Zealand adaptation. The episode ends with Van de Elzen's comments, "That's amazing, I'm selling my sushi to Japanese people and they're loving it. Does it get any better? It doesn't!" ("Sushi", 04/06/12). There are elements of Pearson and Kothari's observations of New Zealand cuisine where, "Difference is subsumed into European cultural capital" only in the texts under study they are subsumed into a form of bicultural capital (2007, p54). These examples help illustrate how both texts absorb notions of foreignness into a mythological food culture underpinned by the superiority of New Zealand food traditions. The answer to the question of how a strong bicultural identity can be reconciled with the realities of a multicultural New Zealand is that it is absorbed into the fantasy of a traditional national food culture which sets up and then goes on to prove the proposition that New Zealand food is healthy, foreign food is not.

In summary, the creation of an inclusive national food culture based on nostalgia for mythical foodways is a key prism through which a society sees itself, makes sense of where it has come from and articulates confidence in where it is going. Food narratives take this centre stage as a function of the power of mediation and their close and enduring links to memory, tradition, ritual, and as a result, identity. In the examples of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* a strong and mythologically robust food culture has been articulated through three key mechanisms. Firstly, food traditions are recontextualised, to add the comfort of tradition in a heavily mediated consumer culture. *Coasters* restores many food traditions to contemporary and inclusive contexts and in doing so it creates a rich fantasy food tradition. *The Food Truck* appropriates the products of modernity and infuses them and their modes of consumption with notions of shared past traditions. Secondly, notions of a national food culture are very tightly bound to visions of New Zealand as a mythical Garden of Eden embodying notions of prelapsarianism and more recent memories of wealth and security. A mythical New Zealand food culture is constructed in line with the way society projects itself to the outside world as "100% pure New Zealand". Foodways are natural, pure, desirable, safe, unique and independent. Thirdly, the realities of historic food culture are side-lined in favour of emphasising traditional pre-European Māori fare. The bicultural construct then goes on to absorb broader multicultural food influences and subsumes them into a food culture confident in its patent superiority over what else the world may have to offer.

The strength of this mythical food culture is in how it papers over many of the divisions in society and papers over many of the cracks wrought by colonialism and the shock of modernity. This sophisticated negotiation of what it means to be a "Kiwi" through a mythological food culture reveals a compelling set of mechanisms which help New Zealand move on from the past and into the future with some confidence. There are also risks associated with enacting these mechanisms. Forgetting always carries with it the risk of repetition. If there is a suppression of the memory of conflict and divergent cultural practices it carries

the risk that a society can make past errors and lose the richness that diversity adds to a unique national fabric.

Before we can draw a line under what emerges in New Zealand from where television, notions of the past, food culture and national identity meet, one significant question remains to be addressed. To what degree does the institutional environment from which these programmes emerge determine statements about collective identity and the past? For guidance on the approach to this I have returned to Michel Foucault. Foucault gives us the concept of, “enunciative modalities” or put simply why do one particular set of statements take primacy over other competing statements (1972, p.55). Foucault highlights the complexity of this issue and that there are a huge range of factors that influence this phenomenon, but in connection with this he asks us to consider where is this voice coming from and what institution legitimates this voice? (1972, p.55-58). It is to the consideration of these enunciative modalities in the light of the industrial environment that I will now turn.

## Chapter 5. The Business of Nostalgia

I argue that the voice of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* is legitimised by television, in particular that of state owned television. My contention is that nostalgic food narratives are an integral component of New Zealand programming patterns due to specific commercial considerations. It is important to identify the unique environmental conditions in New Zealand which make productions such as *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* so popular and the statements they make acceptable. I will explore what these “enunciative modalities” might be in three ways. Firstly, by outlining how the industrial structure of television in New Zealand is more likely to produce narratives that are commercially safe. Secondly, why narratives of nostalgia and food are highly attractive in the local market and thirdly, why the impact of government funding in this space can be affected by generic success and programming decisions. This then leads me to question if the guidelines around government funding and institutional intervention unwittingly perpetuate statements which articulate mythical, safe and unchallenging visions of shared culture?

*Coasters* and *The Food Truck* are broadcast on the most popular state owned television channel and this helps power the statements they can make about “New Zealandness”. I start by acknowledging that the primacy of television as the pre-eminent cultural transmitter and national unifier is increasingly questioned, particularly with the advent of new modes of media consumption wrought by digitisation and the internet (Taylor, 2001, p.174). However, today in New Zealand there is no denying the power of television, as despite the increase in the consumption of other media technologies, it remains the most popular medium by some way, with two thirds of the population watching at least fourteen hours of television each week (see Appendix E for Nielsen television viewership data).<sup>89</sup> Within this context, television viewership in New Zealand can be seen to retain the centrality in national life that Amy Holdsworth evokes when she talks of television as an “altar” within the home (2011, p.29).

### **The Institutional Environment for New Zealand Television and the Imperative of a “Safe Return”**

My first contention is that the television environment in New Zealand is more likely to produce safe and conservative programming such as *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* as a function of its size and structure. Television in New Zealand is inherently structured by the relatively small audience available and the impact this has on advertising revenues. New Zealand’s overall media environment is highly deregulated

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<sup>89</sup> The Nielsen Media CMI finds that for the year ended March 2013, 66% of the New Zealand population over ten years of age were categorised as moderate to heavy television viewers (watching at least fourteen hours of television per week) and 33% were considered heavy viewers with consumption in excess of twenty three hours per week (see Appendix D).

with strongly competitive radio and press sectors chasing limited advertising expenditure which is also fragmenting across new media forms. This environment puts extreme pressure on broadcasters and drives an inherently conservative approach to programming. In this context programming utilizing nostalgia and food offers an appealing and attractive production option. Holdsworth observes, “A competitive television market highlights the tension between creativity and tradition, and here, nostalgia emerges as a formula that offers another form of safe return” (2011, p.112). In tackling the issue of institutional support for food and nostalgia in New Zealand, the key question to address is whether production and broadcast economics are more likely to be sensitive to requirements for a “safe return” than other national environments? To highlight just how important this “safe return” is in New Zealand we need to look no further than the basic structure of the local television industry.

New Zealand television is dominated by three broadcast networks, TVNZ, Mediaworks and SKY TV (NZ).<sup>90</sup> At time of writing New Zealand had recently moved from an analogue to a digital broadcast infrastructure and this is making more niche channels available on the digital *Freeview* platform.<sup>91</sup> The relatively small economies of scale available in New Zealand result in all broadcast networks selling advertising. As media academic Trisha Dunleavy highlights in the introduction of her recent analysis of state funding for New Zealand drama, “New Zealand television is unusual internationally because it lacks a mainstream audience channel that is either dedicated to the pursuit of PSB objectives and/or [sic] in receipt of direct public funding to support these” (2012, p.1).<sup>92</sup> Free-to-air broadcasters TVNZ and Mediaworks are particularly reliant on advertising revenues.<sup>93</sup> SKY TV (NZ) derives 88% of its income from subscriptions which lessens overall reliance, although advertising remains a significant revenue stream and drains available advertising revenues from the free-to-air broadcasters reliant on it.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> TVNZ *TV One* is focused on a mature audience and features a formula of news, drama and current affairs. *Channel 2* appeals to a younger audience, featuring American soaps, comedy and movies. Mediaworks is the other major free-to-air broadcaster with channel *TV3* positioned somewhere between the two main TVNZ offerings. Mediaworks also owns *Four*, aimed at children and young adults with predominantly American youth comedy-drama and *C4* which is a music channel. SKY TV (NZ) is the dominant pay television operator with a New Zealand domestic household penetration of 49.4%. In addition it operates one free-to-air channel called *PRIME* (SKY TV (NZ), 2012).

<sup>91</sup> *Freeview* is a joint venture between TVNZ, Mediaworks and Māori Television to provide a free-to-air digital platform as the New Zealand government frees up analogue frequencies for other (predominantly telecommunication) uses. *Māori Television* is a state funded free-to-air channel supporting the Māori language and culture. It attracts an average audience per time slot of less than 1% of all viewers 5+ (*Throng*, TV Ratings: 25 October, 2013). There are two recent launches on the *Freeview* platform; *Choice TV* (launched in April 2012) and *Sommet Sports* (Launched in July 2013).

<sup>92</sup> Public Sector Broadcasting (PSB).

<sup>93</sup> Despite TVNZ being a state owned enterprise, it is still required to deliver a profit dividend to the government and in 2012 this dividend amounted to NZ\$13.8 million (TVNZ, 2012, p5). Mediaworks is currently operating in receivership as a means of restructuring its debt and hence revenue pressures are extreme. Māori Television is state funded to the tune of NZ\$32.7 million with only NZ\$2.4 million coming from advertising sources (Māori Television, 2012, p20).

<sup>94</sup> In the 2012 financial year SKY TV's reported advertising revenues were at NZ\$41.6 million (SKY TV (NZ), 2013).

Outside of programming brought in from overseas through supply arrangements or spot market activity, New Zealand television programming is on the whole developed and produced by an underlying stratum of local independent production companies. These organizations develop and present programming concepts to broadcasters who make the decision to fund the production based on strategic fit and the likely appeal to audience segments and hence advertisers. Broadcasters may seek additional funding for these programmes from a government agency called New Zealand on Air (NZoA). In 2012, NZoA funded NZ\$83.5 million of New Zealand television programming (New Zealand on Air, 2012). Glenn Usmar, NZoA's Television Manager says broadcasters may seek funding for a number of reasons, for example where the local production budget has been exhausted or where there is the perception of a higher level of commercial risk around a worthy project (personal communication, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013). NZoA's criteria for funding are defined in *The Broadcasting Act* (1989). Programming becomes eligible for consideration for funding where a free-to-air broadcaster wishes to broadcast the programme, where that programme is, "reflecting New Zealand identity and culture" and where the broadcaster believes additional financial support is justified (*The Broadcasting Act* (1989) section 37 (b) (i), p.17). Usmar also highlights that NZoA takes a view on the overall television landscape and will intervene where desirable programming is not being developed due to "fashion cycles" in television or where there is demonstrated market failure in bringing a popular programme format that could reflect local culture to local screens (personal communication, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013).<sup>95</sup>This intervention can take the form of proactive discussions with broadcasters or a more formal RFP process.

Outside of public sector broadcasters there will always be commercial pressures to maximise shareholder returns. However, as I have highlighted, the limited size of the New Zealand market and the concentration of commercial enterprises in the free-to-air space put profitability under extreme pressure and drive a conservative impulse in programming to ensure the safest return. With this in mind, proven genre or content areas become especially appealing and there are few more appealing than nostalgia and food, particularly so when they are combined to make unchallenging statements of togetherness and what "Kiwiness" means.

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<sup>95</sup> The example of market failure cited by Glenn Usmar was *New Zealand's Got Talent* (personal communication, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013). This show was first broadcast on *PRIME* in 2008. Market dynamics made it prohibitive to produce subsequent series until NZoA intervened and subsidised a revival in 2012 and 2013, broadcast on TVNZ's *TV One*.

## Institutional Support for the Formula of Food and Nostalgia

My second contention is that the institutional environment in New Zealand inherently supports narratives that use food and nostalgia as constructs due to a pioneering role in the development of the genre and the importance of “Big Food” advertisers. Food programming is one of the fastest growing genres in the global television business. Programming employing the narrative of food has a significant presence on free-to-air television in New Zealand and there is a dedicated local subscription based food channel.<sup>96</sup> Both domestically and globally, societies are increasingly entertained and informed through the language of food and this has led to a proliferation of generic food formats which provide compelling choices for both television station programmers and local production output.<sup>97</sup>

The popularity of food programming with audiences and programmers is in part explained by New Zealand’s heritage as a pioneer in television food shows. Many nations have local formats and personalities which can break out to a global audience; however New Zealand is notable in producing two early pioneers of global food narratives, Graham Kerr (*The Galloping Gourmet* (1969-71)), and the partnership of Peter Hudson and David Halls (*Hudson and Halls* (1976-1986)). This imbues the genre with a local tradition which can only help its appeal to producers and audiences. The appeal to audiences is underscored when the age profile of the core television viewer in New Zealand is taken into consideration. Television audience research on New Zealand media consumption finds that the older you are, the more likely you are to be a heavy television viewer with the propensity to view moving above the average from fifty five years of age onwards (see Appendix E for Nielsen television viewership data). This age profile and hence “nostalgia proneness” of viewers helps propel industrial support for food shows which harness the past and make statements about New Zealand identity. *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* are only two recent examples of this national preoccupation with local food narratives. Of particular note are Annabel Langbein’s recent shows which draw strongly on notions of the past and are continuing the tradition of taking local food narratives and celebrity to a global audience.

Annabel Langbein’s, *The Free Range Cook* (2010) and *Simple Pleasures* (2012) are both broadcast on TVNZ’s *TV One*. Langbein is a successful food writer, author and media producer. In both *The Free Range Cook* and *Simple Pleasures* Langbein draws on a fantasy of domesticity in a lakeside retreat with

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<sup>96</sup>The success of *The Food Channel* in America since its launch in 1993 has spawned other dedicated subscription based food programme channels around the globe. New Zealand’ has been no exception with the *Food Television* channel being launched locally in 2006 and available on subscription based SKY TV channel 9.

<sup>97</sup> A number of the most popular international shows and licensed formats exist within the free-to-air televisual flow in New Zealand. In the week of 13<sup>th</sup> April 2013, food programme sub-genres included game show style competitions ( *MasterChef*, *Great British Bake Off*, *My Kitchen Rules*), reality TV (*Kitchen Nightmares*, *Hell’s Kitchen*) and celebrity vehicles ( *Chef on Mission* (Simon Gault), *Marcos Great British Feast* (Marco Pierre White), and *Heston’s Mission impossible* (Heston Blumenthal) (*TV Guide*, 2013, April 13-19).

New Zealand's Southern Alps as a backdrop. The implicit nostalgia is summed up by TVNZ's publicity statements for *The Free Range Cook*, "Annabel's fresh, free-spirited approach and the gorgeous natural location create a show that's in tune with the growing desire to live a simpler, less-harried way of life" (TVNZ, 2013). Langebein's formula clearly resonates with New Zealand viewers, but not labouring local cultural narratives and employing a more generic blend of romanticised domesticity has enabled export success. *The Free Range Cook* has been broadcast in eighty three counties (Publishers Association of New Zealand, 2012). Institutional support for narratives of food and in particular those that weave nostalgic notions of the past and togetherness is also a function of the advertiser support which accompanies the audience aggregation these discourses drive.

"Big Food" corporations are attracted to advertising propositions which enable them to link their products to notions of the past and national tradition. Food and nostalgia delivers a blended context that many of the transnational corporations that dominate the New Zealand foodways wish to be associated with. Nostalgia plays its part by implying an often invented tradition that, "...serves in the selling of consumer goods, using notions of history to convey a particular unique panache to a product" (Holtzman, 2006, p.368). The media landscape for advertiser expenditure is transforming in New Zealand as it is in other markets. Audiences and advertising revenues are fragmenting across new media platforms such as online and mobile. Traditional media revenues have come under pressure and the selling of television inventory is increasingly focused on selling both audience and environment.<sup>98</sup> With specific reference to food, this phenomenon is well summed up by Keith Stewart the editor of the New Zealand food industry forum *Foodnews*,

"Warm fuzzies are an important part of any marketing campaign associated with food, which is why nostalgia plays such a high profile role in food and beverage advertising campaigns. These speak often of the history of companies, their links to the families of founders and their preservation of established values" (Stewart, 2012, accessed online).

Audience appeal and attractiveness to advertisers result in a favourable reception by industry institutions to programming which can blend food with notions of pastness. However this commercial attractiveness is not without downsides. We are reminded by Huyssen that commercial appeal is not without consequences on how producers approach narratives of the past, "We do know that the media do not transport public memory innocently. They shape it in their very structure and form"(2003, p.20). These conditions present an uncomfortable proposition for consideration. On the one hand the commercial appeal of local food narratives may furnish advantageous scheduling and healthy production budgets and these factors may enable the statements they make to have enhanced authority and power. However, on the other hand, it locks them in a paradigm which continues to offer a fantasy version of "New Zealandness". This position

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<sup>98</sup> As measured by the New Zealand Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), television has been the recipient of approximately 28% of all measured advertising expenditure between 2007 and 2012. Over the same period online advertising has nearly tripled its share from 5.8% to 16.9% (2013, accessed online).

tends to perpetuate the smoothing of tensions around independence, race relations and the safety of foodways. How do other food traditions get some prominence? How does the truly multicultural nature of New Zealand and its foodways find expression when they present more risqué approaches which are less commercially attractive and upset the utopic visions of artisanal foodways, commodity tradition and bicultural mythicity? A potential way out of this conundrum is offered in the way that broadcasters and government funding agencies work together to enable these alternative voices to be heard.

### **State Intervention and the Role of Television Programming**

The commercial success of food narratives has reduced the necessity for much state support through NZoA. Despite the strong link between food, national identity and the role of NZoA to help foster New Zealand identity and culture, funding for the genre is minimal. In 2010 and 2011 food narratives attracted less than 2% of the funds available for television development and production (NZoA, 2010, 2011).<sup>99</sup> *Coasters* did not receive NZoA funding as a function of its food discourse, rather it received NZ\$384, 138 primarily as a documentary of New Zealand people and places (NZoA, 2010, p.52). This dynamic was confirmed by Glenn Usmar who highlighted that food was a popular genre with broadcasters and that NZoA was, “Not in the business of rushing into a space where we are not needed” (personal communication, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013). The current popularity and success of food allied to nostalgia provide little justification for seeking additional state support. Within this context there is a risk that food nostalgia becomes something akin to Frederic Jameson’s (1991) conservative and regressive formula where expressions of collective pastness are purely subject to the market imperatives of the culture industry. This market dynamic may explain why one set of statements describing the dynamics of New Zealand society take precedence over other alternatives. There is a system perpetuating a safe and unchallenging approach to discourses which combines food culture, pastness and nationality. However, there have been some notable funding initiatives by NZoA in the past five years which have focused on some of the less comforting aspects of food’s link to cultural identity, race relations and the quality of our foodways.

Two programmes have been funded which attempted to address some of the tensions I have raised around race relations and the safety of foodways in New Zealand through the promotion of alternative discourses. It is important to briefly outline their proposition in order to go on to identify how programming flow affects these discourses when compared to *Coasters* and *The Food Truck*. *What’s Really In Our Food?* is a television series which attempts to uncover modern production practices in contemporary New Zealand foodways. The show is broadcast on TV3 and the station’s publicity tells us, “*What’s Really In Our Food?* continues to debunk common myths and misunderstandings surrounding nutrition, and looks at any other health benefits or risks that could stem from the food we eat every day” (TV3, 2013). The four

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<sup>99</sup> In 2008 and 2009 programme funding based on food narratives was less than 1% of total NZoA television development and production funding (New Zealand on Air, 2008, 2009).

seasons produced by Top Shelf productions Ltd between 2008 and 2012 were funded by NZoA to the tune of NZ\$2.5 million (NZoA, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012). The show was typically broadcast at 7.30pm on Tuesday evenings and achieved moderate ratings success (*Throng*. TV Ratings 09 October 2012). Glenn Usmar outlined that funding was provided as it was felt that the programme would provide “real” information on food values and nutrition (personal communication, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013). It may be speculated that the need for NZoA funding is perhaps also a function of the discomfort felt by broadcasters to the potential commercial backlash by packaged food advertisers whose products are often featured.<sup>100</sup> While *What’s Really In Our Food?* addresses (and as we have seen, arguably fuels) anxieties around our foodways, a second NZoA funded food narrative broke out of the predominant bicultural construct of New Zealand homogeneity.

In 2010 NZoA helped fund the production of a food narrative called *Vital Ingredients*, for NZ\$349, 996 (NZoA, 2010, p.53). This ten part series was broadcast on *TV One* in early 2011. Directed by award winning Dan Salmon and produced by Octopus Pictures Ltd, the publicity literature for *Vital Ingredients* states,

“People from over 150 nations call New Zealand home. Every year we welcome thousands of migrants and refugees ... and every year our cultural landscape and the definition of ‘being Kiwi’ changes.... Across the series we meet ten different families as they prepare their food for a celebration. The families come from Colombia, Croatia, Sudan, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Burma and Kiribati – and the people are as vibrant and varied as the meals they cook” (Octopus Pictures, 2011).<sup>101</sup>

The funding of this series recognises the strong and enduring link between food and identity yet rejects the bicultural constructs of food, culture and shared pastness in New Zealand identity we have seen prevail in both *Coasters* and *The Food Truck*. The pastness and nostalgia on display is not one for a shared New Zealand culture but for the culture of origin. Jon Holtzman reminds us that, “Food-centred nostalgia is a recurring theme in studies of diasporic or expatriate populations” (2006, p.367). *Vital Ingredients* was heralded as, “A Feast of New Zealand’s Ethnic Diversity [*sic*]” yet was funded in the “special interest” category and scheduled outside of primetime at 11.30am on Sundays in a non-commercial broadcast time slot (Octopus Pictures, 2011; NZoA, 2010, p.53).<sup>102</sup> Despite a quarter of New Zealand’s population being born in other countries, the rationale presented by the broadcaster for this programming was that the show was seen as having an appeal to a narrow range of minority groups and as such funds were sought

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<sup>100</sup> Series four of *What’s Really In Our Food?* included such staples as tinned beans, dairy foods, pasta, noodles, spreads, oils and ice cream, (many of which have also been featured in the series of *The Food Truck* I have focused on in this treatise).

<sup>101</sup> 2009 Qantas film and television award for best documentary, *A Good Way To Die* (2008).

<sup>102</sup> Television in New Zealand is commercial free on Sunday mornings.

from NzoA's special interest budget ( New Zealand Department of Statistics, 2013). The nature of this time slot was reflected in the low ratings. For example, the second episode failed to reach the top five most viewed daytime shows on a Sunday (*Throng*, TV Ratings 09 January 2011). This illustrates a critical point, that applications for funding require a statement from the broadcaster of where the show is intended to be programmed. This can limit these alternative and more adventurous discourses within the televisual flow which, as I will demonstrate, can have a decisive impact on how loudly these alternative voices and visions of New Zealand can be heard.

*What's Really In Our Food?* and *Vital Ingredients* are good examples of where NzoA has intervened in the market to fund food programming articulating alternative discourses to those of a bicultural national food culture. However, once these programmes get made, they may occupy time slots that may not be as conducive to audience aggregation and the powering of statements about collectivity and nationality as the prime time slots that *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* occupied. This leads to a further contention, that the extent to which one set of competing statements about local cultural dynamics takes precedence over other competing statements is a function of programming. Programming decisions not only effect audience numbers and composition but also the power and authority that the context or "flow" of station programming gives to the specific visions of pastness and shared unity.

A jumping-off point to explore programming decisions and authority can be found in concept of "flow" as put forward by influential television and cultural theorist Raymond Williams (1974). Williams highlights that attitudes and feelings about what we have watched are affected by preceding and following programming, the "flow" within which they are situated. It might be argued that the technology of time shifted viewing renders flow a redundant concept, however an investigation of time shifted viewing for the final episode of *The Food Truck* series two, "Sushi" broadcast on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2012 highlights this is not the case. "Sushi" attracted an audience of 546,160 viewers yet in time shifted viewing as measured by Nielsen, it did not make the top twenty for that day which means less than 4,600 viewers (<0.8%) watched this programme outside of flow (*Throng*, 2012). This is not to dismiss the future impact of technology, particularly as the implications in New Zealand of the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013 digital switch over begin to manifest themselves and as the national roll-out of ultra-fast broadband (UFB) gathers pace. Ultimately it is more likely to be technology and not any institutional or legislative reform which is most likely to create a fairer programming playing field for alternative narratives.

The voice of *Coasters* benefits significantly from its context with televisual flow and this is well illustrated when we compare it to *Vital Ingredients*. Saturday programming on New Zealand's most popular free-to-air, channel, *TV One*, strongly features food lifestyle programming and *Coasters* occupied the prime time 7.00pm time slot. This time slot should guarantee a strong audience but I argue that in this example, the prevalence of shows using "food narratives" during the televisual flow of the day adds significantly to this by lending a generic authority. On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2011, when the first season of *Coasters* was

broadcast, there were five hours of food shows broadcast between 9.00am and 6.00pm, representing 55% of all programming during that day in a near continuous flow (*TV Guide*, 2011, February 26-March 04).<sup>103</sup> *Coasters* follows directly on from the main hour long daily 6.00pm news bulletin and was followed by the British reality show *The Hotel Inspector* at 7.30pm. The positioning of such a strong domestic offering in the peak viewing slot adds weight and authority to its ability to make statements about food, a shared past and identity. By comparison the televisual flow within which *Vital Ingredients* was placed acted to counter any statements it may have made about the true nature of New Zealand's ethnic and cultural composition and divergent pasts. As examples, the second and third shows were broadcast at 11.30am on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2011. They were preceded at 10.30am by the Māori language and culture programme *Waka Huia* which in turn was preceded at 10.00am by the Māori current affairs show *Marae* (*TV Guide*, 2011, January 15-21; January 22-28). Placement of *Vital Ingredients* within a flow which had such a strong emphasis on monocultural indiginity seems incongruous with the programmes focus as, "A Feast of New Zealand's Ethnic Diversity [*sic*]" and can have done little to deliver an audience or endorse its authority as a text on multiculturalism and New Zealand identity.

A further example of the impact of televisual flow is provided when I consider how it adds authority to both *The Food Truck* and *What's Really In Our Food?* through the proximity of programming to news and current affairs. The second season of *The Food Truck* was scheduled into a 7.00pm time slot on a Sunday evening. The flow context for the show is that there is a watershed at 5.00pm on *TV One* as programming transitions from sport and into news and current affairs. *The Food Truck* follows the main daily news bulletin *One News* at 6.00pm and is followed at 7.30pm by the current affairs programme *Sunday* (*TV Guide*, 2012, April 14-20; April 21-25). This flow from news and current affairs is replicated for *What's Really In Our Food?* where the 7.30pm Tuesday timeslot on *TV3* follows an hour of national news and the half hour long current affairs show *Campbell Live*. I argue, using Williams' "flow" construct, that there is something of the factual bias of news and current affairs which sets up the consumption of both texts as inherently authoritative. *The Food Truck's* introductory proposition reinforces this with a nationalistic rhetoric which identifies a national health issue through the linking of obesity and New Zealanders love of takeaway foods. This factual authority is reflected in *What's Really In Our Food?* by the fact that presenter Carolyn Robinson has for many years been a *TV3* newsreader. If flow adds to the ability of local programmes to make statements about shared pastness and collectivity we need to address the issue of the high number of overseas programmes which exists within the televisual flow. The question needs to be asked if these competing statements about nationality and collective memory detract or add authority to local statements, do they strengthen or dilute them.

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<sup>103</sup> Shows featured included *Thorney's Kitchen Central* (featuring former All Black rugby player and MP, Graham Thorne), *MasterChef Australia*, *Jamie's American Road Trip* and *Come Dine With Me*. (*TV Guide*, 2011, February 26-March 04).

My contention is that rather than foreign food shows detracting from the ability of local productions to make statements about “New Zealandness” there is a discursive proposition set up which adds to it. If anything the placement of New Zealand food narratives within the context of international offerings makes the voice of national identity through local food culture louder. The potential for international texts to provide some context for the making of nostalgic statements that appeal to a specific New Zealand sense of pastness and identity is well summed up by historian Alon Confino,

“That a given memory exists, that it has a symbolic representation and a political significance is obvious, but in itself it explains little if we do not place this memory within a global network of transmission and symbolic representations” (2011, p.200).

Confino is reminding us that we make interpretations of national food narratives such as *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* in the context of other offerings we consume within the genre. It is not unreasonable for New Zealand viewers, exposed to strongly nationalistic food narratives originating off shore, to expect the same from domestic offerings. An analysis of prime time weeknight programming on the main free-to-air channels for the week commencing Monday 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2013 highlights the nationalistic statements that foreign food narratives make.<sup>104</sup> *The Great British Bake Off* and *Marco’s Great British Feast* are entitled to reinforce the association between food, memory and national culture in the UK. *My Kitchen Rules* pitches competing teams who are primarily identified by the Australian state that they represent and hence the narrative structure takes advantage of a strongly nationalistic dialogue.<sup>105</sup> *Kitchen Nightmares* and *Hell’s Kitchen* are both vehicles for British celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay. Both shows are set in the USA with *Kitchen Nightmares* visiting restaurants across the nation. To reiterate my point, New Zealand viewers consume these texts with an expectation that they will make statements about their respective national and cultural food traditions and it is not unreasonable for them to expect the same from consumption within the flow of well coded local shows such as *Coasters* and *The Food Truck*.

We can see then that the success of food narratives, particularly when allied to notions of a shared past and collectivity make them a particularly popular programming choice. This limits the level of state intervention necessary and hence can be seen as perpetuating narratives that are comfortable, unchallenging and advertiser friendly. Where NZoA has intervened this has been for worthy programming that challenges the comfort of advertisers and the supremacy of a bicultural New Zealand outlook. The programming time slot and flow context has a significant impact on the ability of the statements they make to have any cultural ascendancy over other more mainstream and less contentious discourses.

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<sup>104</sup> *TV One, TV2, TV3, Four, and PRIME.*

<sup>105</sup> Interestingly a team from New Zealand was incorporated into the Australian state structure of *My Kitchen Rules* from series three (broadcast in Australia February-March 2012). <http://www.popsugar.com.au/celebrity/Meet-Teams-Contestants-From-My-Kitchen-Rules-2012-21230187#photo-21230197>

In summary, the industrial and institutional environment in which *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* are produced provides insights into the enunciative modalities which enable these discourses to make loud and compelling statements about food, the past and national identity. The television industry in New Zealand operates in an environment where the “safe returns” that the powerful generic impulses of food and nostalgia deliver make them appealing material. The ability of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* to make credible statements is driven by the traditional popularity of genre in New Zealand and its ongoing appeal to “Big Food” advertisers. This generic success has meant that government funding has focused on investing in other narrative vehicles to express national culture and values. This has left food narratives to be largely moulded by the commercial imperatives of producers, broadcasters and advertisers. In the few recent occasions where the local industry had produced and broadcast alternative narratives, particularly around food safety and multiculturalism, these have been at the mercy of commercial programming decisions. I argue that this industrial structure can limit dialogues around food and culture and exacerbate the creation of fantasy spaces which continues to obscure the realities of food security, independence and what it really means to be a New Zealander.

## Chapter 6. “It’s Lovely Being a Kiwi – Let’s Drink to That”: Conclusions

(Al Brown, *Coasters*, “Banks Peninsular”, 26/02/11).

At the outset this thesis aimed to traverse a highly charged environment where television, notions of the past, food culture and national identity meet. New Zealand programmes utilising the narrative of food provided a particularly fertile ground through their origination in an environment where the dual impacts of colonisation and modernity were keenly felt. I discovered a complex set of negotiations taking place within the narrative, aesthetic and thematic discourses which created a clear and comforting construct articulating what it meant to be a “Kiwi” and New Zealand’s unique place in the world. To conclude this thesis there remains only two more steps to take. Firstly to summarise the tensions and negations of these forces that are evident in both texts and secondly it is critical to attempt to answer the question of what these findings mean? Do they have positive or negative implications? What implications do they have for how New Zealand or any other similar society remembers or indeed forgets itself?

### **The Negotiation of the Shock of Change and Modern Food Identities in New Zealand**

More than anything else, the way that fantasy and myth around New Zealand’s past is articulated through its food culture is a reaction against the twin shocks of modernity and colonialism. My first step was to utilise two key binary structures on which to chart the narrative of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* and through any tensions and oppositions gain insights into any greater unities. While a surface reading of both narratives often placed them in opposition within the premodernity-postmodernity binary and Svetlana Boym’s restorative-reflective construct, they also highlighted greater unities which directly negotiated tensions around national independence.

Modernity has brought with it vast changes that cut across original indigenous and settler society. Today New Zealand foodways are inflicted with the homogeneity of the products of “Big Food”, a duopolistic supermarket environment and modern living has become more compacted in terms of both time and space. The narratives of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* have responded to these conditions through the presentation of visions of a utopia that weave a fantasy around these realities. These utopic visions are enabled by nostalgia for a mythical past. Consumer sovereignty and older notions of gifting sidestep market dominance of transnational “Big Food” and an air of distrust is woven to obscure their commodifying and standardising impulses and restore national boundaries. Premodern and postmodern notions of foraging negate the realities of the dominance of supermarkets in our food supply and enable older notions of the link between freedom and food to be re-established.

Nostalgia for change is a phenomenon identified in both texts as a way of subsuming difference and binding cultures within national society. Whether Māori or Pākehā change has been a common experience. While change can create negative feelings, within both narratives modern New Zealand is presented as a site of opportunity and positive change. Time poor "Kiwis" are presented with a reformulation of time shaped by mythical notions of the wealth of its availability in the past and formulated through analogies with holiday and leisure time. Space is also mythologised with premodern notions of freedom of access to the land and more recent projections of the comforting and secure suburbia of the early to mid-twentieth century. Nostalgia tracked on the restorative-reflective polarity illustrate two divergent texts united in a shared reformulation of what past hopes, dreams and visions for the future used to be in the light of contemporary preoccupations with the environment and national independence.

The narrative of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* is propelled and supported by aesthetics which themselves convey both notions of a shared past and hopes for the future. Archival drawings, photographs, film and television are blended with a soundtrack of the past and the use of props and settings which convey nostalgia for a New Zealand of days gone by. These are in part enabled by production qualities reflective the producers own proclivities, backgrounds and situations. Narrative is also supported by repeated themes linked to the past and hopes for the future. There is a repetition of personal traits which represent the way "Kiwis" like to think of themselves and their forbearers. The use of childhood imagery is both personally evocative and also reflective of hopes of a continuing cultural legacy.

Food remains a central discourse through which to articulate what being a New Zealander means. There is an enduring link between food and identity and this extends to how notions of nationality are represented by food culture. *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* illustrate a sophisticated process which creates a unifying food culture. They do this by subsuming shared experiences of commodified foodways and differing cultural traditions around food into a fantasy national food culture. The creation of food culture is handled differently in each text. *Coasters* contemporises older food traditions and *The Food Truck* links modern commodity consumption to notions of tradition. The link between modernity and the changes wrought by colonisation are bridged through an articulation of New Zealand as a Garden of Eden. *Coasters* links our foodways to nostalgia for a pure and prelapsarian New Zealand, whereas *The Food Truck* returns to the Eden of the 1950's and 1960's with its contemporary evocations of wholesomeness, progress, security and social harmony. These sites of purity and relative peace also act to smooth many of the racial tensions have become more prominent in New Zealand over the past thirty years. These are also negotiated through the articulation of a national food culture largely based on pre-European indigenous foodways. The premise of each show allows them to turn a blind eye to largely meat loving,

land hungry practices of colonial white settler society. This results in the creation of a mythical and predominantly bicultural food tradition which survives in the face of the spread of global food cultures by recontextualising these foreign multicultural influences and absorbing them into the dominant bicultural construct.

Statements of nationality based on the fantasy of a shared past articulated through food are only powerful if they are able to be repeated and there are no strong competing statements. The structure of the New Zealand television industry and the institutional environment determining government funding plays a part in allowing the primacy of particular statements around what it means to be a New Zealander to be made. The relatively small competitive television environment places great emphasis on the need for programming that safely delivers both audiences and advertiser revenues. The blend of food and nostalgia satisfies both requirements and this can be seen through its generic prevalence and repetition through other local productions. The generic success of the food narratives mean that broadcasters are often able to justify production funding out of commercial budgets, particularly where the narratives are non-threatening and likely to appeal to the advertising community. This popularity also means that food is rarely funded by the government agency NZoA as it rightly focuses on funding more needy articulations of New Zealand identity and culture such as drama and local entertainment. There are however some recent examples of NZoA funding for food narratives which question modern foodways and challenge bicultural orthodoxy. However these are always at risk of being programmed into the televisual flow in a way that fails to capitalise on the potential audience and in some cases appear to suppress the competing statements made.

### **Implications of Findings**

So what does all this mean? What are the implications of these processes for how national identity and culture in New Zealand will develop? Are there broader insights to be drawn from how these processes harmonise the present through reformulation of the past, particularly as they apply to other societies or popular cultural products? There are clearly both positive and negative implications. The processes played out in *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* are responses to trauma that promote one form of remembering over another. In the creation of myth based on very select elements of the past the question has to be asked, what do we lose through forgetting the elements that do not fit into the new myth? Food traditions brought and developed by early settlers or by more recent arrivals from diverse global cultures may provide a more accurate reflection of the meaning of being a “Kiwi” in contemporary multicultural New Zealand.

Truth is always a subjective notion but it can be more accurately determined through a wider range of inputs. Discounting elements of past food traditions, not recognising others and omitting painful aspects of history creates a fantasy that distorts to the same degree that it disinherits. The experience of immigration is one common to the New Zealand experience. Implicit in this is the mixing of cultures and the discovery and sharing of new cultural expressions. This process is exemplified in food when we consider “Fusion Cuisine”. This mixing of cultures often leads to conflict as it did in nineteenth century New Zealand. The narratives of *Coasters* and *The Food Truck* smooth over these historic tensions but in doing so creates a powerful bicultural construct that squeezes out other voices which could limit the inclusiveness and hence power of new cultural expressions.

The recontextualisation of commodity products and modern forms of consumption as traditional also poses some issues. If New Zealanders make their identity through commodities produced by transnational “Big Food” then future notions of independence and uniqueness of culture must be questioned. If shared memory and identity are articulated by L&P, Watties baked beans, Rashuns, and McDonalds then food heritage and identity is in the hands of corporations headquartered in Atlanta GA, Pittsburgh PA, Purchase NY and Oak Brook IL. Linked to this is that commodity forms are often unhealthy. If a popular national food culture makes its way through products that are often highly processed, high in fats, sugars and salts then phenomenon such as obesity “epidemics” and continued anxiety over the links between food and health with continue to be a defining feature in the national food narrative.

There are also issues which arise from the specific structure of the television industry in New Zealand. The market size and reliance on advertisers mean less threatening domestic narratives will always take precedence in the search for safe returns and advertising dollars. This conservative impulse is seen in the prevalence of food narratives and the popularity of local productions linking food to nostalgic statements of nationality. This generic popularity with broadcasters is also reflected in the relatively low levels of funding by NZoA for food narratives as expressions of identity and culture. This poses a threat where food culture is always created in the light of commercial pressures and alternative, arguably more accurate reflections of national identity through food are squeezed out. This presents a second issue associated with the absence of a non-commercial public sector television broadcaster. Where alternative voices are seen as programmable and these are funded by NZoA, then the lack of commerciality which prompted the request for funding can also consign the production to live in a less commercially attractive time slot within the televisual flow with the implicit limitations this has on audience reach.

There are however some significant up sides to the way that a fantasy past has been used to construct a national food culture. We are again drawn to the historic themes of trauma caused by colonisation and the

shock of modernity. New Zealand is not alone in experiencing these impulses. North America, South America, Australia and Southern Africa have all been subjected to the same tensions. Each national experience is unique, yet as Andrea Huyssen reminds us. "The form in which we think of the past is increasingly memory without borders rather than national history within borders" (2003, p.4). The use of the past in these New Zealand texts may provide fruitful ground for further study in other nations trying to come to grips with the legacy of intercultural conflict at a local level and the pressures on national identity and an independent voice at a global level. The reformation of past dreams and hopes for the future in the light of contemporary needs means that nostalgia and the past has the potential to reenergise societies where the failures of the past act as chains holding them back.

*Coasters* and *The Food Truck* are cultural products which have deployed both narrative, aesthetic and thematic appeals to a mythical past and in doing so have created a past that can live comfortably with both present day conditions and future hopes. In restructuring the past and in particular how this was achieved around the power of food as a cultural and memory artefact, the texts provide a path to the healing of old wounds and the substitution of notions of old freedoms with the new freedoms of commodity culture. Within the New Zealand context there are also implications for how other voices can be heard. While generic and advertiser appeal may keep food narratives enslaved to commercial pressures, the fact that New Zealand can also produce and fund alternative voices is in itself an achievement. While it is tempting to call for legislative or institutional changes to ensure fairer programming for these alternative statements, it is the technological revolution that is sweeping television and the media in general which may drive the change. On the 1st December 2013 New Zealand free-to-air broadcasting switched to a completely digital platform. This switch heralds the changes in viewing habits that are beginning to be felt. An article on the Fairfax Media owned news website Stuff by Marika Hill summed this up,

"The last analogue television broadcast switched to digital today, but a growing number of viewers couldn't care less. Thousands of cord cutters, as they are dubbed, are dumping the television in favour of their phones, tablets and computers" (2013, accessed online).

As this change in viewing habits takes hold and the pick and mix of on-demand viewing becomes more prevalent, alternative narratives and expressions of national identity will begin to be placed on a more level footing with well programmed shows such as *Coasters* and *The Food Truck*. The alternative voices funded through taxpayer's money have a better opportunities to be heard.

Societies only exist in so far as they identify themselves as a unified society. The power of television, the past and food is being utilised in New Zealand to heal deep wounds and tame modernity by incorporating it into new notions of tradition. This has enabled a rapprochement with a painful past and its recolonisation as a terrain for making common purpose and a future together.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Massey University, Human Ethics Committee Low Risk Notification



**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**  
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

21 June 2013

Paul Day  
PO Box 256  
WAIUKU 2341

Dear Paul

**Re: Making Kai in Godzone: New Zealand Food Programming, Nostalgia and National Health and Identity**

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 12 June 2013.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

**A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:**

*"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.*

*If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz".*

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

John G O'Neill (Professor)  
**Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and  
Director (Research Ethics)**

cc Dr Alex Bevan  
School of English and Media Studies  
PN241

Dr Joe Grixti, HoS  
School of English and Media Studies  
PN241

Massey University Human Ethics Committee  
Accredited by the Health Research Council

**Research Ethics Office**

Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T +64 6 350 5573 F +64 6 350 5622  
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz animalethics@massey.ac.nz gtc@massey.ac.nz www.massey.ac.nz

## Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

### *Masters Thesis Research*

#### "Making Kai in Godzone: New Zealand Food Programming, Nostalgia and National Health and Identity"

Researcher Paul Day has a career in print and broadcast media spanning over twenty years. This research is an element of the thesis component of the Masters of Media Studies qualification. The research is intended to help provide some industry and institutional background to the way that popular New Zealand food programming use elements of nostalgia to help maximise audience appeal and make broader appeals to collective memory.

#### **Project Description and Invitation**

The thesis investigates how popular television shows with a food focus make statements about what it means to be a New Zealander and how they help us construct our identities and visions for the future. The thesis also intends to explore how these visions can obscure or recontextualise broader societal issues such as concerns around our foodways and cultural independence. Two of New Zealand's most popular food based shows; *Coasters* (series 1) and *The Food Truck* (series 2) are used as the texts to explore these themes.

The Research student, Paul Day would like to invite you to participate in this research by answering a few questions.

#### **Participant Identification and Recruitment**

You have been contacted as you will be able to provide some background on how these texts have been produced. It is intended that there will also be a small number of other participants to this study who are in similar positions of influence in the production of the texts under study

#### **Project Procedures**

- You will be contacted and a request made to answer some key questions and to put some contextualization around some identified features of the shows
- The time involved in answer these questions can, if you wish, be minimal. The detail which you chose to apply in answering questions is at the subject's discretion.
- The researcher student has no conflicts of interest. He is currently a full time student and a self-employed consultant. Paul's study is not funded by any third party, his thesis is not commissioned nor is it intended for any commercial use or application.
- A summary of the research findings can be sent to you on completion of the thesis in early 2014.

#### **Data Management**

- It is envisaged that responses will either be in email form or collected in face to face interviews
- Responses will be kept in electronic format as email, transcribed notes or recordings
- Data can be destroyed at any time upon request.
- **Participants will be provided with transcripts of the elements intended for inclusion in the thesis along with their context. Participants will be able to review and correct any inclusions as well as ask for elements of their transcript to be omitted.**

#### **Participant's Rights**

***You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:***

- *decline to answer any particular question;*
- *withdraw from the study (specify timeframe);*
- *ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;*
- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.*
- *ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.*

#### **Project Contacts**

- Please feel free to contact the researcher and/or supervisor if you have any questions about this project
  - Research student: [Paul Day](mailto:Paul.Day@massey.ac.nz), PO Box 256, WAIUKU 2341. (021) 125 6366 [st.birinus@gmail.com](mailto:st.birinus@gmail.com)
  - Supervisor : [Dr Alex Bevan](mailto:Dr.Alex.Bevan@massey.ac.nz), Lecturer, Massey University School of English and Media Studies, Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North. (06) 356 9099 ext 81985 [A.L.Bevan@massey.ac.nz](mailto:A.L.Bevan@massey.ac.nz)

#### **Compulsory Statements**

*"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.*

*If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 350 5249, email [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz)".*

## Appendix C: Glenn Usmar, New Zealand on Air: Interview Consent and Authorities.

  
**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**  
School of English and Media Studies  
College of Humanities and Social Science  
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL**  
*Masters Thesis Research*

**"Making Kai in Godzone: New Zealand Food Programming, Nostalgia and National Health and Identity"**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded. *(if applicable include this statement)*

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me. *(if applicable include this statement)*

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: Glenn Usmar Date: 21/11/13

Full Name - printed Glenn Barry Usmar

---

Format for Participant Consent Form (2013) Page 1 of 1

  
**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**  
School of English and Media Studies  
College of Humanities and Social Science  
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North

**AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS**  
*Masters Thesis Research*

**"Making Kai in Godzone: New Zealand Food Programming, Nostalgia and National Health and Identity"**

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature: Glenn Usmar Date: 21/11/14

Full Name - printed Glenn Barry Usmar

---

Authority for Release of Transcripts Format (2013) Page 1 of 1

Appendix D: Peter Young, Fisheye Films Limited: Interview Consent and Authorities.

  
**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**  
School of English and Media Studies  
College of Humanities and Social Science  
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL**

*Masters Thesis Research*

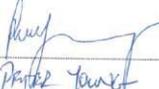
**"Making Kai in Godzone: New Zealand Food Programming, Nostalgia and National Health and Identity"**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded. *(if applicable include this statement)*

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me. *(if applicable include this statement)*

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:  Date: 7/2/14

Full Name - printed Peter Young

Format for Participant Consent Form (2013) Page 1 of 1

  
**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**  
School of English and Media Studies  
College of Humanities and Social Science  
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North

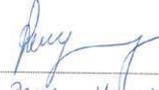
**AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS**

*Masters Thesis Research*

**"Making Kai in Godzone: New Zealand Food Programming, Nostalgia and National Health and Identity"**

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature:  Date: 7/2/14

Full Name - printed Peter Young

Authority for Release of Transcripts Format (2013) Page 1 of 1

**Appendix E: Nielsen Consumer & Media Insights (CMI), Second Quarter, 2012 to First Quarter, 2013.**

Source: Nielsen CMI Q2 12 - Q1 13 - FFADNT  
 All Respondents –New Zealand  
 Retrieved: 20 June 2013 / 10:13

**Overall TV Viewership ( Hrs) 5 YoA +**

		Totals	TV Heavy (23 hours+)	TV Moderate (14-23 hours)	TV Light (up to 14 hours)
Totals	(000s)	3829	1293	1247	1134
	Vert%	100	100	100	100
	Index	100	100	100	100

All Viewer %
14 Hrs +
Heavy + Moderate/ Total
<b>66%</b>

**Age related propensity to be a TV Heavy viewer**  
 23 hrs + per week  
 ( Index of 100+ = More likely than average)

		Totals	TV Heavy (23 hours+)	TV Moderate (14-23 hours)	TV Light (up to 14 hours)
55-59 Years	(000s)	224	76	84	59
	Vert%	5.85	5.88	6.74	5.2
	Index	100	<b>100</b>	115	89
60-64 Years	(000s)	257	96	87	67
	Vert%	6.71	7.42	6.98	5.91
	Index	100	<b>111</b>	104	88
65-69 Years	(000s)	195	93	63	36
	Vert%	5.09	7.19	5.05	3.17
	Index	100	<b>141</b>	99	62
70-74 Years	(000s)	151	80	49	20
	Vert%	3.94	6.19	3.93	1.76
	Index	100	<b>157</b>	100	45
75-79 Years	(000s)	117	64	37	14
	Vert%	3.06	4.95	2.97	1.23
	Index	100	<b>162</b>	97	40
80+ Years	(000s)	149	76	47	24
	Vert%	3.89	5.88	3.77	2.12
	Index	100	<b>151</b>	97	54

The Nielsen Company