

FANTASIA NZ?

**The Disneyfication of the New Zealand
Shopping Mall**

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of the requirements for the Degree of
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Fantasia: NZ
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Manufactured, experiential, consumption environments are increasingly mimicking the design techniques and principles on display within the Disney theme parks. One particular example of an experiential consumption environment which has been influenced by the Disney-style approach to business is the shopping mall. These commercialized attractions offer a distant alternative, and distraction, to everyday life. The theoretical concept of Disneyization offers insight into what visitors to these manufactured experiential consumption destinations are (assumed to be) searching for - and in-turn receiving.

This thesis specifically focuses on 1) the development and design of the New Zealand shopping mall by assessing the extent to which identified elements of the Disney theme parks are replicated within the country's shopping destinations 2) the degree to which experiential consumption environments are being developed within New Zealand.

Based upon the review of completed fieldwork, the 'System of Objects' theory proposed by Baudrillard and image association perspectives of Eco are added to the theoretical analysis as a complimentary aside to the Disneyization concept. These works also further highlight the link between experiential consumption environments and those who visit them.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Described by Eco (1986) as the Sistine Chapel of America, Disneyland has effectively led the way in the creative design and development of a multitude of experiential consumption environments since first opening its gates in 1955. By the 1980s, Holbrook and Hirshman (1982, p.132) suggested that leisure – in a multitude of environments – was beginning to be seen as involving a steady flow of fantasies, feelings and fun encompassed by what they call the ‘experiential view’. ‘More than 50 million people a year from all lands pass through the turnstiles of Disney theme parks’ (Giroux, 1999, p.19). The feat of enticing such a substantial number of visitors is something the experiential-equated shopping mall strives for. One of New Zealand’s largest shopping malls, St Lukes (Auckland), can match Disneyland’s annual figures - by only twenty percent (Property Council of New Zealand, 2006). Whether in New Zealand or America, the vast array of spectacles and experiences on offer within these types of environments cater for the ever-increasing expectations many consumers now have when searching for ideal leisure experiences.

While America may be inundated with theme-park-style consumption experiences, historically New Zealand has tended to steer away from Disneyesque consumption environments which are heavily themed and often come complete with amusement park attractions. More recently New Zealand shopping malls, like their American counterparts, have begun to cater for a perceived increase in demand for exciting environments that offer a multitude of leisure-related activities (Troy, 1997; Hall, 1997). Equate the development of the theme park with the progression of consumer-oriented environments and a picture of the evolving nature of the shopping mall begins to emerge. The promise of a shopping experience, complete with a full array of products, services and entertainment, is now giving the shopping mall a competitive edge in retailing (Farrell, 2003; Clifton, 2006; Guy, 1994; Bryman, 1995; Ritzer, 1993).

An intricate design scheme lies behind the concrete exterior of the shopping mall. Shopping has evolved into a ‘leisure-time cultural activity in which people become audiences who move through the spectacular imagery designed to connote sumptuousness and luxury, or to summon up connotations of desirable exotic far-away

places, and nostalgia for past emotional harmonies' (Featherstone, 1993, p.103). Manufactured experiential consumption environments, whether in their original theme-park form or in the shopping mall, are convincingly maintaining their status as destinations on a global scale - such commercialized attractions offering distractions from the workplace (McCannell, 1989). As a result, shopping mall managers adapt their design and management processes accordingly.

The shopping mall mimics the theme park in multiple respects. Nye, 1981 (cited in Bryman, 1995, p.84) highlights a number of different ways of examining and describing theme parks. Such perspectives can also be applied to the shopping mall:

- A fabricated controlled environment, designed to be different from everyday life.
- A direct consequence of improvement to transportation
- A spectacle which provides visitors with all-encompassing visual and aural experiences.
- As an entertainment experience designed for families.
- A place where people are unlikely to be harmed

The incorporation of Disney-originated concepts within many areas of society is described in detail in Bryman's (2004) *The Disneyization of Society*, which makes a direct link to the shopping mall (1995; 2004). Bryman is by no means alone in linking Walt Disney and the Disney theme parks to the design and development of these consumption Meccas. Many authors have acknowledged the significant influential role Disneyland has played in the design of malls throughout America, and the world (Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Ritzer, 1995; Schlosser, 2002; Underhill, 2004). Farrell (2003, p.165) suggests that 'despite its official designation as a theme park, Disneyland was, and still is, a mall. It's a mall in the original sense of a pedestrian promenade – and it's a shopping centre too.' Pine & Gilmore (1999) refer to the term 'shoppertainment' in relation to the influence of Disney and making shopping experiences more entertaining.

The aim behind the purposeful design of the shopping mall parallels that of the theme park - the aim is to draw people in. Basic shopping mall designs often imitate an ideal main street scene, reminiscent of Main Street USA (aka Disneyland). In describing visitor flow through Disneyland, Bryman (1995, p.65), notes that 'visitors move to the

Town Square, then down Main Street, round a Central Plaza with the Sleeping Beauty Castle inviting them forwards, and then they fan out to one of the lands.’ Replace the main street with the promenade, the castle with the food court, and the lands with stores, and you have the same scenario, but set in the shopping mall. The creation of a mall, as a retail theme park, provides a whole new world for consumers to enjoy and explore (Farrell, 2003).

An additional development, which also interlinks with the purposely placed facades and insinuations of the theme park, is the creation of the shopping mall as a community centre. The shopping mall appears to more realistically portray a community focal point than does the theme park. Perhaps initially stumbled upon by mall management (upon seeing individuals gathering within the mall and utilizing the privately owned surroundings as if those of a town centre), this concept has undoubtedly been manipulated for financial advantage, via the provision of themed areas which mimic traditional community centres and enticing consumption opportunities. This encourages the idea that the ‘new age’ community centre is associated with spending.

In this thesis Disneyland, and the specific management principles it reflects (Bryman, 2004), will be incorporated into a framework used to compare the extent to which the New Zealand shopping mall replicates experiential consumption environment design-based assumptions (made by mall developers and managers). The Disneyization theory is an extension of the principles worked out within the theme-park (Disneyization). The transformation of this location into a blue-print for other sectors of society, is a result of the way in which Disneyland has developed, combined and utilized a series of specific management and design principles.

This thesis also proposes the alignment of the image-association perspectives Eco (1986) and the System of Objects theory offered by Baudrillard (1996; 1998), with the Disneyization concept. While acknowledging that some authors (Ritzer, 1993; Guy, 1994; Farrell, 2003) choose to link Ritzer’s (1993) McDonaldization framework with the Disneyization principles, my fieldwork suggests that combining these theories for use in analysis, especially in relation to the ever increasing provision of experiential consumption, may not be so relevant (Refer to Chapter 3 for further discussion).

Defining the Shopping Mall

For the purposes of this thesis, any reference to the term ‘shopping mall’ specifically relates to large suburban shopping malls located within major centres of New Zealand. These ‘shopping malls’ will typically exceed 40,000 square metres in size, and incorporate an enclosed promenade, food court, cinema complex, two or more anchor stores, 100 specialty retail stores, visitor and information centre, shopper amenities, and free car parking, often in a parking structure. Three shopping malls which fall into this category within Christchurch, for example, are Westfield Riccarton, The Palms (Shirley), and Northlands (Papanui).

Overall Aim

The overall aim of this thesis is to understand the influences underlying the development and management of shopping malls in New Zealand and the degree to which these aspects parallel North American and especially United States of America experiences.

Research Objectives

My objectives in this thesis are:

- 1) To provide a history of the organization, design, and operation of shopping malls within New Zealand.
- 2) To determine the ways in which the design principles and techniques used within New Zealand shopping malls parallel the principles of the Disney theme parks as experiential consumption environments.
- 3) Analyse the assumptions made and the design principles and techniques used by shopping mall planners and designers in New Zealand.

Methodology

Method Justification

After reviewing a substantial amount of literature on the chosen topic, I selected a qualitative approach to my research, as it is well suited to “the context of discovery” (Rudner, 1966). While there is a ‘persistent view that only facts constitute evidence

and that these are best derived from research involving numbers’ - this style of research leaves many questions unanswered (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p.26). Qualitative research provides a contextual, explanatory, evaluative and generative overview by offering an ‘enlightenment’ unavailable via a quantitative approach (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

The chosen methodology incorporated the combined use of in-depth interviews, evidential photographs, literature reviews, and observational data collection – the latter of which also incorporated information gathered by the author while participating in the environment being studied (Veal, 2006). This combination of methodological tools also enabled an alignment with Lofland et al’s. (2006, p.15) goal of collecting ‘rich data’, whereby ‘a wide and diverse range of information [is] collected over a relatively prolonged period of time in a persistent and systematic manner’. Each method complemented the other by expressing and reiterating specific aspects of the chosen framework. Data were collected over a 12 month period using a semi-structured interview process, and the incorporation of the Disneyization theoretical framework to collect evidential photographs, review the literature, and categorize observations. The McDonaldization framework was also initially incorporated into the collection of data, however based upon primary reviews of the fieldwork, it was established that the McDonaldization concepts were not as relevant as initially believed (see Chapter 3 for further analysis). As a result, the remaining data collection, and subsequent analysis, was modified to primarily focus on Disneyization and the supporting works of Eco (1986) and Baudrillard (1996; 1998).

Another benefit of the qualitative approach involves ‘data analysis and collection taking place concurrently; any writing is often an evolutionary, on-going, process, rather than a separate process which happens at the end of a project’ (Veal, 2006, p.196). This was of significant use in relation to the research conducted in this particular instance, as data collection and analysis were spread systematically throughout different locations and months of the year. This indeed inspired an evolutionary-type process to analysis, as suggested by Veal (2006) above, which resulted in new paths of research in addition to identifying gaps that needed to be filled.

An attempt was made to incorporate a representation of mall management opinions, in order to assist in meeting the second and third objectives set out above. The two largest shopping mall development and management companies in New Zealand were approached and they agreed to take part in the research. In-depth interviews focused on the two major New Zealand mall ownership and development companies: Westfield and Kiwi Income Property Trust, and their respective properties in both the North and South Islands of New Zealand. The extent of sampling was based on the availability and willingness of Centre Managers, Marketing Managers, Development Executives and associated Town Planners to participate.

Becker (1998, p.67) confirms that ‘sampling is a major problem for any kind of research. We can’t study every case of whatever we’re interested in, nor should we want to. Every scientific enterprise tries to find out something that will apply to everything of a certain kind by studying a few examples’. In this respect, the data collected via the above methods are something upon which a confident judgment, in relation to the objectives of this thesis, can be made.

The Research Process

Due to the difficulty faced in accessing managers within the Disney Corporation, my specific understanding of Disney and Disneyland has emerged from my direct experiences of visiting the Magic Kingdom theme park in Anaheim, California and reading and assessing existing academic literature. My assessment of the New Zealand shopping mall has, alternatively, largely relied on interviews with managers, in addition to the reading of academic and related literature and my experiences as a visitor to various shopping malls.

Research was conducted primarily with those involved in shopping mall layout and management (the town planner, together with mall promotion, marketing, and development managers). Data collection focused on the identification of, and the degree to which, design techniques and principles (established under the Disneyization framework) are used by those involved to influence shopper behaviour (as opposed to the interpretation of design techniques identified by the shoppers themselves).

A series of qualitative in-depth interviews and associated photography took place with one of New Zealand's largest retail development companies: Kiwi Income Property Trust. Their major retail site in Christchurch, Northlands Shopping Centre, offered initial insight into the assumptions of mall managers and owners in relation to mall design. In-depth interviews took place with the Development Manager (Karen Jeffs), the Promotions Manager (Kylie Chalmers), and the Centre Manager (Brian Bell). Internal and external photographs of the mall were also taken.

Observations at, and photographs of, Disneyland Resort, California, were then gathered in order to use as a base for, and comparison with, information gathered within the New Zealand shopping malls. These observations corresponded with an assessment of the Disneyization principles identified by Bryman (2004). Photographs and participant observations focused on the physical structure, layout, and design techniques within the complex (Disneyland, California Adventure and Downtown Disney) and their noted similarities to – or differences from – the New Zealand shopping mall.

On returning to Christchurch, in-depth interviews continued. The focus moved from Kiwi Income Property Trust to New Zealand's largest retail property management company, Westfield. Despite being based in Auckland, Westfield Development Executive Jo Duthie (whose retail site responsibilities include Riccarton, Queensgate, Shore City, West City and Pakuranga) visits Christchurch on a regular basis. Jo set aside an afternoon to discuss general aspects of the New Zealand shopping mall and specific elements of Westfield Riccarton.

A trip to Auckland by the author, on the 9th of August 2007, enabled the further collection of photographs and observations of additional New Zealand shopping mall environments. These included one of New Zealand's newest malls - Sylvia Park (owned by Kiwi Income Property Trust) - as well as St Lukes (Westfield) and Albany (a purpose-built enclosed main street). Follow up interviews with Karen Jeffs (Kiwi Income Property Trust) and Jo Duthie (Westfield) also took place.

Guideline interview questions for all in-depth interviews included:

- Do you see offering a 'complete recreational experience' to mall visitors as being important? (i.e. people are no longer coming to the mall necessarily just to shop)
- Do you see the mall acting as a community base or community centre? If so, is this something seen as important in relation to your primary focus?
- Is 'theming' and portraying the shopping environment as something that is unique, creative and sometimes 'fantasy-like' necessary (especially in New Zealand)?
- Do you see elements such as efficiency, control, and predictability important to the mall environment? How would you describe these elements as being incorporated into the mall?

Prior to the collection of empirical data, an initial literature review was compiled in order to adequately meet the first research objective, analyse the evolution of the shopping phenomenon and study the development of the shopping mall on both an international and national scale. This review is detailed in the following chapter, and highlights the establishment of the generic department store and the eventual rise of the shopping mall as an experiential consumption environment. Reviews and analysis of New Zealand retail literature – particularly in the historical sense – proved problematic due to an overall lack of published material. Some areas were later 'fleshed-out' by information gathered in interviews.

Chapter 2. The Rise of the Shopping Mall

Shopping, as an activity, and the environments in which it takes place have both undergone interesting transformations in recent decades. The activity of shopping has entered into the domain of leisure, rather than being seen as a chore, and the physical structure of the shopping mall has turned towards experiential provision. Mapping the influences to these changes and discovering how a visit to the local corner store has evolved into an all-encompassing mall experience encourages a better understanding of the foundations and development of the New Zealand shopping mall - and how it may (or may not) differ from its international counterparts.

The Art of Shopping

Shopping requires two essential elements: time and money – the combination of which is often difficult to arrange. They are, for want of a better description, ‘the great scarcities of modern life’ (Cross, 1993, p.1). Yet the art of combining the two for the purposes of shopping has been mastered by many, if not most, over the years.

‘Modernizing capitalism sought to change “wheelhorse” to “worker” and “worker” to “consumer” (Ewen, 1977, p.26). As individuals entered specialized fields, they became dependent on others to supply the things they could not, or did not, produce themselves. In other words, ‘shopping is both the price of our specialization, and a benefit of it’ (Farrell, 2003, p. 4).

In America in the 1920s, the development of technological consumer durables such as the automobile, in addition to increases in discretionary income and the search for, and procurement of, goods and services outside of work time, set the development of the ‘consumer nation’ concept in motion (Cross, 1993). While working hours have dramatically increased, from, for example, the 30 hour working week in America in the early 1930s, so too have the levels of discretionary income and the amounts of goods and services available for consumption (Hamilton & Denniss, 2005). In 1973, 20 per cent of Americans agreed that owning a second car was a necessity. By 1996 this figure had increased to 37 per cent (Schor, 1998, cited in Hamilton and Denniss, 2005).

A difference also slowly began to emerge between ‘going shopping’ and ‘doing the shopping’.

Going shopping is a vague activity, an extravagance – literally, ‘wandering about’. It is open-ended, with no precise plans or destinations: you can spend all day or not, you may just look and not buy. Going shopping is pleasurable, and possibly transgressive and excessive: you may spend too much time or too much money (Falk and Campbell, 1997, p.102).

The introduction of the credit card came to play an integral role in *how* we spent, and in *how much* we spent (Razor Films, 2004), in-turn nullifying the once important excuse of ‘I can’t afford it’. Increases in consumption levels have been further aided by increasing income, the amount of free time to which people have access, and the conception of shopping as a form of recreation in itself (Razor Films, 2004).

Macnaghten and Urry (1998, p. 24) suggest that some of the structural shifts in the nature of consumption are due to the huge increase in ranges of goods and services available, a break down of traditional tastes (so that people are open to a wider range of products) and the evolution of consumption as the basis of identity. The majority of modern lifestyles are predominantly based on the collection and display of materialistic items, termed by Ewen (1977) as ‘fashionable consumption’. There is an aura associated with driving a BMW, carrying a Gucci handbag or wearing the latest style in sunglasses. Jean Baudrillard offered his ‘System of Objects’ to help interpret this phenomenon by aligning the concept of ‘sign-value’ with the consumption process. Sign-value suggests that consumption activity is concerned with image association via the purchase of merchandise (Corrigan, 1997). ‘Through consumption, individuality and distinctiveness are purchased, as is full participation as a modern individual’ (Bryman, 1995, p. 152).

The rise of consumption is not solely about increasing levels of purchasing. It is also about the encouragement of consumption by the design, layout and convenience offered by shopping malls. Baudrillard’s System of Objects, as I shall discuss in Chapter 3, provides a valuable framework for interpreting this, by suggesting that the augmenting and steering of consumption is done by consumption environments and

their associated producers (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2007). Promotions by the owners and managers of these environments are not necessarily focused on specific objects as such, but more towards a general 'desire to desire' (Corrigan, 1997). From the mall developer's perspective, it is about making money out of creating wants (Razor Films, 2004). Such wants are increasingly being shaped out of the experience an individual associates with shopping. In this respect, consumption is promoted as fun and enjoyable. 'It is not surprising, therefore, that more and more shopping malls are adopting a Disney-type approach to retailing, so that shopping takes place in themed environments. Increasingly it is difficult to distinguish large malls with themed environments from theme parks' (Bryman, 1995, p.155). West Edmonton Mall in Alberta, Canada, or The Atrium at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, are two very good examples of this.

Visiting the theme park incorporates consumption as a central part of the experience (Bryman, 1995). The same can be said of the shopping mall, which has evolved as a place to play in addition to a place to buy (Falk & Campbell, 1997). This combination has aided a further rise in consumption levels. Mall developers and designers have learnt a lot from Disney, including 'sophisticated techniques of illusion and allusion [which] enable them to create an appropriate and convincing context where the relationship of the individual to mass consumption and of the commodity to its context is mystified' (Goss, 1993, p.21). Creatively disguising the array of consumption opportunities available at a particular location, via extravagant themes and designs, can effectively deceive the visitor into spending more. 'Profit increasingly depends, therefore, upon image making and the creative management of shopping centres' (Goss, 1993, p.22).

Statistics about the growth of the shopping mall phenomenon suggest that the approach is working. Shopping centre space, within the United States alone, has increased 12 fold over the past 40 years. 'By 2000, there were more than 45 thousand shopping malls with 5.47 billion square feet of gross leaseable space in the United States' (Farrell, 2003, p. xi). 'Shopping is the second most important leisure activity in North America, and although watching television is indisputably the first, much of its programming actually promotes shopping' (Goss, 1993, p.18). Shopping is one of the most popular leisure activities in New Zealand, with shopping malls being

characterized as the heart of the community (Shepherd, 2006). Kylee Chalmers, Marketing Manager of Northlands Mall in Christchurch notes that marketing the centre as a community base is a big part of the marketing programme. ‘People take real ownership of the mall too. . . The beauty of this area is that there is a real community feel to it. . . You want your primary catchment to have ownership of the centre, it’s part of the community’ (Personal Communication, 7th March, 2007).

Origins of the ‘Mall’



*Figure 1. The National Mall in Washington D.C.
(Source: <http://www.meticulous.com/portfolio/3d.php?x=2012olympic>)*

Remove the concept of shopping from the term ‘shopping mall’ and place the term ‘mall’ into its traditional form of a pedestrian environment or formal garden (Farrell, 2003), and the history of a parallel row of stores with a pedestrian pathway in between begins to emerge. ‘The basic concept of the centralised marketplace has been well-established across cultural lines for more than a millenium’ (Hall, 2007, p.10). In the United States, the National Mall in Washington D.C (See Figure 1, above) is said to have had its influence on the concept and term of the modern day shopping mall, as it encapsulates ‘a public promenade’ developed as an outdoor space, along the sides of which have appeared stores and leisure facilities (Farrell, 2003). Schoenherr (2006, p.5) alternatively suggests that the origin of the term ‘shopping mall’ comes ‘from the

British game of Pall-Mall, or “ball and mallet”, combining elements of croquet and golf, played since the fourteenth century. Similarities in terminology aside, Schoenherr’s (2006) reference connects us with Farrells’ (2003) work, as the game Pall-Mall was played on a wide fairway green’ or ‘promenade’.

From Department Store to Shopping Mall

In the mid-seventeenth century in North America, to provide ease and convenience, individual stores began to merge, and the concept of a gathering of specialty shops in one particular town, under one roof, eventually came to be defined as the department store (Falk & Campbell, 1997; Schoenherr, 2006). The development of the department store in New Zealand was also ‘linked with the enormous increase in the production and availability of manufactured goods, which followed the urbanization and industrialization of late-nineteenth-century Western Europe and America’ (Laurenson, 2005, p.10). People viewed department stores in a similar light to tourist attractions. They were classed as monuments to modernity (Falk & Campbell, 1997). The Bon Marche store in Paris led the way in this new era of consumerism in 1852, ‘displaying a wide variety of goods in “departments” under one roof at a fixed price’ (Schoenherr, 2006, p.1). Department stores such as Macy’s, Bloomingdales, and Harrods followed suit in 1858, 1872, and 1874 respectively. Department stores

in cities and towns around New Zealand, developed later than their British, European, American, or Australian counterparts but they experienced growth patterns similar to many overseas department stores. As their trade prospered, they enlarged their premises by acquiring adjacent land, added more stories to their buildings, or moved to other larger or more central sites. It seemed that the larger they grew, the more successful they became (Laurenson, 2005, p.5).

Evidence of amusement-park style activities for children began to appear within many New Zealand department stores during the late 1920s and early 1930s (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). Such thrills and lavish displays have yet to be seen again, to the same extent, in the malls developed in more recent years across the country. Often described as fantasy places, department stores (or emporia as they were also known) ‘were among the very first public spaces to be heated and use electric light not only for illumination but also for effect’ (Falk & Campbell, 1997, p.66). They became

seductive, glamorous environments which incorporated a variety of colour, design, and display techniques to influence peoples' spending (Cookson & Dunstall, 2000).

[copyright clearance to reproduce figure not obtained]

Figure 2. A young girl seems caught up in the magic of solo flight, as she rides in the aeroplane roundabout on Farmers' roof-top playground
(Source: Auckland War Memorial Museum Library. Cited in Laurenson, 2005, p.103).

[copyright clearance to reproduce figure not obtained]

Figure 3. A roof was placed over the Farmers' playground area in the late 1950s, creating an all-weather attraction for children (Source: G. Griffin. Cited in Laurenson, 2005, p.144).

The department store ‘assumed a critical role in shaping consumer culture, linking shopping with pleasure and through a dramatic ‘staging’ of consumption which reinforced the symbolic attributes of goods . . .’ (Mansvelt, 2005, p.39).

There would also appear to be a number of commonalities between the department store and the yet-to-be-developed shopping mall in terms of convenience and service provision:

Department stores provided a vast range of facilities that enhanced the convenience, comfort and pleasure of shopping. These included supervised children’s areas, toilets and powder rooms, hairdressing courts, ladies and gentlemen’s clubs and writing rooms, restaurants and tearooms, roof gardens with pergolas, zoos and ice rinks, libraries, picture galleries, banks, ticket and travel agencies, grocery provision and delivery services (Falk & Campbell, 1997, p.67).

Today, suburban shopping malls are the places ‘where due homage is played to consumerism’ (Laurenson, 2005, p.1), its precursor department store, acting as the stepping stone between the older, traditional, corner store and the shopping mall as it is now known (Falk et al., 1997). The creation of the large-scale suburban shopping mall was led by a number of changing historical trends (Farrell, 2003), including commercial media (radio, television, movies, magazines), national brands, advertising, and urban sprawl (the latter of which shopping malls have further exacerbated). Shephard (2006) suggests that import restrictions, price-fixing, suburban drift, and a call to follow American retailers, led to the subsequent evolution of the shopping mall in New Zealand. Troy (2007) supports the idea of American influence, by arguing that New Zealand retail development trends closely follow the happenings in other OECD countries, ‘albeit with a time lag of a few years or so’ (p.4).

Laurenson (2005, p.146) suggests that most New Zealand ‘department stores never fully recovered from the crisis of the 1930s Depression’, and that by the late 1950s many were in rapid decline. This, added to the high costs of maintaining inner city buildings and high wage bills, resulted in many department stores having to reduce their size or close their doors (Laurenson, 2005). Furthermore, growth-related pressures within the main New Zealand cities tended to focus more on suburban

locations as opposed to inner-city areas. ‘Contemporary urban growth trends in New Zealand reflect longstanding cultural preferences for low density living in suburban and peri-urban settings’ (Memon, 2003, p.27). In turn, retail store owners and prospective developers conjured up the suburban mall, with many department stores acting as anchor stores within such mall establishments (Farrell, 2003; Clifton, 2006).

Conveniently located American-style shopping malls offered more appealing options for their customers. Shopping in an array of specialty shops with a variety of merchandise and services, within a comfortable and more casual setting complete with plenty of free parking spaces was the latest trend; it was far more convenient than a trip to the inner-city department store (Laurenson, 2005).

In April 1950, the first regional shopping mall opened near Seattle in the United States. Known as the Northgate Mall, it was anchored by a Bon Marche department store – the shopping mall’s predecessor (Schoenherr, 2006). Riccarton Mall, in Christchurch, led the way for similar shopping mall establishments in New Zealand when it opened in 1965 (Cookson & Dunstall, 2000).

‘By the 1960s the post-war population growth was beginning to make its presence felt in new retail environments. Housing developments mushroomed, and a slow but steady movement of commerce away from the central business districts began’ (Laurenson, 2005, p.147). Mall development within outer suburbs was facilitated by increasing car ownership (Longstreth, 1998). With ‘the ever-increasing post-war importance of the automobile, cars were now taking their lucky owner to the mall’ (Cookson & Dunstall, 2000, p.159). Shoppers could choose which mall to visit, and did not have to worry about carrying purchases home because they had to walk. With the establishment of many new homes in spreading suburbs within New Zealand during the 1950s, expenditure on major items, such as motorcars, grew rapidly. ‘The number of registered motor vehicles in New Zealand more than doubled from 210,027 in 1947 to 515,173 in 1960’ (Laurenson, 2005, p.47). Furthermore, the shopping mall provided free and easily accessible parking – an essential element of its existence (Farrell, 2003; Underhill, 2004).

On an international scale, the mall, initially identified as a place to stroll, became the shopping mall - a place to stroll while you shop (Miller et al., 1998). The shopping mall environment became a replication of downtown space and variety (Guy, 1994), and, just like their department store counterparts, malls began to focus on visual presentation and design (Underhill, 2004). ‘The characteristics . . . enclosed and separated from wider social spheres, centered around leisure, consuming and simulation, regulated by disciplinary technologies of surveillance, gate-keeping and crowds’ (Mansvelt, 2005, p.59).

Furthermore, the reasons why people went shopping could no longer solely be associated with the desire to experience the satisfaction obtained from purchasing goods (Hewer & Campbell, 1997). The balance of work-time and leisure-time has slowly but surely seen the activity of shopping become more associated with leisure and leisure-like expectations (Cross, 1993). Shoppers were searching for the complete entertainment experience, from when they walk in the door, to when they walk out of it. There is a certain ‘allure of the . . . mundane surrounded by finery’, and so mall designers and managers continue to ‘. . . mask the ordinary in a dazzle of magic’ (Ewen & Ewen, 1982, p.61), despite the often added cost to the customer. Malls, like theme parks, ‘are ‘enchanted spaces’ – spaces where inauthentic alienating experiences are replaced with magical manufactured leisure and consumption experiences, in order to make increasingly rationalized spaces . . . seem appealing’ (Mansvelt, 2005, p.59). In doing so however, the mall is essentially and effectively bending consumers to its will (Thrift, 1985).

The Modern Day Shopping Mall

Today, in the United States alone, there are over 45,800 shopping centres, 1100 of which are classed as regional shopping malls (Property Economics, 2007), and a number of which have developed into mega-malls. ‘Mega Malls’ are the latest vacation destinations within the United States. Described by Belsky (1992) as retail-recreation centres, ‘Mega Malls’ offer experiential consumption taken to the extreme - incorporating accommodation, amusement parks, recreational opportunities (such as ice rinks or water parks), live shows, casinos, movie theatres and restaurants. West Edmonton Mall in Alberta, Canada, is one of the most notable of these sites (Bryman, 2004).

Built by the Ghermezian family (who emigrated from Iran in the 1940s) in four separate phases between 1981 and 1998, West Edmonton Mall attracts 60 million visitors a year (Triple 5 Group, 2003) - that is four times the annual number of visitors to Disneyland (The Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2005). The mall hosts a collection of retail areas modelled on nostalgic locations, in addition to an amusement park, ice-skating rink, water-park, golf-course, dolphin aquarium, submarine ride, and over 800 retail stores (Triple 5 Group, 2003). Spread out over 547,368 square metres, it irrefutably holds the title of the largest mall in the world (Triple 5 Group, 2003). A blend of the mega-mall and the more standard, less extreme, American shopping mall may well be indicative of what is in the offing for their New Zealand counterparts in terms of displaying aspects of experiential consumption.

It is important to note here that the latest American retail trend is beginning to steer towards groupings of big-box chain stores (Shepherd, 2006). While similar establishments are beginning to appear in New Zealand (such as Tower Junction in Christchurch) their affects are not considered hazardous to the existence, and continued growth, of the regional shopping mall. Recently surveyed Christchurch shoppers noted that the stores available at Tower Junction (such as *Bunnings* - hardware store, *Number 1 Shoe Warehouse* - discount shoe store, or *The Suite Centre* - bulk furniture store) are not on offer at local shopping malls (Janus Marketing, 2005, p.39), and in this respect Tower Junction is not in competition with Christchurch's traditional shopping malls. Shepherd (2006, p. 49) suggests that 'the mall shows no signs of extinction in New Zealand' - a statement which is exemplified by the fact that 'as of December 2005 Westfield alone had \$600 million worth of construction projects underway' throughout the country.

Easy access to the private motor vehicle and the evolving nature of public transport is just as an important factor in the continued accessibility of the shopping mall as it was when the mall concept was first developed. 'Whether the priority has been connecting light rail to the West Edmonton Mall or Mall of America, building a commuter station at Sylvia Park, or building busway stations at Houston's Galleria and Westfield's Albany Centre, public transport is increasingly important even at the suburban retail centres' (Hall, 2007, p.23).

Within New Zealand, the combined space taken up by shopping malls, excluding car parking, is over 172 hectares (Shepherd, 2006), or the equivalent of over 300 football fields – and growing. This figure is comparatively small when compared to Canada’s West Edmonton mall, which alone covers 115 football fields. However differences in population size (added to New Zealand’s astonishingly high retail spending figures) indicate that the development of shopping environments in New Zealand are as prominent as those by its international counterparts. ‘In the 1980s, annual retail sales stood around the \$7 billion mark’. Over the past 20 years, a huge growth in retail sales has seen consumers spending on a faster basis than their household incomes would suggest is possible. By ‘September 2004 the [New Zealand] retail sector had a value of \$54,213 billion’ (Blundell & Gasteiger, 2004, p.1).

The Auckland area alone contains over 144 shopping centres (of which large scale suburban-style malls make up only a handful). ‘There is 0.63 sq m of shopping space per person – less than Christchurch’s whopping 0.82 sq m but far more than Wellington’s 0.52 sq m’ (Blundell & Gasteiger, 2004, p.2). Christchurch regional shopping malls (or centres* as they are often referred to) - Northlands, Riccarton, The Palms, and Eastgate - receive over 50 million visitors a year, and have a combined annual total turnover of more than \$500 million (Property Council of New Zealand, 2006). It is not surprising to learn that trips to the shopping mall have become a top ‘Kiwi’ recreation (Drinnan, 2006).

While shopping malls are privately owned spaces, they also ‘constitute channels for investment for property and finance companies’ (Pawson et al., 1998, p.261). Finance companies originally channelled superannuation investments for many New Zealanders into the shopping malls during the 1970s. Companies such as National Mutual and Prudential (original owner of Riccarton Mall in Christchurch) would eventually sell to larger property development companies (Karen Jeffs, Kiwi Income Property Trust, Personal Communication, August 10th). As a result, standing behind the increasing number of regional shopping complexes in New Zealand today are a

*‘A major shopping centre incorporating at least one full line department store or large discount department store, one or more supermarkets and, generally, 60 or more specialty shops. Total Rentable Area will generally exceed 15,000 square metres’ (Regional Shopping Centre Directory, 2006, p. 282).

plethora of corporate businesses and trusts – many of which operate from off-shore. Shephard (2006) suggests that it is the Australian mall ‘titans’ who are cornering the New Zealand market when it comes to ownership of shopping malls. ‘Westfield has the biggest Kiwi presence, but AMP, Commonwealth Bank-run Kiwi Income Property Trust, ING, Multiplex, Centro and Macquarie Countrywide are hard on its heels, buying up or expanding existing malls and scouting new sites’ (p.41).

With ‘making money’ as their primary focus, these corporate giants attach whichever design and operational principles are necessary in order to entice more visitors, and encourage more spending, as they continue to drive up profit levels. These well-established organisations and development trusts oversee the general management, development and maintenance of the malls. On-site management teams are employed specifically to coordinate the day-to-day running of each site - including taking care of tenants’ needs and providing customer services to the many shoppers who visit the mall on a daily basis.

Originally listed on the Sydney Stock Exchange in 1960, the Australian owned Westfield Group (a division of the American Westfield Company) now represents 121 shopping centres in four countries ‘with over 10.2 million square metres of retail space’ (Westfield Group, 2007). The company has ownership interests in 12 shopping centres in New Zealand which hold a total value of NZ\$ 2.8 billion (Westfield Group, 2007). These retail properties include:

277 New Market: Auckland	Albany: Auckland
Downtown: Auckland	Glenfield: Auckland*
Manukau City: Auckland	Pakuranga: Auckland*
Shore City: Auckland	St Lukes: Auckland
West City: Auckland	Riccarton: Christchurch
Chartwell: Hamilton	Queensgate: Lower Hutt (Wellington)

*Westfield has just (2007) placed the Glenfield and Pakuranga malls (listed above) on the market, at the same time as opening the newly built Albany mall.

The two Westfield shopping malls used for research purposes in this study are Riccarton in Christchurch, and St Lukes in Auckland. Both shopping malls were purchased by the company as existing malls and have since undergone multi-million dollar refurbishments.

Westfield Riccarton (Christchurch), which originally opened in 1965 (Property Council, 2006), now has a total of 170 retail stores - in addition to entertainment providers such as Hoyts Cinemas, Time Zone, Configure Gym, a large Food Court area, and an additional seven coffee shops and three restaurants (Westfield, 2007). The mall has an annual pedestrian count of 8,678,000 and an annual turnover of \$261,536,000 (Property Council, 2006). St Lukes Mall in the Auckland region, contains over 187 stores. Originally opened six years after its Christchurch counterpart, St Lukes has an annual pedestrian count of 9,850,000 and an annual turnover of \$271,700,000 (Property Council, 2006).

The title of New Zealand's largest shopping mall appears to be in hot debate. Anne Gibson (*The New Zealand Herald*, 2007) cites Albany as the largest shopping mall in New Zealand (at 70,000m²). However, based on coverage measurements alone, there would appear to be a mall that is approximately 10,500m² bigger (Sylvia Park), owned by Kiwi Income Property Trust, New Zealand's second largest retail development firm. On completion, Sylvia Park (Figure 4) overtook Westfield St Lukes to become the largest shopping mall in New Zealand, with a total 85,000m² of leaseable space (20,000m² of which is dedicated to the leisure and entertainment precinct), making it nearly twice the size of Northlands Shopping Centre in Christchurch, and marginally bigger than the new Westfield mall in Albany (annual turnover figures are currently unavailable for both Kiwi Income Property Trust shopping malls).

The Trust focuses 39 per cent of its total portfolio of properties on shopping centres in five of the major centres within New Zealand (Kiwi Income Property Trust, 2007).

These sites include:

Sylvia Park: Auckland
Downtown Plaza: Hamilton
North City: Porirua

Centre Place: Hamilton
The Plaza: Palmerston North
Northlands: Christchurch



(Figure 4. Artists impression of the completed Sylvia Park Mall in Auckland. Source: KIPT, 2007)

Northlands Shopping Centre in Christchurch, and the newly built Sylvia Park shopping mall in Auckland, were analysed in further detail for the purpose of this study. Northlands Shopping Centre incorporates 134 retail stores, including innovative leisure opportunities such as a flight-simulator, and a soon-to-be-built swimming pool complex (in association with the local council). Sylvia Park currently houses over 180 tenants, excluding the leisure and entertainment precinct which includes a 10 cinema movie complex, and a selection of restaurants and cafes. A business centre is also shortly due for completion on the site (Kiwi Income Property Trust, 2007).

Summary

With the continual development of experiential consumption environments and increased levels of competition, mall management is increasingly needing to provide as 'few reasons as possible for the shopper to leave' (Bryman, 2004, p.65). The provision of exciting recreational shopping experiences is becoming the point of difference when attempting to make shopping malls more appealing. Underhill (2004), notes that while shopping malls may be privately owned they are often designed to look like (in hopes of perhaps acting like?) the village square – and of course as a result 'for many visitors, there can be a very real problem of distinguishing between the real and the fake' (Bryman, 1995, p.171). The design of certain sections of West Edmonton Mall in Alberta, Canada, goes well beyond the generic village square, offering scaled replicas of Bourbon Street in New Orleans, and the French Boulevards

of Paris. Mega-malls, such as West Edmonton, act as the link in the chain between Disneyland, which initiated the development of experiential consumption environments (Bryman, 2004), and the creation of equivalent environments such as those emerging in New Zealand (albeit to a lesser extent than their American or Canadian counterparts).

Many influential factors can be attributed to the evolving nature and expansion of mall design and management. From the many shoppers increasingly searching for entertaining and pleasurable consumption experiences, to technological advancements such as the automobile, and the emphasis placed on the necessity of collecting/displaying materialistic objects by society as a whole. The connotations of image and style association on the part of these fabricated environments are something which the 'System of Objects' theory, constructed by Jean Baudrillard, in conjunction with the comparable views of Umberto Eco, can partially account for. The arrival of Disneyesque-type shopping mall design principles and techniques on New Zealand shores can also be examined in relation the corresponding theory of Disneyization. The intricacies of these theories are discussed and analysed in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Context

In mid 1952, nearly twenty-five years after Walt Disney introduced the world to an animated rodent with bright red pants, oversized yellow shoes, and trade mark ears, plans were unveiled by Walt Disney for the development of a theme park opposite the Disney studios in Burbank, California. Masterminded by Disney himself, the park would incorporate five themed areas (Frontierland, Fantasyland, Tomorrowland, Adventureland, and Main Street USA), a plethora of amusements and rides, eating establishments, souvenir stores, horse drawn carriages, a train and much, much, more (Finch, 2004). Despite experts telling Disney that the park hardly seemed like a sound investment and that ‘he had invented a new way of losing money’ (Finch, 2004, p.436) Walt was determined to complete the project. \$17 million dollars and two years later, on July 17th, ‘Disneyland’ opened to the public for the very first time (Smith and Clarke, 1999).

The ‘overall concept for the Park had its own kind of logic, which has proved enormously effective over the years’ (Finch, 2004, p.436). ‘For adults, Disney’s theme parks offer an invitation to adventure, a respite from the drudgery of work, and an opportunity to escape from the alienation of daily life’ (Giroux, 1999, p.5). Not only would Disneyland become known as the most famous theme park in the world, both it and the overall Disney approach to business would also play an important role in influencing society. ‘What made Disneyland very different was the fact that it was organized in a way, and built on a scale, that was user-friendly decades before the term was coined’ (Finch, 2004, p.438). ‘If we imagine the Disney Company as a teaching machine whose power and influence can, in part, be measured by the number of people who come in contact with its good messages, values, and ideas, it becomes clear that Disney wields enormous influence on the cultural life’ (Giroux, 1999, p.19).

‘Walt Disney had built the Versailles of the Twentieth Century – but it was a Versailles designed for the pleasure of the people rather than the amusement of the nobility’ (Finch, 2004, p.438). The metamorphosis of some shopping malls into retail theme parks, provides a whole new world for consumers to enjoy and explore (Farrell, 2003). Disneyland has played a significant influential role in the design of malls throughout America, and the world (Bryman, 1995, 2004; Farrell, 2003; Pine &

Gilmore, 1999; Ritzer, 1995; Schlosser, 2002; Underhill, 2004). The term Disneyization was coined by Bryman (1995; 2004) as a theoretical base to interpret Disney's influence.

This chapter outlines the specific principles which encompass Bryman's (1995; 2004) Disneyization theory. The common combination of Disneyization with Ritzer's (1993) McDonaldization framework is also evaluated. Based on the results of my fieldwork, it is suggested that the two theories lack cohesiveness when specifically related to the environments analysed within this thesis. The interpretations offered by Baudrillard (1996; 1998) and Eco (1986), provide an alternative base for analysis which more appropriately complements Bryman's (1995; 2004) concept of Disneyization and its underlying principles when related to experiential consumption environments. These interpretations also extend upon the few management and design techniques identified within the theme-park and the shopping mall

Disneyization

'Disneyization' concerns itself with the spread of principles exemplified by the Disney theme parks (Bryman, 2004). These principles can, in turn, be directly linked to the design and management of the shopping mall - including those in New Zealand, where managers are aiming to provide 'attractive shopping environments for the shopper to enjoy' (Guy, 1994, p.199). These Disneyization principles are theming, performative labour, hybrid consumption and merchandising (Bryman, 2004).

Theming

'Theming' is defined as the location of institutions or objects in a narrative that is largely unrelated to the institution or object to which it is applied, often incorporating mementos of nostalgia, such as a casino or restaurant with a Wild West narrative (Bryman, 2004). In relation to Disneyland, Walt Disney envisaged creating a cartoon-like environment 'that immerses the audience' (Disney, cited in Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p.47). An example of this is *Adventureland*, where there is a general jungle safari theme, complete with Tarzan's Tree House, Jungle Cruise, Indiana Jones Ride and a Bengal Barbeque restaurant. The theming concept has been carried across into the mall setting. While the examples of the Mall of America (Minnesota) and West Edmonton Mall (Canada) 'are unusual in their size - the features they exhibit can be

seen in much smaller malls' (Bryman, 2004, p.33). When you are in a shopping mall you can often lose sight of the fact that you are in a manufactured simulation of a real down-town or city shopping district. At West Edmonton you can even find yourself meandering down the boulevards of Paris or a replicated Bourbon Street from New Orleans. 'It's all a nod to Disney' (Underhill, 2004, p.210). To many visitors the environments may be considered fabricated, but not necessarily fake (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). There is something still 'real' about them. Bryman (1995, p.127) suggests that 'by presenting rosy pictures of the past and present, the problems of the present can be played down'.

The one exception to the use of 'unrelated narrative' in theming, according to Bryman (2004), is when a company logo and associated brands are used to influence theming. Such is the case, for example, in the 'World of Disney' retail stores (with its flagship store located in Downtown Disney and additional stores spread throughout shopping malls around America), where extravagant, flamboyant and fantastical images transform otherwise simple retail stores into environments of magic and wonder - in a way mesmerizing the customer and enticing them to spend.

Performative Labour

'Unhelpful and discourteous behaviours are found abundantly in the outside world and therefore undermined the kinds of impressions. . .' that Disney wanted to create within his theme-park (Bryman, 2004, p.109). A similar perspective, in terms of avoiding unwanted behaviours, is also taken within the walls of the shopping mall, where both shop staff and mall representatives are increasingly being encouraged to exhibit 'emotional labour', known also as 'Performative Labour'. Performances by staff working in consumption environments are defined by Pine and Gilmore (1999) as a form of theatre, in which employees are actors who engage the guests (much as Mickey Mouse 'personally' welcomes visitors to Disneyland).

Performative labour incorporates the growing tendency for frontline service work to be viewed as a performance, especially one in which the deliberate display of a certain mood is seen as a part of the labour involved in service work (Bryman, 2004). Baudrillard (1998) refers to an equivalent use of 'personalized communication' by workers as a tool to further encourage consumption. 'We are surrounded by waves of

fake spontaneity, ‘personalized’ language, orchestrated emotions and personal relations’ (p.161). Whether in a theme park, department store, or mall - workers are instructed on what to say, what to wear, how to look, all in an attempt to make the shopper feel welcome, at home and willing to spend more. Disneyland and the Disney Store demonstrate the point even further, as its ‘sales staff are considered and referred to as cast members, whilst their customers are referred to as guests’ (Goss, 1993, p.29), re-emphasizing the point that the whole performance is just that, a show.

Hybrid Consumption

Bryman (2004) identifies ‘Hybrid Consumption’ as a general trend whereby the forms of consumption associated with different institutional spheres become interlocked with each other and increasingly difficult to distinguish. Disney effectively utilizes this principle within his theme parks via the provision of accommodation, restaurants and cafés, retail stores, shows, rides and additional amenities. Similar examples of Disney’s use of hybrid consumption are apparent at most modern shopping malls. Northlands Shopping Centre in Christchurch boasts a relatively large mix of ‘institutional spheres’, such as a multiplex cinema, time zone arcade game area, flight simulator, restaurant and bar, food court, two supermarkets, post-shop, hair and beauty salons, two banks, not to mention the plethora of retail stores. Hybrid Consumption has become a principle which is reflected in most, if not all, shopping malls.

Merchandising

The fourth principle of Disneyization, Merchandising, is ‘a form of franchising, in the sense that it is a mechanism for leveraging additional uses and value out of existing well-known images’ (Bryman, 2004, p.79). It is an opportunity for the management of large consumption environments to jump up and candidly quote Tom Cruise’s characterization of Jerry McGuire, by shouting ‘Show me the money!’ and extracting even more revenue out of their product. The concept is associated with restaurants, hotels, zoos, tourists destinations and amusement parks around the world. Disneyland offers a plethora of associated merchandise in its souvenir stores, such as t-shirts, mugs, hats, flags, pens, paper, candy, plush toys, and books – all of which are exclusive to the Disney theme-park alone.

McDonaldization: Questioning the Alignment with Disneyization?

The theoretical concept of McDonaldization encapsulates ‘the principles of the fast-food restaurant’ and describes how ‘McDonalds’ type approaches ‘are coming to dominate more and more sectors of society’ (Ritzer, 1993, p.1). The approach has generated imitators throughout the worlds’ retail economy, and is a theory which has been frequently aligned with Disneyization in the interpretation of consumption.

Schlosser (2002, p.5) argues that ‘the basic thinking behind fast food has become the operating system of today’s retail economy, obliterating regional differences . . .

America’s main streets and malls now boast the same Pizza Huts and Taco Bells, Gaps and Banana Republics, Starbucks and Jiffy-Lubes. . .’. There are four specific principles which are associated with McDonaldization: Efficiency, Calculability, Predictability and Control (Ritzer, 1993).

Ritzer (1993) suggests – amongst other things - that commercialized consumption environments such as the ‘shopping mall can also be credited, at least in part, to [their] predictability’ (p.95). Perkins (2006) describes malls as types of consumption sites, which are increasingly becoming ‘places where people seek out experiences that are predictable, efficient, calculable and controlled’. Meanwhile, Farrell (2003) makes reference to McDisneyization in terms of the ease-of-use consumption environments provide. My initial conclusions, based on the primary analysis of associated literature, tended to support the McDisneyization alignment. However, based on the field work conducted for this thesis, in addition to a further review of associated literature, I believe, that in regard to the analysis of experiential consumption environments, the two theories do not interlink quite so well.

Efficiency: Putting the Timeline in Disrepute

Ritzer (1993) primarily notes that the fast-food restaurant did not invade the large cities of America until the late 1950s. The concept of effectively moving a large group of people through a particular experience is something which Walt Disney incorporated into the operation of Disneyland when it first opened on July 17th, 1955 (Smith and Clarke, 1999; Sorkin, 1992; Disney Enterprises, 2001). Ritzer (1993, p.35) also admits ‘the fast-food restaurant did not create the yearning for efficiency’, yet the ‘efficiency concept’ is still frequently associated with the McDonalds style of

management. A considerable amount of time would go by after the opening of Disneyland before similar ‘efficiency concepts’ were drawn upon by the McDonalds fast food restaurants. Could it be that Disneyland, and not McDonalds, set the standards for efficiency? At Disneyland, guests not only have to get in and out with relative ease, they also had to experience the individual rides and attractions in conjunction with hundreds (or even thousands) of other visitors.

An added element of ‘efficiency’ brought by Disneyland was the ability to make guests feel as if they have not been forced through the attractions at an alarming rate. Shopping malls are designed to follow similar principles – efficient visitor flow, whilst maintaining visitor numbers and ensuring a relaxed, comfortable and enjoyable environment. At McDonalds there is no requirement to mask the efficiency concept.

Differences in Defining Calculability

Ritzers’ principle of calculability tends to use ‘quantity as a measure of quality’ (1993, p. 63). At a McDonalds restaurant this refers to a combination of the time it takes to prepare the customers food, the amount of food that customer receives, and the amount of money which is actually paid for that food. The concept of calculability at Disneyland is substantially different to that which takes place within the McDonalds restaurant. To begin with, the generic ticket price at Disneyland means that visitors can walk down Main Street, taking in the sites, climb aboard the Pirates of the Caribbean ride, or visit Mickey Mouse as many times as they want. There are no limitations placed on the number of experiences, or for that matter the amount of fun and enjoyment visitors can have (beyond what can be experienced in the time period covered by the purchased ticket).

The time-factor which is associated with calculability within McDonalds demonstrates a push for the speeding up of time and fast processing of customers – the opposite to that promoted at Disneyland and the shopping mall, where visitors are encouraged to linger at certain displays, stay in the environment for longer periods of time, and not notice time passing by.

While acknowledging that both Disneyland and the shopping mall, like McDonalds, need to calculate costs and revenue, the ‘to-the-second’ precision of the fast-food

restaurant is not so relevant within Disneyland or the shopping mall. Bryman (1995; 2004), the author of the Disneyization principles, omits any reference to the McDonaldization principle of ‘calculability’ or use of it in the park. When this is accompanied with a lack of discussion on ‘calculability’ by New Zealand shopping mall managers, suggests there is no place for it (on the basis of how it is defined by Ritzer) within the shopping mall.

Predictability

Predictability is essentially a guarantee that things are going to be the same each time you experience them. From the taste of the Big Mac and Fries you order at McDonalds, to the ease of purchasing them - there is comfort in knowing that certain experiences are guaranteed never to change. Yet, ‘predictability’ contradicts many of the adventurous and magical insinuations associated with Disneyland. Ritzer (1993, p.83) argues that ‘people prefer to know what to expect in all settings at all times’ (Ritzer, 1993, p.83). Yes, there are certain expectations of being able to visit the Haunted Mansion or experience the Indiana Jones ride whilst at Disneyland, but this particular type of predictability is not always the draw-card. Even when partaking in an attraction or show for the second or third time, there is something new to be experienced and enjoyed each time – something you failed to notice before.

Depending on the time of year visitors go Disneyland they can experience changing foods, seasonal decorations, cast costumes, displays and shows. Within the shopping mall, while there are often expectations of visiting specific retail stores, there is also a focus on the more unpredictable experiences which, in turn, make the activity more enjoyable and exciting – such as deciding to have a coffee, meeting friends, finding a bargain, choosing items to purchase or watching entertainment. ‘The fact that in American Disney parks, many visitors are returnees is a further testament to [Disney’s] success in attracting adults and to the significance of forging a connection’. The experience of too much ‘predictability’ and the enticement of returning would wear off.

Behind the Systems of Control

The argument here is not that Disneyesque environments lack all elements of control. They do not. The argument is that there are different types and levels of control (and reasoning behind their use) to those outlined by Ritzer (1993).

At McDonalds these elements of control often relate to the management of the very significant numbers of people who come and go through the doors, or visit the drive-thru (sic). Visitors have one purpose: to buy food (which is occasionally quickly eaten on-site) and then leave – as a result their movements are much more simplified. Experiential consumption environment planners and managers spend large amounts of time and money determining how visitors move – where they walk, where they don't walk, and in particular, what they walk past (Bryman, 1995). These are important considerations at both Disneyland and the shopping mall. Geography persuades us to buy. It is an important concept in relation to the layout of a mall and its stores, and the arrangement of merchandise within it. Shoppers are (often subconsciously) influenced by atmosphere, layout, and advertising (Razor Films, 2004). In this respect, the displays and structures associated with Disneyland are used for the same reason within shopping malls - as 'visible lures, which draw people onto the next attraction' (Bryman, 1995, p. 99). The reasoning behind the control mechanism here is to make people stay and see as much as possible, in addition to masking the mechanics of the magic.

Time standing in line, on a ride, spent in stores, or spent in Disneyland as a whole, is also calculated with pin-point accuracy by Disney management. Time management and control is cleverly done, so that most visitors are blissfully unaware that their entire experience is timed right down to the second. Making the experience appear timeless is something which Disneyland has down to an art. The seven minute Jungle Cruise, in Disneyland's Adventure Land, feels like it takes least 20 minutes. There is a big difference between standing in line at McDonalds and continually glancing at your watch to cruising through an (albeit manufactured) African jungle, enjoying the sites and forgetting that time exists.

McDonalds will always stand out as the leader within the fast-food industry - providing a service which is easily accessible, offers value for money and allows the customer to collect their food and leave quickly so as to focus on more enticing experiences. Disneyland will always be associated with fun, fantasy, adventure, magic and timelessness – a place where visitors can get lost in enchanting worlds, choose to stay all day and fully emerge themselves in the experience.

The Theories Proposed by Baudrillard and Eco

The System of Objects theory offered by Baudrillard (1996) proposes that the collection and purchase of commodities is a mere indicator of an idea of a relationship and that there is an in-depth process which lies behind the activity of consumption. What is ‘consumed is never the object, but the relationship itself . . . which has been transformed into a sign-object and thus consumed’ and displayed (Baudrillard, 1996, p. 201).

Retailers have come to depend on capturing the customer’s ‘desire’ to take a piece of their experience (whether that be visiting a theme-park or participating in a shopping excursion) home with them. This fuels the discussion which often arises over whether an item is ‘wanted’ or ‘needed’. If an item is then needed, that particular shopping activity could be considered more of a chore than an as experiential consumption. Even if the item is wanted, it begs the question: ‘What is it wanted for? What does it represent or portray?’

The connotations of image and style emanated by fabricated destinations, such as Disneyland, are something which Baudrillard’s ‘System of Objects’ theory can also partially account for. While the theory primarily associates itself with the augmenting and steering of consumption, it can also be moulded to encompass visitors *directly* associating a positive and style-like image to the experiential consumption environment they visit, such as West Edmonton Mall, Disneyland, or Las Vegas. The heavy theming of many experiential consumption environments not only places emphasis on the continued incorporation of Disneyization principles, it also further exemplifies Baudrillard’s ‘System of Objects’ and the *indirect* image-association. The concept of indirect image association links in closely with the work of Eco (1986), who describes how reconstructed sites – created as signs to reality – are in fact misinterpreted by visitors, and their value taken as if they were the real. The Trevi Fountain at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, or the New Orleans Bourbon Street replica in West Edmonton Mall are prime examples that exist within experiential consumption environments. An example of such misinterpretation provided by Eco (1986, p.7) in his work *‘Travels in Hyper-Reality’* describes the reconstruction of the US Presidents Oval Office in Austin, Texas – which uses the same materials and colours. ‘To speak of things that one wants to connote as real, these things must seem real.’

Unlike Baudrillard, Eco directly emphasises the design techniques and principles utilized within Disneyland to demonstrate his arguments. In relation to the concept of indirect image association, there is also the additional concept of imitating and fabricating the 'ideal' environment in order to establish a type of reassurance. However, as Eco (1986, p.57) points out, more often than not

profit defeats ideology, because the consumers want to be thrilled not only by the guarantee of the Good but also by the shudder of the Bad. And so at Disneyland, along with Mickey Mouse and the kindly Bears, there must also be, in tactile evidence, Metaphysical Evil (the Haunted Mansion) and Historical Evil (the Pirates).

Eco (1986) also makes reference to the issue of passivity and the robotic-like nature of certain elements encapsulated within the theme-park (potentially noted as at a substantially earlier date than Ritzer's discussions on 'control'). 'Access to each attraction is regulated by a maze of metal railings which discourages any individual initiative' (Eco, 1986, p.48). Yet, do visitors pay particular attention to this detail, due to the pre-existent hype and anticipation of the experience to come?

There is growing trend of incorporating varying levels of illusion within experiential consumption environments – the use of which often mask commercial reality (Eco, 1986). There is a fine line between the real thing and reconstructed truth. 'What is falsified is our sense to buy, which we take as real, and in this sense Disneyland is really the quintessence of consumer ideology' (Eco, 1986, p.43). Another identified element is the use of the concept of time, and how sense of time is often lost whilst in an experiential consumption environment such as Disneyland. There is no use of cheap tricks in experiential consumption environments - more the use of Disneyesque precision.

In direct reference to Disneyizations 'merchandising' principle, Eco (1986, p.43) notes that 'Disneyland makes it clear that within its magic enclosure it is fantasy that is absolutely reproduced'. In this sense the merchandise on offer is not falsified or replicated, but 'genuine' merchandise. Merchandise purchased at the Disneyland theme-parks (and to an extent the shopping mall) therefore resemble memories,

experiences and relationships that an individual has formed whilst at the location. These items can be displayed accordingly to advertise the fact that a certain location was visited, or certain experiences were had. ‘What is falsified is our will to buy, which we take as real, and in this sense Disneyland is really the quintessence of consumer ideology’ (Eco, 1986, p.43). Experiential consumption environments like Disneyland are therefore emitting a Starship-Enterprise-like tractor beam onto the unsuspecting consumer, drawing them inwards. In this sense merchandisers have effectively and successfully created a ‘desire to desire’ - a facet of Baudrillard’s ‘System of Objects’ whereby consumers fall into the trap of wanting to purchase something for the sake of it as opposed to wanting the item for a specific reason.

The purchase and display of these items often acts as a sign which says ‘this is where I’ve been and this is what I bought’. There is a sense of associated prestige or sign-value (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2007) experienced by the consumer when these types of purchases take place. However, on their return home, how often does the Disneyland tourist choose to wear his or her bold and garish Mickey Mouse sweatshirt which was a ‘must have’ purchase whilst visiting the park? A search on E-bay will bring up a multitude of merchandise associated with West Edmonton Mall in Canada, including everything from the simple postcard and tacky shot glass, to the official West Edmonton Mall board game with its Monopoly-like insinuations – all wanting and willingly waiting to be traded – quite possibly after the disenchantment has set in after a re-evaluation of the purchase on their return home.

Summary

Bryman’s (1995; 2004) concept of Disneyization offers a series of complex elements which can be categorized under the four principles of: Theming, Performative Labour, Hybrid Consumption, and Merchandising. These principles reflect the multiple techniques and designs primarily used by management within the Disney theme-parks, yet also incorporated into the management of additional experiential consumption environments, such as shopping malls. It has been established, based on the review of fieldwork and literature, that the McDonaldization framework offered by Ritzer (1993) is not as relevant to the aims of thesis, as initially believed. For the reasons outlined above, I have chosen not to incorporate the McDonaldization principles when conducting further analysis on the data collected for this thesis and have, in turn,

sourced the works of Eco (1986) and Baudrillard (1996;1998) to complement Disneyization concept.

Having examined the theory often associated with Disneyesque experiential consumption environments, it is now time to place Disneyland itself 'under the microscope' and examine the ramifications such associated theories have. This analysis will pave the way for comparison later in this thesis between the typical Disney experience and the development of shopping malls as experiential consumption environments.

Chapter 4: Disneyization as Exemplified by its Namesake

The following descriptions and assessments of the design and management techniques utilized within Disneyland are based on my observations during my visit to Anaheim in April, 2007. In conjunction with the previously identified principles of Disneyization (Theming, Performative Labour, Hybrid Consumption and Merchandising) and my fieldwork conducted so far (within the New Zealand shopping mall), I will be looking for aspects related to general layout, customer service provision, consumption enticing techniques, refurbishment solutions and the ability to create an overall 'experience'. Many of the identified management techniques and design elements will be revisited for further analysis in Chapter 6.

The first time I visited Disneyland was when I was five years old. I have been back many times since – each time I do so I turn into that over energetic and very excited five year old, planning the next trip as I leave. The one aspect which differs from my visit when I was five, to those in more recent times, is sadly admitting that the experience is fabricated and staged for effect. Yet Walt Disney managed to capture the inner child in many of us when creating Disneyland by successfully using a unique combination of design and management techniques. Whether you are five years old or forty five years old, when you step up to the gates you cannot help but put aside all pre-dispositions and submerge yourself in the fun, fantasy and escapism which the park offers.

I must admit that I felt a tinge of excitement and anticipation when I walked down South Harbour Boulevard and turned into the plaza entry gates of Disneyland. As if on cue, the all too familiar sounds of Disney mega-hits began to ring out via well positioned speakers (see Figure 5), preparing visitors a couple of hundred metres in advance for the wonderful world that lay beyond the ticket gates ahead. Music is a clever marketing ploy used by the Disney entrepreneurs to put visitors in a mood that they hope will parallel the fun and excitement they are about to experience. After all, it would be wrong not to be happy when you are visiting the happiest place on earth!

Programmed sound echoes throughout the park, with an array of themed music playing outside the gates, inside the gates, in the souvenir stores, in the toilets, in the

cafes, in the lines as you stand waiting for a ride and of course on the ride itself. By the fifth day of my visit to the park I desperately wanted to find the power cords and pull them from their sockets in an attempt to escape the constant ringing. . . Before I knew it I had found myself mimicking a recent complainant to *The Press* (July 28, 2006) by a letter-writer who loathed the use of music within the shopping mall for the very same reason.



Figure 5. One of the many sets of speakers within the park. (Source: Author)

I must admit though that the tunes were, at times, quite catchy and from my observations appeared to be doing their job. If it wasn't for the fact that I was there to hunt out any marketing technique in use, I too would probably have skipped along merrily, waving my hands around in the air like Tinkerbell (as the majority of other visitors walking up the path were doing).

A series of trams (See Figure 6) were travelling adjacent to the same path I was walking along, bringing visitors to the ticket gates from the mall-like carparks some distance away (See Figure 7). This service saved people experiencing the adverse effects of weather extremes, increased flow efficiency and ensured visitors maximum time spent enjoying the park's attractions – as opposed to walking to and from them,

which could take anywhere between 10 to 20 minutes each way, as discovered on investigation later that same day.



Figure 6. The complimentary trams which take guests to and from the carparks (Source: Author)



Figure 7. One of the many parking structures available for use by Disneyland guests (Source: Author).

The effort that has gone into the entrance ‘plaza’, which lies beyond the shuttle drop-off stations at the Disneyland Resort was impressive - especially considering it was an area which was neither in the theme parks or the Disney Downtown shopping area, but a ‘holding bay’ out the front. From the seemingly polished Mickey ears at the top of the sign-post poles, to the ‘Year of a Million Dream’ flags (Figure 8) - looking as if they had been unwrapped earlier that morning - flying perfectly in the breeze, the area was immaculate.

Pristine paved areas, lavishly designed flowerbeds, and pruned trees were placed accordingly around the entrance plaza. Seating was abundant - along with multiple rubbish bins – which looked like they had just received a fresh coat of paint (See Figure 9). There was no sign of graffiti or rubbish anywhere.



Figure 8. Year of a million dreams flags at the Disneyland entrance plaza (Source: Author).



Figure 9. An example of the pristine flowerbeds, themed seating and seemingly newly painted rubbish bins (Source: Author).

My initial thoughts of rushing through the ticket gates on arrival first thing on a Monday morning come to an abrupt halt for both myself and undoubtedly many other visitors, as the queues, which stretched a lot longer than anticipated, came into view. Taking into consideration that my visit was during the ‘low season’, there were still upwards of a thousand people gathered outside the gates at 8.30am. I was reminded of a scene from ‘Charlie and the Chocolate Factory’. Walt had certainly managed to encapsulate the same sense of intrigue and anticipation (though considering the time difference between the release of the movie and the opening of the park, perhaps this reference should be the other way around). The suspense of the gates opening at Disneyland is not quite the same as when the doors of the mall slide open (with the exception perhaps on sale day).

The Disneyland railway station towers over the entry gates (Figure 10). It conveniently blocks any inkling of what adventures may lie in-store for those waiting to enter, and prevents visitors who may be standing within the associated village square, on the other side of the station, from seeing out. ‘I don’t want the public to see the real world they live in while they’re in the park’ noted Walt Disney while construction of the park was in progress (cited in Farrell. 2003, p. 25).



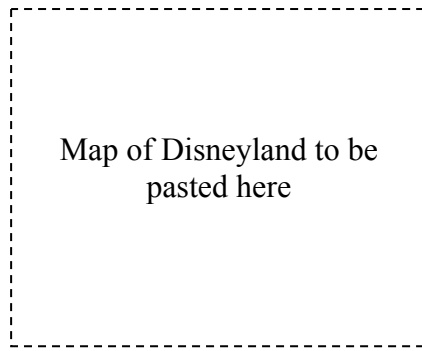
Figure 10. View of the Disneyland Railway Station from behind the ticket gates in the Entrance Plaza (Source: Author).

Fordist-like efficiency had the majority of those waiting outside walking through the gates dead on the chime of 9 o'clock - which came from the one and only clock in the park, positioned high on the tower of the Disneyland railway station. Once stepping through the gates, however, all sense of time would be lost.

For ease of use, and continual reference, visitors are provided with maps of the park (Figure 12) when passing through the turnstiles at the entry gates. These maps include key references to retail stores, attractions, amenities and food and beverage facilities. Date-specific entertainment and promotional materials are also provided for customers on a daily basis. The awe and excitement of being inside the park quickly overpowers any inclination to study the pamphlets provided in any detail. Mimicking the majority of visitors around me, I quickly folded the map up and stuffed it in my backpack – keen to concentrate on the anticipated sites and experiences which are now only footsteps away. I was soon walking under the bridge where the Disneyland railway looped above. A plaque in the centre of the archway set the scene:



Figure 11. The plaque hanging over the archway which leads through to the park (Source: Author).



*Figure 12. A copy of the map of the park, handed to visitors upon their arrival
(Source: Disneyland Resort, 2007).*

For those unfamiliar with what to expect after walking through the ticket gates and under the archways at the entrance to Disneyland, the walkway opens out into a ‘stereotypical’ village square –based on Walt Disney’s home town of Marcelin, Missouri (Stewart, 2005). It is somewhat surprising to find such a setting in a theme-park, but the village green, the local bank, the town hall, combined with the tram and the horse and carriages all exude a ‘warmth and nostalgia’ (See Figure 13) – even when it is discovered that the building facades are fabricated masks for retail and merchandise stores.



*Figure 13. View of the Disneyland village square with a view leading up Mainstreet USA
(Source: Author).*

The concept of Main Street, USA (Disneyland) almost certainly never really existed in the form presented. It was never that clean, well maintained, or ideal – or for that matter contained so many shops. The Grove Shopping Mall, in Beverly Hills (which I visited later in the same week) offered an uncanny resemblance to the Disney Main Street area with its store facades, cobbled streets, Italian statues and fountains, and a ‘Disneyesque’ double-decker tram (See Figure 14).



Figure 14. A view down the main promenade at The Grove Shopping Centre (Source: Author).

Careful consideration has gone into the architectural design of Disneyland – from its five-eighth scale buildings along Main Street to its centre-piece Castle, the latter of which incorporates ‘architectural elements and building blocks . . . significantly different in the upper reaches than in the lower foundation in order to make the castle seem to soar beyond its 189-foot actual height’ (Wright, 2005, p.24). Elaborate architecture, stretching from 1920s retail store facades (See Figure 15) to fantasy-style tree houses, rainforest settings, haunted mansions and replica archaeological sites (Figure 16), can be found throughout the park.

These types of designs created a feeling of community. The downside to the use of such designs is, however, that the perception of a genuine community within a consumption environment can often distract shoppers from their intended purchases or from the possibility of impulse buying. Within the confines of Disneyland, there is an observable lack of interaction between visitors, but an agreeable sense of community brought about by the setting or ‘place’. This fabricated sense of community did not appear to be distracting shoppers from purchasing – plastic shopping bags emblazoned with the Disneyland logo are being carried by many wandering up Main Street. Once leaving the environment, all sense of (this somewhat unique) community is gone.



Figure 15. Scaled replica store fronts at the Disneyland Resort (Source: Author).

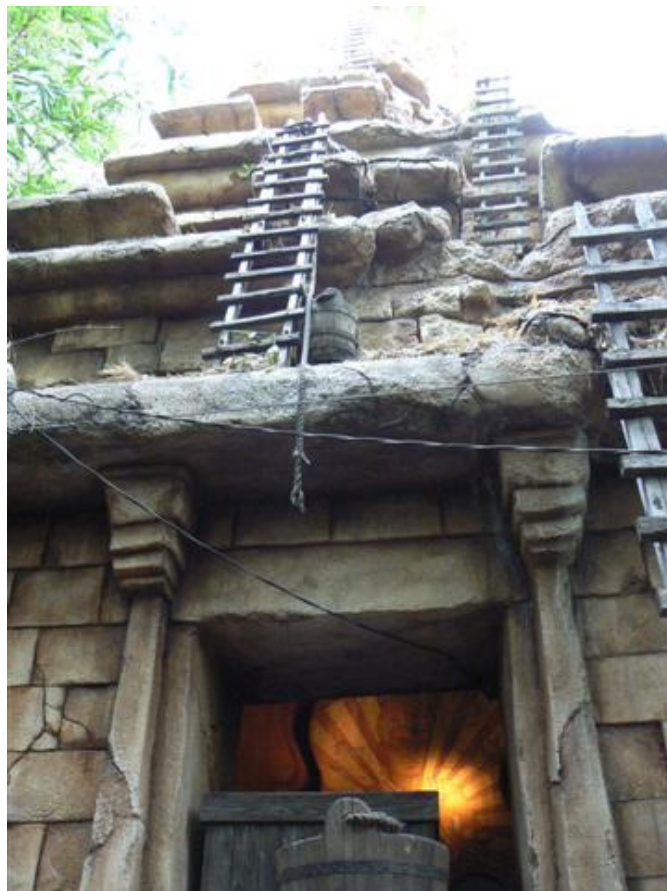


Figure 16. Archaeological site architecture on display in Adventureland (Source: Author).

Having only been inside the Disneyland gates for a mere 10 minutes, and without even realizing it at the time, I had already parted with nearly ten dollars on a take-out latte – the Styrofoam cup emblazoned with the Disney logo, a Mickey cookie - the novelty getting the better of me (Figure 17), and a reminder to come back to purchase a Mickey Mouse coffee mug before I leave. Management relies on people like me. ‘Sales from merchandise are a major contributor to profits from the parks’ (Bryman, 2004, p.81). From previous experience, I knew that little attention would be paid to the purchased items once they were taken home – yet there was something about being in the park which made me put this ‘sensible’ thought to one side.



Figure 17. One of the many commercialized merchandise opportunities available for purchase by Disneyland guests (Source: Author).

Since the majority of shopping malls are not seen as tourist attractions, unlike Disneyland, it would explain why they tend not to choose or need to take up the option of *merchandising*. The exceptions to this are of course the experiential consumption meccas such as West Edmonton Mall in Canada, The Mall of America, or the heavily themed malls in Las Vegas, which produce and sell a vast range of their own associated merchandise, because they are, in-part, tourist attractions.



Figure 18. The iconic Disneyland Castle, located at the centre of the park (Source: Author).

The main souvenir stores in the town centre (Main Street area) are carefully positioned so that visitors have to pass them every time they enter and exit the park (as kindly pointed out to me by a Disney cast member) – thus increasing the chance of a purchase taking place. From the street these shops appear as individual stores with separate entrances and exits, yet inside, the stores are interlinked as if a miniature department store. Visitors can choose to wander through the stores without setting foot outside, or if they prefer, meander in and out each one, stepping out onto the footpath each time. Either way, the function of these shops, is to draw visitors further down Main Street, and thus towards the famous spectacle and (other) logo for which Disney has become famous . . . the castle (Figure 18).

Visitors to Disneyland are also faced with seven enticing themed ‘lands’ once they reach the top of Main Street, each with it’s own associated attractions, architecture, retail stores and cast members. Once in front of the castle, visitors can: walk over the moat and through the castle into *Fantasyland* and *Toontown* (See Figure 19);



Figure 19. The sign welcoming guests to ToonTown – one of Disneylands, many themed lands (Source: Author).

turn right and explore the array of technological thrills of *Tomorrowland*; turn left and make their way through to *Frontierland*; or, choose the promise of adventure in *Adventureland*, which also leads to *New Orleans Square* and *Critter Country*.

The ‘lands’ within Disneyland are also cleverly designed so as not to be seen from, or overlap with, their adjoining counterparts. Intricate behind-the-scenes pathways linking the lands are utilized by cast members. The entry and exits to these areas are thematically disguised within each to maintain the illusion of fantasy and not allowing visitors to see ‘behind the scenes’ (See Figure 20). Shopping malls use similar internal pathways leading to staff and service areas which are also ‘backstage’. There are substantial areas of space in both the shopping mall and at Disneyland which visitors are predominantly unaware of or do not notice.



Figure 20. The associatively themed gates within ToonTown which hide any behind-the-scenes happenings from visitors. N.B. Even the hills and sky and the background are fabricated (Source: Author).



Figure 21. One of the themed rest 'islands' within the park which the rest areas within the shopping mall appear to mimic (Source: Author).

Making my way towards the *Adventureland* archway, and the jungle-like setting behind it, it was not long before I noticed a series of theme-integrated ‘islands’ (See Figure 21) positioned down the middle of the promenade I was walking along (on which either side a scattering of food stalls, souvenir stores and entries to various rides were placed). The islands themselves are essentially rest areas, with seating, planting and rubbish-bins (again theme-integrated) – similar, if not identical to those found in the promenade of the shopping mall.

The first path I followed eventually guided me to a large lake which bridged the *Adventureland* and *Frontierland* areas. The island in the centre of the lake immediately caught my eye. Upgrades and additions to the theme-park usually take place behind closed doors, drawn curtains, or purpose built panels, in an attempt to create curiosity and mask the construction process (The Disney Institute, 2001). I was therefore surprised to see the construction of a new building, on the island opposite (Figure 22), taking place without any attempt to hide it – it just seemed wrong for a supposedly magical place like Disneyland to provide visitors to the park with such insight into the construction processes.



Figure 22. No effort is made to hide the construction taking place on Tom Sawyer Island (Source: Author).

As I walked further around the corner I was almost glad to see an adjoining attraction being renovated heavily undercover, a posted sign reading ‘Mark Twain River Boat currently under renovation’ and large drapes covering any hint of what could be taking place inside (See Figure 23, below).



Figure 23. The Mark Twain Riverboat, masked from view as it undergoes renovation (Source: Author).

White board, adorned with the promise of a ‘new attraction coming soon’ could also be found within other areas of the park (Figure 24).



Figure 24. Temporary boards block the development of a new attraction within the Disneyland Resort (Source: Author).



Figure 25. This Island themed food court area offers a similar selection food to other foodcourts in the park (Source: Author).

The opportunity to eat and drink appears around every corner. The presence of such eating establishments are an element of Disneyizations ‘hybrid consumption’. Food courts appear in every themed land within Disneyland (See Figure 25), enabling the visitor to stay in the area they are currently experiencing. The food offerings and food-court-style snack-bars offer similar types of food as found within other areas of the park. They offer a variety of themed options to further extend your ‘magical’ experience (such as Mickey Mouse pretzels or appropriately named Disney character hamburgers). Of course being inside the theme park, with few other options for food and drink, means that you pay heavily for the privilege of eating there.

A craving for entertainment took the better of me by the time I returned to the castle, via Frontierland. I deviated from my search for design techniques, to enjoy the elaborate (in terms of both theming and experience) rides on offer. The combination of anticipation, excitement and the provision of heavily themed spectacles en-route, made waiting for the rides almost as much fun as actually being on them. Many queuing areas incorporate interactive video screens, animated characters and appropriately themed surroundings. Only in hindsight did I consider the fact that I was herded – somewhat cattle-like - through the maze of barriers and turnstiles prior to stepping into

an associated boat or into a related car or cab. Disney has managed to create excitement in the anticipation of what was to come. For those with limited time, the newly developed *FastPass* system allows the time conscious visitor to Disneyland to collect tickets to particular rides early and then come back at a pre-scheduled time later in the day to move to the head of the queue.

At the end of each ride (such as ‘Indiana Jones’ or ‘Pirates of the Caribbean’) I observed that the exit-path led ride-goers directly into an associated souvenir store where ride-associated merchandise could be purchased. Retailers are well placed to pounce as the thrill and excitement of the ride still linger at the forefront of people’s minds, enticing them to reach for their credit card and take a piece of memorabilia home. These stores promote take-home merchandise in a way that is similar to the thrill and enjoyment of the ride which has just been experienced, and always incorporate extravagant and creative models of characters and props (see Figure 26, below).



Figure 26. The intricate themed displays in the Pooh Bear ride-associated retail store (Source: Author)

The models and props are uniquely ‘Disney’, with Honey pots and trees from the Hundred Acre Wood creatively placed around the Pooh Bear store. However, theming which accords with particular rides contradicts Bryman’s (2004) perspective that

theming is unrelated to the object to which it is applied. The use of the specific design techniques within these stores should be considered an important element of Disneyization. However, the line between theming and ‘company logo and brand association*’ is blurred here. The ‘World of Disney’ (see Figures 27 and 28, below) store in Downtown Disney, where extravagant, flamboyant and fantastical Disney images transform otherwise simple retail stores into environments of magic and wonder to entice spending, is undoubtedly an example of this exception as a stand-alone retail store.



Figure 27. The main entrance to the ‘World of Disney’ retail store at Downtown Disney Mall (Source: Author).

*The one exception made by Bryman (2004) regarding theming, whereby an object or institution can be themed in relation to the company which owns it.



Figure 28. A view inside the 'World of Disney' retail store (Source: Author)



Figure 29. This friendly driver displays one of the many types of performative labour (Source: Author).

Wherever I travelled within the park, I was always acknowledged by its staff – whether it be a smile from a cleaner, a friendly wave from a transport operator (See Figure 29), or a hug from one of the Disney cartoon characters. It is all put together on the notion that ‘you never get a second chance to make a first impression’ (Disney Institute, 2003, p.75).

There are also tight controls on *performative labour*, as light hearted and relaxed as it may initially appear. When a visitor to Walt Disney World in Florida, December 2006, entered the park, he was accosted by officials who ‘ordered him to change his looks or get out’. Why? The accostee, 60 year old James Worley, bore a startling natural resemblance to the traditional image of Santa Claus. This, added to the fact that he was ‘greeting wide-eyed children with his trademark “ho ho ho”’, resulted in a complaint from management that he was impersonating Santa – who was, supposedly, considered to be a Disney character (The Times, cited in *The Press*, 2006, p.B2).*

All cast members are required to undergo an in-depth course in the art of performative labour at Disney University, which teaches appropriate ‘concepts and behaviours’ in addition to a number of ‘performance tips’ (Disney Institute, 2003, p.79). Even when leaving I was farewelled by an energetically friendly exit gate attendant.

Spending five days in the park had introduced me to a plethora of design and management techniques – the combination of which had truly made my experience more exciting and enjoyable. From the community-like feel when I initially walked under the archway, to the lavish architectural and interior designs, and from the loss of all sense of time, to the friendly and welcoming cast members that made you feel as if you belonged – the use of these varied techniques were undoubtedly effective. What’s more, they saw me leaving the park with numerous purchases in an attempt to take a little piece of the magic home.

As I said goodbye to the gate attendant on my last day at the park – my thoughts turned to the Disneyesque techniques and designs on display within the New Zealand shopping mall.

*Would Coca Cola suggest otherwise, being the original creators of the red and white Santa image?

Chapter 5: The New Zealand Shopping Mall

Whilst acknowledging that the shopping mall may not be a theme park in the truest sense, aligning the techniques and principles designed and developed by Walt Disney for his theme parks to the mall, emphasises the development of shopping malls as experiential consumption environments. The New Zealand shopping mall also offers examples of Disneyesque elements. These specific design and management principles have been identified for the purpose of this research by the means of personal observations and interviews with management staff. While there may be no tinge of excitement as you make your way through the car-park and up to the large sliding glass doors marking the main entrance to the mall, there is often hope that you will be somewhat entertained and enjoy the forthcoming shopping experience.

A similarity with the design and construction of Disneyland as an enclosed fantasyland is the first thing that springs to mind due when faced with the façade of the shopping mall. Farrell (2003, p.24) suggests that shopping malls are ‘basically a fortress designed to protect us from the trials and tribulations of the world we’re coming from’. New Zealand shopping mall managers tend to agree. ‘I think to have an enclosed shopping centre is pretty crucial to flow and to how the centre will track. It creates that ambience. If you don’t have an enclosed environment there is no ambience’ (Kylee Chalmers, Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 7th March, 2007).



Figure 30. Exterior view of Sylvia Park Mall (Source: Author)

It relates back to the opportunity to make people feel like they are in another world. However, creating an enclosed environment within a mall can, and often does, result in such buildings becoming an eye-sore from the outside, often presenting difficulties in integrating such malls with their surrounding (often residential) environments (Personal Communication, Bob Batty, 22 October, 2007).

‘It’s quite commonly thought . . . that malls are very internal, that they are very inward facing and very unattractive from the outside’ says Westfield’s Jo Duthie (Development Executive, Westfield, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007). Shopping malls are traditionally designed in a box format with a long elevation. Despite this, they still manage to offer a sense of Disneyesque intrigue from the outside. As Jo points out, when compared to structures such as The Warehouse ‘the mall doesn’t look quite so bad’. Sylvia Park mall in Auckland manages to maintain an enclosed fantasyland type approach, while at the same time incorporating an indoor/outdoor flow and façade that steers away from the traditional box format of the mall (See Figure 30) – enclosed but enticing.

From a financial perspective, enclosed consumption environments are also money spinners. ‘You need it to be enclosed so people feel like they’re in one building, they feel more comfortable. They probably walk more slowly because they feel more comfortable and will absorb more, especially shop displays and window displays, and spend more money’ adds Kylee (Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 7th March, 2007). Recently conducted research places The Palms, Westfield Riccarton and Northlands Shopping Centre as the three highest ranking malls, in Christchurch, with regard to levels of ambience (Janus Marketing, 2005, p.27).

Moving closer to the entranceway, there is also, notably, no music playing within or near the areas leading up to the mall (unlike Disneyland). This could be due to the likely competition from traffic noise created by carparks and nearby roads. Another possibility is, of course, that mall management do not feel a need to hype-up their customers in advance (to the Disney/Theme Park extreme) or entertain them before they enter. On stepping through the sliding glass entry doors, however, music is as prominent in the shopping mall as it is in Disneyland, and for similar reasons – it

influences how we think and ‘is intended to make us better consumers’ (Farrell, 2003, p.67). Kylee Chalmers notes that ‘music plays throughout the centre [on a constant basis]. If I can’t hear it at one end then I have to go back and turn it up. Some shopping centres are even beginning to theme their music in different areas. . . It’s an important topic for us, we always talk about it’ (Promotions Manager, Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 7th March). Jo Duthie, Development Executive for Westfields New Zealand, suggests that in many cases shoppers ‘would never normally notice it until it’s turned off’. While the suggestion is also made that New Zealand malls do not play music that deliberately subconsciously says “buy” (Westfield, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007), Jo acknowledges that music ‘provides a little ambience as well. It helps benefit the overall shopping experience – it’s kind of a calming thing, as opposed to anything else’ (Westfield, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007). This latter comment is consistent with Farrell’s (2003, p.67) view that the use of music within the shopping mall is a type of audio merchandising. ‘It’s intensely intentional music, and it’s intended to make us better consumers’.

There are times however, when retailers get the careful balance of playing music and creating ambience wrong – something which is often noticeable when stepping from the generic promenade areas of the mall into individual retail stores with separate sound systems which play loud, upbeat music in an attempt to make people feel good and in the mood to spend (also designed to appeal to different demographics). A series of complaints to The Press* in 2006 placed emphasis on the negative side effects of the use of music in retail stores and the mall. One particular complainant argued that the music was played at a level which made it hard to think and often gave her a headache (July 28, 2006).

* Christchurch’s only daily newspaper.



Figure 31 . The Health and Home section of Sylvia Park Mall in Auckland (Source: Author).



Figure 32. One of the themed climbing walls in the outdoor retail area at Sylvia Park Mall (Source: Author)

There is a distinct ambiance experienced within the mall, once you are well inside and the glass doors leading to the ‘real world’ have firmly closed behind you. According to market research, there is a strong call from shoppers for mall managers to create ‘atmosphere’ within the shopping mall in addition to providing an appropriate retail mix (Janus Marketing, 2005, p.26). Such ambiance or atmosphere is often created via a plethora of combined design techniques, the most predominant of which are related to interior or architectural designs. While the provision of heavily themed architectural and interior design is not apparent in the majority of New Zealand malls, Sylvia Park (in Auckland) has successfully managed to incorporate a number of themed architectural qualities, such as the cheerful feel of the Health and Home area of the mall (See Figure 31). The outdoors retail section of the mall is complemented by a two-storey climbing wall and rock face with models of climbers attached at varying heights (See Figure 32), as well as abseiling from the roof. While this may be associative theming, and does not technically fall under Bryman’s (2004) definition of theming, its occurrence re-emphasises the need for associative theming to be taken into consideration when identifying the principles of Disneyization.

The newly constructed Westfield Albany Mall incorporates a Disney-like main street as its main feature. ‘We’ve got High Street. . . we’ve got a nice big glazed, kind of open atrium looking area that is like an internal street – in a sense that it’s glazed and it’s in a controlled environment, but for all intents and purposes looks like you’re outside. We’ve then got a market place running through it as well’, says Westfield Development Executive Jo Duthie. ‘New Zealanders as a culture aren’t over-the-top’ she continues, ‘If I decided to make a mall into ‘Fairyland’ or something like that, people would go “Okay, are you for real?!”’ (Westfield, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007). New Zealanders tend not to associate with the theming aspect of things quite so much as Americans do. There is also the consideration of cost in relation to the maintenance and continual updates that would be required on heavily themed displays and architecture. Kiwi Income Property Management Development Manager Karen Jeffs agrees that New Zealand is more conservative. ‘Even compared to Australia we’re more conservative. We’re a different ethnic mix. I also wonder if the American themed thing is ‘trying to be different’? We haven’t had to go that far because the malls aren’t so prolific yet. There are malls, but they kind of service their catchments or their areas. They’re not necessarily having to do something radically

different. Because we are a small country, with a small population – we cater for a different market’ (Karen Jeffs, Kiwi Income Property Trust, Personal Communication, 10th August, 2007).

On a more subtle front, Karen Jeffs highlights the use of native planting, stonework, and water-features within the Northlands Shopping Centre which replicate the natural environments associated with the surrounding Canterbury Plains (See Figures 33 & 34).



Figure 33 . The Canterbury Plains are replicated in this staged setting outside the main entrance to Northlands Shopping Centre. The theme is subtly integrated throughout the mall (Source: Author).

‘What you are seeing as far as theming in New Zealand is actually quite different. It’s architectural theming. It’s quite the New Zealand theme – with the planting and the timber, the flax detail. It’s kind of regional theming. The other example is Remarkables Park in Queenstown - it sits at the foot of the Remarkables next to the airport. It’s all river stone and local schist and ties in with the area. They’ve done it really well. It’s not the out there, garish, Disneyland, kind of theming’ (Karen Jeffs, Kiwi Income Property Trust, Personal Communication, 10th August, 2007).



Figure 34 . One of the areas inside Northlands which subtly integrates the natural stone and tussock grass elements of the surrounding Canterbury Plains (Source: Author).



Figure 35. These renovations of a Wendy's Ice Cream store at St Lukes are a little harder to screen from the shoppers eye (Source: Author).

The use of scaffolding, drapes and printed signs within the shopping mall (Figure 35) is standard practice when significant design alternations and renovations are taking place - the combination of which provide intrigue and suspense-like feeling similar to the methods used in Disneyland (See Figures 23 & 24 in Chapter 4). The standard white board reflects the promise of a ‘new store coming soon’ within the shopping mall (Figure 36).



Figure 36. Renovations taking place ‘behind-the-scenes’ for a soon to be opened Health 2000 store at St Lukes Shopping Mall (Source: Author).

The comments made by Karen Jeffs (p.67) suggest that for levels of theming to occur within the New Zealand shopping mall to the extent in which they are found in Disneyland and many American shopping malls, a certain novelty aspect usually has to be associated with it. Kylee Chalmers (Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 7th March, 2007) notes that while the inclusion of a novelty aspect is important, ‘it could create confusion as well. People get a bit funny sometimes’. More often than not, theming is used in relation to specific seasons or events. ‘Maybe if the All Blacks were playing we would do banners and things like that, but if it isn’t relevant then we won’t do it. If you wanted to do it all year round then, money-wise, it’s going to become a bit of an issue. It still needs to have some kind of relevance. It needs to be related to something. Christchurch people are reasonably conservative’. Christmas is a prime example of seasonal theming within the shopping mall (Figures

37 & 38). ‘We will put in Christmas decorations, Christmas trees, Santa will come in – that kind of thing. If we didn’t do that people would complain. There is an expectation that you do that. This year we are going to add some animated elves that move’ (Kylee Chalmers, Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 7th March, 2007).



Figure 37. Christmas decorations at Northlands start being displayed late October (Source: Autor).

There would also appear to be financial gain for shopping malls visibly partaking in and promoting specific events and seasons. ‘We’re always looking at doing things like that. That’s because there is a return on your investment there. If it looks good then you get more people talking about it’ (Kylee Chalmers, Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 7th March, 2007). The shopping malls owned by Kiwi Income Property Trust are no different. ‘We have a person on our staff that does all the centres’, notes Development Manager, Karen Jeffs. ‘They coordinate that with our marketing teams. That’s big budget. Decorating a centre this size [Sylvia Park] will cost a quarter of a million dollars with the Christmas decorations. It’s important to have Santa on site too. It’s the biggest time of the year’ (Personal Communication, 10th August, 2007). Karen adds that, aside from Christmas, additional promotions in the shopping mall are usually ‘based around Easter, Mothers Day, Fathers Day – things like that’.



Figure 38. One of the many Christmas wreaths on display at Northlands in Christchurch (Source: Author).

The majority of New Zealand malls have not, until recently, utilized the concept of themed or specialized lands or ‘areas’ other than precincts for food and beverage, and for cinema and games. One of New Zealand’s newest malls, Sylvia Park, has opted for the creation of a number of style ‘precincts’ or ‘hubs’ which mirror the themed Disney ‘lands’ concept (Adventureland, Tomorrowland, etc.); for example, a fashion precinct where the majority of high-fashion shops are collectively situated. There is an entertainment precinct, complete with restaurants, bars, promotions area and Hoyts cinema (See Figure 39), and even an ‘outdoors’ precinct where a series of outdoor equipment and clothing stores are situated. The ‘precinct’ concept has been adopted to a lesser degree in many of the newly developed or renovated malls in New Zealand. Christchurch’s Riccarton Mall also has an entertainment precinct with bars, restaurants and cinema complex (albeit smaller than that at Sylvia Park). As with Disneyland, each of these precincts provide rest areas, or seating areas, located in the middle of the promenades (See Figure 40).



Figure 39 . The entranceway to Hoyts and the entertainment precinct at Sylvia Park (Source: Author).



Figure 40. One of the many rest areas located in the middle of the promenade area at Northlands Mall (Source: Author).

The malls have also attempted to reach a similar standard of cleanliness, freshness and comfort to Disneyland, in producing marble walkways, planting areas, ensuring windows are always polished and rubbish always collected and providing comfortable seating (See Figure 41). As more malls choose to adopt the Disney presentation approach, the others are having to follow suit. ‘Five years ago or 10 years ago you wouldn’t have seen leather couches in the centre. What we’re providing is comfort areas inside malls, rather than a couple of park benches, so the challenge has been – people liked the park benches, but they like the leather sofas a whole lot more (Westfield, Jo Duthie, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007).



*Figure 41. The promenade area in the fashion precinct at Sylvia Park Mall in Auckland
(Source: Author)*

Within minutes of being inside the mall, it becomes apparent that there is a wide range of activities to experience. More and more shopping malls are choosing to provide Disneyesque ‘hybrid consumption’ environments to cater for shoppers searching for variety within ultimate experiential consumption environments (Janus Marketing, 2005). While the majority of shopping malls do not replicate the extraordinary amount of combinations found within experiential consumption environments such as West Edmonton Mall or the Mall of America, they do follow some of their leads (Bryman, 2004). New Zealand malls are offering standard retail opportunities in addition to coffee shops and eateries, and leisure attractions such as cinemas, gyms, simulators, gaming zones. ‘People come down [to Sylvia Park] for the whole thing – including the

dining and the after hours. You get to do your shopping and at half past eight you still have time to have your dinner and go to a movie or something. That ‘all in one’ is getting more and more important - each new centre lifts the bar on that’ (Karen Jeffs, Kiwi Income Property Trust, Personal Communication, 10th August, 2007).



Figure 42. The Food Court Area at St Lukes Mall in Auckland, offering a vast range of food and beverage options (Source: Author).

The food-court layout within the mall (see Figure 42) is identical to those within Disneyland – including the queues to collect food, the seating arrangements and the condiment counters. The provision of multiple chain-eating-establishments within one location is also increasing in the shopping mall. As malls get bigger, national retail chains are positioning two or more stores within each mall. I noted this at the south entrance of Northlands Mall, in Christchurch, where there was a ‘Yellow Rocket’ food outlet, observing that on exiting from the west entrance the same store appeared again.

Karen Jeffs also notes that there is an intention to add a series of office blocks on the Sylvia Park site, facing Mt Wellington Highway, so that there will be a range of office services for visitors to the mall to utilize. General Manager of Northlands Shopping Centre, Brian Bell refers to the importance of ‘retail mix’ in this respect and the importance of tying expectation (in terms of the stores on offer within the shopping

mall) with something new and unique to that particular mall (Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 9th March, 2007). There appears to be a careful balance between a shopping environment meeting expectation and an environment which offers a point of difference.

Shopping malls also are also tending towards the provision of activities and shows to draw shoppers in. Entertainment and social aspects are noted as important features by shoppers at Westfield Riccarton and Northlands Shopping Centre in Christchurch (Janus Marketing, 2005). A 2004 New Zealand study by Bowler on the benefit of holding community events in a local shopping mall discovered that ‘event marketing which involved the provision of free entertainment for shoppers’ (p.299) provided a definite draw card. However, while the events on offer did increase the numbers of visitors to the particular mall involved, the provision of such entertainment did not necessarily result in increased revenue for the stores within the mall. This could easily have been a one-off case however, as malls including Northlands and Riccarton in Christchurch, strive to provide activities in the mall on a regular basis, and have purpose-built centre courts where such activities can take place. Marketing Manager Kylee Chalmers provides the example of professional wrestlers putting on a display in the centre court. ‘People came in for autographs and drove here specifically to see them’ (Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 7th March, 2007).



Figure 43. One of the many coin operated childrens rides on offer at Northlands Mall in Christchurch (Source: Author).

In many cases, New Zealand shopping malls offer themed rides for young children, which can come in the form of miniature amusement-park-type rides located throughout the mall, or themed carts which can be hired by parents and guardians to push their children around in (Figures 43 & 44).



Figure 44. An example of the themed carts available for hire at St Lukes Mall in Auckland (Source: Author).

The majority of New Zealand shopping malls do not reflect theming in the context of company logo and brand association – or if they do it is to a very limited extent. Of the three major malls in Christchurch, only The Palms reflects its name in its architecture and landscaping, via the use of giant Palm trees (See Figure 45).



Figure 45 . Exterior façade of The Palms Shopping Mall in Christchurch. Its logo and incorporated Palm Trees planted on site exemplify the Company/Brand Association theming exception (Source: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/Places/Canterbury/CanterburyPlaces/9/ENZ-Resources/Standard/3/mi>)

Particular New Zealand retail stores have associated images which relate to their brands and will often manage displays accordingly. Stores within New Zealand shopping malls that are clearly themed, include ‘Rodd & Gunn’ - with its country/farming style interior, or ‘Nature’s Discovery’ - complete with rock formations and 3D Dinosaur (See Figure 46). ‘Individual tenants will have a fit-out manual and a set of design guidelines. They’re a set of rules they have to comply with’ says Karen Jeffs. ‘We have a set of retail design managers that come in and critique each individual fit-out as it comes in to make sure it doesn’t clash with the store next door or that the signage doesn’t poke out too much. There’s the odd fit-out that you’ll get in that have looked at both of those documents and gone ‘Oh well, we’ll forget about those and just do what we want’. It’s so out there and funky that you’ll actually look at it and go ‘okay!’ (Kiwi Income Property Trust, Personal Communication, 10th August, 2007).

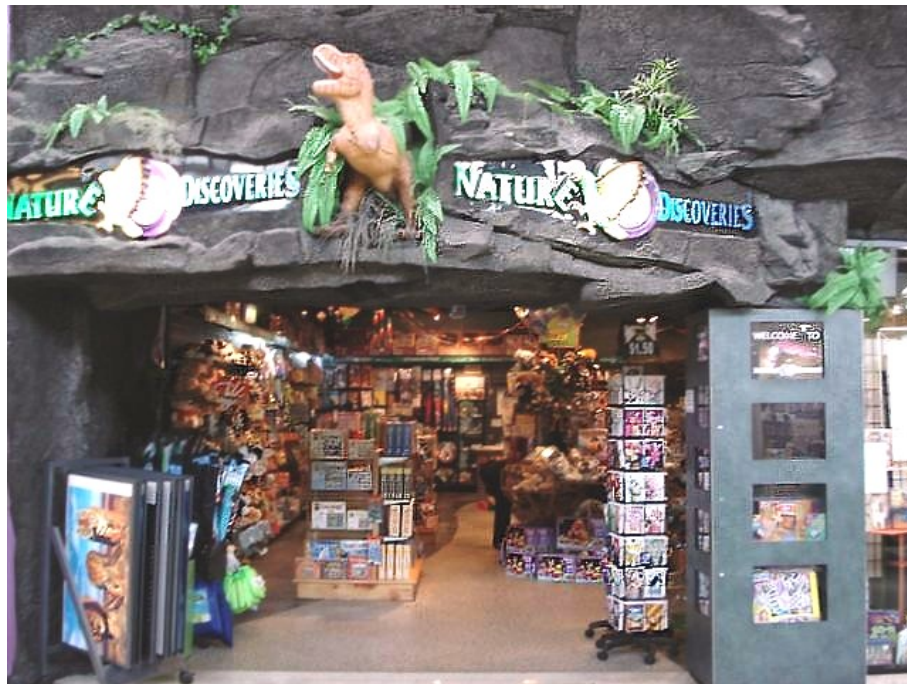


Figure 46. The Nature's Discovery retail store at Northlands Mall exemplifies Company and Brand Associated theming on the scale of an individual retail store (Source: Author).

With the creation of ambience and provision of a wide range of customer services, entertainment and consumption opportunities (all under one roof), a community-like atmosphere has begun to develop within many shopping malls. Marketing and developing the shopping mall as a community centre (or base), especially within New Zealand, is an important consideration for mall managers (Kylee Chalmers,

Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 7th March, 2007). As a result, 'malls are sites for far more than the mere purchase of goods - they focus on recreational environments that encourage browsing, eating and meeting people' (Pawson, et. al., 1998, p.260). They have become social centres.

'I think that shopping centres are very much the heart and soul of the community because they are a hub base for people to meet', says Jo Duthie (Westfields, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007). 'A shopping centre is going to cater for a lot more of the average type of person. There's always something for people to do and it becomes a central part of the community, and people we know have very strong bonds to their centres. It's part of who they are and where they've grown up.' Sylvia Park may be one of the few New Zealand malls which differs in this conceptual use of the mall as a community base due both to its location, and the fact that it is newly built, as opposed to being a renovated or progressively enlarged mall. 'People are travelling to come to the centre [Sylvia Park]. It differs from community-based malls which have strong catchment and surrounding community areas. People are looking for different things', says Karen Jeffs (Kiwi Income Property Trust, Personal Communication, 10th August, 2007).

A side effect of the creation of 'community' in the mall can be when temporary - and potentially low spending - community-based groups converge on the mall. In some cases, it takes the ingenuity of mall management to make such occurrences work to their advantage. When Northlands Mall, in Christchurch, began experiencing gatherings of elderly early in the mornings, who were using the venue as a meeting place and subsequent walking destination, the mall management decided to officially support the activity. The Press (18th July, 2006) first made note of this congregational recreational activity in 2006, and since then mall management has joined with the ranks of local tenant, Configure Express, to create the 'Northlands Walking Express'. The shopping mall opens an hour early, at 8am, on both Tuesday and Thursday mornings to allow groups of walkers to stroll along the promenade at their own pace, and socialize in the traditional sense of the term 'community'. The benefits are cleverly promoted, not only in terms of the environment on offer, but also in-terms of linking back to the opportunity to purchase. 'All Northlands walkers will receive a walker's card entitling them to fantastic discounts and offers', reads the 2006 Summer

edition of 'Moi' magazine (the official publication of Northlands Shopping Centre). From coffee to clothes, movies to shoes, mall walkers are encouraged to spend, spend, spend after their leisurely stroll. This unanticipated development, the use of a mall as a place to exercise, is an extension of hybrid consumption. This is perhaps one area of the shopping mall evolution which is not related to Disney. The safe, secure, clean environment produced by the mall undoubtedly plays a part in this evolved use. 'Northlands' is following a similar trend overseas. By the time walkers have finished their laps, the mall, and its stores, are open. Many walkers will decide to stay on to browse or have a coffee (Eleven, 2006, p.A10).

An alternative 'community' however – groups of loitering teenagers at the mall - can prove a security issue. Westfield's Jo Duthie notes from her experience at other centres that malls '... do tend to have groups of people who you potentially deem as being unwanted. As a matter of course if they were creating a disruption we would probably ask them to leave. They would have to be relatively disruptive to get us to do that. The general deal is that you want to create an environment that people are comfortable in' (Westfield, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007).

In 2005 visitors to both The Palms and Northlands (Christchurch) described congregations of teenagers at the mall as 'barriers' to enjoyment of their mall experience, and also suggested that these groups were often quite 'intimidating' (Janus Marketing, 2005, p. 28). 'We get the odd issue, like graffiti around the outside [of the mall] at night because that's where some of them hang out', says Kylee Chalmers. 'From an economic perspective they are not a group that are marketed to. This is where they hang out though... To be honest they're not a group I need to do anything about. They don't have an income' (Kylee Chalmers, Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 7th March, 2007).

Farrell (2003, p.159) suggests that 'when we enter a mall, we enter a timeless environment', yet the majority of New Zealand shopping mall managers dismiss the idea of this as a deliberate ploy. Karen Jeffs suggests that the lack of clocks in Northlands comes down to the fact that space is utilized for more important things. 'It's all about shop fronts and not having blank walls. It's not like the Casino psychology - it's more of a coincidence. It's about design, shop-fronts and money.

Every surface is thought about – there’s not much left’, says Karen, who also points out that the counter balance to lack of clocks is the use of daylight within the mall. ‘It’s important for us to get daylight into the mall’ (Kiwi Income Property Trust, Personal Communication, 10th August, 2007). Westfield’s Jo Duthie agrees. ‘It’s not a conscious thing at all that we don’t display clocks. It’s just not the sort of thing you would normally put in, because most people would wear a watch or have a cellphone. Our aim is not to try to trick people so that they have no idea what time it is (Westfields, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007). Marketing Manager, Kylee Chalmers, from Northlands, suggests that most visitors to the mall are unaware that such time-pieces are missing (Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 7th March, 2007) – but this could be evidence perhaps that customers have been hooked into the timelessness that the mall environment offers. As for the use of daylight (See Figure 47) – it too can have its benefits for mall managers. If shoppers can see that it is still light outside, they may consider that they have time to stay longer. If shoppers can see it is raining outside, they might delay a return to the car. Despite the views of the mall managers, and skeptical as it may sound, I am left with the question, is it coincidental that not one shopping mall I visited in my research over the past year had a clock in it? Furthermore, how often do people look up? Between all the design features, store fronts and advertising. Are shoppers really aware of the natural light that some malls choose to let in via skylights?



Figure 47. St Lukes Shopping Mall in Auckland uses skylights to let some natural light into the mall (Source: Author)

Weather can also affect the amount of time spent in a mall – or even the choice to visit the mall in the first place. When visiting the Westfields Riccarton, or Northlands, on a cold or wet day, there are a noticeably larger numbers of people using these centres. Lenihan (2006, p.23) goes so far as to suggest that air conditioning allows a ‘deepening of interior space’, similar perhaps to the effect of a fire being lit in the living room in the middle of winter. Climate control helps to keep a prospective shopper in the mall for as long as possible, in an attempt to encourage further spending. On a cool day, the shopper can be guaranteed warmth within the mall, and on a hot day, vice versa. ‘It’s nice in the mall regardless of what the weather is doing outside’ (Kylee Chalmers, Northlands Shopping Centre, Personal Communication, 7th March, 2007).

One important point which Jo Duthie makes is that in New Zealand the temperatures are not extreme. Westfield malls therefore tend to do what most offices do. ‘We heat or cool, summer or winter, to a relatively standard temperature. It’s a comfortable, ambient kind of temperature’ (Westfield, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007). There is still wet weather to consider however. ‘As much as everybody says they like outdoor malls in New Zealand, the reality is that they’re just not that practical. They don’t work. If you look at the Botany shopping mall [Auckland], you’ve got a concept there which is taken out of Queensland, which is fantastic. To a large degree it looks really really nice and it’s very inviting on a bright fine summers day, but in the middle of winter when it’s pouring down with rain – as it frequently does in Auckland – it’s not quite so inviting to get wet when you’re running from shop to shop’, says Jo Duthie (Westfield. Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007). ‘And that is something we are well aware of and conscious of in any shopping environment in New Zealand – be it in bulk retail centres, or shopping centres – people don’t like getting wet. They really don’t. So I think that shopping in an open, light, natural but still quite controlled environment is something that works quite well’.

The wide promenades, multiple entrances and exits, customer services centres and extensive parking structures also combine with the aforementioned design techniques to add to the effectiveness of the mall - especially in terms of customer flow (See Figures 48 and 49). Karen Jeff notes that ‘the biggest issue is getting people past the shop fronts [which face out onto the interior promenade]. There is a psychology as to

how many steps inside the door and which way you look. It's around that – so you're pushing the maximum amount of people past the stores. That's what Westfield and we do. That's why the tenants come in here. We do charge higher rates than outside the mall, but we do get concentrated customer counts' (Kiwi Income Property Trust, Personal Communication, 10th August, 2007). Arguably such flow can become restricted during sales, school holidays and cold/wet winter weekends due to the confined nature of the architecture. On days such as these, a 'quick trip' to the mall is virtually impossible. On the whole, this is something that can work to the favour of mall management when shoppers give up fighting through the crowds on the promenade and move into the nearest store or escape to one of the cafes for a coffee or bite to eat (excluding those few who may exit the mall all together).



Figure 48. One of the promenade areas at St Lukes Shopping Mall which opens out into a food court area and leads to set of escalators to the second level (Source: Author).



Figure 49. Northlands Shopping Centre in Christchurch offers a wide promenade area for its shoppers, with a number of easy-to-follow store directories located at intermittent intervals (Source: Author).

In this respect, the mall efficiently keeps the shoppers within its confines at certain times, as opposed to getting them moving through and out quickly. In retail settings, unintended lingering is an essential first step towards eventual spending (Farrell, 2003) on unforeseen/impulse purchases. Within Disneyland, unintended lingering along Main Street, around the stores located at the ends of rides, at shows, and in the communal areas within each of the lands, also encourages eventual spending. The only time when regular flow is more essential is during the queuing process for rides – perhaps in the shopping mall this could equate to standing in line at the cash register within individual stores.

While malls entice foot traffic, individual retailers are usually left to their own devices to use emotional labour to encourage a purchase to take place. This being said, customer service is still seen as an important provision by mall management. ‘We have a customer services desk within all of our centres, staffed by Westfield staff members says Jo Duthie (Westfield, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007) ‘We don’t, at the moment, have a concierge desk and people randomly walking around handing out lollies and that kind of thing. We would do that on an ‘as and when’ required kind of basis. For example, when we open a new part of the centre - that’s when we’d put that sort of group of people on’.

Westfields’ Jo Duthie points to an alternate perspective, noting that shopping malls can assist in both the effectiveness of the activity of shopping and in a more general environmental and traffic management sense. ‘By having it all available in the one environment you make the trips a lot more efficient. For all intents and purposes, looking at it from a very macro level, it’s better on the environment because you’re doing less (sic) car movements, it’s better on traffic congestion, and it’s a lot more peaceful for you as a shopper, because you’re not having to keep getting back into the car and doing all the short trips’. There is also the matter of time efficiency to consider. ‘Because you probably tend to go to your local centre – you would make it quite time efficient because you know where everything is. You feel at home coming here’ (Jo Duthie, Westfield, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007).

The concept of merchandising in association with the New Zealand shopping mall (i.e. the production and promotion of souvenir like items promoting a specific mall) is

something which is yet to be established here – this type of merchandising is often reserved for the larger international experiential consumption environments.

‘Merchandising comes with theming and having that brand. We just haven’t got to that yet’ (Karen Jeffs, Kiwi Income Property Trust, Personal Communication, 10th August, 2007). The idea of purchasing a Westfield Riccarton T-shirt, or a Northlands Shopping Centre coffee mug is not something either promoted or prospectively considered by shopping malls in New Zealand. Perhaps the question to ask here to is why would shoppers in New Zealand want to associate themselves with a shopping mall ‘brand’? (See Chapter 6).

The interviews and observations conducted at the multiple shopping mall sites, discussed above, have left me with a better understanding of the multitude of design elements and techniques utilized within the New Zealand shopping mall. The majority of these techniques and designs parallel those found within Disneyland. The few discrepancies noted in relation to Disneyland and the Disneyization theory (in Chapter 4), were similar to those identified within the shopping mall. A further in-depth analysis detailing the extent to which the design elements and techniques of the New Zealand shopping mall correspond with the principles of the Disney theme-parks will be provided in the next chapter. This will then inform a discussion of possible future trends for the New Zealand shopping mall.

Chapter 6: Following the Mouse through the Mall

Notwithstanding the minor differences between the techniques I used to study Disneyland (observation and literature based) and New Zealand shopping malls (a mix of observation, interviews, and literature reviews), an in-depth analysis of the principles and techniques used by management in these environments can still effectively take place. To varying extents, the New Zealand shopping mall is now reflecting many of the principles identified within the Disney theme-parks which, in turn, also align with the interpretations proposed by Baudrillard (1996;1998) and Eco (1986).

The Disney theme parks are directly related to the ‘transformation of shopping into play’ (Bryman, 2004, p.1). People are looking for the good life – a separate world, away from the troubles they have to deal with in the real world (Farrell, 2003). Shopping malls are taking advantage of this stance, to the extent where ‘shopping has infiltrated, colonized, and even replaced almost every aspect of urban life’ (Lenihan, 2006, p.23).

How have Disneyesque elements reached New Zealand Shores?

There is a strong influence from both Disneyland (and America) on the design techniques and principles associated with the New Zealand shopping mall. While some of my interviewees were not completely clear about the mechanisms by which these influences were transmitted, they did indicate that a careful combination of American and New Zealand techniques and principles are required when it comes to the design of the New Zealand shopping mall – this is something which was indeed reflected in the extent (and way in which) Disneyization principles are incorporated into the New Zealand shopping mall.

There has always been a tendency for New Zealand to turn to America for inspiration in retail design. ‘That Westfield has begun rationalizing its smaller centres so that it can focus on its supermall concept is the latest example of how trends are similar here to those in North America’ (Hall, 2007, p.11). While comments made by the majority of the mall managers suggest that New Zealanders may be more conservative in their views about lavish theming in retail settings, there is undoubtedly a growth in the size

of shopping malls, and developments in the design techniques being utilized within them. Karen Jeffs also supports the importance of American influence, but also hints at other geographical sources of inspiration. 'Historically we have bought in American or Australian architects. In recent years the overseas experience and influence has been quite important. That being said, it needs to be put into a New Zealand context. Auckland is one of the fastest growing Asian cities in the world. More and more we need to be looking at what's happening in Asia, than America. It's probably a combination' (Kiwi Income Property Trust, Personal Communication, 10th August, 2007). The multi-cultural diversity of a region or country can therefore strongly influence the design and type of retail amenities/services offered within a mall.

Disneyesque Elements Exemplified in the Mall

Theming

The use of theming within New Zealand shopping malls is more subdued than that found within Disneyland. The traditional designs of experiential consumption environments, experimentation and innovation in retail design are difficult to locate within the New Zealand shopping mall because there is a much smaller market of discretionary income here - compared that found in other larger countries (Lenihan, 2006).

Subtle hints of Disney's 'theming' principle (and its associated concepts) are, however, increasingly being incorporated within many newly built or developed New Zealand malls. These include generic blanket-like themes throughout entire malls (See Figures 34 & 35, in Chapter 5, of Northlands Mall, Christchurch). The recently developed Sylvia Park, in Auckland, may be the first of many exceptions to the case stated above by Lenihan (2006), as it combines a series of factors which could be described as representing a 'New Zealand' experiential consumption environment. Kiwi Income Development Manager Karen Jeffs suggests that Sylvia Park is an 'attraction in itself' (Personal Communication, August 10th, 2007). The manufactured environment contains an abundance of Disneyized elements, while at the same time using aspects of product/image association. From the themed two-storey rock faces with abseiling models and the multi-coloured vibrant retail designs and entertainment precinct, to the abundance of hybrid consumption (See p.86) - the mall could well be an indication of what is to come in New Zealand in terms of experiential consumption

environments (See Figure 33 in Chapter 5 of Sylvia Park, Auckland). Hall (2007) agrees, noting that ‘although the super-sized West Edmonton Mall reflects extremes well outside of what would likely take place in New Zealand, the overall trend suggests that New Zealand and North America are on a parallel path’ (p.23). The new, bigger centres are winning out over the older smaller centres (Troy, 2007).

The themed displays and structures within Disneyland are used for the same reason within the shopping mall - as ‘visible lures, which draw people onto the next attraction’ (Bryman, 1995, p. 99). People are drawn inwards, down Main Street by the imposing edifice at its far end – the Sleeping Beauty Castle (Finch, 2004). Hall (2007) suggests that the replicated Disney-style ‘main street’ is becoming increasingly popular in the development of New Zealand retail environments. Visitors to the mall may see unique displays or architectural features in the distance which invite them forwards – passing more stores and retail promotions in the process. In retail settings, unintended lingering is an essential first step towards eventual spending (Farrell, 2003) on unforeseen/impulse purchases.

The convenience of the Disneyesque fantasyland-type atmosphere at the shopping mall is also often noted as one its main draw-cards, especially in relation to its lack of distractions from the outside world, accessibility, and perhaps the slightly less theme-park-related ability to shelter visitors from the outside weather extremes. The temperature within the mall is always controlled (Ritzer, 1993; Guy, 1994; Bryman, 1995), demonstrating that no part of retail design is left to chance (Razor Films, 2004). As with the use of extreme architectural *theming*, Company Logo and Brand Association - an exception noted by Bryman’s to his concept of theming (see Chapter 3) - is often restricted to malls that are tourist destinations in their own right. Many shopping malls which do incorporate this concept, do so on a very subtle basis. There will, however, often be individual stores within the shopping mall which utilize lavish brand association concepts into their store fit-outs, such as The Rainforest Café at Downtown Disney or Ontario Mills (on the outskirts of Los Angeles).

Theming, in accordance with a company logo or brand, is difficult to find within the New Zealand shopping mall - and when done so has again been created very subtly. The Palms, in Christchurch, was the only mall identified in my research which

displayed characteristics of this particular Disney feature (See Figure 44 in Chapter 5). A number of individual shopping mall tenants also demonstrated this particular type of theming – albeit under the careful eye and coordination of mall management, as one particular interviewee pointed out. The lack of generic mall theming in relation to brand or logo relates to the associated costs involved with maintenance and updates (something which is a factor identified for the limited use of standard theming within the mall). With mall managers noting that hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent on seasonal theming at Christmas time alone, the costs for year round brand-associated theming is not financially feasible in New Zealand.

The creation of timelessness, via the lack of clocks, within experiential consumption environments, such as the theme-park and the shopping mall, could also be described as an illusion which falls under the category of theming. The only clock in Disneyland is located at the entrance. Placed, so that people can see how long they have to wait until the park opens, or calculate if they have time to wander across to California Adventure, or for lunch at Downtown Disney (both within the confines of the Magic Kingdom complex). The lack of clocks on display, combined with the amount of fun to be had, are key contributors to the effect of making time stand-still whilst in Disneyland. ‘The pirate show lasts a quarter of an hour (but you lose any sense of time, it could be ten minutes or thirty)’ (Eco, 1986, p.44).

Farrell (2003, p.159) suggests that malls help us to ‘un-do time’. When we enter the mall, we enter a timeless environment - with no clocks, limited outside visibility and no distractions. It is not surprising, therefore, that not one shopping mall I visited contained a clock of any kind.

In addition to the aforementioned theming types, two theming aspects were identified at Disneyland and within the New Zealand shopping mall which are not allocated a category, or for that matter discussed, in Brymans (2004) description of Disneyization:

- Seasonal Theming is becoming increasingly utilized within the shopping mall – Christmas is undoubtedly the most popular season, with lavish Christmas trees, garlands, wreaths and Santa’s grottos appearing in every mall. Thousands

of dollars are spent on an annual basis fitting out New Zealand shopping malls in an attempt to get visitors into the Christmas spirit. Under Bryman's (2004) description of 'theming' there is a lack of consideration for seasonal or event associated theming – something which marks both the Disney Theme-parks (Figure 50, below), and the shopping mall (see Chapter 5). Seasonal theming for experiential consumption environments goes well beyond hanging up the odd decoration here and there.

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*Figure 50. The Disneyland ticket gates are themed accordingly during Halloween
(Source: <http://www.wdwinfo.com/Disneyland/photos/Halloween.htm>)*

- Associative Theming is also something which is noticeable in both Disneyland and the shopping mall and is perhaps something which contradicts the non-associative nature of 'theming' as described by Bryman (2004). Linking associative displays, fit-outs, and architecture with a ride and a retail store (See Figure 26 in Chapter 4 of Disneyland) or the mall and the region in which it is located (Northlands Mall, Christchurch) is a technique identified within my research. Within Disneyland it is more than likely associated with increased merchandising sales. In the New Zealand shopping mall, it is more likely used to create a feeling of ownership and association with the region or area in which the mall is situated.

Modifications and updates to the theme-park and the shopping mall (whether heavily themed or not) rely on identical techniques of masking. The use of scaffolding, drapes

and printed signs within the shopping mall are a standard occurrence when significant alterations and renovations are taking place - the combination of which provide a similar sense of intrigue and suspense when found within the themepark. Also, management does not always want the public to know how certain effects and designs are created. Barriers within the themepark may, occasionally, be designed and themed slightly to fit in with their surroundings, such as the use of bamboo fencing in the jungle section of Adventureland. Alternatively, plain white boarding may be used displaying signage of a 'new store' or 'new attraction' coming soon.

Performative Labour

Brymans principle of Performative Labour, it is a technique extensively made of use of within a majority of consumer environments. Baudrillard (1998) refers to an equivalent use of 'personalized communication' by workers as a tool to further encourage consumption. He notes that 'we are surrounded by waves of fake spontaneity, 'personalized' language, orchestrated emotions and personal relations' (p.161).

Performative Labour, or emotional labour - as it is sometimes called - is closely associated with services where a potential commercial transaction could take place (Bryman, 2004). Within the shopping mall there is a fine line between effective Performative Labour, Personalized Communication and the potential for annoying the customer – the latter emphasising the difference between the use of Performative Labour at Disneyland (to entertain and encourage the purchase of take-home memorabilia), and its use within the retail setting (to solely encourage a purchase).

Merchandising

Disneyland offers a plethora of associated merchandise in its souvenir stores, such as t-shirts, mugs, hats, flags, pens, paper, candy, plush toys, and books – all of which are exclusive to the Disney theme-park alone. The purchase and display of these items often act as a sign which says 'this is where I've been and this is what I bought'. There is a sense of associated prestige or sign-value (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2007) experienced by the consumer when these types of purchases take place. Merchandisers have effectively and successfully created a 'desire to desire' whereby consumers purchase something for the sake of it as opposed to wanting the item for a

specific reason. How often does the recently returned home Disneyland tourist choose to wear their bold and garish Mickey Mouse sweatshirt which was a ‘must have’ purchase whilst visiting the theme-park?

Merchandising, theming and branding are not a central part of the mall experience in New Zealand. Merchandising is the only principle of Disneyization which is not reflected in the New Zealand shopping mall. Taking into account the aforementioned conservative nature of New Zealanders and the more subtle approach to theming, it is doubtful as to whether New Zealand shopping malls - as experiential consumption environments - will ever reach a status whereby an associated line of merchandise is both produced and willingly purchased.

But, like the souvenir items purchased at the theme-park, positive sign value is certainly placed on the plethora of products available for purchase within the mall’s individual retail stores and can be used to interpret visitors *directly* associating a positive and style-like image to the experiential consumption environment they are visiting. They may prefer to tell their friends they shop at Westfield Riccarton, or like to be seen having a coffee at Northlands.

There is one small piece of environment specific merchandise produced by both the theme-park and the mall and provided to visitors free of charge: a conveniently small and detailed map, outlining the location of entertainment, food and beverages, retail stores and amenities – something which is often kept as a souvenir by visitors to Disneyland, or by tourists who visit local shopping malls. Located near the entrances and the customer service counters at both the mall and the theme-park, these maps are designed by management to offer an easy-to-carry a quick reference guide so that locations can be found easily, or alternatively – no locations missed out. I collected one of these maps on entry to Disneyland on my first day. I had a quick glance at it, and like many others, stored the map away to look at later. Once inside the park, however, I forgot about it. If I wanted to know where something was I usually asked, otherwise I was happy to wander around. Actions, such as this also take place with the maps provided in the shopping mall (and not necessarily because people are familiar with the mall layout). On my (first) trip to Sylvia Park mall in Auckland, one of the first things I did was collect a map, but the combination of the newness of the mall, the

mix of stores, and the layout encouraged me to simply wander around and look at everything (I did not look at the map again until I got back to my hotel).

Hybrid Consumption

The provision of a multitude of opportunities encourages visitors to stay longer and return on a regular basis. Shopping malls, as multifunctional environments, are a type of ‘marketing strategy which provides distinct settings for recreational, cultural, amusement, and leisure activities’ (Lewis, 1990, p.122). Most shopping malls do not offer the extraordinary extent of hybrid consumption combinations found at the larger, more extreme, experiential consumption environments such as West Edmonton Mall or the Mall of America - but the smaller malls are able to follow some of their leads (Bryman, 2004). New Zealand malls have adopted the Hybrid Consumption concept, offering varied combinations of restaurants, movie theatres, displays, entertainment, attractions, retail stores and supermarkets. People do not necessarily just visit to shop, though that is what the owners want them to end up doing – and more often than not they end up getting what they want. A person may intend to go and watch a movie, or simply stretch their legs and grab a coffee. When they actually reach the mall they decide to nip into the Supermarket, grab a birthday card for a friend from the bookstore, or happen upon a pair of shoes which just ‘have’ to be purchased.

Creating Community

One particular issue that has arisen in my research has been the creation of community within the shopping mall. Original shopping centre designs were based on village centres and traditional towns, which in turn evoked a strong sense of place (Goss, 1993) and a resulting community feel. Similar approaches are still in use, and noted as being incorporated in the New Zealand mall environment by many of those interviewed. The idea, of course, is that if you can determine community ‘needs’, then you can structure the mall to visibly meet some of these needs, thus creating an image of strong community commitment and consciousness in the minds of potential customers (Lewis, 1990, p.122).

As a direct link with the Disneyization principle of Hybrid Consumption, Sorkin (1992) notes that “mall time” has become an increasingly standard unit of measure because malls offer such a large range of services and activities. Shopping malls

suggest that we belong there (Farrell, 2003) by attempting to create and develop themselves as true community centres (Clifton, 2006). An increasing number of promotional activities have begun to appear in the mall. Mall developer Bill Dawson notes that ‘the more needs you fulfill, the longer people stay’ (Developer, Bill Dawson, cited in Sorkin, 1992, p.15). Such provision entices adults, and especially teenagers, to use the mall environment as a social centre (Sorkin, 1992). This is particularly the case in New Zealand where unpredictable weather limits use of parks and beaches as regular meeting places. From a retailing point of view, however, problems have been identified with regard to groups of teenagers using the mall as a social meeting place.

Mall management does not like to see such groups develop. They use mall space for other than economic purposes. These warm knots of a community can and do disrupt the cool smooth flow of economic transaction. Group members take seats designed for shoppers (Lewis, 1990, p.134).

So in some cases, more time spent in a consumption environment does not result in increased levels of spending (Farrell, 2003).

The concept of community also ties in with the Disney principle of theming, as the sense of community is often built on the traditional main-street theme.

In constructing an attractive place image for the shopping center, developers have exploited a modernist nostalgia for authentic community, perceived only to exist in past and distant places, and have promoted the conceit of the shopping centre as an alternative focus for modern community life (Goss, 1993, p.22).

In this context, community is equated with place and relationships and a sense of belonging between individuals (Lewis, 1990). In relation to fabricated consumption environments, a collection of people that do not necessarily communicate or recognize each other could be enough to constitute labeling them as a type of community. It is their collectiveness in terms of place which creates an, albeit temporary, community.

The danger in the above case however is that these temporary forms of community are ‘too fragmented and pluralized to offer enduring forms of belonging’ (Delanty, 2003, p.192). This would indeed appear to be the case in settings like Disneyland, where there is an observed lack of interaction between visitors (See Chapter Four), but an agreeable sense of community bought about by the setting or ‘place’. Once leaving the environment, all sense of community is gone. The interactions which take place within the shopping mall setting take place in a similar fashion, though to reiterate, the sense of belonging is ‘hardly constitutive of community in the traditional sense’ (Delanty, 2003, 142). Lewis (1990) acknowledges that malls lure and assemble collectivities and crowds of shoppers, but he also notes that ‘these groups seldom share the common ties and engage in the sort of social interactions necessary to forge a sense of ‘wenness’ – of community – from the raw social material of a crowd’ (p.127). This contradicts Baudrillard (1998) who, while not directly mentioning the concept of community, suggests that ‘consuming is something one never does alone... One enters, rather into a generalized system of exchange and production of coded values where, in spite of themselves, all consumers are involved with others’ (p.78). But consumers may be collectively placed within the confines of the shopping mall, but this does not necessarily mean that they interact with each other. Some shoppers partake in the activity of consumption for purposes such as interaction with store assistants, or to feel part of a group – but no actual group exists based solely on the action of consumption. Nevertheless, and as suggested by Baudrillard (1996;1998) perhaps a new metamorphic community has emerged within both the theme-park and the shopping mall.

Further Design Aspects of the Theme-park and the Shopping Mall

While there is an element of control at the Disney theme parks, due to the relatively high priced admission fees, there are no such fees prevalent when entering the shopping mall (Bryman, 2004). Security and surveillance within shopping malls, it would seem, need to be of a higher standard, as shopping mall managers lack the ability to screen who enters the environment. Shopping malls utilize a variety of security techniques, including uniformed security guards, plain-clothed security guards, surveillance cameras, intermittent police patrols. ‘Certain groups are particularly likely to be watched’ (Bryman, 2004, p.145). This is reinforced by Westfield Development Manager, Jo Duthie, who also noted that from a financial

point of view, such groups were not targeted for promotional or marketing purposes due to their lack of access to funds. In an effort to curb the use of the mall by these groups, the concept of paying for the experience of shopping at the mall may not be as far fetched as it sounds. Pine and Gilmore (1999, p.65) predict that ‘in the full-fledged Experience Economy, we will see not only retail stores but entire shopping malls charge admission before a person is allowed to set foot in a store.’

Climate within the theme-park is a little harder to oversee, due to the fact that the majority of areas are at the whim of the weather gods. Individual rides, queuing areas and eateries are all appropriately coordinated to suit the outside air temperature (i.e. air-conditioned or heated). The majority of rides - more so in Disneyland than California Adventure (also part of Disney’s Magic Kingdom at Anaheim) - are indoors which makes the environment a little easier to control. Alternatively there are conveniently interlinked selections of weather-appropriate merchandise available for purchase. Retail stores within the park offer everything from sun-hats and sunglasses to jackets, umbrellas and disposable rain protectors on cue. Within the shopping mall, however, there is more opportunity to coordinate the climate accordingly. In a similar respect to Disneyland it is air-conditioned or heated in relation to the air temperature outside. There is a fine line here however, and an urge to please all shoppers. If it is too cold in the mall people may leave. If it is too hot, visitors may become tired and or irritated. Westfield Development Manager, Jo Duthie made the point that the temperature within Westfield Riccarton is coordinated so shoppers do not feel they have to wear a jacket because it is too cold, or take off their sweatshirt, because it is too hot.

Summary

North America has significantly influenced the development of the New Zealand retail industry - resulting in an array of similarities in the principles and techniques combined and used within Disneyland to those utilized within the New Zealand shopping mall. While a small percentage of these principles fail to be unaccounted for under Bryman’s (1995, 2004) concept of Disneyization, the likenesses between the mall and the theme-park, as experiential consumption environments, still remain. The creation of a unique sense of community, experienced by visitors, was just one of the

many techniques identified. Together, these discoveries combine to form the basis upon which a series of conclusions, and future predictions, can be drawn.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis has provided an outline of the historical development of shopping malls from both an international (mainly North American) and New Zealand perspective. It has also incorporated the associated theories of Disneyization (Bryman, 1995; 2004), Baudrillard's (1996; 1998) System of Objects and the theoretical initiatives of Eco (1986). Observations of and literature reviews on Disneyland, accompanied by observations, interviews and literature collected on the New Zealand shopping mall, proved valuable when it came to determining the ways in which the design principles and techniques used within New Zealand shopping malls parallel the principles of the Disney theme parks. As a result, analysis of the assumptions made, and the design principles and techniques used, by shopping mall planners and managers in New Zealand could be effectively completed.

Experiential consumption environments which mix consumption and play, are the kind of contexts where the ludic (playful) responses initially uncovered in research on visitors to Disney theme parks are likely to be found (Bryman, 2004, p. 142). Such destinations promise 'a fulfilling fantasy and consumption experience as a break from the humdrum of everyday life' (Shields, 1989, cited in Bryman 2004, p. 142). When these Disneyesque techniques are incorporated by managers, unique experiential consumption destinations are created which entice vast numbers of willing consumers around the globe. The environment of the shopping mall demonstrates the effective combination of the many aspects associated with Disney, offering insight into what consumers at such destinations are assumed to be searching for and receiving, in addition to highlighting continually reinforcing the cycle of consumerism.

Similarities and Differences

A series of similarities have been identified between the theory of Disneyization (Bryman, 1995; 2004), Baudrillard's 'System of Objects' (1996), the perspectives of Eco (1986) and the design and management techniques of Disneyland and the New Zealand shopping mall. These are outlined below.

- The Disney principles of Theming, Hybrid Consumption and, to a lesser extent, Performative Labour are clearly identifiable within the New Zealand shopping

mall. Theming, though not necessarily utilized to the same extent as Disneyland, would appear to be reflected to a greater degree by malls developed and owned by Kiwi Income Property Trust (predominantly Northlands Mall in Christchurch and Sylvia Park in Auckland). Performative Labour is principally confined to the individual retail store.

- The elements of timelessness and the passive nature of certain activities within Disneyland – as identified by Eco (1986) - are utilized to the same extent (and for similar reasons) within the shopping mall as they are in the theme-park.
- Baudrillard's 'System of Objects' - whereby consumers purchase an item for the sake of it as opposed to wanting that item for a specific reason – is also an aspect which is encouraged within the Disney theme-park environment and the shopping mall. This augmenting and steering of consumption (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2007) acts like a Starship-Enterprise-like tractor-beam for visitors and/or shoppers, drawing them inwards and enticing them to consume.
- The development of the concept of 'efficiency' by Walt Disney in 1955 has stood the test of time in regard to the effective organisation and management of the Disney theme-parks today. This particular management technique is utilized within the shopping mall in a very similar manner.

A limited number of differences between the aforementioned theories, the theme-park environment and the shopping mall were also identified during the research. These included:

- Merchandising (in terms of the principle described under Disneyization), is something which has yet to emerge in association with the New Zealand shopping mall. The production of destination associated products or souvenirs may be limited in use to those experiential consumption environments which act more as tourist destinations in their own right.

- Baudrillard's 'sign-value' concept (described under the System of Objects theory in Chapter 3) may well be associated with both the shopping mall and the Disney theme parks, however in relation to Disneyland it is strongly linked to the Disney-related merchandise available for purchase. Within the shopping mall 'sign-value' is generically associated with the vast range of items on offer within the individual retail stores.
- There is a growing tendency in some New Zealand shopping malls for them to act as community centres – a place for people to meet, spend time at, belong to, and take ownership of. While the Disneyization elements of Hybrid Consumption, Theming, and Performative Labour may facilitate the creation of community within the mall, their combination within the Disney theme-park results in a disjointed and less interactive environment (according to both literature and observation) – perhaps this is again based on the notion that the theme park is a tourist destination.

A Summarising Model

The model below (Figure 51) attempts to summarise the research and analysis conducted within this thesis. It demonstrates the close alignment of the management and design techniques used within Disneyland and the shopping mall. These combined techniques and designs have resulted in the creation of a sense of community within such types of experiential consumption environments.

Future Trends

In relation to predicted future trends in New Zealand Shopping Mall design, Town Planner Bob Batty suggests that there will be 'an increasing trend towards multi leisure use of shopping malls' (Personal Communication, 20th January, 2007). Bob goes on to suggest that there is potential for 'the external designs of malls to adopt a more integrated approach to the surrounding areas in which they sit', while at the same time maintaining that enclosed 'fantasyland' feel. A relatively new example of this is Westfield Riccarton's 'living-street' approach along Rotherham Street which integrates a traditional community street feel with the retail aspects of the mall (Figure 52). Hall (2007, p.23) notes that 'New Zealand and North America are on a parallel path', further suggesting that this is not a simple coincidence. 'Some of New

Zealand's major shopping centre owners are multinational enterprises with properties throughout Australia, North America, and Europe, and the developers are clearly watching global trends' (Hall, 2007, p.23).



Figure 52. Westfield Riccarton, Rotherham Street entrance (Source: Author).

Jo Duthie, Westfield Development Executive, however, believes that there are limitations to how far the use of development and design concepts can go. New Zealand shopping malls are 'always going to be restricted by market driven factors. In New Zealand, compared to America, you have a relatively limited depth. There are only so many retailers - there is only so much demand. There's no point in building a mall that's got the capacity to hold 500 shops tomorrow, because there's not 500 retailers that are willing to go into it. It's all relative to market size and market demand. I think that we will continually try and lift the bar in terms of design, deliverables . . . I think that people want to enjoy their shopping experience' (Westfield, Personal Communication, 24th July, 2007).

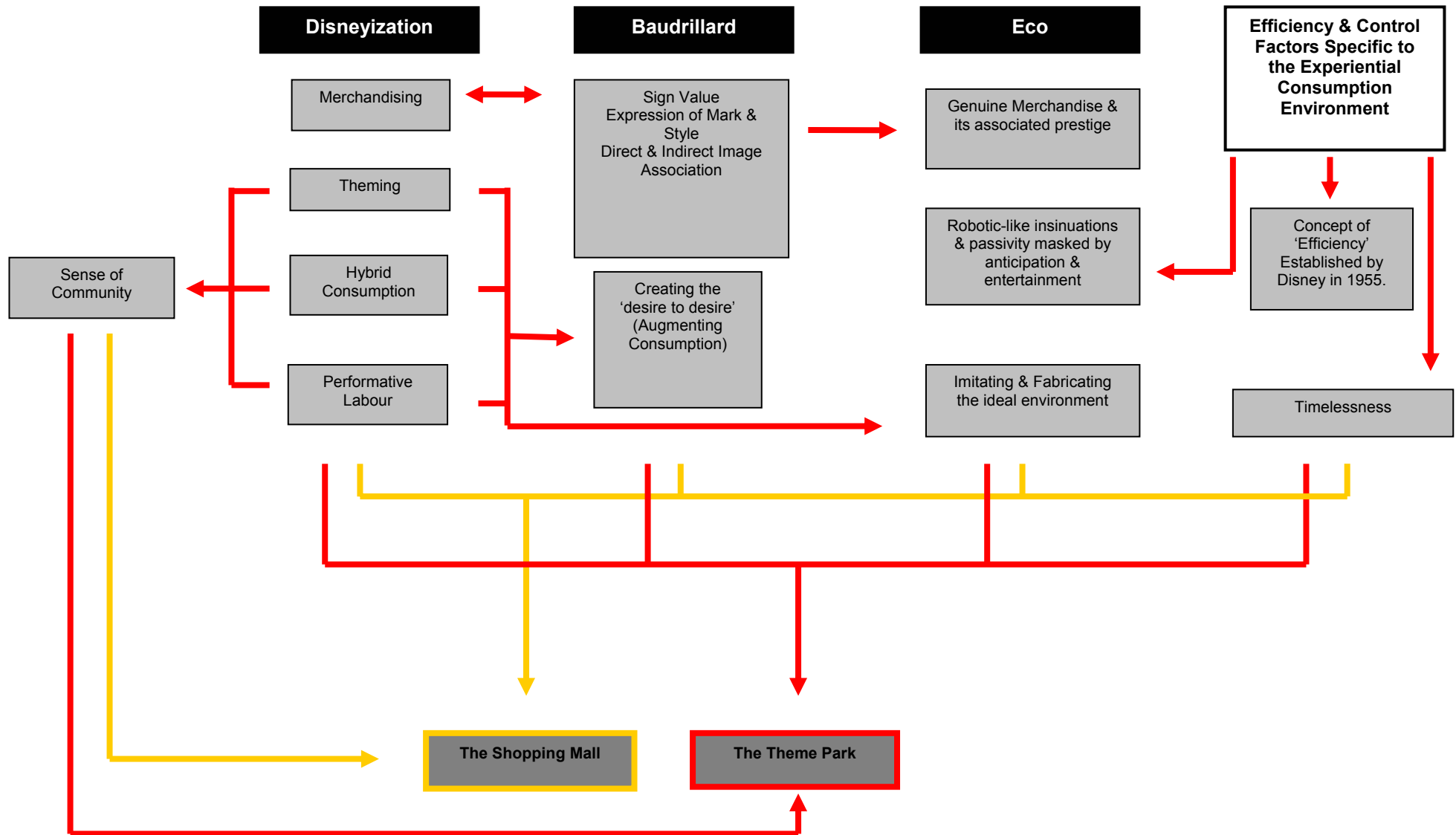


Figure 51. Summary of Comparison between the elements associated with Disneyization and their use within the New Zealand shopping mall (Source: Author).

Karen Jeffs, from Kiwi Income Property, however, claims that ‘design and feature wise – there’s not a level malls are going to reach and then stop. There’s increased expectations, especially with the kids of today. I think that has to keep going’ (Personal Communication, 10th August, 2007). In this respect New Zealand will continue to see the same evolving challenges in terms of retail provision our North American counterparts (Hall, 2007, p.10). New Zealand shopping malls may not necessarily get bigger, but design and feature wise, they may have to explore new and expanding territories. Those malls, where entertainment is not currently offered to aid sales, could follow the lead of Disneyland, where a successful blend of entertainment provision, and consumption opportunity, has resulted in the ‘sales of goods and food contributing greatly to the profitability of the parks’ (Bryman, 2004, p.64).

Future Research Areas

There are a number of potential future research areas which might stem from my work. especially in relation to a more extensive record of New Zealand shopping mall development.

- The collection of historical data for this thesis proved immensely difficult due to the general lack of archival literature and pictorial records published or locatable. In depth research and the collection of pictorial and textual information related to the historical development of retail environments within New Zealand would be very useful.
- Aside from the Janus Report, there appears to be minimal research conducted on the views, wants and needs of shoppers themselves. The ongoing collection of such data could not only be important from an historical sense – to record the changing views, wants and needs of New Zealand consumer society – but could also provide managers of consumption environments (experiential or otherwise) with a valuable tool to assess whether what they are providing meets the expectations of their customers.
- With regard to shopping mall/community interfaces, research could be conducted on the benefits of shopping malls liaising directly with Council Community Boards in order to better reflect the needs of the community. This

could be a win/win situation for all involved. Examples of this are already occurring in Christchurch between Northlands Shopping Centre and the local council, where plans are currently being negotiated for the development of a new community swimming pool adjacent to the existing shopping mall.

A vast range of experiential consumption environments, from the suburban shopping mall to the fully fledged theme-park, can be found around the globe – to both a lesser and greater scale than those discussed in this thesis. The draw of these experience-driven destinations are resulting in them, in many cases, becoming tourist attractions in their own right - and there is little evidence of them fading in popularity.

Construction is currently underway near the Al Ain highway in Dubai's desert on what could become the quintessential experiential consumption environment of the world, one which may display the elements of Disneyization better than its namesake. Once completed, Dubailand

will be the world's largest theme park, twice the size of Florida's Disney World. Scheduled to open between 2015 and 2018, it aims to be the centrepiece of Dubai's tourism infrastructure, attracting up to 200,000 visitors a day. . . It will include the world's largest shopping mall, the world's largest observation wheel, twenty nine square kilometers of themed worlds . . . and a snowdome . . . The Global Village is already completed with its replica Taj Mahal and Eiffel Tower (Hickman, 2007).

Disneyland has certainly made its mark on consumption, and at a more local level on the design principles and techniques utilized within the shopping malls of New Zealand. 'Theme-park attractions . . . [are] now commonplace in shopping malls - the two forms have converged. Malls now routinely entertain, while theme parks function as disguised market places' (Sorkin, 1992, p.16). The international influences taken on-board by shopping mall managers, combined with traditional New Zealand styles, have effectively resulted in the creation of New Zealand's own unique version of Fantasia, as hinted at by Frizzell in the illustration below (Figure 53).

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Figure 53. From Mickey to Tiki by Dick Frizzell
(Source: http://www.prints.co.nz/page/fine-art/PROD/40_Top_New_Zealand_Art_Prints/8217).

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