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Espresso-ing Consumption:
A social geography of Central Auckland's coffee & café culture.

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
for the degree of Master of Arts in Geography

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November 1998
ABSTRACT

Despite growing numbers of individuals purchasing coffee-oriented goods (beans, plungers, espresso machines, etc.) in an attempt to produce high quality coffee within the comforts of home, coffee consumption essentially remains a socio-spatial activity; we still “go out” for coffee, and coffee bars and cafés are the chosen sites for consumption. The consumption sites and practices associated with coffee have become a significant element in the contemporary Auckland landscape. Offering a variety of espresso-based beverages, cafés and coffee bars provide a sense of community, theatre, and a sensual experience. The thesis examines the construction of the café/coffee bar as a site of consumption and how it is perceived and used by its consumers. Findings are derived from survey work, a focus group, and participant observation. Evidence is presented of cafés operating as ‘third places’ in relation to work and home, with consumers frequenting establishments on a regular basis and finding a sense of community within.

Key words:
consumption, coffee, third place, sense of place.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis marks the end of five years of university overseas, and for this reason I feel I need to acknowledge many people who have helped me along the way.

I would, firstly, like to thank my supervisor, Robin Kearns. With your guidance and encouragement I was able to move forward and expand my geographical horizons (drinking lots of lattés along the way).

Two people, Gordon Winder & Alan Latham, have been especially helpful this year in the design of this thesis. I also wanted to thank Richard Le Heron & Larry Murphy for all their advice over the last few years. Thanks guys.

Thanks to Jan Kelly, Jonette Furridge, Brian Hurst, Brian Marshall, and Melanie Milicich. With your help the words and images on these pages have become meaningful. Thanks.

A sincere thanks to the five cafés which took part in this thesis, especially those who provided lots of caffeine during my many hours of 'observing'.

A number of feelings of personal acknowledgement also come to mind...

To my Mom and Dad, my mentors and friends. Thank you for your unconditional love and support through the ups and downs of the last 5 years. All I am and hope to be is because of you. (It's been a sprint!)

To Walter, for being the marshmallows in my mochaccino, and the best part of my overseas experience.

To Melissa, for all the years you have been my best friend (15 and counting), encouraging me to go out and do it. I love you.

To Vicki for being my dearest friend over the past few years. I will miss you.

To Julian, Mark, Charmaine, Jo, Claire and Donna for being my best buds in New Zealand.

To Brian and Dianne Gurr, for making me feel a part of your family when my own was so very far away.

Andrew Gurr for helping organise the paper and focus group. Thanks heaps!

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my grandmothers, Ella Marie Todd Figart & Anna Olava Evanstad Liberty.

This is for you.
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