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**'BEEN THERE - DONE THAT'**

**IDENTITY AND THE OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE OF  
YOUNG PAKEHA NEW ZEALANDERS**

**A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
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**Kristina Lynn JAMIESON**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Tourism has become, in recent decades, a pertinent, though contentious area of social scientific inquiry. Anthropological and sociological studies have tended to favour an impact analysis approach, choosing 'Third World' 'host' communities as research sites. This study asserts that tourism research must also consider *tourists*. It calls for analysis of tourists' practices from the perspectives of tourists. Specifically, it suggests that in examining tourists' practices, researchers must consider the socio-cultural and historical contexts from which these practices are constructed.

The particular tourist practice with which this thesis is concerned is the Overseas Experience of young Pakeha New Zealanders. Interviews with a research cohort of twenty participants who undertook an Overseas Experience during the time from the late 1950s to the mid-1990s form the primary data. Interpretive analysis has been based on situating this data in the context of the literature of the anthropology and sociology of tourism, pilgrimage and ritual.

The thesis explores issues associated with identity and establishes in what sense Overseas Experience participants can be conceived of as 'tourists'. Rejecting approaches which attempt to define tourists and their practices according to type, this study favours the application of rite of passage in understanding the meaning of an Overseas Experience for Pakeha New Zealanders. Rite of passage lends a processual approach, which when complemented by an emic perspective, allows for a more holistic analysis of this tourist practice.

Drawing on the specificities of each participant's Overseas Experience has enabled a detailed examination of what I have termed the 'liminoid' episodes of this tourist practice. While the participants recalled that they had 'out of the ordinary' experiences as part of their Overseas Experiences, the study concludes that an Overseas Experience for Pakeha New Zealanders is strongly connected to concerns associated with the home context. Tourists' practices are shaped by perceptions about personal, cultural and national identity.

**KEYWORDS:** IDENTITY; OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE; PILGRIMAGE;  
RITE OF PASSAGE; TOURISM; TOURIST; TOURIST  
PRACTICES; TRAVELLER; TRAVEL.

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	3
<b>ISM -</b>	
<b>PRAISAL OF THE SOCIO-CULTURAL PHENOMENON</b>	
<b>REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH FOCUS</b>	
Introduction.....	3
A Tour of the Field of Tourism .....	3
An Overseas Experience as an Episode of Tourism - A Review of the Relevant Literature .....	15
Concluding Comments .....	26
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	27
<b>METHODOLOGY AND INTRODUCTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS</b>	
Methodology and Research Focus.....	27
Introducing the Research Participants in Relation to a New Zealand Historical Context.....	31
The 1950s and Early 1960s in New Zealand - a Synopsis.....	31
The Mid-1960s to the Mid-1970s in New Zealand - a Synopsis.....	35
The Mid-1970s to the Mid-1980s in New Zealand - a Synopsis.....	40
The Mid-1980s to the Mid-1990s in New Zealand - a Synopsis.....	46
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	57
<b>'OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE' PARTICIPANT:</b>	
<b>DIFFERENT TYPE OF 'TOURIST'</b>	
Introduction.....	57
Overseas Experience Participants Identify Themselves .....	57
Traveller or Tourist? .....	67
Concluding Comments .....	74

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<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b> .....	75
<b>'OUT THERE': PARTICIPANT ACCOUNTS OF THEIR OVERSEAS EXPERIENCES</b>	
Introduction.....	75
Freedom from Social Commitments and Perceived Restraints Associated with the Home Context .....	76
Adventures Involving (Often Physical and Sometimes Life- Threatening) Risk .....	82
Perceptions of Excitement and Fascination Through New (Often 'Once in a Lifetime') Experiences.....	98
Temporary Financial Hardship .....	105
'Work for Travel' - Casualised Employment Undertaken as Part of an Overseas Experience.....	115
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b> .....	136
<b>OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE AS RITE OF PASSAGE</b>	
Introduction.....	136
Applying Rite of Passage to the Context of Tourism .....	137
Concluding Comments .....	158
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	160
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	164