

Passion, Power and Politics in a Palestinian Tourist Market  
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Sex tourism has become a central icon in a liberal Western discourse condemning the tourism industry. In this discourse sex tourism is figured as a machinery of desire constructed and programmed in the 'first world' to sate the jaded appetites of the rich and powerful with the lives and labours of socially and economically disadvantaged 'third world' victims. The category of sex tourism, which assimilates phenomena ranging from southeast Asian brothels run for foreign men by international crime cartels with the covert support of national governments (see Hall 1992 and Truong 1990) to the "sugar mummie" phenomenon wherein older woman tourists travel to tourist centres in order to enjoy sexual encounters with local youths<sup>1</sup>, is well suited to represent the exploitative character of much of the tourism trade between the developed and less developed countries insofar as it foregrounds the destructive playing out of empowered's irresponsible desires on the bodies of those immobilized by poverty and lack of alternative opportunities. Critiques of sex tourism thus condemn not only the sexual exploitation they analyze but also the structure of international tourism which, as a form of neo-imperialism (Nash 1977), 'mines' the host society for commodities to be enjoyed by first world tourists with a blithe disregard for the effect of extraction on the social and economic fabric of the tourist-receiving culture.

The metonym is appropriate; the various forms of sex tourism do in fact make corporeally manifest the gross inequities of power upon which the entire dynamics of both contemporary international tourism and the current world market depend (Ong 1985). However, the simple, if compelling, opposition of oppressor and victim in a relationship which looks more like rape than intercourse partakes of a dualism which shares more with the discourse of colonisation than it does with one of liberation. To see the object of the tourist's desire as a passive entity subjected to the overpowering will of another is to reproduce in representation precisely the structure of domination one claims to criticise. By presenting the 'host' as a victim to whom the 'guest' does things, one perpetuates the modernist assumption that non-Western peoples are objects upon which western projects are inscribed, and consequently suggests that the only way they will be rescued from the dire situations in which tourist projects place them will be through the promulgation in the west of more enlightened tourist attitudes and activities.

'Green' tourism manifests this 'orientalist' attitude in its assumption that we can make things better for the host societies not by entering into discussion with local communities about what they want from tourism but by unilaterally redefining the character, and the goals, of the tourism we feel we 'should' practise in and on those communities. 'Green' tourism, which strives to allow host cultures to retain their 'authenticity' by intruding as little as possible on the infrastructure of the societies, has in fact generated complaints in the host societies about the fact that this more enlightened tourism deprives people of work and of the capital generated by their participation in more 'exploitative' forms of tourism. Third world peoples may not want to be allowed to remain 'noble savages'. Valene Smith, in a study of touristisation on the small Philippines island of Boracay, points out that

the people of Boracay, like all rural Filipinos, would enjoy having the infra-structure

that is needed to support tourism, because it would make their lives easier, pleasanter and safer. And they certainly *want* the income generated by tourism, in the form of cash with which to buy goods and services including better education for their children. They appreciate the employment that is enabling their young people to stay on the island, or to return home to Boracay from the squalor of big cities, and be with their families. In the eyes of most villagers, tourism has been very positive - and the sins of the 'drifter' tourists can be temporarily overlooked in the face of their largesse (Smith 1988 cited in Harrison 1992: 11).

Spokespersons for 'moral' tourism, which protects these people - against their will - from the 'sins' of touristic largesse, pay as little attention to local peoples' definitions of their needs and desires as did the apologists of earlier forms of touristic practise who assumed, without inquiring into local perceptions, that everyone wanted the 'passport to development' that large-scale touristic development was believed to provide (see de Kadt 1979). Thus the obverse of the modernist assumption that it is legitimate and desirable for the 'developed' world to transform the 'underdeveloped' world into an image of itself is the belief that development is illegitimate and undesirable and that third world peoples will be much happier if we can take what we want from their environments without implicating them in the business. In both instances the political issue, which pertains to the perceptions of and relations between the parties of a collusion or confrontation, is subordinated to and effectively rendered extraneous by the moral issue, which concerns the way our practices coincide with or contradict our images of ourselves. The 'others' in each case exist only as mirrors which return our own self imagings to us.

I am not here taking a partisan role towards either touristic development or underdevelopment, but am pointing out that there is a substantial flaw in the models we use to analyze tourism and its impact on non-Western cultures. Our perspectives on host societies are, I argue, informed by a basic narcissism which prevents us from examining the responses of their populations to our various interventions; we ceaselessly scrutinize our own moral *cum* aesthetic categories without attempting to open a dialogue between our modes of evaluation and those of the people with whom tourism brings us into contact. The history of the concept of 'authenticity' in tourism studies, summarized by Selwyn in his introduction to this volume, seems precisely to illustrate the shortcomings of our analytical chauvinism insofar as the telling criteria in debates on authenticity is not whether the cultures concerned see their practices and possessions as 'belonging to themselves' but whether those cultural manifestations confirm or conflict with our images of what those cultures and their constructions should be.

Social and cultural anthropologies, which claim to examine other cultural systems from 'within' and subsequently to translate those world views into terms which render indigenous interpretations comprehensible to the 'outside' without effacing their alterity, should generate anthropologies of tourism which allow students to 'see' what tourism and its effects look like to the people who host and accommodate it. Nonetheless, perhaps because anthropologists are discomfited by an approach to other cultures which is a bit too close to their own, there has been a tendency to draw analytic categories for the study of tourism from sociology, and these 'empirical' devices are deeply implicated in the same modernist faith in the universalism of our particular cultural categories which I have criticised above (see Crick 1985; Crick 1988; and Peacock 1986). The alternative is to delve much more deeply into what members of host communities have to say about tourism and how it affects

their worlds. As Crick saliently points out

Without close attention to the local voice (indeed, we must be careful here, local *voices*, for tourism produces a range of very different local reactions), our social scientific work risks being descriptively poor and ethnocentric.... We need to know the local perceptions and understandings of tourism, we need to know the local perceptions of change and continuity, and we need to recognize that any culture is likely to have contradictory things to say about both. If international tourism is about *our* culture rather than the destination country (Thurot and Thurot 1983), an anthropological approach to international tourism that cannot accord a crucial status to the full range of local voices risks putting itself in the same position (Crick 1988: 68).

If we attend to these local voices we find that the members of host societies are involved in their own politics of accommodation with or resistance to the development of international tourism; they interpret the consequences of touristic development in 'their own' terms (terms which themselves are likely to already reflect previous acts of accommodation and resistance to other forms of Western incursion) and they act according to those interpretations (Scott 1990). Such actions may prove ineffectual or even counter-productive since, as I suggested in my opening, the power of the developed nations far outweighs that of the developing or undeveloped countries. Nonetheless, if we do not consider what local peoples think of what is being done to them and what strategies they devise to resist such encroachments or render them bearable, we will continue to see them as mere objects of our aggression or beneficence and thus remain committed to forms of cultural imperialism which force our wills, and our images, on peoples who want to create their own lives in accordance with identities they chose for themselves.

Erik Cohen's writing on sex tourism provides exemplars of how one can acknowledge that persons caught in difficult and demeaning situations are victims of forces beyond their control without simultaneously denying them the right to struggle according to their own strategies to accommodate themselves to or overcome those forces. In "Lovelong Farangs: the correspondence between foreign men and Thai girls" (Cohen 1986), Cohen examines the postal dialogue which takes place between Thai prostitutes and men who have returned to their home countries after extended relationships with the women. He discusses the dependency which expresses itself in the mix of sexual fantasy and romantic longing in the men's letters, and contrasts this to the opportunism which informs the pleas for money and duplicitous vows of fidelity the women return. Cohen, against the grain, concludes that Asex-tourism may indeed engender the sexual exploitation of local women on the macro-social level; but on the micro-level of interpersonal relationships, the state of affairs may often be inverted - the local women actually exploiting the foreigners@ (Cohen 1986: 124).

This simultaneity of weakness on the 'macro-social level' and power on the 'micro-level' is mirrored in his study of the way short term Palestinian labourers in Acre in Israel talk about their relationships (actual or invented) with foreign tourist women (Cohen 1971). Although the paper in large part emphasises the investment of Palestinian youths in unrealistic fantasies of escaping from the miseries of their marginal lives through marrying tourist women and emigrating from Israel, it also points out that such shared fantasies about affairs with tourist women creates an arena in which a struggle for status can successfully be played out between men whose marginal position in the wider Israeli society allows them little access to any other status. In exchanging stories of sexual conquests, in parading a

succession of foreign 'lovers' in front of other Palestinians who consider such capital prestigious, and in flaunting foreign addresses and perfume-scented letters from Canada and Scandinavia, young men with no future and little in the way of a present are able to show themselves as more successful than their peers who, like them, have no access to any other forms of success or status. Thus whereas in the global context these men can be seen as manipulated by comparatively well-off tourists who use them as the raw material of 'holiday romances', in the local context within which the men live they show themselves able to salvage 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu 1977: 171-183) from the affairs which they invest in circuits of exchange they see as satisfying and empowering. In "Arab Boys and Tourist Girls in a Mixed Jewish Arab Community", as in his study of tourist-prostitute correspondence, Cohen is less concerned with quantifiable positivist data than he is with texts - stories, letters, comments - in which he can read the way members of the host community interpret the contacts they have with tourists and with the tourism machinery which generates those contacts. Through focussing on discourse Cohen is able to demonstrate that power not only devolves from 'the top' or 'centre' but that it also rises up from 'beneath' in acts of 'deviant' interpretation which shift the parameters of evaluation so as to render the weak as strong and the strong as weak.

In the following essay, a study of narratives told of sex with foreign women by Palestinian men in a Jerusalem tourist market, I intend to engage the issue of power in a more explicit way than does Cohen. This is in part because of a choice to foreground issues of domination and submission which are only implicit in Cohen's work, but more signally because merchants in tourist markets compete fiercely with each other to attract and sell to tourists in whose largely arbitrary decisions rest the success or failure of the merchants' personal and financial investments. Their relative powerlessness in the face of the vacillating demands of groups of foreigners endowed with economic and social superiority was counterbalanced, in the particular setting of the Jerusalem *sūq* (market), by the development of an aggressive sexuality focussed on the women of the tourist populations. Sex with tourists in Jerusalem was not a means of escaping or fantasizing escape to another world but was, more complexly, a means of imagining and acting out a power that, in objective terms, the merchants did not have. The tourist merchants' obsessive interest in having sex with, and in stories of having sex with, foreign women served a dual purpose: it provided merchants with a field in which to play out scenarios of vengeance against foreigners who, in their eyes, oppressed them both economically and socially while at the same time constructing an arena in which the merchants, all of whom were similarly at the mercy of economic demands over which they had no real control, could compete for the status of being one of those few able to master the masters. It is this motive of mastering or, to phrase it differently, of overpowering which marks the significant difference between the ways the lumpenproletariat of Acre and the petite-bourgeoisie of Jerusalem conceived of sexual relations with foreign women. While the 'Arab boys' observed by Cohen dreamed that their foreign girlfriends would save them from the lives they were living and transport them to fairer shores, the Palestinians with whom I spent two years expected nothing from tourists but a contest for cash and conquest. Encounters were brief and in many ways brutal, and all that was desired from tourists was money and the material for narratives of sexual conquest to reinvest in a closed world of selling and seduction from which the merchants had no intention of escaping. Furthermore, the situation of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories when I did my fieldwork (just prior to the outbreak of the *intifada* [the Palestinian Uprising])

was different from that of 'Arabs' in Israel proper just after the disastrous defeat of the 1967 war. Whereas Palestinian Acre in the late sixties was marked by a quiescent despair, the Old City of Jerusalem in the mid-eighties hummed with debates on the ways Palestinians could rise up and overthrow Israeli dominion. As I will show in the closing pages of this paper, such debates could not but influence the ways tourist merchants interpreted their relations with outsiders they came to see as implicated in the political oppression they suffered.

Jerusalem, despite the sordidness of some of the scenarios I will recount below and the political struggle which simmered beneath its glittering surface, is the focus of Christian Holy Land pilgrimage and is dense with the shrines and holy places which make Jerusalem sacred to Christians throughout the world. Before the outbreak of the *intifada* a bright halo of religious and secular souvenir shops (many now abandoned) owned and staffed by Palestinians bore testimony both to the attraction to foreigners of shrines like the 'Holy Sepulchre', the 'Lithostratus' and the 'Stations' of the Via Dolorosa and to the assumptions of local peoples that such attraction should generate substantial economic benefits for those who knew how to exploit it. In the vicinity of the holy places and along the crowded streets which connect them lay scores of shops - some only the size of a small sitting room and others nearly that of a typical British corner grocery store - filled with items arranged to catch the eyes of passing pilgrims and tourists. From the street each of these would appear as a single door, always open when the metal security shutters were unlocked, flanked by display windows. Inside the windows, and often suspended as well from boards and wires above the doors and outside the windows, would be dozens of often dusty articles for the tourist trade - pieces of what appeared to be local jewelry (much of it made in Taiwan), swathes of embroidered cloth, small brightly coloured cotton throw rugs, candles with transfers of Jesus or Mary stuck on them, reproduction icons, olive wood carvings of holy figures (both Judaic and Christian), T-shirts emblazoned with 'Israel is Real' or 'Israel We Love You', small metal castings of the word 'Shalom' and so forth. In case the baubles on display were not adequate to catch the attentions of passing tourists, or simply because there was nothing else to do, a Palestinian youth, between the ages of 14 and 35, would either stand in the doorway watching the tourists go by or sit within smoking a *nargilah* (water pipe), talking with friends, or telling beads while attentively watching to see whether a tourist passing by might be lured in. Within the shop, and depending on the space allowed by the shop, the visitor would find at least one sofa and one chair, a small table, a mirror, and a tape deck playing anything from Michael Jackson to Um-Khalsum. These furnishings would typically be surrounded by trappings (hung cloth, incense sticks, brass coffee pots, etc.) designed to provide an air of the Orient. There would as well almost inevitably be a private space, usually another room behind the first with its entrance hidden by hanging cloths, sometimes even an attic or loft reached by climbing up a spindly ladder and through a trap door, or, in the case of the smaller and poorer shops, the shop interior itself sealed off from the street by closing the iron shutters at opportune moments. Whatever form the hidden room took, there would always be within a place where one - or two - could lie down.

Sitting in the back of these shops with men who in the course of time became my friends I would, time and time again, watch tourists, alone or in small groups, guardedly enter to look at the items displayed. These tourists, themselves informed by an attitude promulgated by their Israeli guides and by Ministry of Tourism handouts (see Bowman 1992), would studiously ignore the welcome offered them by the merchants, handle the goods, and discuss them in hushed voices with their companions, should they be

accompanied, before breaking silence to ask the price. The shopkeepers would then testify at length to the fine quality of the merchandise and to its superiority over identical items being sold in all the other shops up and down the street before offering an often inflated price. In most instances the tourists would put the item down and walk out or laugh and offer anything between one tenth and one quarter of the price asked. Sales were - occasionally - made, but usually negotiations ended with the tourists walking out and the shopkeepers muttering 'fucking tourists'.

This drama was, for the most part, scripted by the nature of the tourist market. The shops of the traditional sūq, although retreating steadily in the face of rapidly escalating municipal taxes and the expanding tourist market, still sold food, clothing and household items to a local clientele. This local market, like the Sefrou sūq described by Clifford Geertz (Geertz 1979), was made up of a multitude of shops, each of which, while selling commodities similar to those of the surrounding shops, depended on a fixed clientele tied to the shop by habit and reputation. Established networks linking particular shops with particular customers guaranteed merchants a number of clients who would - as long as the goods remained adequate and reputations untarnished - come to them rather than going to the shops of their neighbours. The merchants of the tourist market, on the other hand, strove to sell nearly identical items - mementoes with little if any use value - to a transient population which was only vaguely desirous of souvenirs. The merchants neither sold the sorts of goods which ensured demand, provided the sort of specialisation which made one shop different from the next, nor could depend on a flow of established customers (although the struggle to 'corner' a tourist guide and his clientele was constant as was the effort to get 'good' customers to refer friends from abroad). In consequence, the tourist sūq, unlike the traditional market, was fully, often cut-throatedly, competitive and was, to a rather brutal degree, a buyer's market.

The only thing ensuring a merchant's survival in a market where shops opened and closed down with dizzying speed was style in selling (Khuri 1968). The nature of competition in the largely undifferentiated market determined that appearance was all and that economic and personal success depended on the merchant's success in selling himself to usually indifferent if not openly hostile customers. Street merchants prided themselves on chameleon-like qualities, being able to shift languages, religions, politics and even their national identities to suit what they perceived to be the tastes of potential customers. Most of the merchants whose businesses had survived for more than a year or two were capable of speaking five to six languages with a surprising proficiency. Muslim merchants could be good Christians for Christian tourists and pilgrims, and many Muslims and Christians played at being Jews for foreigners delighted with the success of the state of Israel. Often shopkeepers would listen carefully to the conversations of tourists in the shops or on the streets in order to judge their political inclinations. Having evaluated the terrain, the dealers would then present themselves as Zionists, Palestinian victims of the establishment of the Israeli state, and even Cypriot nationalists in exile. Others, like the Ibrahims turned 'Avis' or the Dauouds become 'Davids', would deny being Palestinian and claim to be Israeli if they thought their customers might not like Arabs. More subtly, there were constant shifts in styles of solicitation manifest not only in what clothing was worn in what manner but also in the degree of deference, aggressiveness or seductiveness in approach which was chosen to draw a customer to oneself and away from others.

With so many merchants so adept at forming their selves to fit the whims of their

elusive customers, the tourists' choice of where to buy was largely arbitrary. When people find themselves wanting nothing in particular in a place where dozens of persons are desperate to sell identical nothings, the reasons they chose to buy or not to buy from one person or another are largely contingent. This essential arbitrariness is not comfortably embraced by the dealer who depends on sales to make a living. Consequently, in Palestinian tourist markets as in, I suspect, any saturated tourist market, there develops a conception of a near-magical 'method' of mercantile efficacy which can, it is believed, counter the structural inefficacy of the merchants' efforts. When merchants were not engaged in discussing their own and others' sexual exploits, they were often redesigning their shop displays, debating why particular merchants were bad salesmen and why others were successful, and evaluating the positive and negative points of their own encounters with tourist purchasers. One consequence of this continuous struggle to discover the 'method' of drawing tourists was that any innovation in the market that seemed temporarily successful was immediately copied by the other merchants so that the edge an innovator might gain was lost as soon as it became apparent to his neighbours. Thus the chimera of market power proved as elusive as its pursuit was passionate.

The shopkeepers in the Jerusalem tourist market depended for the survival of their businesses and the esteem of their neighbours on precisely that which the market, because of its structure of supply and demand, could not provide, namely prolific custom. The inherent weakness of the merchants' situation was not, however, interpreted in terms of the economic structure of the market but instead, as one would expect of the petite-bourgeoisie, in personal terms. Each merchant saw his difficulties in appropriating a sufficient share of the market as, first of all, a consequence of his inability to overcome the reticence of tourists about buying in his shop and, secondly, the result of unfair trade practices - lying, underselling, depreciation - by his neighbours. It was consequently believed that if the merchant were better able to attract tourists and vanquish their hesitancy he would not only succeed in making a decent living but also, through mastering a substantial share of the market, succeed in defeating the machinations of his competitors and gaining their respect. It is not surprising, when one considers the difficulties the nature of the market throws in the way of the successful sales on which economic survival depended, that the Palestinian merchants' conceptions of themselves and their powers were very closely tied to their abilities to seduce customers into their shops and tourist moneys into their tills. It is also not surprising that a tremendous amount of resentment was felt towards those persons, the tourists, who somehow always seemed to succeed in resisting and rejecting these efforts at economic seduction.

Considering the way these men passed their daylight hours and made their livings, it is not unexpected to find that in the nights they continued to play at attraction and seduction with tourists. In the early months of my fieldwork I was struck by the fact that men who spent their days muttering 'fucking tourists' at customers who failed to buy would spend their evenings obsessively absorbed in either talk of, or the actual game of, 'fucking' tourists. Those men able to arrange liaisons with tourist women during daylight hours would spend their evenings buying them dinners and drinks in a sustained effort to take them to bed. Others would gather in the bars of the many cheap hostels of the Old City staring at the women who came in, attempting to talk with them, and speculating about having sex with them. The owner of a local hostel cum bar told me that he did not make money from providing rooms to the men and women tourists who passed through but from selling drinks

to the crowds of young local men drawn by the presence of foreign women lodgers to hang about for hours drinking, watching and waiting in the basement bar.

This time and effort, much of it wasted but some rewarded, was relived, embellished and transformed through the long dull hours spent on the following day or days waiting in the shops for customers. When I was with my friends in their shops and there were no customers to be seduced, conversation turned to which men had had sex with which tourist women and which had strived but failed. For the most part, the successful seducers in these tales were the tales' tellers or their close friends, and stories which featured successful seducers who were not close to the teller inevitably told of how the woman who had been seduced was 'easy' and had already slept with several other men. Clearly, status investment in these stories was quite high and, as one might suspect from constantly hearing of the successes of self and friends and the failures or easy wins of persons more distant, the veracity was correspondingly low.

To a large degree, the value of the sexual act was in its telling, since that could be circulated amongst peers, and not in its enactment, since that - when it did occur - was shared only between the self and a stranger. As in the many places where male sexual fantasizing serves to compensate for felt insecurities or impotencies in sexual and other domains, the woman in the narrative was a set piece, and her imagined investment in the scenario was itself a construction designed to further the enhancement of the teller's status. The act (or imagined act) of intercourse was performed and narrated by males for males. I found it difficult, while in Jerusalem, to inquire into the motives of those tourist women who went out with, and sometimes had sex with, the Palestinian merchants; to them I was, I suspect, just another male predator on the street. Women with whom I have subsequently spoken off tourist ground have told me that in situations like those which arise in Greece (Zinovieff 1991), Israel/ Palestine, and other heavily touristed nations the woman traveller finds herself so intensely harassed by local men that she may, for relief, take up with one of them simply to get the others to leave her alone.

Such a rationale did not, however, find place in the stories I heard narrated by the men. Those stories were structured to celebrate the power of individual merchants over women, and, through that overpowering, over other men, and in consequence their narrative strategies would disallow statements which exposed the successful seducer as a man fairly arbitrarily chosen from amongst an undifferentiated mob of would-be seducers. The situation rendered in the women's interpretations would come all too close to mirroring and thus reasserting the contingency of the market situation which the male tales deny; it would expose behind the compensatory tale of seduction the same structure of arbitrariness which causes the tourist to buy an item from one shop rather than another.

Remaining within the domain of male tales, one finds that the graphic detail of these stories of sexual encounters does more than give an air of authenticity to the narratives. A close examination of a typical story of tourist sex reveals a complicated terrain of resentment, power, anger and, somewhat surprisingly, failure. I'd like, in what follows, to retell a tale told me by Salim<sup>2</sup>, a young man in his late teens, about his encounter with an older foreign woman. Salim's narrative is only exceptional in its rehearsal of so many of the themes informing the many tales of sex with tourism. In the commentary which follows I will attempt to relate Salim's tale not only to the stories of others but as well to a shared perception of the world which those stories articulate.

Salim told me one morning that the previous day a woman, alone, had walked into

his shop to look at bedouin dresses he was selling. He described her as 'a motherfucker' and 'a real bitch' who was rich and beautiful and who looked 22 despite being 31. The woman was a New Yorker, elegantly dressed and married to an older man who was "foolish enough" to leave her to wander alone in the market. Salim 'courted' her successfully, keeping her in the shop for a couple of hours, giving her cups of kawa (Turkish coffee) and chi (mint tea), telling in his faintly accented but quite fluent English of his [imaginary] years in America, his disdain for the other men in the market, the exotic provenance and antique excellence of his bedouin dresses. The consequence, reiterated several times as the story grew more tawdry, was that she bought from him for \$400 a dress he claimed was worth no more than \$200 which she thought was a great bargain because she had managed to talk him down from \$450.

Having succeeded in the significant financial seduction Salim proceeded to "ice the cake" by asking the woman to meet him later in the evening so that he could show her the city. She was, according to Salim, as adamant in her refusals as she was clearly drawn by his charm and his virility. When she left his shop Salim told her "I will be in the lobby of the King David hotel at 10 p.m. and I hope I will see you there". Salim went on to tell of arriving at 10:20 and of finding the woman waiting there, dressed exquisitely and looking very anxious at the possibility that her date might not show. Salim, aware that he had already "won", asked her to accompany him to a friend's house. She refused, and yet it was quite clear that she was incapable of really refusing; in spite of her wealth, her nationality and her often mentioned (by Salim) husband asleep upstairs in their \$120 a night hotel room, she could not resist his seductiveness. The upshot was that Salim took her from the King David's opulence to "a dirty little room" where "he fucked her till 5 a.m.". She, allegedly, was ecstatic about both the size of his "Palestinian cock" and his technique, and was carried to heights of sexual fulfillment. He, on the other hand, was dropped into disgust and depression by the whole experience. Looking down on her, supposedly flushed by orgasm, he told her she was "just a slut" and that he was sure "she fucked with everyone in all the countries she'd been in". She was, he said, deeply offended but he claimed that saying this "made him feel good afterwards". The story closed with a retelling of Salim's success not only at 'fucking' this woman but also at overcharging her on the dress he sold her; he said "I figure I got a good deal with the profit and the fuck thrown in". Interestingly the story was closed by Salim's telling of his sorrow that a Palestinian woman whom he'd long loved was marrying another man because Salim wouldn't marry her. Salim claimed he couldn't marry his true love "because the involvement would be too great"<sup>3</sup>. Nonetheless he swore that if he did marry "a Palestinian virgin" he'd be faithful to her and "would go out on the street, take out [his] cock, and piss on all the foreign women, even if one of them was the Queen of Sheba".

Several themes arise in succession in Salim's story. The first, and most embellished, is that of the helplessness of the woman in the face of Salim's charm, despite her possession of all that western society could give - freedom, beauty, cosmopolitanism and a rich husband. In the early parts of the story the seduction is a strictly 'hands off' affair which operates through Salim's success at marketing both his goods and his self. Sexual violence was strongly frowned upon in the market and two young boys who, in another circumstance, took liberties which had not been offered (touching the breasts of two Finnish women for whom they had bought drinks despite the women's protests) were shamed up and down the street by being told that "men don't take what is not given". In Salim's story the course of the in-shop seduction is lovingly told over - the details of conversation, Salim's small gifts of fifty

cent earrings and cups of tea and coffee, the displaying of his own goods and the denigration of those of others - to suggest that the woman, despite her multitudinous advantages, walked into a situation she could not handle. In Salim's narrative, as in so many others', she who is seen as representative of the empowered, when forced to deal with the weak face-to-face, one-on-one, is incapable of defending either her economic or her bodily integrity. The narrative logic of these tales reveals that after one strips away the structural inequalities built into the relation of tourist and tourist merchant by economic inequality and the hostility of the Israeli-run tourist industry, the merchant is exposed as inherently more powerful. The woman's helplessness before Salim and her willingness to leave the opulence of the King David hotel and the security provided by her wealthy husband stand as testimony to his power over and superiority to the personal representatives of the impersonal forces which would destroy him.

The compounding of the economic and the sexual in the woman's surrender serves to prove Salim's power in both valued domains of the world of the street merchant. The fact that these two motifs - of selling and of seducing - are interwoven with such complexity in the story suggests that it is the act of overcoming which is significant rather than that of making profit or enjoying the sex. That it is power in general rather than financial or sexual power which is being discussed is revealed by the fact that throughout the story the woman's imagined power, both in getting a good deal and in controlling her body and her will, is shown to be sham. Another shopkeeper told me that when he seduces tourist women the "game is over when she takes off her underpants"; from that moment on he loses interest and feels disgust. I found myself several times in situations where merchants who had made it clear to me that they had had sex with women who were still in the neighbourhood offered me the women (in their absence or in Arabic) as though, having 'had' them, they were theirs to pass on. The women became tokens testifying to the sexual capital accumulated by the merchants, and by offering these foreign women to me they were suggesting that I, though empowered like the women by my origins, was poorer than they in the personal powers that mattered.

This story, like dozens of other similar stories, was then about the potency of the individual in a situation where impotence was structured into the social situation by political and economic forces. Its theme of seduction reveals how these individuals imagined themselves able to manipulate a world which appeared designed to suppress or destroy them. Salim's power is doubly asserted in his story in that his ability to take the woman's money in a sale reinforces and is reinforced by his ability to take her body in a scenario which reverses their structural positions. In the 'dirty little room' she sheds all her powers - her freedom of will and mobility, her wealthy husband, her luxurious locale and her elegant clothing - in exchange for five hours of intercourse with a man who, despite having none of her privileges, treats her with disdain. The fact that a significant player in the story, the husband, is absent in body but constantly present in reference, suggests that, as in all the most satisfying stories of sex with tourists, the victory over the woman is at the same time a victory over the man whose identity, and whose power, is seen as being tied up with her. Just as offering me their sexual hand-me-downs and claiming that the "easiest" women were British asserted the merchants' superiority over me as a foreigner, so too did 'taking' the woman of a foreign man. Juliette Minces, in *The House of Obedience*, writes of "a well known phenomenon, the desire of the colonially dominated to revenge himself upon the woman of the dominator" (Minces 1982: 38) and in these stories, where the sexual act is

described in the terminology of violence, we see a symbolic displacement of a struggle that the dominated cannot, in fact, win. The men, like the women, can be taken on; another form of narrative favoured by Jerusalem merchants tells of fights with foreign men which, despite the odds against the Palestinians, the Palestinians always win. What cannot be taken on is the imbalance of power that sets up these oppositions in the first place.

Sexual tales relate how the structurally 'fucked' become the 'fuckers'; they tell, in other words, of the way a group of persons 'feminized' (Brandes 1980: 206 and Herzfeld 1985: passim) by their economic and political positions are able, through sexually dominating the women of the dominators, to retake a 'masculine' position both in relation to the women and, through a triangular struggle in which they prove more masculine than the women's men, in relation to those men as well<sup>4</sup>. Thus in a domain which I can only refer to as mythological, the slaves become the masters of those who, in the real world, appeared in positions of dominance.

Interestingly, while foreign women played such central roles in the scenarios of these narratives, the treatment of Israeli women was more complex. I cannot recall hearing a merchant tell of seducing an Israeli who'd come to buy in the market, although more than half of the tourist market's trade was with Israeli domestic tourists or with Israeli Jerusalemites who would stroll through the market on the Sabbath when West Jerusalem was closed. When I asked about this absence of tales about seducing Israelis I was told that Israeli women "didn't count" because seducing them took neither skill nor effort. Clearly implicit in such statements - solicited by and directed towards a foreigner rather than by and to another merchant - is the assertion of the sexual superiority of Palestinian men over their Israeli rivals. Another story, which I heard several times in different shops, suggests another, perhaps more substantial, reason for the street merchants' hesitancy at attempting to accrue status by narrating tales of sexual success over Israeli women. This told of an Israeli woman who frequently came to the Old City on Saturdays to wander through the shops looking for goods which attracted her. She consistently brushed aside the flashy rubbish and well-crafted imitations offered her and inevitably discovered the best items that the shops held. Having found these she would signal to the merchant (she was always represented as refusing to speak Arabic and speaking only in Hebrew or with gestures) that she would have sex with him in exchange for the goods. In the stories the merchants always succumbed to the 'seduction' despite their knowledge that they were being 'had'. She always, after passionless sex, would wordlessly stand up and walk out of the shop with the merchants' most cherished articles. The tale suggests that Israeli power was too imminent to be denied even in a displacing language of sexual politics. The Israeli woman was able, without even compromising so far as to use the language of the merchants, to outseduce the seducers. In the domain of sexual re-presentations of economic and political power it is she who played the successful businessperson and the merchants who were analagous to the tourists in losing both their valuables and their bodily integrity. The way that more typical sexual stories displace and yet re-present political and economic inequities shows up quite saliently in stories of the failure of sexual forays. One afternoon Masim, a merchant devoted to body-building who frequently attempted to provoke fights with foreigners, came to my room in a surly mood and told me he had earlier in the day been entertaining an English woman behind the closed metal doors of his shop. In the course of 'heavy petting' she inserted a finger in his anus and he ejaculated. He claimed that he had immediately jumped up, thrown open the metal doors and forced her, half dressed, out into the street.

To understand what lay behind his anger one must relate his story to the term *manioc* with which Palestinian youths in the streets frequently greet friends - but never anyone who is not a friend. *Manioc* translates as 'the one who takes his pleasure in the ass'. By addressing a friend as *manioc* one playfully demasculinizes him in suggesting that he, though a man, enjoys sex passively 'like a woman' (compare Brandes 1980: 9296). The term is also used to describe perjoratively persons who, in one way or another, surrender face. Thus someone walking in the street holding hands with a foreign woman, dancing Western style in a pub or simply talking too much or too loudly in the street is described as a *manioc*. Masim's anger was about being figuratively feminized while he was attempting - literally and in terms of a discourse on social intercourse - to assert his dominant, 'masculine' role over a tourist woman. His anger and dismay, both strong enough to allow him, just *ex post facto*, to tell me (an 'outsider' to the circuit of status accrual) the story, was not because the woman had seemed to try to feminize him by inserting her phallic finger in his vaginal anus but because he, subject to this symbolic reversal, seemed, by having an orgasm, to legitimate the inversion.

This rare, but succinct, story of failure enables us to see more in Salim's much more typical narrative of success. At the moment of Salim's sexual victory, when he dispassionately stares down on the body of a woman allegedly still caught up in the passion of their intercourse, that victory turns to ashes. Salim's statement that the woman has sex with all the men of all the countries through which she passes did more, I suspect, than manifest a desire to add insult to injury. Salim's statement was more strategic; he did not say that she sleeps with other men in Palestine/Israel but that she sleeps with other men in other countries. He was able still to accrue status on the street since she, in Palestine/Israel, chose to sleep with, and to buy from, him. He was not able, however, to convince himself that his sexual exploit provided him with any power over her since she, in the global situation, was recognised as the consumer. He was successful over his neighbours in the market, but that success could not provide him, or any other merchant, with any real power over the world that made him a passive supplier of goods to active consumers of goods. He finally acknowledged both to himself and to the people to whom he told his tale that he had been chosen from among the other available bodies in the market in the same way his dress had been chosen over others that other merchants had had on display. He may have, through his ability to present his commodities with greater style than his compatriots, succeeded where they failed, but finally, in the stories of the bedroom as in those of the shop, the person and the people with the significant power are represented as those foreigners who wander from nation to nation purchasing the most attractive commodities and picking up the prettiest boys<sup>5</sup>.

I suspect that the woman's story would not validate Salim's interpretation either of her motives or her promiscuity. Her view of the incident was not, however, pertinent to Salim's story or to the interpretations of those to whom he told it, because the story told not of the world seen by foreigners but of the world experienced by the street merchants. The tail of Salim's tale is particularly interesting to an interpretation of the narrative as a failed attempt to overcome a structural inequity. His story of his unwillingness to marry a Palestinian woman suggests the degree to which the street merchants, having chosen to deal with the

impoverishment of their situation through the economic and sexual seduction of tourists, had isolated themselves from the wider, and potentially more fulfilling, domains of Palestinian life. Salim gave up the Palestinian woman he claimed to love because he could not disinvest himself from the struggle on the street. His compulsive desire to re-engage constantly in a competition which he, and his fellow merchants, already knew was unwinnable separated Salim, and those others, from the wider world of domestic reproduction and political recuperation. The symbolic economy of the tourist market, which linked personal identity and integrity to success in selling to foreigners, required that all the merchant was and had be invested in that seduction and that nothing would be left for investment elsewhere. This was manifest in the prodigality of the merchants who would spend most of what they earned on entertainment and other forms of conspicuous consumption and were willing to throw the little they had saved into highly speculative and generally untenable schemes for making rapid profits. It was also manifest in the number of street merchants who remained unmarried at thirty-five despite being members of a wider Palestinian community which considers an unmarried man to be a failure. The merchant's exclusive investment of his person in the market revealed itself in the closing section of Salim's narrative. Salim dreamed, as did most of the men with whom I talked, of eventually marrying a Palestinian virgin who was, unlike the tourist women, incorrupt. Nonetheless, according to his narrative, even after having done so his penis would be invested in the struggle with foreigners rather in his relationship with his wife: "after I marry her I will be faithful to her and I will go out on the street, take out my cock, and piss on all the foreign women, even if one of them was the Queen of Sheba". Salim's closing image of the merchant's penis as a sign in an agonistic discourse with foreigners rather than as an element connected with the creation of family, community and nation enables us to picture the alienation of the tourist market, and of its indigenous participants, from the community in which it is set up and which it commodifies. The engrossment of tourist merchants in the market was nearly total, and Palestinians within Jerusalem and in the surrounding towns and villages who were not involved in that market looked upon it and its shopkeepers with scorn. It was assumed that men who became tourist merchants gave up on their responsibilities to the wider Palestinian community in order to make money quickly by dealing with Israelis and foreigners. The fact that few in the market did make money, and that those who did did not make it quickly, was no more recognized by their critics than it was acknowledged by the merchants themselves. For each group the tourist market was seen as a rapid route to riches. While for those persons outside its 'charmed circle' the process of gaining those riches was seen to involve degradation if not outright betrayal of the Palestinian people, for those shopkeepers who were caught up in it their failure to get rich quick fueled their compulsive engagement in its economic and extra-economic circuits. Their failure to make money increased their aggressivity towards the tourists they saw as denying them their just deserts and intensified the competition between them for mastery over the tourists. Each augmentation bore fruit in an escalated investment in the mythic economy of 'fucking tourists'.

Such a closed circuit can, however, only remain integral for as long as its logic serves to explain the world of its participants. The tourist market separated shopkeeper from shopkeeper by forcing them to compete for the scarce resource of tourist customers. As long as they could see their competitors as their chief enemies and their own inability to grasp the 'magic' of economic seduction as the chief impediment to their mastering of the market and those competitors, the tourist merchants remained indifferent to the encompassing political and economic framework which determined the workings of the market and fully invested in mythologies which asserted that the individual could overcome customers and

competitors. However, by the time I returned to Jerusalem in 1987, six months before the outbreak of the intifada, the efficacy of that mythology had been undermined by what was perceived to be active intervention by the Israeli state. Taxes on the shops in the Old City had increased several times between 1983 and 1987, and so too had the previously lax state surveillance of who was and who was not paying them. Simultaneously, international tourism to the entire area of Palestine/Israel had plummeted - in part because of developments in the Lebanon - and fewer customers were being seen in the market. The merchants, faced by vastly increased overheads and diminished income and conscious of the presence of tax collectors and of Israeli guides who prevented tourists from entering Palestinian shops, interpreted what was going on as part of what they came to define as an Israeli project to drive Palestinian merchants out of the Old City. The adoption of a political discourse on the workings of the market had begun, by the time I visited, to undermine the previous mythology; the antagonism the merchants saw as undermining their existence was shifting from that of tourists who would not buy and other merchants who lied and cheated to that of the State itself. The lament that "the situation is very bad; there is no money, the women are hard to find, and it is very hard to live" was formulaically repeated in 1987 just as it had been earlier in the decade, but in 1987, unlike between 1983 and 1985, the onus for this paucity had shifted from tourists and neighbouring merchants to "the political situation".

This reinterpretation led to the integration of the Palestinian tourist merchants into the nationalist mainstream; their participation in the strikes which have been a major part of the intifada has been comprehensive since 1987 despite the economic deprivation entailed in that participation (Tamari 1989 and Tamari 1991). Such a transformation in interpretation and strategy suggests that host communities in underdeveloped regions are not passive and powerless recipients of whatever, be it good or bad, the developed world deems to impose upon but are instead made up of persons involved in continually assessing their situations and capable of changing their responses to those situations when previous strategies of empowerment prove ineffectual. I will close with a field report which, while illustrating this point, also serves to undermine the entire opposition of First World/Third World, Developed/Underdeveloped which structures liberal discourse. In 1989 I sent an early draft of this paper to a Palestinian academic I knew from the West Bank who was, at that time, a visiting lecturer at a university in the United States. Two weeks later I returned to Jerusalem to follow up on some fieldwork, and was approached by two tourist merchants who told me "we want to talk to you about your paper". That evening I met with half a dozen of the merchants who had either read, or been given detailed summaries of the argument by friends who had read, copies of the draft. It turned out that the paper had been faxed to Birzeit (a West Bank University) where it was photocopied by various of the academic staff, one of whom had close ties with the 'street' and had distributed copies among merchant friends. What was more surprising than the speed with which the paper had reached the 'field' was the fact that the merchants with whom I discussed the paper were sympathetic to the argument and claimed they were using it as a means of "thinking through" an obsession with sex with tourists they claimed to want to overcome. The situation was, however, even more complex; the merchants' encounter with the paper came at the end of a process of reassessment which had been initiated when, in the midst of the politicisation mentioned above, one of the former merchants returned to the Old City from Paris here, under the patronage of the Franciscan monastery, he had achieved his doctorate in psychoanalysis in a Lacanian department. Despite his qualifications, the psychoanalyst had been unable to get

employment in Israeli hospitals because he was Palestinian. A short stint of work in a Palestinian hospital had resulted in his being fired because his insistence on practising 'the talking cure' offered him access to domains of family life which, in traditional Palestinian communities, were considered inviolate. In consequence, he spent two years without work sitting in shops with his friends and former colleagues introducing them to basic concepts of psychoanalysis and offering them ways of using them to make sense of their lives. Access to that material at the same time as the worsening political situation was leading them to look for ways of escaping from their isolation from the wider, and increasingly more politicised, Palestinian community gave them means for understanding their previous incarceration within the closed circuit of 'fucking tourists' and ideas of how to escape it. My paper was merely another contribution to a radical melange of political, sociological and psychoanalytic theories which these 'victims' were using to make sense of their situation so that they could devise more effectual ways of dealing with the impacts of tourism, economic peripheralisation and military occupation on their lives.

None the less, it must be recognised that understanding a situation and devising strategies of empowerment within it is often not a sufficient defense against the overwhelming powers of hostile states and exploitative international economies. In Israel/Palestine at present the *intifada* has given way to a 'peace process' which may hold out prospects for an improvement in the political situation. It remains to be seen whether a political settlement will substantially improve the economic situation of merchants and former merchants in Jerusalem's Old City. The backdrop to the political wars of 'Jews' and 'Arabs', as to many of the political struggles which have marred the past two hundred years of world history, is a more perdurable antagonism between those who have the power to collect and disperse an economic surplus and those who struggle against the odds to lay hands on one. This is a war which continues in spite of the fact that borders are labile and antagonists change sides. What this paper has described in Israel/Palestine in the 1980s is one of many skirmishes in this war, and whatever the resolution of that skirmish it does not mark the end of the war. It is important however that we as anthropologists attend carefully to the character of the conflict; the Palestinian merchants described in this paper, like so many other communities struggling against the structural inequities of international tourism and other modalities of colonial domination, are certainly not helpless - they are merely outgunned.

#### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> . It seems apposite that a Sunday Observer article reporting on the papers dealing with sex tourism in the Roehampton Institute Conference was entitled "Sugar Mummies and their Prey" (Hale 1988: 35).

<sup>2</sup> . The names in the recountings that follow are pseudonyms.

<sup>3</sup> . An older merchant told me "I want to be a good Muslim, but I cannot because I cannot go to the mosque to pray. To sell things to tourists I have to lie, and because of that I am too impure to pray".

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<sup>4</sup> . The politics of `triangular desire' are convincingly set out in René Girard's work, and are useful in the analysis of this situation if it is seen that the merchant does not simply want to become the man whose partner he seduces but wants to take the position of power occupied by that man in both the sexual relation with the woman and in the wider field of social and economic power (Girard 1965).

<sup>5</sup> . The knowledge, which surfaces through the cracks in these stories, that the Palestinian `fucker' is always, at base, `fucked' by the rest of the world may have been behind one informant's statement that "one should never fuck in a shop; sex and money don't mix". The strategic purpose of sex with tourists seems here to be recognized as always already thwarted. It is seen, through the same metonymic logic that represented sexual empowerment as an extension of economic power, that the inevitable failure in the sexual domain will turn and curse ventures in the economic.