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**At Home Abroad**  
**The Field Site as Second Home**

By  
*Glenn Bowman*

E-article

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# AT HOME ABROAD

## The Field Site as Second Home

*Glenn Bowman*

And if I had a boat  
I'd go out on the ocean  
And if I had a pony  
I'd ride him on my boat  
(Lyle Lovett, "If I Had a Boat", 1987)

### **Mise en Scène**

My flat was elegantly bare; the floors and walls were made up of huge blocks of golden Jerusalem stone, and the domed ceilings which sheltered the three rooms (one living/bed room, a small kitchen, and a tiny shower and toilet) were lined with whitewashed plaster. There were two small barred windows in my living room; one opened onto a narrow passageway outside the flat's door and the other looked into a large open area twenty feet below which was used by the Coptic Christian families settled around their church's monastery for gossiping, hanging clothes, playing games, and – in periods leading up to religious feasts – practising marching and bagpipe playing for Scouts' processions. The bathroom window also looked down onto that courtyard while the small window which lit the kitchen abutted immediately onto the stone walls of the Greek Orthodox Charalambos Monastery. When I moved in I stocked the kitchen and put in place a few dozen books, a stereo system, and a select group of LPs I'd carried across Europe in my aged Renault 4.

Between January 1983 and October 1985 I lived in the Old City of Jerusalem in a small rented flat which was perched over the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Stations of the Via Dolorosa and backed onto the precincts of the

Holy Sepulchre. The apartment, part of a residential compound called the Johanniter Hospiz which was owned and rented out by the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, had in the past been under the patronage of Friedrich Wilhelm, King of Prussia, and had served to house German pilgrims to the Holy Land. In the early 1980s the two-storied congeries of small rooms, wandering courtyards, and ramshackle outbuildings was for the most part occupied by the families of Christian Palestinians who had fled their homes in upper middle class neighbourhoods of West Jerusalem in 1948 and taken refuge in the Old City, remaining there ever since as refugees dependent on the church's charity. Not long before my arrival church administrators had, following the deaths of previous inhabitants, repossessed two of the living quarters and refurbished them to rent to medium term foreign visitors who would pay market value rents and not lay claim to rights of permanent residence.<sup>1</sup> I rented one apartment while I carried out my DPhil research on Christian pilgrimage; an American post-graduate student of Palestinian descent took the other while he studied the political situation.

Leaving the flat I would walk out into the aforementioned passageway which was just wide enough to hold a chair and small table for typing up field notes and from which I could look over a perforated wall onto the street life of the busy *Aqabat al-Khanqah*. A set of simple metal staples set into the exterior wall of the building allowed access to the main roof's dome which afforded a magnificent panoramic view of the Old City, itself backed by the long

curve of the Mount of Olives beyond which on clear days the Moab Mountains of Jordan seemed preternaturally close. Turning right outside the flat's door I would move through a narrow corridor between the wooden building in which my neighbours, Um-William and Abu-William, cooked and the domed single-roomed edifice in which they lived. This passage was narrow enough that I could, when I wanted privacy, hang a blanket across it.

My urge for privacy was probably culturally alien to the setting, but there were times when I felt it fiercely. Once I passed out of the space I marked as mine, I would feel the eyes of the courtyard community upon me. Um-William and Abu-William were nearly always outside their room sitting, cooking, or talking and always, kindly but all too attentively, looked me over, commented on whether I looked well or ill, and made recommendations about how to take care of myself (their best was to stave off nausea by having a glass of *arak*, a fiercely alcoholic anise drink, first thing in the morning). Proceeding down the staircase into the courtyard onto which looked the domiciles of the compound's other residents, I would meet, and usually be drawn into conversation with, any of a score of other neighbours who would want to know how I was, where I was going, and/or what I was doing. Leaving the courtyard for the street (or coming back from it) I had to pass in front of a tiny room in the door of which, throughout the daylight hours, sat an old man who, while ostensibly paging through the Bible he held in his lap, looked at me with overt disapproval and marked silence.<sup>2</sup> Even at night when I came in or went out, and when it appeared that no one was awake, I felt that I was observed; hints dropped – usually, rather unsubtly, pertaining to 'guests' – confirmed this.

### A Small Boat

One of these guests, an Israeli-American psychoanalyst who I'd tempted into the *terra incognita* of the Old City with tales of its cultural fecundity, commented, on retiring to my flat after a tour of the then-pulsing streets of the Muslim and Christian Quarters, that "here, in the middle of this amazing otherness, you've moored your apartment like a small boat you

**This illustration has been omitted  
for copyright reasons.**

Ill. 1: Local residents on steps to Johanniter Hospiz. (Photo by the author.)

withdraw into to be 'at home'. I'd like, in this short meditation on second homes, to unpack that image of the fieldwork residence as a floating piece of home and to suggest ways in which the space of that 'small boat' might not only lend itself to the work of understanding cultural alterity but also carry the researcher into unanticipated waters.

Being 'at home' while away is far from unusual amongst those who pass as travellers. John Ashberry, in his 1961 essay "On Raymond Roussel", quotes (without attribution) Michel Leiris' assertion that

Roussel never really traveled. It seems likely that the outside world never broke through into the universe he carried within him, and that, in all the countries he visited [he twice circumnavigated the globe], he saw only what he had put there



in advance, elements which corresponded absolutely with that universe that was peculiar to him ... (Ashberry 1987: xvii).

Catherine Schmidt notes a similar phenomenon when she refers to guided tours as “insulated adventure(s)” (Schmidt 1979) wherein tourists, convinced that they are embarking on an encounter with foreign places and their inhabitants, nonetheless make sure that the windowed walls of their hotels, the sheltering shells of their tour buses and the cossetting discourses of their guides protect them from confrontations that might force them to question either their positions or identities.<sup>3</sup> Second home ‘ghettos’ populated by foreign nationals who insist on being ‘abroad’ in the near exclusive company of co-nationals (for example, the British in the Dordogne region of France or the Costa del Sol of Spain) also make evident a cultural narcissism *sans frontières*. Such ways of being at home in foreign spaces are more likely to strengthen mono-cultural identifications than to dissolve them, and work on diasporic identities<sup>4</sup> has suggested that when subjects abroad self-isolate from the other identification with a ‘homeland’ is likely to be even stronger than it would have been ‘at home’.

In some ways I was not, at least initially, unlike the tourist on his or her ‘insulated adventure’, though what protected me from disconcerting alterity was not guides or tour buses but instead my research plans and the set of procedures social scientists term ‘method’. My research was on Christian pilgrims and their relations to the ‘Holy Land’ and to other pilgrim communities (Bowman 1991). It was clear to me who I had to speak with and what sorts of information I was intent on collecting; I met with priests and patriarchs from churches ranging from the Eastern Orthodox to the Western Protestants, I interviewed and travelled with pilgrim groups as diverse as Ethiopian Orthodox and Christian Zionist, and I observed and talked with officiants of the tourism trade from the street level of tour guides and bus drivers to the offices of the Ministry of Tourism. My methodology was a combination of participant observation, open-ended interviewing and a modi-

cum of questionnaire distribution, and whilst I had some wonderful experiences travelling with, talking with, and simply observing a fabulous range of characters none of this ‘came home’ with me other than in the form of the notes I would spend hours typing up on an ageing portable electric typewriter. I very much located myself in the ‘classical’ anthropological position of disembodied viewer, positioned like a Cartesian eye looking upon and analysing a setting and its subjects without in any way identifying with the locale studied (Bowman 1997). As an unbeliever and an anthropologist I could play at participation in pilgrimage and its accoutrements so as to discern their informing logics, but my engagement with the worlds of priests and pilgrims was always at a distance. When I brought my work home with me it was as observations and ideas I worked through and analysed in my own private space.

There was also an element of the *flâneur* in my early relation to the Old City, and this too is not unlike that established by the traveller, tourist, or second home owner with regard to the sites they variously inhabit. Here one appropriates a scene by *looking upon* it as though it had been provided for one’s own pleasure and stimulation.<sup>5</sup> As long as I did not feel the gaze of the city looking back on me, I could voraciously feed my senses with the smells, sights, sounds and, on the more crowded thoroughfares, pressings of streets which by day heaved with masses gathered from all over the world and by night were eerily empty and troubled only by whiffs of incense and rotting food, the echoes of distant ecclesiastical chanting and the occasional clanking of the *Uzis* (machine guns) carried by patrolling Israeli soldiers. I spent hours walking through the city, by night and by day, with a pair of cameras around my neck (one for colour film, one for black and white) taking in the richness of a city marked with the traces of 3,000 years of continuous human occupation. Once beyond the neighbourly gaze I had to pass through between my flat and the street, I could, like Benjamin’s *flâneur*, once again feel myself *at home* while away:

The street becomes a dwelling for the *flâneur*; he is as much at home among the facades of houses

as a citizen is in his four walls. To him the shiny, enamelled signs of businesses are at least as good a wall ornament as an oil painting is to the bourgeois in his salon. The walls are the desk against which he presses his notebooks; news-stands are his libraries and the terraces of cafés are the balconies from which he looks down on his household after his work is done (Benjamin 1983: 37).

The situation wasn't idyllic insofar as being home alone can be lonely regardless of how wonderful the housing, and I did in the first few weeks of living in the Old City often resort to the oddly American setting of Hebrew University (Mt. Scopus) where I held a Lady Davis Fellowship and where I could meet and talk with scholars who, like me, were living in a land other than that in which they had been born and raised.

### Voices beyond the Wall

About three weeks after I'd moved into the Johanniter Hospiz I was wriggling out of my Renault which I had had to park tightly against the wall of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate on one of the few vehicle accessible streets in the dense fabric of the Old City when I was hailed by a Palestinian man in his mid-twenties. He spoke excellent English and engaged me in a conversation which began with a moan about the difficulty of finding parking within the city walls and moved fairly quickly to a disquisition on the refusal of the Israeli government to invest in the Old City's infrastructure. I was not surprised to be addressed in English – I knew from my observations of street merchants that they were able to address tourists appropriately in any of up to half a dozen languages – but was taken both by Fayek's apparent warmth and evident intelligence. Unlike my neighbours, whose solicitude seemed to mask an anxiety that I would somehow corrupt their habitat, Fayek seemed to be simply friendly, and within a few minutes I found myself sitting with him in the Joc Inn (a local hostel for tourists which held a bar frequented by them as well by local Christians and Muslims) drinking the first of a number of Maccabe beers. Although I quickly learned a fair bit about Fayek (he lived in

Abu Dis, was Muslim, and ran a small jewellery shop on Christian Quarter Road) what amazed me was that there was little I could tell him about myself and what I was doing in the Old City that he didn't, at least in outline, already know. Clearly, despite my sense of being able to move 'invisibly' through the city's streets, I had been the focus of more than casual attention. What Fayek knew was a distillation of information from several sources, compiled in that incredible collective cerebrum which throbbed at the heart of the Palestinian city.<sup>6</sup>

Over the next couple of weeks Fayek and I spent a lot of time together. I got used to sitting in his shop watching him string beads or render coins 'antique' while we chatted like any new friends about whatever came to mind. Occasionally tourists would enter and Fayek would gauge in what language to greet them (often uncannily knowing whether they were Swedes, Italians, French or British before they'd said a word), offer them small bitter sweet cups of coffee, ask them about their travels, and, eventually, try to sell them some of his goods. I began, on my daily trips to the Holy Sepulchre to observe and interview pilgrims, to look forward to stopping off for a while in Fayek's shop. I also found myself becoming somewhat protective of my friend, intervening on occasions when bargaining became hostile either to vouch for Fayek's integrity or to counter Israeli guides' assertions to potential customers that Fayek, like all the Palestinian street merchants, was trying to take their money to fund the PLO.

After the fortnight or so it took Fayek to adequately 'check me out'<sup>7</sup> he began introducing me to other colleagues on 'the street', although it was clear that introductions were formal and only informative to me as those merchants already knew who I was. Within a very short while my daily forays to do 'proper fieldwork' grew more and more impeded as the kilometre or so walk up the *Aqabat al-Khanqah* and along Christian Quarter Road to the entrance of the courtyard of the *Anastasis* (the Orthodox name of the Holy Sepulchre) took me past the shops of a dozen or so street merchants to whom I'd been introduced – grocers, bakers, photographers, and dealers of antiquities, religious goods, and, of course,

tourist tat – all of whom I had to say hello to and half of whom I had to sit with at least long enough to have a chat and a coffee. When I had appointments or particularly arduous schedules to meet I would be forced to take an alternative route along the *Suq Khan el Zeit* whose jostling crowds, while slowing progress, provided relatively reliable cover from the attentive and demanding gaze of new friends and acquaintances. For the most part, though, I was delighted to spend time with the locals and to hear from others about *their* perceptions of the world and of the people I had until then been observing on my own. Disrupting Benjamin's metaphor, it was as though I'd begun to hear voices coming through the walls.

### At Home in – and Above – the *Suq* (Market)

The hours I spent sitting with my new friends in their small shops introduced me not only to the complex dynamics of a tourist market but as well to the rich diversity of the life stories, and aspirations, of the shopkeepers who peopled it. Most of the merchants were, like Fayek, 'edge people' insofar as they had chosen to make a living by dealing with foreign tourists and with the Israeli nationals who would shop in the 'Arab Quarters' on the Sabbath when Jewish West Jerusalem closed down. This was potentially lucrative but simultaneously corrupting territory, and as a result the normal life course followed by Palestinian men was here kept 'on hold'. Most of the men I came to know were in their mid to late twenties or, like me, early thirties. They were Christians and Muslims, some were college educated, some came from old Jerusalem merchant families whilst others were parvenus from Hebron and villages to the south. Nearly all were unmarried. The Palestinian practice of bride price rendered marriage an expensive proposition, and, while merchants would often talk of getting married when they had made enough money to make that possible, the talk tended to be abstract; profits were restricted by the fierce competition of a buyers' market and Palestinian girlfriends or fiancées were notable by their absence. There was, however, a perpetual pursuit of foreign women and, although in a number of cases that would eventually lead to marriage (and consequent expatriation),

for the most part it was a serious game in which the pleasure of seduction was paired with the important business of demonstrating to other merchants that one was able to entice and conquer foreigners (see Bowman 1989, 1996).

Whether it was my own 'edge' position as an expatriate anthropologist in the field, or the fact that, like them, I was a single man, I found myself feeling uncannily 'at home' in their company. Some of this was the generous camaraderie (it was nearly impossible for me, for instance, to pay for their, or even my own, drinks) and some was the sense of, for the first time since I was sixteen or so, having a circle of close male friends.<sup>8</sup> The 'game' of sexual competition was also engaging although my ends were somewhat less economic than theirs. One might, however, wonder what was in this relationship for the half dozen or so *shabab* with whom I came to spend increasing amounts of my time. An element, I'd like to think, was simple friendship, although we, as anthropologists, know that friendship is compounded of a give and take of self-interest and interest in the other. Certainly I provided them with some relief from the boredom of sitting in shops all day waiting for customers to wander in, make a couple of stereotypically hostile enquiries, and wander out. I was around for a more sustained period, would bring to them stories and perspectives from outside the limits of the market, was interested in what they had to say, and would provide occasional amusement by playing the culturally obtuse fool. Furthermore, competition was fierce in a setting wherein a large number of dealers were all selling pretty much the same sort of things to a limited clientele, and no one trusted their neighbours very far. To maintain one's status (an extremely valuable commodity) one had to protect oneself constantly from the impugnings of neighbours and friends who were simultaneously competitors in what was perceived to be the zero sum game of selling and seducing. Here I played the role of outsider inside; people could talk to me about various personal issues (including those pertaining to business difficulties or problems with 'friends') without putting the information divulged into general circulation.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, and to return more straightforwardly to the topic of 'second homes', my flat, though small, was neutral ground, belonging to no one in particular and, more to the point, to none of the extended families with whom the *shabab* all lived. Although it was very rare for any of my Palestinian friends to visit on their own, the flat became a place where a number of us could get together (with or without tourist girlfriends), prepare a barbecue, listen to music, drink *arak* and smoke a *nargile* (water pipe). After inquiring in the course of a day whether or not I would be happy to host a barbecue in the evening, a couple of them would shop for lamb, vegetables, and *arak* and gather after the shops closed to set up a metal grill on my balcony, cook meat and make salad. We would then all gather and, until well past midnight, talk and drink, with occasional forays up onto the roof to see Jerusalem laid out beneath us. Just as the flat provided a sort of liminal terrain for me, a locale moored between home and the field, so too it was for my friends a place that was simultaneously part of the Old City and apart from it. Anywhere else that they could get together was somehow entailed in the demands and conflicts of family and community; hosting friends at each others' homes involved elaborate and interminable rituals of respect and decorum with elders, while meetings in local hostels and pubs seemed inevitably to end in punch ups between themselves and other local guys, between themselves and tourist men, or between each other. Only in my flat would I witness anywhere from six to ten of these men, sometimes but not always with foreign women, sitting around peacefully, sharing food and drink, and talking comfortably and openly with each other. Here my second home became a home away from home for them and, as for me, it felt homely precisely because it wasn't home.

It's hard to say in retrospect what my flat did in the long term for my friends. Although they were both Muslim and Christian, educated and barely schooled, relatively well off and just scraping by, they shared, like the rest of their co-nationals, the experience of living under a military occupation which was to grow far more brutal after the imposition of Rabin's 'Iron Fist' policy in October 1985. In the

early-eighties they had seemed to ignore that encompassing political situation, because, I thought, they were too deeply invested in the local war of market competition to pay it much regard.<sup>10</sup> After that pretending became much more difficult, and eventually the audience for whom one pretended and the market one struggled to dominate leached away; Israeli settlement expansion within, and the systematic economic isolation of, the Palestinian sectors of the Old City combined with escalating Palestinian militancy to render tourism and shopping unviable. My recent attempts, in spring of this year, to track friends found three dead (two suicides, one heroin overdose) and six living outside the country. I could find no trace of the rest. Although there is no way that I can believe, in the face of an ongoing history of dispossession and displacement, that these moments of communion worked some enduring good in the lives of these men, I can nonetheless hope that those who remain alive occasionally think back with pleasure to those nights afloat above the *suq*.

### The Field Transformed

For me the flat, and the 'home' in the street which augmented it, radically changed both my fieldwork and my life. When I first moved into the Old City my apartment and 'the street' – the unholy sectors of the Holy City – were no more than accessories to the research I planned to do. The reason I was in Jerusalem was to carry out fieldwork on pilgrims in the holy places, and in that task my flat served as a place to write, eat and sleep; I also used it, when the strains of fieldwork and of being a stranger in a strange land got to be too much, as a place in which to take cover with my books and my music. The streets of the *suq* served initially as routes to the shrines and churches in which I needed to observe, photograph and interview priests and pilgrims. Quite quickly they became an engaging distraction on my ways to and from work, but I was initially too locked into my pre-planned agenda to envision them as objects to study. Even when, speaking through Fayek, the street called out to me and I responded, I still did not see the Palestinian city and its inhabitants as part of my fieldwork; for quite a

while I considered Fayek, Jack, Garo, Salim, Anis, Mustapha, Suhail, Albert, Nabil, Francis, Ibrahim and a scattering of others to be friends with whom it was fun to talk, drink, and chase around the city, but certainly not as subjects on whom to turn an anthropological gaze.

It was when I began to identify with the street merchants that, ironically, I began to see them anthropologically. This was prompted by the recognition that accompanying their recurrent discussions of selling was a leitmotif of embroidered tales (backed by fervent effort) of trying, and occasionally succeeding in, seducing foreign women. Myself caught by the sexual fervour of the market, yet frustrated to see friends compulsively trapped in a game which in real terms they were bound to lose, I struggled to link the mercantile and prestige economies and worked on the analysis of what in time would become 'Fucking Tourists' (Bowman 1989, 1996). That study was one of power – or more accurately of fantasies of power in the face of political and economic impotence – and it was the issue of power which began to make me see the street as an object of anthropological concern. Over the months I lived there I listened to friends' and neighbours' stories of maltreatment by police, tax collectors, and city administrators, repeatedly heard Israeli tour guides in the street malign the merchants to prospective customers, and came to share the frisson of conjoined fear and impotent rage as armed soldiers or settlers passed by. Whether sensitivity to some unjust power I brought with me from my 'first home' resonated with the quotidian oppression I was growing increasingly aware of, or whether I simply found myself empathetically identifying with the people I was associating with, I found myself feeling more and more Palestinian in my responses to symptoms of what I was coming to recognise as 'the situation'. In time I came not only to sense in my friends' and neighbours' gestures, intonations, and moods the weight of a 'normalised' military occupation but also to feel that weight bear on me.<sup>11</sup> In this way the situation on the street became my concern in a way Christian pilgrims and pilgrimage, always mediated through Oxford and my thesis, never could. Here I was not watching

others from the objective vantage point of a social scientist but observing myself, and others, at home in the world. Anthropology here became analysis of a social world as it was refracted through the self's experience – truly participant observation.

This 'at home-ness' was, in my case, significantly qualified by the fact that I always already had had other homes elsewhere. When I speak of home with reference to the various places in which I have lived, I do not simply mean physical places but as well a collection of practices, passions, and perspectives associated with those places. Those ways of seeing and being are themselves at least in part transportable; the examples cited above of travellers who never really leave home (Roussel, insulated adventurers, and inhabitants of second home ghettos) suggest that for some it is possible to live abroad as though they brought their homes with them. Even, however, when one finds oneself identifying with the particular life of another place one rarely finds that one has gone fully 'native'; there always remains in one's existential tool kit ways of understanding, emotional responses, and strategies of coping brought from previous residencies. I had brought with me to Jerusalem (among other things) my anthropological and analytical ways of thinking with the intention of working on topics such as sanctification, ritual construction of place, and the multivalence of memorialisation. Under the pressure of what became a fierce need to make sense of, and thus take at least cognitive control of, the brutalities of everyday life in Palestine, these were remachined into tools for understanding (among other things) the ways ethnic domination and economic marginalisation impacted upon individuals. At the time I saw these tools as having potential for assisting in mobilising my friends on the street towards self defence and liberation,<sup>12</sup> but I realised subsequently that to have thought my theorising had provided them with anything more than a bit of bitter entertainment was hubristic. For me, however, practising anthropology in a second home made me at home with the discipline of anthropology. I learned in Jerusalem that I am, with the others surrounding me, the subject of anthropology.

## Notes

- 1 I unwittingly was part of a move by the Lutheran Church to reappropriate properties of which it felt it had been illegally dispossessed in 1948; this reappropriation was carried out at the expense of the local Palestinian community. During my residence in the Old City the Church closed the Österreichische Hospiz zur Heiligen Familie (Austrian Hospice of the Holy Family), which had served since 1948 as the only civilian hospital within the city walls, later reopening it as a luxury 'pilgrim hospice' which simultaneously serves as "Austria's culture bearer in the Orient" (see <http://www.austrianhospice.com/en/jerusalem.htm>). The Johanniter Hospiz, after my departure, was transformed into "the home of the sisters' community of the Brotherhood of Jesus [Jesus-Bruderschaft]" (<http://blessedgerard.org/johahosp.htm>) which is headquartered in Gnadenhal, Germany.
- 2 I was deeply unsettled in 1987 while sitting in a North London cinema watching Michel Khleifi's *Wedding in Galilee* to once again feel the gaze of the old man upon me; uncannily Khleifi, looking to cast someone to represent an elder able to recall the Ottoman occupation, chose his uncle – unbeknownst to me the man from my courtyard – for the role.
- 3 My "Politics of Tour Guiding" (Bowman 1992) examines this insulation in Israel/Palestine, and investigates the possibilities of breaching it.
- 4 See, for illustration, Hockenos 2003, Skrbis 1999, Glick-Schiller & Fouron 2001, Werbner 2002, and the papers in Markowitz 2004.
- 5 Walter Benjamin opens his famed disquisition on the flâneur with the sentence "once a writer had entered the marketplace, he looked around as in a diorama" (Benjamin 1983: 35).
- 6 In April of this year (nearly twenty-two years after I moved out) I spent a couple of days in the Old City and was repeatedly recognised and greeted by name on the street by people who remembered me in great detail, many of whom had been – when they 'knew' me – only young children.
- 7 Fayek later told me that, although the arrangement was informal and the choice of him a matter of his willingness, it had been decided amongst a number of the shabab (formally, 'youth' but in this context basically 'guys') that he should serve a sort of gatekeeper, assessing whether I could be trusted sufficiently to be allowed access to their circles.
- 8 In my middle class East Coast American upbringing one moved quickly in one's mid-teens into foreshadowing the nuclear family to come, largely abandoning one's 'gang' of same sex friends and spending all one's time with one's girlfriend.
- 9 Panagiotis Geros, in a recent PhD thesis, writes of his

field experience that "the younger people that I knew felt that they could trust me with information about their personal lives and their emotions about others, something they could not do with other members of the local society, given the real threat of gossip and rumours. In a way, I sometimes found myself in the position of an informal psychoanalyst in whom they confided things which they could not express to family or others ..." (Geros 2007: 39).

- 10 I later realised that they were probably far more aware than I had thought. For one thing their livelihood precisely depended on pretending, for foreign tourists and Israeli shoppers alike, that the occupation did not exist; for another they kept quiet because they believed, most likely with good reason, that the Old City was rife with Palestinians collaborating with the police and soldiers.
- 11 In 'Radical Empiricism' (Bowman 1998 and, in German, 2001) I use Mauss' idea of 'prestigious imitation' in conjunction with Freudian theories of identification to analyse the ways fieldworkers might find themselves 'at home' in the field.
- 12 Another of the shabab, Francis, had grown up in relative poverty in the Christian Quarter but had subsequently done so well in the Franciscan Terra Sancta school that the church had supported him to study for and achieve a doctorate in psychoanalysis in Paris. He returned to the Old City about the same time I arrived but proved unemployable, by either Israeli or Palestinian institutions, for variant ideological reasons. Like me he spent his time with friends in their shops ostensibly chatting but in fact attempting, as he told me, to familiarise them with the analytical tools he'd learned while abroad in university so that they could comprehend, and master, the rage and despair inflicted on them by 'the situation'.

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