THREE

Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World

The discussion in chapters 1–2 was mostly confined to intellectual and political developments in the Arab world and how Western trends influenced and informed ongoing debates directly and indirectly. Here, I will turn to developments outside the Arab world, specifically in the United States and Europe, and how they sought deliberately to influence Arab concepts of sexual desire and practice. These developments had been debated in the intellectual field, but some insisted instead that they be squarely placed in the political field of state-society relations. With the rise of the women's movement and the discourse of sexual liberation across Western countries in the late 1960s and especially in the 1970s, the attention of many Westerners came to bear on the sexual question as such, and not only in the West but also and increasingly outside it. The impact of this intervention on the Arab world would be jolting. In this chapter, I will examine these Western interventionist trends and their effects on the contemporary Arab world while in chapter 4 I will examine in detail the Arab intellectual reaction to them.

One of the more compelling issues emerging from within the Western gay movement in the last twenty-five years is the universalization of "gay rights." This project has insinuated itself into the prevailing U.S. discourse on human rights to launch itself on an international scale. Following

in the footsteps of the white Western women's movement, which had sought to universalize its issues through imposing its own colonial feminism on the women's movements in non-Western countries—a situation which led to major schisms from the outset (these were apparent at the first UN-sponsored International Women's Year World Conference in Mexico City in 1975 and continuing through the 1980 Copenhagen conference, the 1985 Nairobi conference and the fourth UN conference in Beijing in 1995)[1]—the gay movement sought a similar missionary task. Western male white-dominated organizations (the International Lesbian and Gay Association—ILGA—and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission—IGLHRC) sprang up to defend the rights of "gays and lesbians" all over the world and to advocate on their behalf. ILGA, which was founded in 1978 at the height of the Carter administration's human rights campaign against the Soviet Union and third world enemies, asserts that one of its aims is to "create a platform for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered people internationally, in their quest for recognition, equality and liberation, in particular through the world and regional conferences."[2] As for IGLHRC, which was founded in 1991, its mission is to "protect and advance the human rights of all people and communities subject to discrimination or abuse on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status."[3] It is these missionary tasks, the discourse that produces them, and the organizations that represent them which constitute what I will call the Gay International.

Like the major U.S.- and European-based human rights organizations (Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International) and following the line taken up by white Western women's organizations and publications, the Gay International was to reserve a special place for Muslim countries in its discourse as well as in its advocacy. This Orientalist impulse, borrowed from predominant representations of Arab and Muslim cultures in the United States and in European countries, continues to guide all branches of the human rights community. The Gay International, being

1. For information on the discord between European and U.S. women and women from Asia, Africa, and Latin America during these conferences, see, for example, Judy Klemesrud, "Scrappy, Unofficial Women's Parley Sets Pace," *New York Times,* 29 June 1975; Frank Frial, "Women Are Losing Ground, World Parley Is Told," *New York Times,* 15 July 1980; and Georgia Dullea, "Female Circumcision a Topic at UN Parley," *New York Times,* 18 July 1980, and several articles in the *New York Times* covering the Nairobi conference on 19 July 1985.

2. International Lesbian and Gay Association, Constitution, Section C. "Aims and Objectives," Article no. 2 (i), available on the ILGA Web site at http://www.ilga.org.

3. International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, "Our Mission," available at their Web site, http://www.iglhrc.org.

a relative latecomer to this assimilationist project, has sought to catch up quickly. To do so, supporters of the Gay International's missionary tasks produced two kinds of literature on the Muslim world in order to propagate their cause: an academic literature produced mostly by white male European or American gay scholars "describing" and "explaining" what they call "homosexuality" in Arab and Muslim history to the present;[4] and journalistic accounts of the lives of so-called "gays" and (much less so) "lesbians" in the contemporary Arab and Muslim worlds. The former is intended to unravel the mystery of Islam to a Western audience, while the latter has the unenviable task of informing white male gay sex tourists about the region and to help "liberate" Arab and Muslim "gays and lesbians" from the oppression under which they allegedly live by transforming them from practitioners of same-sex contact into subjects who identify as "homosexual" and "gay." The following remarks may be taken as typical. Lisa Power, co-secretary general of ILGA, states authoritatively that "most Islamic cultures don't take kindly to organized homosexuality, even though male homoeroticism is deep within their cultural roots! . . . most people are too nervous to organize, even in countries with a high level of homosexuality."[5] Robert Bray, public information director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and an officer of ILGA, understands that "cultural differences make the definition and the shading of homosexuality different among peoples . . . But I see the real question as one of sexual freedom; and sexual freedom transcends cultures." While on seemingly sexual escapades in Morocco and southern Spain, Bray states that "at least one guy expressed a longing to just be gay and not have to live within the prescribed sexual behaviors, and he said that there were others like him." Based on this "one guy," Bray confidently concludes that "I believe this longing is universal."[6]

In contradistinction to the liberatory claims made by the Gay International in relation to what it posits as an always already homosexualized population, I will argue that it is the very discourse of the Gay

4. The only exception to this poor scholarship is an article by Bruce Dunne, "Homosexuality in the Middle East: An Agenda for Historical Research," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 12, nos. 3–4 (Summer–Fall 1990): 55–82. This article's major weakness lies in the fact that it does not consult a single original Arabic source. Dunne's anthropological impulse, however, gets the best of him in a later article cited below.

5. Quoted in Rex Wockner, "Homosexuality in the Arab and Moslem World," in *Coming Out: an Anthology of International Gay and Lesbian Writings*, ed. Stephen Likosky (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 105. This article was reprinted from a number of U.S. gay and lesbian magazines including *Outlines, BLK, The Weekly News* (Miami), and *Capital Gay* (London). Of course no Arab or Iranian could be found to write an article in this "international" anthology, and a white gay American man had to do it instead.

6. Wockner, "Homosexuality," 116.

International, which both produces homosexuals, as well as gays and lesbians, where they do not exist, and represses same-sex desires and practices that refuse to be assimilated into its sexual epistemology.[7] I will show how this discourse assumes prediscursively that homosexuals, gays, and lesbians are a universal category that exists everywhere in the world and, based on this prediscursive axiom, the Gay International sets itself the mission of defending them by demanding that their rights *as* "homosexuals" be granted where they are denied and be respected where they are violated. In doing so, however, the Gay International, as this chapter will show, is producing an effect that is less than liberatory.

The Gay International, through its more illustrious organization, ILGA, launched a new and aggressive universalization campaign in 1994 coinciding with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising. While ILGA achieved official NGO status at the United Nations in 1993 (which it later lost), its international activities continued unabated including "efforts to stop the mass execution of homosexuals in Iran," an unsubstantiated propagandistic claim that was also bandied about by an official of the U.S. State Department.[8] Part of the commemorations of Stonewall was ILGA's convening of its sixteenth "Annual World Conference" from June 23 to July 4, 1994, in New York. Whereas ILGA boasted "delegates" from Western Europe, East Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the United States, it "was working hard to bring activists from Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean."[9] The commemorations included the "International March on the United Nations to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People," demanding among other things that the General Assembly "proclaim an international Year of the Lesbian and Gay People (possibly 1999)," and the application of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights to "lesbian, gay, bisexual, drag and transgender people."[10] This aggressive campaign at the United Nations ran throughout the 1990s and into the next decade.

7. Because most of this literature deals with male homosexuality, my comments are likewise concerned primarily with that issue.

8. Mark Unger, "Going Global: The Internationalization of the Gay and Lesbian Community," *Metrosource: The Gay Guide to Metropolitan New York* (Summer 1994): 49. See Wockner, "Homosexuality," 107–11, for evidence of the Gay International's collaboration with the U.S. State Department to malign the Iranian government. Citing a U.S. journalist and a U.S. State Department official who investigated the case, Wockner claims that there were mass executions of homosexuals in Iran. Although the official's investigation produced no documentary evidence, the official asserts that the allegation of mass executions was "probably true," 108.

9. Unger, "Going Global," 50. It should be noted that it is not clear whether these delegates were indeed residents of the countries they represented or U.S.–based diaspora members of these regions.

10. See "The Demand of Stonewall 25," in *Metrosource: The Gay Guide to Metropolitan New York* (Summer 1994): 46–47.

Rex Wockner, the author of an acutely othering article on "gays and lesbians" in the Arab world and Iran, which was reprinted in a large number of gay publications in the United States and Britain, wonders in bafflement about Arab and Iranian men who practice both "insertive" same-sex and different-sex contact and refuse the Western identification of gayness: "Is this hypocritical? Or a different world?" he marvels. "Are these 'straight' men really 'gays' who are overdue for liberation? Or are humans by nature bisexual, with Arab and Moslem men better tuned into reality than Westerners? Probably all the above."[11] It is precisely this perceived instability in the desires of Arab and Muslim men that the Gay International seeks to stabilize, as their polymorphousness confounds gay (and straight) sexual epistemology. As I will show below, the assumptions underlying the mission of the Gay International demand that these resistant "Oriental" desires, which exist, according to Wockner, in "oppressive—and in some cases murderous—homelands," be re-*orient*ed to and subjected by the "more enlightened" Occident.[12] I will survey the literature of the Gay International with an eye to the politics of representation it enacts, as well as its stated project of "defending gays and lesbians." Although I will look at different kinds of literature—academic studies, journalistic accounts, human rights and tourism publications—which are governed by different professional demands, political configurations, markets, and audiences, I do not seek to flatten them by erasing these differences, but rather to demonstrate how, despite these manifest differences, a certain ontology and epistemology are taken as axiomatic a priori by *all* of them.

Representing Arab and Muslim Desires

Western gay interest in and representations of sexuality in Arab and Muslim countries, in fact, coincide with the very emergence of Western gay scholarship on sexuality.[13] Although homoerotic and sexual representations of Arab men by Western male writers, as we saw, precede this period (examples include William S. Burroughs, Paul Bowles, T. E. Lawrence, André Gide, Roland Barthes, and Jean Genet, to name the most prominent), these neither constituted a genre nor precipitated a full-fledged discourse among Western gay men about Arab male sexual de-

11. Wockner, "Homosexuality," 115.

12. Wockner, "Homosexuality," 107, 115.

13. For a good survey of some of these writings, see Joseph Boone, "Vacation Cruises; or, The Homoerotics of Orientalism," *PMLA* 110 (1995): 89–107.

sires. They were rather offshoots of standard Orientalist representation of the Arab world. It was John Boswell who inaugurated a debate on Muslim societies in which Western white gay scholars are still engaged. Boswell's romantic and less-than-academic assertions that "most Muslim societies have treated homosexuality with indifference, if not admiration,"[14] was not necessarily a new conclusion, as Western Christian propaganda had for centuries portrayed Muslim societies as immoral and sexually licentious compared to Christian morality. Indeed, as Jeffrey Weeks informs us, "many Western gays, for a long time now, have traveled hopefully to the Muslim world and expected to find sexual paradise."[15] He proceeds to explain, however, that "reality is more complex." Basing himself on the findings of a collection of articles edited by Arno Schmitt and Jehoeda Sofer, Weeks asserts that "the sexual privileges allowed to men [in the Muslim world] are largely at the expense of women" and that "those adult men who do not fit readily into prevailing notions of true manhood . . . are often looked down upon and despised."[16] As Weeks views the present Muslim world as one undergoing change, he concludes that there are two possible outcomes of this change: "Only time will tell whether that culture will approximate more and more to the secularised Western model, or come increasingly under the sway of a new religious militancy. What can be said with some assurance is that it is unlikely to stay the same."[17] The Western model as the only liberatory telos to be applied universally is never interrogated by Weeks.[18]

Indeed, Boswell's romantic descriptions were taken up by Arno Schmitt, who challenges both Boswell's research and conclusions.[19] Contra Boswell's essentialist claims of the timelessness of the categories of homosexuals and gays, Schmitt asserts that in Muslim societies "male-male

14. John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 194.

15. Jeffrey Weeks, foreword to *Sexuality and Eroticism among Males in Moslem Societies,* ed. Arno Schmitt and Jehoeda Sofer (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1992), x.

16. Weeks, foreword, x.

17. Weeks, foreword, xi.

18. Michael Warner, one of the major queer theorists of the day, is attentive to the issue of the internationalization of white U.S. sexual politics as far as "theoretical languages" are concerned but does not question the internationalization of the epistemologies producing such languages: "As gay activists from non-Western contexts become more and more involved in setting political agendas, and as the rights discourse of internationalism is extended to more and more cultural contexts, Anglo-American queer theorists will have to be more alert to the globalizing—and localizing—tendencies of our theoretical languages," in Michael Warner, ed., *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University if Minnesota Press, 1993), xii.

19. See Arno Schmitt, "A Critique of John Boswell's Writings on Muslim Gays," in Schmitt and Sofer, *Sexuality,* 169–78.

sexuality plays an important role. But in these societies there are no 'homosexuals'—there is no word for homosexuality—the concept is completely unfamiliar. There are no heterosexuals either."[20] Schmitt, who is overall more nuanced in his descriptions than Boswell, makes the essentialist claim that the absence of these categories in Muslim societies is itself a phenomenon that is constant across time. Although Boswell was careful to level his judgment about Muslim societies in the classical period (seventh–fourteenth century) of the Islamic era and which coincides with the European medieval period, recent scholars, including Schmitt, tend to extend whatever judgment they have to the whole of Arab Muslim history. Schmitt, like the classic Orientalists who use the seventh-century Qur'an to study Muslims of the twentieth century, insists without any scholarly evidence that "because the behavior of Muslims today can be seen as modification of older behavioral patterns, the study of male-male sexuality in Muslim society should start from the old texts—although most of these reflect the viewpoint of the middle class only. Study of modern texts, conversation, and encounters with them and observations of Arabs, Iranians, Turks help us to understand not only the modern behavior, but the old texts as well."[21] Schmitt's ahistoricism is compounded by the limitations of the audience he imagines. Note how the "us" in his text refers only to Westerners, gay and nongay, but never to Muslims, who must be observed. Indeed, Schmitt's book, which is a collection of mostly Orientalist, if not outright racist, views that he and his contributors bandy about, is aimed, according to him and his coeditor, not only at Western scholars in a variety of disciplines but also at "anybody in contact with Arabs, Turks or Persians—be it a tourist in Moslem countries, a social worker 'in charge' of immigrants, or just as a friend of an immigrant," anybody, that is, who is *not* an Arab, a Turk or a "Persian."[22] One such white gay contributor, on whom the editors rely for information on life in Iran where he had lived before, identifies himself as "a freelance writer now living in New York (and never again in Tehran)."[23] The Orientalist method that Schmitt deploys in this book is one in which Arabs and Muslims can only be objects of European scholarship and never its subjects or audience (his use and inclusion of native informants notwithstanding). Still the Schmitt and Sofer volume has impressed the establishment of the Gay International

20. Arno Schmitt, "Different Approaches to Male-Male Sexuality/Eroticism from Morocco to Uzbekistan," in Schmitt and Sofer, *Sexuality,* 5.

21. Schmitt, "Different Approaches," 20.

22. Schmitt and Sofer, *Sexuality,* xiv.

23. Schmitt and Sofer, *Sexuality,* 194. The author's name is David Reed.

so much that ILGA relies on it as a corrective to its own "research."[24] An example of the "research" conducted by ILGA is its entry on Egypt in *The Second ILGA Pink Book,* where the authors inform us that "Transvestite dancers, 'Khawal's' [*sic*], who dance at feasts are very popular." ILGA's "researchers" seem to confuse the nineteenth-century phenomenon of the *Khawal* with the present.[25] Time, as expected, is never factored in when the topic is Arabs and Muslims.

This timelessness of Muslim Arab sexual culture is noted even by a careful scholar of medieval Muslim societies. Everett Rowson, who acknowledges a puzzling change in Arab sexual categories after the ninth century, concludes, basing himself on Arabic texts written in the eleventh century, that these texts' "concepts can be taken as broadly representative of Middle Eastern societies from the ninth century to the present."[26] Others, like Edward Lacey, defend Islam and Arabs against Western racism insisting that although "Islam possesses its full quota of dogmatism, fanaticism, obscurantism, rigidity and sexism—[it] has always in practice been, and still is (despite the present-day activities of certain bloodthirsty heretics who do not even deserve to be called Muslims), far more acceptant and tolerant of homosexuality, far more receptive, indulgent and permissive toward it . . . than either of the two other great monotheistic religions of the Western world."[27] For Lacey, however, as for Boswell, Schmitt, and Rowson, an antihistoricism is embedded in the heart of their arguments. Using medieval Arabic texts, Lacey affirms what he calls "the constants of human nature, the universal, unvarying qualities of temperament, the unchanged, unchangeable, undying sexual appetites and weaknesses that unite human beings throughout all ages and across all gulfs of religious, cultural and

24. Whereas ILGA's Pink Book, for example, states without explanation that Jordan has laws criminalizing homosexuality, ILGA's Web site corrects the mistake by referring to Schmitt and Sofer, who write in their book that "the Penal Code of 1951 makes no distinction between sexual intercourse by persons of the same sex or persons of different sexes." Schmitt and Sofer, Sexuality, cited on the ILGA Web site; see www.ilga.org/information/legal_survey/middle%20east/jordan.htm. Indeed, this is symptomatic of the shoddy and unprofessional "research" carried out by ILGA. For the Pink Book, see Aart Hendriks, Rob Tielman, and Evert van der Veen, *The Third Pink Book: A Global View of Lesbian and Gay Liberation and Oppression* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1993), 297.

25. *The Second ILGA Pink Book A Global View of Lesbian and Gay Liberation and Oppression* (Utrecht: Interfacultaire Werkgroep Homostudies, 1988), 189.

26. Everett K. Rowson, "The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice Lists," in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity,* ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), 72–73.

27. Edward Lacey, "English Translator's Introduction," in Ahmad al-Tifashi, *The Delight of Hearts, or What You Will Not Find in Any Book* (San Francisco: Gay Sunshine Press, 1988), 31. Lacey translated only the five chapters of the book that deal with "homosexual" anecdotes. The chapters were translated from a French translation and not from the Arabic original.

linguistic difference . . . How edifying—and humbling—to realize, for example, that the popular belief that the size of a man's penis may be gauged by the size of his nose was as widespread in those remote times as it is today . . . or that most queens, in the final analysis, preferred, then as now, a thick cock, whatever its length, to a thin one."[28]

Contra Schmitt, As'ad AbuKhalil, a Lebanese political scientist who lives and teaches in the United States, affirms that "homosexual" identities and what he calls "pure homosexuals" have existed in Arab/Islamic civilization.[29] AbuKhalil asserts that the "idea that there were no self-declared lesbians (suhaqiyyat) or gay men is false."[30] His evidence consists of one line that he mistranslates from the famed medieval physician al-Razi as cited by al-Tifashi. While discussing hermaphroditism (al-khinath), which, according to al-Razi, results from the strength and/or weakness of male and/or female sperm, al-Razi also speaks of less extreme outcomes with cases where "you would find masculinized women [nisa' mudhakkarat] as you would find feminized men [rijal mukhannathin] so much so that some of these masculinized women either menstruate less or do not menstruate at all, and some of whom might grow beards, as I have seen weak beards and mustaches on many women . . ."[31] AbuKhalil mistranslates the first part of this line as "You might find males as women and females as men" and lets it hang without the remainder of the line.[32] Throughout his account, AbuKhalil refers to "homosexuals," "gays," "heterosexuals," and "homophobia" as transhistorical identities and phenomena and anachronistically identifies people and practices with them. For example, he cites medieval Arabic books, which "contain collections of poetry and anecdotes by and about gay men and women."[33] Unlike the antihistoricists, however, AbuKhalil believes that changes *have* occurred in the Arab world, but they do not concern identities, which he sees as transhistorically present, but rather "homophobia," which he believes is historically contingent: "The advent of Westernization in the Middle East brought with it various elements of Western ideologies of hostility, like . . . homophobia. This is not to say that there were not antihomosexual . . . elements in Arab/Islamic

28. Lacey, "English Translator's Introduction," 30–31.

29. As'ad AbuKhalil, "A Note on the Study of Homosexuality in the Arab/Islamic Civilization," *Arab Studies Journal* (Fall 1993): 32–34, 48.

30. AbuKhalil, "A Note," 33.

31. Shihab al-Din Ahmad al-Tifashi, *Nuzhat al-Albab Fima La Yuwjad Fi Kitab* (London: Riyad al-Rayyis, 1992), 303.

32. AbuKhalil, "A Note," 33.

33. AbuKhalil, "A Note," 33.

history, but these elements never constituted an ideology of hostility as such."[34] Indeed, AbuKhalil's misreading of the evidence extends to the European scene, which he mentions for contrast, arriving at unsubstantiated conclusions: "The professed homosexual identity among Arabs allowed homosexuals historically a degree of tolerance that was denied for centuries to homosexuals in the West. When homosexuals were hunted down as criminals in much of medieval Europe, homosexuals were rulers and ministers in Islamic countries."[35] This identitarian essentialism characterizes AbuKhalil's entire approach.

Bruce Dunne participates in this academic discourse with his essay "Power and Sexuality in the Middle East."[36] He asserts that "sexual relations in Middle Eastern societies have historically articulated social hierarchies, that is, dominant and subordinate social positions: adult men on top; women, boys and slaves below."[37] Presumably, in non-Middle Eastern societies such hierarchies did not "historically" exist except in the celebrated cases of "Greek and late Roman antiquity," but certainly not in the medieval, let alone the modern, "West." As this situation is contrasted with the "distinction made by modern Western 'sexuality' between sexual and gender identity, that is, between *kinds* of sexual predilections and *degrees* of masculinity and femininity, [which] has until recently, had little resonance in the Middle East"[38]—a judgment that is further illustrated by quotes from Egyptian native informants (a young man and a physician) whom Dunne cites—the conclusion is inescapable: "Western notions of sexuality offer little insight into our contemporary young Egyptian's apparent understanding that sexual behavior conforms to a particular concept of gender."[39] Dunne's approach is to demonstrate how "Middle Eastern" society, *unlike* Western society, is one where non-"egalitarian sexual relations" predominate and where sexuality "conforms to a particular notion of gender." This is the reason why, citing IGLHRC, he affirms that "many homosexuals in Middle East-

34. AbuKhalil, "A Note," 34.

35. AbuKhalil, "A Note," 33.

36. Bruce Dunne, "Power and Sexuality in the Middle East," *Middle East Report* 206 (Spring 1998): 8–11, 37.

37. Dunne, "Power," 8.

38. Ibid. The term "Middle East" is a problematic one due to a number of reasons, not least among them is its imperial pedigree, which locates the area in relation to Europe. Other problems relate to the fact that the Muslim world extends beyond the "Middle East" into Asia and Africa and that the "Middle East" includes non-Arabs and non-Muslims (e.g., residents of the European settler colony of Israel and Armenia). It is not clear if what Dunne and others describe as "Middle Eastern" applies to all these people or not.

39. Dunne, "Power," 9.

ern countries have sought asylum in the West as refugees from official persecution."[40] Thus, he calls for "queering" the "Middle East" to put an end to these conditions.[41] This type of anthropology by Dunne (who incidentally knows no Arabic, as evidenced by the lack of any Arabic sources in his work—his native informants notwithstanding) calls less into question its (and his) conception of the other and more its (and his) conception of its mythical idealized self—one that is incapable of seeing the other except as a projection of all that it is not and that it does not contain, namely, nonegalitarian sexual relations, the oppressive rule of men, "gender-based" sexuality, patriarchy, and so forth. This mythological "West" as reference remains the organizing principle of all such discussions.

A more recent addition to this growing body of literature is Stephen Murray and Will Roscoe's *Islamic Homosexualities,*[42] a title indicative of their limited knowledge of Muslim societies (since "Islamic" is an adjective referring to the religion Islam while "Muslim" refers to people who adhere to it, it is unclear how "Islam," the religion, can have a "homosexuality" let alone "homosexualities"[43]). Murray thinks that Arno Schmitt's claim that Arabs have no conceptions of homosexual persons because (according to Schmitt) "Arabic synonyms for 'to fuck' have no form of reciprocity,"[44] is preposterous, as "I do not know of such a verb in English or any other language. To fuck and be fucked requires more than two persons, or sequential acts, or use of a dildo: human anatomy precludes A's penis being in B's anus while B's penis is in A's."[45] In fact, contra Murray and Schmitt, *both* classical *and* modern Arabic have the verb "tanayaka," which does indicate reciprocity as when two people "yatanayakan" meaning that they are "fucking each other."[46] The language-based errors and mistakes in both Schmitt's and Roscoe and

40. Dunne, "Power," 11

41. Dunne, "Power," 11.

42. Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, eds., *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

43. "Islamic" corresponds to "Judaic" as "Muslim" corresponds to "Jewish" or "Jew."

44. Schmitt, "Different Approaches," 10.

45. Stephen O. Murray "The Will not to Know, Islamic Accommodations of Male Homosexuality," in Murray and Roscoe, *Islamic Homosexualities,* 33.

46. Historically, the verb "tanayaka" referred to the eyelids closing on each other, literally fucking each other, as in "tanayakat al-ajfan," or to indicate that people have been overcome with drowsiness, as in "tanayaka al-Qawm." See ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-ʿArab,* vol. 10, 502. The verb however was used in the medieval period as it is in the modern period to mean that two people fuck one another. See, for example, the tenth-century classic Abu Faraj ʿAli bin al-Husayn Al-Asfahani, *Kitab al-Aghani* [The Book of Songs], ed. Ihsan ʿAbbas, Ibrahim al-Saʿafin and Bakr ʿAbbas (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 2002), vol. 21, 63, where the famed ninth-century poetess and singer ʿArib recounts how she and her lover Muhammad bin Hamid were fucking one another, "tanayakna."

Murray's books are too many to list here. Suffice it to say that this is the level that their fight to represent the *true and real* Arab or "Islamic" position on male-male sexuality has reached. Indeed Murray, after a range of quotes from sources or stories dating back to the classical period of Muslim civilization and to contemporary oral reports by Arab native informants, including one "Omar, a cosmopolitan Saudi studying in the United States,"[47] concludes that "with females segregated and tightly controlled, young and/or effeminate males available for sexual penetration are tacitly accepted—and very carefully ignored in Muslim societies, past and present."[48] Indeed, time in the context of the Arab world and Islam is not an agent of change but rather the proof of its lack.

Incitement to Discourse

The advent of colonialism to the Arab and Muslim worlds, its sponsorship of what came to be known later as "modernization" projects, and the proliferation and hegemony of Western cultural products have indeed had their effects. Basim Musallam has shown how such contact from the beginning of the nineteenth century reversed centuries of support that most schools of Islamic jurisprudence had given to women's rights to contraception and abortion, thus assimilating Islam's stance on these questions to the Christian Western position (both Roman Catholic and Protestant).[49] Indeed, as Western cultural encroachment continued, its hegemonic impact was also felt at the level of language. The word "jins," for example, meaning "sex," emerged in Arabic sometime in the earlier part of the twentieth century carrying with it not only its new meanings of a "biological sex" and "national origin," but also its old meanings of "type," "kind," and "ethnolinguistic origin," among others. The word in the sense of "type" and "kind" has existed in Arabic since time immemorial and is derived from the Greek "genos." As late as 1870, its connotation of "sex" had not yet taken place.[50] An unspecific word for sexuality, or "jinsiyyah," which also means "nationality"

47. Murray, "The Will," 41.

48. Murray, "The Will," 42.

49. Basim Musallam, *Sex and Society in Islam: Birth Control before the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

50. Butrus al-Bustani, *Muhit al-Muhit, Qamus Mutawwal Lil-Lughah al-ʿArabiyyah* (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnan Nashirun, 1987), 129. Al-Bustani's dictionary dates from 1870, at which time the word "jins" had still not acquired the meaning of "sex." For medieval dictionaries, which identify jins as "genos," see ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-ʿArab,* vol. 6, 43; and Muhammad bin Yaʿqub Al-Fayruzabadi, *Al-Qamus Al-Muhit* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-ʿArabi, 1997), vol. 1, 738.

and "citizenship," was coined by translators of the works of Freud in the 1950s (like Mustafa Safwan and Jurj Tarabishi)[51] with a more specific and nonconfusing word coined more recently by Muta' Safadi, one of the two translators of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*.[52] Still the new word "jinsaniyyah" is understood by a few, even among the literati. Words for homo- or heterosexuality were also invented recently as direct translations of the Latin original: "mithliyyah" or sameness in reference to *homo*sexuality, and "ghayriyyah" or differentness in reference to *hetero*sexuality. Arab translators of psychology books (except for translators of Freud who coined the term "mithliyyah"[53]) as well as Arab behavioral psychologists had adopted in midcentury the European expression "sexual deviance," translating it literally as *al-shudhudh al-jinsi*, a coinage that, as we saw in the preceding chapters, remains the most common term used in monographs, the press, and polite company to refer to the Western concept of "homosexuality."[54]

The advent of colonialism and Western capital to the Arab world has transformed most aspects of daily living; however, it has failed to impose a European heterosexual regime on all Arab men, although its efforts were successful in the upper classes and among the increasingly Westernized middle classes. It is among members of these richer segments of society that the Gay International found native informants.[55]

51. See Sighmund Fruyd, *Tafsir al-Ahlam*, translated by Mustafa Safwan (1958; Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif Bi Misr, 1969), 181, for example; and Sighmund Fruyd, *Thalathat Mabahith Fi Nazariyyat al-Jins*, translated by Jurj Tarabishi (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1981).

52. See Mishil Fuku, *Iradat al-Ma'rifah, Al-Juz 'al-Awwal min Tarikh al-Jinsaniyya*, edited and translated by Muta' Safadi and Jurj Abi Salih (Beirut: Markaz al-Inma' al-Qawmi, 1990).

53. Sighmund Fruyd, *Tafsir al-Ahlam*, translated by Mustafa Safwan, 182, 301, 337, 390, 391, 396, and 400.

54. See chapter 2 above on the biologically essentialist and pathologizing account of homosexuality provided by Nawal al-Sa'dawi in a chapter titled "Al-Rajul wa al-Shudhudh al-Jinsi" in her *Al-Rajul wa al-Jins* (Beirut: Al-Mu'assassah al-'Arabiyyah lil-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 1986), 557–69. The book was originally published in 1977. As'ad AbuKhalil argues that the use of the term "shudhudh jinsi" in the Arab press constitutes oppression of "homosexuals" in the Arab world today. See his "New Arab Ideology? The Rejuvenation of Arab Nationalism," *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 35 and 35, fn52, where such use is the only evidence provided by AbuKhalil to support the charge of anti-"homosexual" oppression.

55. One such example is the short essay written by a Jordanian lesbian for a book compiled by IGLHRC. The author uses a silly and wrongly transliterated and Orientalist pseudonym "Akhadar Assfar" [properly transliterated, it would read Akhdar Asfar, meaning Green Yellow], See Akhadar Assfar, "Jordan," in Rachel Rosenbloom, *Unspoken Rules: Sexual Orientation and Women's Human Rights* (New York: Cassell, 1996), 103–4. Although the author is careful to say that her statement "was written to reflect my personal, individual perspective and not to speak on behalf of other lesbians in Jordan" (103), she ends her essay by affirming that "Lesbians in Jordan are without a mention, without recognition, very marginalized . . . YET WE EXIST," 104. Another Tunisian native informant by the name of "Muhammed" provides information to one Francoise Gollain in her "Bisexuality in the Arab World," in *Bisexual Horizons: Politics, Histories, Lives*, ed. Sharon Rose and Chris Stevens (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1996), 58–61. See the interview conducted by the two gay editors

Although members of these classes who engage in same-sex relations have more recently adopted a Western identity (as part of the package of the adoption of everything Western by the classes to which they belong), they remain a minuscule minority among those men who engage in same-sex relations and who do not identify as "gay" nor express a need for gay politics. This point is conceded by the Gay International whose descriptions of the sexual practices of Arab men, as we saw above, stress the "prevalence" of same-sex contact while acknowledging the dearth of "gay" politics or identification.

It is this minority of native informants and its diaspora members who now staff groups such as the U.S.-based Gay and Lesbian Arabic [*sic*] Society (GLAS), founded in 1989 by a Palestinian in Washington, D.C. Indeed, as members of the Gay International, this minority is one of the main poles of the campaign to incite discourse on homosexuality in Arab countries. GLAS defines itself as "a networking organization for Gay [*sic*] and Lesbians of Arab descent or those living in Arab countries. We aim to promote positive images of Gays and Lesbians in Arab communities worldwide. We also provide a support network for our members while fighting for our human rights wherever they are oppressed. We are part of the global Gay and Lesbian movement seeking an end to injustice and discrimination based on sexual orientation."[56] GLAS's newsletter *Ahbab* declares that "since we started this site, we have witnessed the development of a global family of Gay/Lesbian Arabs and friends."[57] For the founder of GLAS and its current outreach director, Ramzi Zakharia, "since the concept of same-sex relations does not exist in the Arab world, being 'Gay' is *still* considered to be sexual behavior . . . Just because you sleep with a member of the same sex does not mean that you are Gay . . . it means that you are engaging in homosexual activity. Once a relationship develops beyond sex (i.e.: [*sic*] love) this is when the term gay applies."[58] Indeed for Zakharia, the issue of time is crucial. In the Arab world, being gay is "still" considered sexual behavior—the point being that the Arab world has yet to catch up with the liberatory Western model of gayness, a transformation that GLAS seeks to expedite. GLAS's Western sexual epistemology is clearest in its claim to represent those Arab men who practice same-sex contact but do not identify as

(one is an Israeli Jew, the other an American Jew) with an Israeli Palestinian man named Walid who identifies as "gay" in *Independence Park: The Lives of Gay Men in Israel*, ed. Amir Sumaka'i Fink and Jacob Press (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 197–219.

56. See its website and homepage at www.glas.org.

57. See its Web site at http://www.glas.org/ahbab/home.htm.

58. Nur Sati, "Equivocal Lifestyles," *Living Channel*, 30 July 1998, posted on the *Ahbab* newsletter Web site, http://www.glas.org/ahbab/Articles/arabia1.html. Emphasis added.

gay or seek to be involved in gay politics through GLAS or any other organization.[59] In this, these self-identified gay Arab native informants are not unlike many Arab women native informants for Western feminism. As Marnia Lazreg put it, "To what extent [these Arab women native informants] do violence to the women they claim authority to write and speak about is a question that is seldom realized."[60]

The Gay International and this small minority of same-sex practitioners who adopt its discourse have embarked on a project that can only be described as *incitement to discourse*.[61] As same-sex contact between modern men has not been a topic of government or journalistic discourse in the Arab world of the last two centuries (the atypical and exceptional 1950s books and articles by Salamah Musa notwithstanding), the Gay International's campaign since the early 1980s to universalize itself has incited such discourse. The fact that the incited discourse is characterized by negativity toward the mission of the Gay International is immaterial. By inciting discourse on homosexual and gay and lesbian rights and identities, the epistemology, nay, the very ontology of gayness is instituted in such discourse, which could only have two reactions to the claims of universal gayness—support them or oppose them without ever questioning their epistemological underpinnings. Indeed it is exactly these reactions that anchor and strengthen and drive the Gay International's universal agenda. In a world where no one questions its identifications, gay epistemology and ontology can institute themselves safely. The Gay International's fight is therefore not an epistemological one but rather a simple political struggle that divides the world into those who support and those who oppose "gay rights."

The Gay International is aided by two other phenomena accompanying its infiltration of the international public sphere—namely, the spread of AIDS on an international scale and the Western homophobic

59. In an article discussing the gay-bashing of a Pakistani living in Chicago, an otherwise careful observer, Alexander Cockburn (who argues persuasively against hate crimes legislation as a misguided strategy that does not deal with the causes of hate crimes or with the legal inequalities of gays and lesbians in U.S. society) urges the U.S.-based Al-Fatiha Foundation, which he identifies as "an international gay Muslim organization," not to "wast[e] time on hate-crimes issues in Chicago when their Muslim comrades round the world are confronted by forces of intolerance even grimmer than [Chicago] Mayor Daley's Blue Knights . . . Seven Islamic nations prescribe the death penalty for homosexuality" (Cockburn, "Beat the Devil," *Nation,* 21 May 2001, 10). When Al-Fatiha turned its attention to the people who actually created it, Cockburn urges the organization to represent people who never sought its creation, much less its "defense" of their rights.

60. Marnia Lazreg, "Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing As a Woman on Women in Algeria," in *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 89.

61. I borrow the notion of "incitement to discourse" from Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 1, 17–35.

identification of it as the "gay" disease, and the rise of Islamism in the Arab and Muslim worlds during the same period, which demanded a strict order of sexual mores. The Gay International has benefited measurably in its task of inciting discourse by attracting much antigay Islamist and nationalist reactions.[62]

As discussed in the introduction, while the premodern West attacked medieval Islam's alleged sexual licentiousness, the modern West attacks its alleged *repression* of sexual freedoms in the present. Representations of Arab societies in the discourse of the Gay International, which includes the very popular publication *Spartacus,* an "International Gay Guide," range between the horrific and the splendid, the latter on account of the "availability" of Arab men willing to engage in insertive anal intercourse with Western (read white) gay men. In the context of an Arab anticolonial nationalism or the more recent Islamism seeking Western technological modernization while "preserving" its version of cultural or religious "authenticity," the Gay International is *correctly* perceived as part of Western encroachment on Arab and Muslim cultures. The fact that the Gay International resorts to the same organizations (the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Congress, U.S.-based human rights organizations, the American media, inter alia), practices, and discourse that advance U.S. imperial interests is hardly a mitigating circumstance. Indeed, not only the Arab world but also many Muslim countries find themselves in a similar position, as do non-Muslim third world countries.[63] Faisal Alam, the Pakistani American founder of a new Gay International organization for gay and lesbian Muslims, the Al-Fatiha Foundation, explains to his Western audience how Islam is "200 years behind Christianity in terms of progress on gay issues." Alam, not surprisingly (like Robert Bray, quoted above), is a field associate with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in Washington, D.C.[64]

62. For one of the earlier and measured Islamist responses to Western scholarship on homosexuality in Arabic, see Muhammad Jalal Kishk's engagement with the work of John Boswell in his *Khawatir Muslim fi al-Mas'alah al-Jinsiyyah* [A Muslim's Thoughts on the Sexual Question] (1984; Beirut: Dar al-Jalil, 1992). For a Christian parallel of incitement to discourse, in the case of the Anglican Church, see Neville Hoad, "Homosexuality, Africa, Neoliberalism and the African Church: The Lambeth Conference of African Bishops, 1998," in *Studies on Religion in Africa* 26 (2004): 54–79.

63. On the case of southern African nationalist responses, see Neville Hoad, "Between the White Man's Burden and the White Man's Disease: Tracking Lesbian and Gay Human Rights in Southern Africa," *GLQ* 5, no. 4 (1999): 559–84. On the case of Cuba and the reactions to the Gay International in the context of the cold war, see Lourdes Arguelles and B. Ruby Rich, "Homosexuality, Homophobia, and Revolution: Notes toward an Understanding of the Cuban Lesbian and Gay Male Experience, Part I," in *Signs* (Summer 1984): 683–99, and part 2, *Signs* (Fall 1985): 120–35.

64. David Goldman, "Gay Muslims," *Southern Voice* (Summer 1999), posted on http://www.al-fatiha.org/svoice.html. Alam has become so important in Washington circles that *even the Wash-*

The ambivalent gay representation of the Muslim world as a "homosexual paradise" has led some European gay men to convert to Islam. Khalid Duran, a Moroccan social scientist, reports on such occurrences in Britain and Germany: "Such converts are drawn to Islam by the erroneous assumption that Muslims are more tolerant . . ." Indeed it is such beliefs that account for why "Morocco has become a favorite playground for European gay men." As a result, religious circles "are reacting with increasing bitterness to this type of prostitution engendered by tourists from affluent societies. The long-standing indulgence was certainly not rooted in Islam. On the contrary, an Islamic backlash is gaining momentum, despite the abject poverty."[65] Still, the phenomenon Duran discerned in Europe seemed to be reproducing itself in the United States, at least until 9/11. The founder of a new U.S. group called "Queer Jihad" is a white American convert to Islam who goes by the name "Sulayman X."[66]

Duran discusses the result of this touristic assault:

> A dispassionate discussion of the human rights of homosexuals is particularly hard to initiate in Muslim societies confronted with a kind of Western homosexual aggression. An instance in point is a representative of a European political foundation who was stationed in North Africa for many years. Extremely extroverted, he projects his homosexuality as a mark of distinction above and beyond his redoubtable academic merits. Such Western extravagances make the task of human rights activists among Muslims very difficult indeed.[67]

Duran understands that gay sex tourism in Morocco incites a discourse that has negative effects. However, he falls in the Western gay epistemological trap that identifies as homosexual only those Arab and Muslim practitioners of same-sex contact who are "passive." Duran describes "active" partners as having "no other homosexual inclinations" or as

ington Post featured him in an article. See Emily Wax, "Gay Muslims United in Face of Rejection," *Washington Post,* 3 April 2000.

65. Khalid Duran, "Homosexuality and Islam," in *Homosexuality and World Religions,* ed. Arlene Swidler (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993), 186.

66. See the site of his group Queer Jihad on the Internet and his own "Confessions of Sulayman X," posted at http://www.well.com/user/queerjhd/confessions.htm. I should note here that Sulayman X's pretensions are made possible within a post–World War II context of African American appropriations of Islam and the appropriation in turn by white U.S. youth culture of African American popular culture. I should also note here that Faisal Alam, the founder of al-Fatiha, met one such convert. He tells the *Washington Post* reporter that his first homosexual encounter was a "relationship with an older male convert to Islam" in the United States where he lives. See "Gay Muslims United in Face of Rejection."

67. Duran, "Homosexuality," 186–87.

suffering from "emergency homosexuality."[68] It is the passive ones who are gay and therefore at risk for human rights violations. Duran notes that Western "gays seeking active partners in North African countries usually do not realize that their local lovers are often motivated by a hostile attitude toward them as citizens of nations that had once been colonial masters. To sodomize a Westerner provides a kind of psychological relief for some people from among the former 'subject races' who now have a chance to take it out on their oppressors. This also holds true of some other African regions; to do it to a white man is like taking revenge, along with having a source of income."[69] By reducing the desire of Moroccan men who are "active" in same-sex contact to the economic, anticolonial, or "emergency" realm, Duran need not account for the different workings of sexual epistemology and sexual desire to which Moroccan men subscribe; sexual desire is simply and conveniently eliminated from his account altogether.

Duran's semianthropological study (vaguely reminiscent of Richard Burton's views on the "Sotadic Zone"), which is punctuated by data that he provides as a native informant, differentiates between what he considers "the more genuine, or genetic type of homosexuality . . . [which is] generally less common among the peoples of the 'Islamic belt' than in Europe" and the more prevalent "emergency" homosexuality he thinks exists in the Arab countries and Iran.[70] Like AbuKhalil, Duran seems to think that the categories of "gay" or "straight" are transhistorical; he writes of "two important historical figures [who are] known to have been gay, Sultan Mehmet Fatih, the Ottoman conqueror of Constantinople (Istanbul), and Sultan Mahmud Ghaznawi, who invaded India from Afghanistan."[71]

Since the early 1980s, in the wake of the Iranian Revolution and the rise of Islamism in the Arab countries and the beginnings of the internationalization of the Western gay movements, a steady, albeit infrequent, discourse about Western "sexual deviance" and later about AIDS became evident in the Arab press. Much of it represented the Western gay and lesbian movements, following Western religious descriptions, as part of the "decadence" and "degradation" of Western sexual mores in general. Still, this limited discourse rarely mentioned "sexual deviance" in Arab

68. Duran, "Homosexuality," 188. Although Duran does not clearly define what he means by "emergency homosexuality," the sense is of men who have sex with men when there are no women available. His notion of "emergency homosexuality" seems related to Freud's notion of "contingent homosexuality." See Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality,* trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1962), 3.

69. Duran, "Homosexuality," 189.

70. Duran, "Homosexuality," 187–88.

71. Duran, "Homosexuality," 190.

countries and remained infrequent until the 1990s when it became more vociferous, although still infrequent, in response to the crusading efforts of the Gay International.

An example of this is the exchange that took place between the editor of a London-based Arabic newspaper, *al-Hayah,* and a representative of a U.S.-based Arab gay and lesbian group. Railing against Western cable and satellite channels for broadcasting programs containing violence, sexual material, and gay and lesbian weddings, Jihad al-Khazin, then editor-in-chief of the most prestigious Arab daily *Al-Hayah,* referred to gays by the Arabic term "sexual deviants."[72] Al-Khazin's conservative and procensorship argument chastised Arab liberals who fight government control of television and defended Arab governments as the bearers of "the responsibility to protect their societies from the worst aspects of degeneration." Al-Khazin, who often espouses Western conservative opinion on social matters, concluded his tirade by quoting Western sources that "sexual deviants" constitute no more than 1 to 2 percent of Western society. He asserted that "the focus [of television representations] on [a] violence without punishment or pain has led to the spread of violence in society. The danger now [lies in the possibility] that the focus on deviance among women and men, might lead to the acceptance of deviance as a normal, not a deviant, issue, its subsequent spread in the West, and then its reaching us."[73] Incensed by the use of the term "deviant" but not by the procensorship argument, Ramzi Zakharia, the Palestinian American founder of GLAS, wrote a letter to the editor in protest. Zakharia insisted that the term "deviant" "insults me as an Arab who desires people of the same sex as it insults millions like me." Zakharia explained how deviance does not describe people like himself since homosexuality is "genetic" and since his relationship to his sexual partner is based not only on sex but also on love. After issuing a veiled threat to withdraw a number of advertisements that the company for which he works usually places in *Al-Hayah,* Zakharia declared that his group's goals in the Arab world were like those of the feminist movement, namely, to "remove the old and tribalist patriarchal system, which has strangled and continues to strangle our people . . . This system is based on the use of 'traditions' and 'honor' as weapons to repress pluralism in our societies in order to make democracy practically impossible, and to maintain the tribalist mentality whose effects are very clear in the contemporary Arab world."[74] In

72. Jihad al-Khazin, "'Uyun wa Adhan," *Al-Hayah,* 9 February 1996.

73. Al-Khazin, "'Uyun wa Adhan."

74. Ramzi Zakhariyya, "Al-Nizam al-abawi wa aslihatuhu al-qam'iyya," letter to the editor, *Al-Hayah,* 3 March 1996.

response to Zakharia, al-Khazin, whose own concern about "degeneration" is borrowed wholesale from late nineteenth-century European social Darwinism, asserted that he did not intend to insult anyone by his comments but was simply using the Arabic term for homosexuals. The other term that exists, he correctly added, is *mithliyyah* or sameness, a term that is hardly known to most readers.[75] Al-Khazin concluded by asserting that "we" published most of Zakharia's long letter "while registering that the editor-in-chief and *Al-Hayah* are both against sameness [Mithliyyah], or deviance [shudhudh], or whatever the reader would like to call it, for reasons of traditions, religion, and inherited conventions, but without insulting anyone and without coercion, imposition, or oppression and without making a case out of it, as this was not the intention . . . moreover, the editor-in-chief admits his ignorance of this issue more generally as he did not realize that this issue was on the table."[76] Indeed it was not, as al-Khazin's concern was with the spread of "deviance" from the West to the Arab world and not its actual existence in the Arab world, about which he feigned ignorance; and neither the editor of *Al-Hayah* nor *Al-Hayah* itself would have declared their explicit opposition to "sameness" in the Arab world had they not been incited to do so by Mr. Zakharia, who forced such an admission to be issued from his American domicile—an admission that will affect not him but people in the Arab world. Zakharia's letter elicited another response from a Saudi physician in Riyadh who felt it incumbent to assert that the punishment for homosexuals is death and challenging Zakharia's claim of the genetic basis of "sexual deviance," asserting it as a "disease."[77]

Such incitement was not only confined to the pages of *Al-Hayah;* it had exploded in the preceding two years on the pages of many Arabic newspapers. In discussing the UN population conference in Cairo in 1994 and the UN-sponsored World Women's conference in Beijing in 1995, these issues came to the fore as a result of the imposition of the agenda of the Gay International by U.S., Canadian, and European NGOs on the rest of the world. The scandal of distorted translations of texts of

75. I should note here that in the last few years, in their coverage of gay- and lesbian-related news, *al-Hayah* and other Arabic newspapers have begun to employ intermittently the expression *mithliyyah,* indicating a transitional, ambivalent phase in language use between "shudhudh" and "mithliyyah." See, for example, "Mithliyu al-jins ila al-qafas al-dhahabi fi Kanada . . . wa al-baritaniyyun yantazirun al-faraj" [Canada's homosexuals (enter) the golden cage (of marriage) while the(ir) British (counterparts) are still waiting (to follow in their footsteps)], *Al-Hayah,* 13 April 2000, back page.

76. Response of the editor-in-chief (al-Khazin), *Al-Hayah,* 3 March 1996.

77. Dr. 'Abdullah Bin Hamad, "Al-Shudhudh al-jinsi marad wa laysa amran mafrudan," letter to the editor, *Al-Hayah,* 15 March 1999.

platforms and other resolutions to other languages became a major issue in the preparation of both conferences. It was in this context that Arab columnists began to rail against the "lobby of deviants" in America who want to impose their debauchery on the rest of the world.[78] More recently, it was at the February 1999 population conference in The Hague, "The International Conference on Population and Development—Five Years after Cairo," where this "deviant lobby" showed its less than peaceful face. Intent on applying the Rousseauian formula that those who refuse to obey the "general will" of the Gay International be "forced to do so," indeed "be forced to be free," as Jean-Jacques Rousseau had put it,[79] the conference organizers attempted a repeat performance of 1994 by denying most delegates translations of conference resolutions, as they made them available only in French, English, and Spanish.[80] The resolutions included statements about guaranteeing for the youth the "freedom of [sexual] expression and sexual orientation." The word "orientation" was subsequently translated into Arabic in newspaper coverage as "direction," or "tawajjuh" (which has no idiomatic meaning whatsoever) and explained to the readers as meaning "sexual deviance."[81] It was a Belgian journalist of Muslim Arab origin who, as a correspondent for an Islamist magazine (*Al-Mustaqbal al-Islami*), alerted the Arab youth delegations to these ambiguous terms and their meanings prompting them to oppose them and to ask that they be removed from the resolutions. As punishment for his efforts, the UN conference coordinator denied him press access to the conference and instructed the UN security guards to take his press card and beat him. He was found by the Dutch police unconscious and handcuffed. They untied him and released him after which he pressed charges against the UN. The journalist, named Bashshar al-Jammali, sent letters to the 187 UN delegations and involved U.S. congressmen and the Dutch police in what became a cause célèbre condemning the machinations of the Gay International. Articles in the Arabic press and interviews with al-Jammali appeared with all the gory details of his beating.[82]

78. See, for example, Zaynab ʿAbd al-ʿAziz, "Kawalis mu'tamar al-mar'ah fi bikin," in *Al-Shaʿb* (Cairo), 7 July 1995, and her "Tafakhur al-shawadh . . . wa mu'tamar al-mar'ah," *Al-Shaʿb* (Cairo), 28 July 1995.

79. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract,* in Rousseau's *On the Social Contract, Discourse on the Origin of Inequality and Discourse on Political Economy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), 26.

80. See Danya Amin's report, "Muntada Fi Lahay . . . ," *Al-Hayah,* Mulhaq al-Shabab, 30 March 1999, 1.

81. Danya Amin, "Muntada Fi Lahay," 1.

82. See Muhammad al-Shaqa', "Hal yasmaʿ Anan anin Bashshar?" *Al-Hayah,* Mulhaq al-Shabab, 18 May 1999, 20.

Defending Rights

As the twenty-first century dawned, Egyptian authorities began to crack down on Cairo-based locations where Westernized Egyptian gay-identified men and their European and American tourist cohorts congregate. On May 11, 2001, the police raided a discotheque housed in a boat on the Nile in the upper-class neighborhood of Zamalik and arrested 55 people, at least 34 of whom were at the disco at the time of the arrests while the rest were arrested in their homes or on the streets of Cairo. Women and foreign (read European and American) men present at the discotheque were released immediately while three Egyptian men found to be the sons of "prominent" people were released later. The arrested men were alleged to be members of a cult that considers the poet Abu Nuwas their "prophet." This allegation was based on a book, which the authorities claimed they had found at the home of one of the suspects, that elaborates this view and wherein same-sex practitioners are enjoined to go on a pilgrimage to the Dead Sea annually to commemorate the death of the "People of Lot." The men were roughed up and insulted by the police. They were later subjected to physical and psychological torture, including "medical," read rectal, exams to ascertain their "deviance."[83] When interviewed by Human Rights Watch, Dr. Fakhry Saleh, the Egyptian government's director of the Forensic Medical Authority, and his deputy Dr. Ayman Fouda cited the 1857 book of the French forensic doctor August Ambroise Tardieu as their authority for such medical procedures.[84] Tardieu's book, already famous in Europe,

83. For journalistic coverage of the arrests, see Muhammad Salah, "'Abadat al-shaytan yastalhimun qawm Lut" [Satan worshipers receive their inspiration from "the people of Lot"], *Al-Hayah,* 14 May 2001, 7, and *al-Hayah*'s subsequent coverage on the following dates: 15 May 2001, 7; 16 May 2001, 7; 29 June 2001, 5. Note that originally it was reported that fifty-five people had been arrested; by late June the number was reduced to fifty-two—the three upper-class men who were released in the meantime were dropped unceremoniously from the count. See also Muhammad Salah, "'Qawm Lut al-judud' yabkun fi al-jalsah al-ula li-muhakamatihim" ["The new people of Lot" cry at their first trial hearing], *Al-Hayah,* 19 July 2001, 4, for coverage of the first trial hearing; and Bonnie Eslinger and Hossam Bahgat, "Egypt Steps Up Anti-Gay Campaign: 52 Men Face Obscenity Trial," *San Francisco Chronicle,* 19 July 2001, A12. See also Hossam Bahgat, "Explaining Egypt's Targeting of Gays," *Middle East Report,* 23 July 2001 (press information note available online at http://www.merip.org). See also *Al-Hayah,* 16 August 2001, 1, 5, 6; 28 August 2001, 15; 29 August 2001, 6; 30 August 2001, 6. On rectal exams performed on the suspects, see "'Qawm Lut al-judud' al-difaʿ yataʿahhad taqdim wathaʾiq li-tabriʾat al-muttahamin" ["The new people of Lot": The defense promises to provide documents to exonerate the suspects], *Al-Hayah,* 5 September 2001, 6. Apparently no exams were made on the penises of the men (for traces of fecal matter, for example) to ascertain if they were "deviant."

84. August Ambroise Tardieu, *Étude médico-légale sur les attentats aux moeurs* [A Medical-Legal Study of Assaults against Morals] (Paris: Bailliére, 1857).

came to be known in Egypt in the late nineteenth century as part of the modernization of medicine in the country.[85]

The official charges brought against these men by the state prosecutor were those of "offending religion" (one of the accused had allegedly written a text that advances a "heretical" interpretation of Islam as a religion that revels in same-sex contact) and of "practicing debauchery"—Egyptian law has no provisions against same-sex practice. Because Egypt has been under emergency regulations since the early 1980s, the men were tried by a special emergency state security court—an indication that the state considers this a national security issue. One person (the alleged author of the "heretical" text) was sentenced to a five-year prison term with hard labor, and his alleged associate received a three-year term. One person received a one-year prison term, and twenty others were found guilty of practicing debauchery and were sentenced to two-year prison terms with hard labor, while the remaining twenty-nine were found innocent of all charges and released. IGLHRC representative Scott Long (misidentified by *al-Hayah* as ILGA's representative or, more precisely, according to *al-Hayah,* "The International Association of Sexual Deviants") was at the trial and spoke with journalists. He condemned the court decisions and asserted that the "government exploits religion in an attempt to oppress the suspects." The court had declared that "Eastern society" as well as all monotheistic religions "condemn deviance [shudhudh] and perversion/delinquency [inhiraf]."[86]

This crackdown followed an increasing visibility of Westernized, Cairo-based, upper- and middle-class Egyptian men who identify as gay and consort with European and American tourists, as well as the related increase in Internet activity among some of these men to arrange for meetings. It should be noted that the police were able to pursue these men mostly through monitoring their Internet correspondence. The most prominent of the Web sites, gayegypt.com, is in English and features tips for European and American gay tourists coming to Egypt.[87] Clearly most Egyptian men who practice same-sex contact neither know

85. See Human Rights Watch, *In a Time of Torture: The Assault on Justice in Egypt's Crackdown on Homosexual Conduct* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2004), 108–9.

86. See Muhammad Salah, "'Qadiyyat qawm Lut al-judud' fi Misr: al-ashghal al-shaqqah li 23 muttaham wa tabri'at 29" [The "Case of the New People of Lot" in Egypt: Hard labor for 23 suspects and the acquittal of 29], *Al-Hayah,* 15 November 2001, 8.

87. For example, the site has a Web page called "Gay Arabic" in which it states the following: "Welcome to gayegypt.com's gay arabic [*sic*] page—perfect for gay tourists wishing to use a few words in their encounters with Egyptians. Even remembering a few of these phrases will raise eyebrows and enhance your prospects of a profitable holiday." The rest of the Web site acts as a guide to gay tourists visiting Cairo and Egypt more generally and interestingly appropriates Egyptian-born Greek poet Constantine Cavafy as a "gay" poet.

English nor have the wherewithal to afford Internet access, much less know how to use it. This is important in that the police do not seek to, and cannot if they were so inclined, arrest men practicing same-sex contact but rather are pursuing those among them who identify as "gay" on a personal level and who seek to use this identity as a group identification through social and public activities. The campaign of the Gay International misses this important distinction. It is not same-sex sexual practices that are being repressed by the Egyptian police but rather the sociopolitical identification of these practices with the Western identity of gayness and the publicness that these gay-identified men seek.

The arrests prompted a torrent of media collusion with the government, condemning the practice of "deviance" as a new Western imposition—ironically, the hysteria that gripped the Gay International and their local agents only further ignited the rhetoric. IGLHRC was joined by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International in condemning the arrests and in orchestrating a letter-writing campaign to Egyptian officials.[88] They were joined by GLAS and by Al-Fatiha's now infamous founder Faisal Alam, who not only called for worldwide demonstrations in support of the arrested men but also solicited the signatures of members of the U.S. Congress, recruited by openly gay and anti-Palestinian Massachusetts congressman Barney Frank and by the anti-Arab and anti-Egyptian Tom Lantos to sign a petition threatening a cutoff of U.S. aid to Egypt if the government failed to release the men (both Congressmen are Jewish Americans with strong pro-Israel views—facts that are not considered irrelevant, especially to the Arabic press).[89] Western

88. See also Bahgat, "Explaining Egypt's Targeting of Gays"; and Howard Schneider, "Cultural Struggle Finds Symbol in Gay Cairo: Arrests of 52 Men Reflect Tension between Islamic Traditionalists, Secularists," *Washington Post,* 9 September 2001, A24.

89. A GLAS flyer circulated via e-mail called for the 15 August 2001 demonstration in New York City at the Egyptian consulate. The flyer called on people to "join us for a rally outside the office of the Egyptian Consulate as we send a clear message that Gay Rights are Human Rights and that our tax dollars will not continue to fund the brutal oppression of our brothers and sisters in Egypt or any other Arab country." Al-Fatiha's Faisal Alam issued an Action Alert on 14 August 2001, entitled "International Day of Solidarity and Mourning in Support of 52 Detained Men in Egypt," calling for the 15 August worldwide demonstrations and asserting that "the Egyptian government [should] know that the world will not sit back and watch injustice and oppression take place!" On Alam's call to members of Congress, including Barney Frank, to sign the threatening petition, which many, including Frank, did, see *Al-Hayah,* 15 August 2001, 1, 6. See also the *Washington Post,* 9 September 2001, A24, and *Al-Ahram al-ʿArabi,* 25 August 2001 (online version). Alam had already met Frank at least a year earlier when he "presented a copy of the Koran to a group of Jewish gay leaders, including U.S. Representative Barney Frank." See Wax, "Gay Muslims." Lantos's anti-Arab and anti-Egyptian views are noted in *al-Hayah,* "Al-Mithliyyun fi al-ʿalam yatahaddun li nasrat qawm Lut fi Misr" [Homosexuals in the world (launch a) challenge in solidarity with the "people of Lot" in Egypt], 15 August 2001, 1, 6. His unwavering support of Israel and enmity to Arab countries and the Palestinians is discussed in Janine Zacharia, "Lantos's List," *Jerusalem Post,* 13 April 2001 (online version).

diplomats and the Western press, who are usually silent about most human rights abuses in Egypt as well as the poverty that afflicts the country, flocked to the trial hearings in droves and registered their horror at the proceedings. The reaction of the Egyptian press and the Egyptian government was swift: more vilification campaigns of deviant sex as an imperialist plot followed, as evidenced by the *real* alliances that the Gay International makes with imperialists—Al-Fatiha's activities were seen as particularly egregious. Indeed, the vilification campaign against these men intensified precisely as a result of the actions of the Gay International and the Western politicians whose support it solicited. During the hearings, the prosecution frequently referenced the Gay International's campaign, pledged to defend the "manhood" of Egypt against attempts to "violate" it and wondered what would become of a nation who sits by idly as its "men become like its women" through "deviance."[90] The press and conservative Islamists soon began to call for explicit laws criminalizing same-sex practice.[91] The Gay International and its activities are largely responsible for the intensity of this repressive campaign. Despite the overwhelming evidence that gayness, as a choice, is proving to bring about more repression, not "liberation," and less sexual freedom rather than more for Arab men practicing same-sex contact, the Gay International is undeterred in its missionary campaign. Indeed, more recently, Ramzi Zakharia of GLAS claimed that "we refer to [the Queen Boat raid and trial] as our own Stonewall."[92] Zakharia seems not only to misunderstand the situation in Egypt but also the history of the Stonewall rebellion. The significance of the Stonewall event was not the police raid but rather the reaction it provoked, which mostly consisted of resistance to the arrests and of men and women demonstrating aggressively for their rights to be homosexual and that, as homosexuals, they have the right not to be harassed by the New York police. This inaugural event for the U.S. gay liberation movement and for what came to be known as "gay pride" has little in common with the Queen Boat raid. The reaction of the drag queens at the Stonewall bar was indeed significantly different from the reaction of the men at the Queen Boat discotheque; the latter not only denied being "homosexual" or "gay" but also added that they

90. See Khalid Miri, "Ma'rakah sakhinah bayn al-niyabah wa al-difa' fi qadiyyat al-shawaz" [A heated battle between the prosecution and the defense in the case of the deviants], *Al-Hawadith* (Cairo), 6 September 2001 (online version).

91. See, for example, "Al-Qanun la yu'aqib al-shawaz" [The law does not punish deviants], *Al-Ahram al'Arabi* (Cairo), 25 August 2001, which includes calls for the criminalization of same-sex contact among men in the country.

92. Ramzi Zakharia, radio interview on National Public Radio's "Leonard Lopate Show," WNYC, 14 April 2005

were forced under torture to sign false confessions that they were indeed "deviants." Also, not only did these men not seek publicity for their alleged homosexuality, they resisted the very publicity of the events by the media by covering their faces in order to hide from the cameras and from hysterical public scrutiny. These are hardly manifestations of gay pride or gay liberation.

Reacting to international pressure, the Egyptian government finally relented a year after the initial raid. In May 2002, the government, based on President Mubarak's refusal to ratify the sentences, overturned fifty of the fifty-two verdicts (including innocent and guilty verdicts), explaining that charges of the "habitual practice of debauchery" should have been considered outside the bounds of the State Security Court.[93] Based on this development, 21 of the 23 convicted men were freed except for the two lead defendants who were not included in the decision and remained jailed. Prosecutors opted to retry the twenty-one convicted men in an ordinary court of misdemeanors. The trial opened on July 2, 2002. On March 15, 2003, without allowing the defense to present arguments, the presiding judge reconvicted the men and increased their sentence from two to three years (the maximum under the law).[94] Upon appeal, the judge reduced the sentence to one year (time served). Harassment increased following the Queen Boat case, with police stepping up its surveillance and arrests of people suspected of "debauchery." A report by Human Rights Watch claimed that Egyptian "law enforcement officials read a signal in the Queen Boat case—taking it as an incentive to increasing rigor, or even a route to career advancement."[95]

Indeed, it was not only Egyptian law enforcement officers who would look forward to career advancement in the wake of the Queen Boat case, but so would key members of the Gay International. For his missionary efforts on behalf of IGLHRC and for his monitoring of the Queen Boat trial, Scott Long would soon be rewarded with employment at Human Rights Watch as a director of its newly and specially created program for monitoring worldwide violations of "lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights." Long wrote the organization's report on the Queen Boat trial, *In a Time of Torture: The Assault on Justice in Egypt's Crackdown on Homosexual Conduct,* and reproduced parts of it in the opening article for a special issue of *Middle East Report,* which he wrote, "Sexuality, Suppres-

93. "I'adat muhakamat 50 shakhs fi qadiyyat 'Qawm Lut'" [The Retrial of 50 People in the 'People of Lot' Case], *Al-Hayah,* 23 June 2002, 6.

94. Muhammad Salah, "Raf' al-'uqubah ila Sajn 3 sanawat li 21 min 'Qawm Lut al-Judud'" [Increasing Jail Time to 3 Years for 21 of the "New People of Lot"], *Al-Hayah,* 16 March 2003, 6.

95. Human Rights Watch, *In a Time of Torture,* 49.

sion, and the State" in the Middle East.[96] He would also introduce the report at a public panel in San Francisco convened on the occasion of its release. Long became an instant expert speaking on "gays" in Arab countries on radio shows and at public lectures.[97] At the San Francisco event, Long announced that he had first learned of the arrests in Cairo when an Egyptian gay friend had called him on his cellular phone to inform him of the events (in the article for *Middle East Report,* he claimed that he had learned of them via e-mail messages[98]). As'ad AbuKhalil, who was the discussant on the panel, asked whether persecuted Egyptian Islamists also happened to have the cellular phone numbers of Mr. Long or other U.S. human rights activists. His was a rhetorical question. Indeed, rather than opposing the U.S. State Department's training of Egyptian police in its "Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program," a program in operation since 1983 that is used as the template for finding, arresting, and torturing innocent Islamists, the Human Rights Watch report recommends to the U.S. State Department that it include in its "training programs for Egyptian criminal-justice officials . . . a human rights component that includes issues of sexuality and sexual orientation in a way designed to eliminate prejudice and stigma."[99] The report, perhaps aware of the stigma of being Muslim or Arab in the United States, did not recommend the elimination of the Islamist stigma from the U.S. training program. As corroborated evidence of horrific, yet sadly standard, torture and humiliation proved insufficient exoticization of the situation in Egypt, Long often uses an uncorroborated, incredible story based on a lone report by a man arrested for "debauchery" as evidence of the exotic horror that Egypt constitutes for "homosexuals." The story appeared initially in the 144-page Human Rights Watch report as part of this one man's testimony:

> Once, it's hard to believe this, they brought a class of maybe thirty boys from a school, six or seven years old. They made us lie face down on our stomachs, and the small boys watched the policemen walking on our backs. Then the boys walked on us . . . They told the boys, "This is how faggots [khawalat] end." It was like a school trip.[100]

Long thought this unsubstantiated story was so much more significant (read *othering*) than other corroborated stories of torture that he reproduced it in his eight-page article in *Middle East Report.* He reinvokes it regularly at public lectures, including on radio appearances.[101] Like Long, local Egyptians who contacted and helped the Gay International in their efforts during the Queen Boat episode have also been generously rewarded with their own foreign-funded local organizations, such as Hossam Bahgat's "Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights," founded in 2002, which seeks to defend a number of "personal" rights, including the "sexual and reproductive rights of women and men" and health-related issues, such as "HIV/AIDS."[102]

96. Ibid. See also Scott Long, "The Trials of Culture: Sex and Security in Egypt," *Middle East Report* 230 (Spring 2004): 12–20.

97. His most recent appearance was on National Public Radio on the "Leonard Lopate Show" on WNYC on 14 April 2005 to discuss his expertise on gay Arabs.

98. Scott Long, "The Trials of Culture," 13.

99. Human Rights, Watch, *In a Time of Torture,* 128.

100. Ibid., 71.

101. The latest was on the "Leonard Lopate Show," 14 April 2005. Long's polemics are not only directed at the Egyptian authorities but at any one who might question his Gay Internationalist agenda. In an article that is mostly a response to my article on the topic, he mistook my arguments for nativism, claiming that I was a "liberal metropolitan intellectual" who relied in my criticisms on "a distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic." In fact, my article not only exploded nativist notions of the authentic and the inauthentic (as does the rest of my work) but also never deployed such distinctions or used such terms at all to develop its arguments. What Long and the Gay International seem deliberately to refuse to understand is that opposition to their imposition of sexual identities and epistemologies is based on the violence that they perpetrate on the very subjects they seek to liberate, and not on nativist claims of authenticity and foreignness. See Scott Long, "The Trials of Culture," 15. Long was not the only Gay Internationalist offended by my criticisms. For Arno Schmitt's response, see Arno Schmitt, "Gay Rights versus Human Rights: A Response to Joseph Massad," and my reply to him, Joseph Massad, "The Intransigence of Orientalist Desires: A Reply to Arno Schmitt," in *Public Culture* 15 (Fall 2003): 587–594.

Such facile and naïve misunderstandings include Frances Hasso's assertion that "Massad's contention that lesbian and gay identity in Egypt is strictly a product of U.S. and European-based transnational queer organizations is essentializing in defining as impossible such identities among 'authentic' Egyptian men." See Frances S. Hasso, "Problems and Promise in Middle East and North Africa Gender Research," *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 669. Invented claims and fabricated quotes about my argument like Hasso's now proliferate within Gay Internationalist literature. For the most recent ill-informed misapprehension of my argument, see Brian Whitaker, *Unspeakable Love: Gay and Lesbian Life in the Middle East* (London: Dar al-Saqi, 2006). His book is strewn with anti-Arab stereotypes that the author is careful to mostly place in the mouths of his anonymous native informants. To justify why he is writing a journalistic book about gays and lesbians in the Middle East while lacking any expertise on the subject, Whitaker claims that he was authorized to do so by a pseudonymous "Egyptian" activist, who upon Whitaker's suggestion that he write a book on the Queen Boat incident, responded to him: "No, . . . *you* should write one" (8). What is "unspeakable," however, in Whitaker's book is not some Arab homosexual love that he is endowing with the gift of speech but rather Whitaker's own European supremacist attitude that is fully informed by social Darwinism. Thus, as Whitaker had determined that it "was clearly time for someone to raise the issue in a serious way" and that his Egyptian native informant allegedly explained to him that "it was difficult for Arabs—at least those living in the region—to do so," he, belonging to the group of fittest humans, took it upon himself to defend those unfit to defend themselves, despite certain "risks" which he decided were "worth taking" (9). Whitaker, like many White European and American Gay Internationalist writers, is so insistent on not questioning his own European supremacist nativism that he apprehends any such questioning on the part of others as nothing short of anti-*European* nativism. Failing to understand my intervention as, among other things, a criticism of European *and* Arab nativism, he reformulates it as one calling for "cultural authenticity" and that it "dismiss[es]" those Arabs who want to adopt gay identity as "unimportant victims of Western influence," and that it posits Western influence on the Arab world in "conspiratorial terms" (207–11). The book is a remarkable example of what ill-informed journalism can produce when inspired by social Darwinism and racialized Eurocentrism.

102. See the organization's Web site, http://www.eipr.org/en/info/about.htm.

By inciting discourse about homosexuals where none existed before, the Gay International is in fact *heterosexualizing* a world that is being forced to be fixed by a Western binary.[103] Because most non-Western societies, including Muslim Arab societies, have not subscribed historically to these categories, their imposition is eliciting less than liberatory outcomes: men who are considered the "passive" or "receptive" parties in male-male sexual contacts are forced to have one object choice and identify as homosexual or gay, just as men who are the "active" partners are also forced to limit their sexual aim to one object choice, either women or men. As most "active" partners see themselves as part of a societal norm, so heterosexuality becomes compulsory given that the alternative, as presented by the Gay International, means becoming marked outside the norm—with all the attendant risks and disadvantages of such a marking.[104] Also, most Arab and Muslim countries that do not have laws against sexual contact between men respond to the Gay International's incitement to discourse by professing antihomosexual stances on a nationalist basis. This is leading to police harassment in some cases and could lead to antihomosexual legislation. Those countries that already have unenforced laws begin to enforce them.[105] Ironically, this is the very process through which "homosexuality" was invented in the West.

103. The most recent campaign has targeted the Palestinian Authority (PA). The campaign started two years after the eruption of the second intifada. Articles published in the U.S. press, written by Israelis or pro-Israel Jewish activists, claimed that Palestinian "gays" are so oppressed that they could only find refuge in "democratic" Israel. Interviews with such "gay refugees" recounted horrid torture by PA elements. Indeed, the effort was inaugurated by U.S. Congressman Barney Frank himself, who used the occasion to praise Israeli "democracy" and the way it has functioned as a refuge for Palestinian gays in a region that oppresses them. See Yossi Klein Halevi, "Refugee Status," *New Republic,* 19–26 August 2002; Davi J. Bernstein, "Gay Palestinians Suffer under Arafat," *Yale Herald,* 13 September 2002; and the remarks of Barney Frank, "Supporting Israel," House of Representatives, 20 May 2002, H2654. Even an American Jewish lesbian activist who supports Palestinian rights joined the fray. Incensed by my article on the Gay International, she described my views as akin to "Stalinist dismissals of demands for the sexual liberation of women and homosexuals as nothing more than a bourgeois aberration." For this distinctly uncharitable response, see Charity Crouse, "Out and Down and Living in Israel," *Gay and Lesbian World Review* 10, no. 3 (May–June 2003). Israeli gay groups were in the forefront of defending these Palestinian men, whom Israeli authorities wanted to deport. See "Death Threat to Palestinian Gays," *British Broadcasting Corporation,* online Report, 6 March 2003; Mazal Mualem, "Groups try to stop expulsion of 3 gay Palestinians," *Ha'Aretz,* 7 March 2003. Concern among pro-Israeli American Jews that gay Americans supported the Palestinian cause resulted in a Zionist offensive that went into full gear to "expose" PA "oppression" of gays. See Daniel Treiman, "Gays Are Divided on Mideast Strife," *Forward,* 23 August 2002. On the status of Palestinian men identified as gay refugees in Israel, see Dan Williams, "Palestinian Gay Runaways Survive on Israel's Streets," *Reuters,* 20 September 2003. An Israeli-produced and -directed documentary film was made about one of them in 2004. The film, titled *Garden* and directed by Adi Barash and Ruthie Shatz, was shown at the Sundance film festival in Utah. It told the story of two Palestinian hustlers who slept with men, one an illegal refugee from the West Bank, the other a Palestinian citizen of Israel. Indeed, there were portrayals in the U.S. press that gay Palestinians and Israelis are a model of coexistence, as "demonstrated" in Jerusalem gay bars, see Orly Halpern, "Isn't That Queer," *In These Times,* 16 August 2002. On patriotic Israeli gay men who serve in the Israeli army, see Danny Kaplan, *Brothers and Others in Arms: The Making of Love and War in Israeli Combat Units* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2003).

104. On compulsory heterosexuality's coercion of women in the West, see Adrienne Rich's classic, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs* (Summer 1980): 631–60.

It is not the Gay International or its upper-class supporters in the Arab diaspora who will be persecuted, but rather the poor and nonurban men who practice same-sex contact and who do not *necessarily* identify as homosexual or gay. The so-called passive homosexual whom the Gay International wants to defend against social denigration will find himself in a double bind: first, his sexual desires will be unfulfilled because he will no longer have access to his previously available sexual object choice (i.e., exclusively active partners, as in the interim they will have become heterosexual);[106] and second, he will fall victim to legal and police persecution as well as heightened social denigration as his sexual practice becomes a topic of public discourse that transforms it from a practice into an identity. When the Gay International incites discourse on homosexuality in the non-Western world, it claims that the "liberation" of those it defends lies in the balance. In espousing this liberation project, however, the Gay International is destroying social and sexual configurations of desire in the interest of reproducing a world in its own image, one wherein its sexual categories and desires are safe from being questioned. Because it has solicited and received some support from Arab and Muslim native informants who are mostly located in the United States and who accept its sexual categories and identities, the Gay International's imperialist epistemological task is proceeding

105. The case of the Lebanese vice police's harassment in April 2000 of the managing director of an internet service provider in Beirut for allowing a Web site for "gay" Lebanese to run is one recent example. IGLHRC's intervention on behalf of two people being tried (the internet company's managing editor and a human rights activist) by a military court in connection with the Web site and the campaign it drummed up are exemplary of the incitement to discourse that contributes to even further criminalization and harassment. In one of its campaign mailings, IGLHRC enjoined its supporters to write letters to the Lebanese authorities demanding that they "end discrimination and harassment against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in Lebanon." The setting up of the "Gay Lebanon" Web site featuring a buffed blond European man on the first page, itself incited discourse on gay issues in the press. Even human rights activists in the country ran a gay-unfriendly article on the topic. See Nada Iliyya, "Luwat Lubnan wa Suhaquhu Aydan," in *Huriyyat* 20 (Feb. 2000): 39. The Web site itself, whose language, like the corresponding Egyptian Web site, is exclusively English with Arabic making no appearance whatsoever, provides not only cruising tips for Lebanese men who identify as "gay" (and who obviously must be able to read English and must have internet access) but also to foreign visitors (read white Europeans and Americans) who are duly informed in the tradition of Lebanese chauvinism that homosexuality in Lebanon (a country that, unlike many of its neighbors, has colonial French laws from the 1930s criminalizing homosexuality) is "more tolerated" than in other Middle Eastern countries. The Web site address is http://surf.to/gay.lebanon.

106. This is precisely how the desires of the "passive" homosexual are described not only by the Gay International but also and increasingly in Arabic fiction. On this see chapters 5–6.

apace with little opposition from the majority of the sexual beings it wants to "liberate" and whose social and sexual worlds it is destroying in the process. In undertaking this universalizing project, the Gay International ultimately makes itself feel better about a world it forces to share its identifications. Its missionary achievement, however, will be the creation not of a *queer* planet, to use Michael Warner's apt term, but rather a *straight* one.

FOUR

Sin, Crimes, and Disease: Taxonomies of Desires Present

Much of the discourse about sex that took place in the twentieth-century Arab world centered on reconstructions of the medieval sexual life of the Arabs. It posited a pedagogical role of the past in the present as a model of openness or debauchery, prudishness or licentiousness, liberation or repression, gender equality or inequality, virginality or sensuality. From the 1980s on, a new discourse emerged that dealt with sexual relations, partially by elaborating the category "sexual deviance," in existence, as we saw, since the 1940s, as a sociological and psychological ailment symbolic of decadent societies and applying it not only to the past, but also and more decidedly to the present.

Scholars and intellectuals of the 1970s and early 1980s expanded discourse on sex in the medieval Arab world for a possible sexually liberating pedagogy to benefit the present and future. But the early 1980s saw a veritable explosion of publications of *materia sexualis*. These new publications ranged from books of medieval Arab *ars erotica* to books on love and sex in the medieval Arab world, including accounts of "sexual deviance." In addition, a new genre of medical, criminological, and jurisprudential books about sexual "deviance" in general and in contemporary society in particular were published. If Michel Foucault was correct in asserting that unlike other civilizations, Western civilization was "the only civilization to practice a scientia sexu-