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Occidental Gender Trouble and the Creation of the Oriental Sodomite

Patrick Haddad

Abstract:

Recent debates on the issue of "Arab homosexuality" place the creation of that identity category in a framework of European "epistemic hegemony," putting thus the blame on both *Nahdawi* writers who adopted a Victorian morality and ethics from their western counterparts, and on contemporary "Arab" LGBT activists that participate in neoliberal NGO practices. These two agents allegedly imbibe a matrix of cis-heteronormativity alien to their societies at the time. Literary critics such as Khaled El-Rouayheb and Joseph Massad, foremost writers on the subject of the *Nahda* and homosexuality, have presented the nuanced relationship between Arab modernity, sexuality, and de-colonization. Yet, they have done so while charting a dynamic of power that does not sufficiently provincialize Europe nor re-contextualize the discourse into a longer history of "East/West" history of desire. My objective in this paper is to showcase small but significant instances of interaction between "The West" and the "Orient" on the issue of "same-sex" sexual contact in an effort to understand a trend of portraying "The Orient" as inherently sodomitic. Furthermore, my aim is to question the histories of "Arab" sexuality and modernity that are taken for granted in many of these debates. Thus, I will discuss a dynamic of power contradictory to the one presented in Joseph Massad's *Desiring Arabs*, one that would question several pre- and post-colonialist arguments on the emergence of "homophobia" in Levantine contexts.

With the publication of Joseph Massad's *Desiring Arabs*, LGBT activists in the MENA have been accused of being subservient to imperialism through their complacence in adopting "western" terms that define their sexuality, as well as them forming LGBT rights NGOs, which Massad credits as fully supporting neoliberal practices and imperialism. While NGOization needs to be addressed, I am more concerned in this research with nuancing the binary of "Gay International" vs. "authentic categories of desire." With gay rights discourse gaining momentum in Lebanon, the recent discord between LGBT NGOs and Islamic Sunni clerics (along with the Maronite clergy) denotes local ideological struggles, which problematizes Massad's disregard for all native self-identifying gay men who create a break from the local sexual identity categories.

As such, for the purpose of this research, I question the history of desire presented as fact in *Desiring Arabs*, and that the "homosexual" category only exists in the Levant due to "Western" neo-colonization. My research will be interjected by literature at various pivotal points in history in order to fully contextualize the questions still relevant and not posited by Massad; mainly: how far does this history of sexual desire and condemnation by the "West" stretch back, how long did it last, and were there no "native imperial agents" involved in the project of "Arab" modernity and sexuality?

First and foremost, through his history in *Desiring Arabs*, Massad describes a moment of colonialism, Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, linked to a sexualized power dynamic – that of the colonizer and the colonized; and this is my first issue: the start-date. For Massad and Khaled El-Rouayheb, this epoch in "Arab" sexuality, when representations of sexual expression became tied with political ramifications, does not start till at least the 1800s. Thus, El-Rouayheb's research did not include or sufficiently link the historical depiction of the "Orient" as inherently perverted and the emergence of the "homosexual" in Europe. As for Massad, whose history begins with Al-Tahtawi's *An Imam in Paris*, he did not take into account Arab authors' attempt at establishing a modernization project two hundred years before the emergence of the "Gay International."

Of course, that will not do.

The methodology of unpacking the history of sexuality starting from the concrete onset of colonialism, with Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt, is, unfortunately, lacking, for it inherently centers the discourse of sexuality on Europe, and thus seemingly robs the "Orient" of agency within the narrative, or even a participatory role. My implicit goal is to thus encourage further research into the history of sexual desire, the *Nahda*, and decolonial sexuality movements that do not place the "West" or Europe as the main players.

Thus, part of the revision I am suggesting relies on a critique of what is assumed as the "Nahda" in these debates on "Arab homosexuality," as the timeline, from Napoleon's invasion in the late 18th century and Arab de-colonial movements in the mid-20th century (which is the mainstream understanding of the timeline of the Arab Renaissance, or *Nahda*) inherently relies on European episteme to unpack the debate.

However, throughout this paper, as I discuss the milestones in the history of desire between "The East" and "The West," I suggest re-thinkings of various histories (of sexuality, of modernity, and of colonialism)

we take for granted in research. Namely, that the image of the "Oriental Monstrosity" (of sodomy and pederasty as inherent qualities of the "Orient") affected French and British narratives of the "Orient" so vehemently as to inscribe a veritable "gender trouble," to borrow the term from Judith Butler, wherein differences in the gendered expressions of the perceived "other" create anxiety and a disruption in the cis-hetero-normative matrix.

Such a dynamic "gender trouble" would have been established centuries before the start of the pathologization of "the pervert" in Foucault's genealogy of sexuality, and this would have several implications on the discussion of Arab desire; chiefly: one needs to re-think the start of the pathologization of same-sex contact to include this much more widened world history; one also needs to account for a dynamic of power that existed since the early Crusader era. This dynamic posited the east as a sexualized object for Europe, and its Orientals as the terrifying ultra-virile and emasculating defenders of this land. Ultimately, one would have to rethink Joseph Massad's argument calling for a disavowal with the epistemic hegemony of western-styled identifications (as in, identifying with a sexuality) more thoroughly in order to account for a reading of history that has tried to blame the sodomite at every turn.

I will be conducting my paper by interacting with three main sources and treating them as milestones to signify different points in this history of desire. First and foremost, I will be looking into Crusader-era accounts of the Levant that include its inhabitant's sexual proclivities. Furthermore, I will be looking into accounts of the colonization of Egypt as well as the discourse it initiated, ending my historiography with the first text Massad peruses, Al-Tahtawi's *An Imam in Paris.*

For the purpose of this paper, I will clarify some terms that I will use that might seem interchangeable. First, I use "same-sex sexual contact" in reference to Joseph Massad, and will thus implicate his research when it is used. Second, I use "pederasty" to refer to the appellation of "homosexuality" by *Nahdawi* authors, such as Al-Tahtawi. Third, I use "sodomy" to refer to the different bodily acts classified variedly in different contexts. Furthermore, I use "oriental sodomite" to refer to the portrayal in "Western" contexts of MENA men who engage in same-sex sexual relationships.

Crusader-Era Gender Trouble

In order to adequately question the limits of the history of desire and colonization put forward by Massad, there is a need for further analysis of pre-modern European portrayals of a sexualized "Orient," and to have such an analysis within the context of the *Nahda*. Readers in this discussion would be familiar with Edward Said's seminal contribution in *Orientalism*, as well as his public critique of how writers in western contexts seek to acquire, seduce, and redefine themselves through the management of the female "Orient." Flaubert's Kuchuk, for example, "is the prototype...of all the versions of carnal female temptation to which his Saint Anthony is subject" (Said, 187). Said concludes that Kuchuk is a "symbol of fecundity, peculiarly Oriental in her luxuriant and seemingly un-bounded sexuality" (Said, 187).

Joseph Massad's chimeric contribution in this debate is worthy of recognition: in his *Desiring Arabs*, Massad, ever the student of Said, attempts to unveil several hundred years' worth of orientalist writings on Arab sexuality, from Egypt's colonialism up to the age of the NGOization, beginning with the 1990s

with the emergence of NGOs advocating for LGBT issues internationally, nicknaming this new form of Orientalist discourse on Arab sexuality as "The Gay International." It would seem thus that one need not go deeper in researching this history, if it weren't however, for the pertinent details misplaced within this discussion on sexuality. Early accounts reveal a European disgust towards the "sodometrie" of the Turks/Moors/Moslems/Saracenes (i.e.: any label denoting brown men). Therefore, I aim to bring forth the representations of the Orient in medieval Europe in the hopes that the dynamic of power established in this wide-ranging and multi-faceted dialogue would be re-centered on the regions marginalized by anterior accounts.

We start at the beginning of the ordeal, the Fall/Conquest of Al-Quds/Jerusalem. Michael Uebel, writing in "Re-Orienting Desire: Writing on Gender Trouble in Fourteenth-Century Egypt," says that in the west, since the late tenth century onwards, "sexual perversity, particularly sodomitical practice, was taken to be the most repellent aspect of Muslim society, and thus it became persistently emblematic of an entire culture" (Uebel, 233). Later on he quotes Said concerning the perceived fecundity of the Orient, on which Said remarks "is not the province of my analysis here, alas, despite its frequently noted appearance" (Uebel, 233). It is Uebel's contention, however, "that within the experience of medieval occidental culture, the orient's 'sexual promise' to which Said alludes are already inescapably tied to the desire and dread underwriting an encounter with male homosexuality" (Uebel, 233). Continuing further, he contends that the project of orientalism seems a deeply masculinist one.

Seminal thus in this project is the recovery of the "Holy Land" and the subsequent "reclamation" of European land/honor/virility/masculinity. Uebel writes that "the fantasy of recovering the Holy Land is itself a masculinist response to the perceived threat of homosexual invasion" (Uebel, 233). Oral histories and narratives of the crusades that seep into educational systems chart a simultaneously ponderous and wondrous history: The Pope calls on the faithful to save the foundation of Christendom from pillage; the Byzantine emperor urges all true believers, whether catholic or otherwise, to stop the desecration of the Holy Sepulcher. An army of zealous children march into the sea hoping they could be the barrier between the evil Mahometans and the righteous pilgrims in Jerusalem. All throughout, we are reminded of the magnificent, ever-lasting, and *only* castles in Lebanon that were built by the Crusaders.

Obviously, more critical accounts differ on almost every point I mentioned. Uebel, continuing with the same sexual history of the crusades, remarks that "One of the Ur-documents of the crusades, a forged letter from Alexius I Comnenus to Count Robert of Flanders circulating before 1098, tells of the many sexual atrocities supposedly committed by the advancing infidels" (Uebel, 233). Of course, the fact that a count of Flanders was involved in this affair should not, perhaps, surprise anyone, as this noble house of Flanders became the Imperial house of the Latin Empire, taking Constantinople from the very Comnenus dynasty it swore fealty to during the early days of the crusades. "The letter's catalogue of Muslim abuses," continues Uebel, "builds to the *nefarium peccatum* (abominable sin) of sodomy" (Uebel, 233).

This nefarious sin is as follows: men, of every age and rank (from boys to juveniles, to adult men to senile men, of all social casts, as well as even "clerics" and "monks" (presumably either an Orientalist distortion of Islamic *Ulama,* or a condemnation of local sects of Christianity), all have been "degraded by the sin of sodomy. They have already killed one bishop with this abominable sin" (Uebel, 234). The fact that a death

was of a Christian clergyman is, perhaps, what chiefly resonated with the readers of this forged manuscript. This mass propaganda, according to Uebel, used oriental sodomy as a weapon attacking the core of both masculinity and Christianity. Guibert Nogent, also quoted here, posits that what is accentuated in this letter is what is most threatening about "infidel desire;" its inherent "refusal of women as sexual objects" (Uebel, 234).

And thus, the letter continues, that while the infidels do not spare the feminine sex, which "nevertheless might be excused by virtue of its agreement with nature – they go on to the masculine, with [even] animality and the laws of humanity broken" (Uebel, 234). Without delving too deeply into the close reading that I will be conducting of later documents, this rhetoric of unnaturalness, legality, and the categorization of the oriental other as the Monster/Terrorist/Fag (a term affectionately borrowed from Jasbir Puar) for the purpose of mobilizing a swathe of peoples into more normative behavior will resonate with a certain Egyptian Imam in Paris.

Insofar as the letter reveals, we glean that, by the point it has entered circulation, we can assume that the categorization of the inhabitant infidels of Holy Jerusalem threaten, due to their vile perversity, the very masculinity of Christ, for if they (the Orientals) would "[kill] a certain bishop by means of sodomitical abuse" (Uebel, 234), what would that mean for houses of the Lord?

The rest of this letter, going from the general tone, is not exactly unexpected: continued denouncement of "Arabian" sexual perversion; same-sex contact, "however much it is more frequently extinguished, by that much repeatedly is its flame more briskly kindled – temper itself toward human affairs, which is dirty with sexual minglings unheard of for brute animals and forbidden to Christian sight;" and, notably, polygamy, "although it is allowed the wretches, in their own opinion, to have many women, this is accounted little by them unless dignity is also sullied in the pigsty of such filth with men" (Uebel, 234). These acts so forbidden that the godly Christian must not lay eyes on cannot be, as Uebel puts it, "overcome or erased." Indeed, the theme of the Oriental sodomite shall return to haunt the future writings, as we will discuss later on.

The 1600s

After discussing the accounts of crusader-era European attitudes towards same-sex desire and the portrayal of the "Orient" as inherently sodomitical, it is important that I review another milestone in the history of desire and "East/West interaction." At this point, we should be reminded that as we jump through history, we cross over into a different context, and as such we cannot readily pretend that the "European" attitudes towards same-sex contact remained the exact same, nor that I am attempting to chart an exact pattern here. My project, as I reiterate, is to question the limits of the history of "Arab" sexuality, of the emergence of "western" sexuality, and, as I will go into later on, the participation of *Nahda* thinkers in the creation of homophobia as central to the modernization project.

Similar accounts of Muslim sodomites prevail across the pre-modern world. In *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* by Nabil Matar, who writes about the stereotyping of Muslims in English writings during the renaissance period, he remarks that "the Muslims were represented as a

people who defied God, nature, and English law, and therefore deserved punishment" (Matar, 112). Thus, by the early 1600s, Matar recounts, anxiety towards the sodomitical oriental reached an all-time high, induced by reports of ships caught by Turks whose crew was subsequently caught and retained "for their sodomitical use" (Matar, 116). Reports in the 1600s even prompted the release of a book in 1680, *The Case of many Hundreds of Poor English-Captives, in Algier*. However, this is not to say that homosexual desire, and even sodomy, was not prevalent in English contexts, or even piracy at sea. In fact, according to Matar, "homosexual practices were widely prevalent among the classes of vagrants and sailors, and in the first part of the century the realm was ruled by a homosexual king (James I) whose chancellor was also homosexual (Francis Bacon), and whose Lord Admiral of the Fleet, George Villiers, was homosexual or at least receptive to the king's homosexual desire. But no English writer thought of associating sodomy with Protestant Christianity, only with Islam" (Matar, 116).

In fact, we find ourselves needing to explicate this situation; why would English writers, with homosexuality prevalent in many corners of their society, feel compelled to incite discourse and raise awareness of the "oriental sodomite" if not as an expression of deep-seated attitudes towards race and a general presumption that "oriental" expressions of same-sex contact were understood as inherently perverted, sinful, or otherwise threatening? It is at this point that I suggest that the image of the "Arab" as inherently sodomitical has been cemented in the European imagination, and the inclusion of the Arab sodomite in the consciousness of western-European attitudes towards race and desire is undoubtable.

Male Belly-dancers and the French Male Gaze

Prominent of course in our history of European admonishment of male same-sex sexual contact for the purpose of nation-building is Napoleon Bonaparte's colonization of Egypt. And since it is again a classical starting date for writers on colonialism, I consider Napoleon's invasion of Egypt as another milestone in the history of desire worth commenting on.

Napoleon had, as is common knowledge, set himself up as a savior of Islam, as a vanquisher of the Vatican Pope, and as the liberator of Egypt from the debauched Mamluks through a proclamation to the Egyptians that Bonaparte authored in 1798. Al Jabarti, quoted in Juan Cole's *Napoleon's Egypt: invading the Middle East*, remarked that Bonaparte himself funded that year's celebration of the birth of the prophet on the river Nile. On the day of the celebration, which culminated three days of precession, entertainments, and festival, Denon, at Rosetta, witnessed "lewd dancing to celebrate [the sacred event]" (Cole, 124) performed by men:

> The dance that followed was of the same genre as the chant. It was not a painting of joy or of gaiety, but of a voluptuousness that turned quite rapidly toward a lasciviousness more and more disgusting, in which the actors, always masculine, expressed in the most indecent manner the scenes that even love does not permit to the two sexes save in the shadow of mystery. (Cole, 124)

Denon however was not complaining about the eroticism of the whole affair, but specifically the fact that this extremely public portrayal of desire was exhibited by men between each other. Similarly, Al-Jabarti, Cole reports, "took a dim view of the sexual morality of French men and women" (Cole, 124).

It is worth noting here that what is described in this cultural interaction is a French person's first reaction to "belly-dancing" as it is commonly called, but more accurately "*Balady* dancing," or "traditional Arab dancing." It is through the inclusion of "belly-dancing" into the consciousness of European colonialists that the image of the Arab sodomite was affirmed in the portrayal of Arab sexuality. The dancers, or "actors," here are "always masculine," and the dance itself was described as so indecent that "even love does not permit to the two sexes save in the shadow of mystery" (Cole, 124). Thus, Denon shows disgust at the sexualized image of the belly-dancers that he has constructed (again, this was simple dancing during a traditional, even religious, festival), and, most interestingly, denotes that only "the two sexes" might engage in it, as in, the dance is sexualized to a degree that it is considered tantamount to sexual intercourse. It is worth noting here that Denon is employing a cis-binary, that there are only "males" and "females," in exactly the context where such a categorization or rationalization of sexual differences has not emerged.

This is not to say that there have never been references to binary sexes in Arab society before, but to employ the sexual binary here, with the implication of backwardness/modernity at stake, and to use it to justify a condemnation of same-sex contact is telling, not to mention very interesting in a project that questions the limits of the history of desire and "East/West" interactions.

As previously mentioned, in a project such as Massad's that aims to highlight the implications of adopting a European episteme (such as sexuality or gender categories) a-historically to Arab sexual configurations, it would be an error to not commit to a close reading of the instances where "East/West interactions" took place. These instances, such as the one mentioned above, necessitate further discussion and contextualization, as adoption of a cis-normativity in the context of modernity is a precursor, or at least a factor, in the evolution of "Arab" homophobia.

An Imam in Paris

We do have one more contribution worth noting, Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi's *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz* (or *An Imam in Paris*, published in 1834). A major Egyptian writer and Imam, al-Tahtawi was heavily featured in *Desiring Arabs* (Joseph Massad) due to a particularly interesting appearance in his "protoanthropological" (Massad, 31) treaties on Paris. In the Takhlis, as Massad quotes from al-Tahtawi, quite possibly one of the French's better traits was "their lack of predilection for the love of male juveniles or for writing rhapsodies for them, as this is one thing that is never mentioned among them and which their natures and morality reject" (qtd. In Massad, 32). Al-Tahtawi goes further in saying that, while translating Arabic poetry into French, the French will not translate "oshq al-ghulaman" (love for male juveniles) (Massad, 32), and thus he praises this practice, going on to say that even mentioning this subject is considered extremely taboo, (and rightfully so according to him).

Due to the limitations that translated text pose, in that they are inherently an epistemic break from the original text and context that they are produced in, and the act of carrying over meaning from one tradition to another itself carries with it the prejudices of the reader, it is worthwhile for us to commit to a reading of Al-Tahtawi's *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz* in its original Arabic in order to fully understand the nuances of the terminology used. The difference in nuance, and its subsequent re-reading by other post-Nahdawi thinkers are markers for us to better understand the changing attitudes of the Arab intelligentsia towards same-sex sexual contact.

In the second chapter of the third portion in Al-Tahtawi's treaties on the Parisians, Al-Tahtawi expends a lot of effort to discuss the gender relations in Paris, while at the same time contrasting them with his native society. He says: "And of the praiseworthy things in their (the Parisians) character, which is most like the character of the Arabs: their lack of leanings to the ahdath (juveniles), and their renouncement of their pursuit from the beginning" (Al-Tahtawi, 87). It is noteworthy that at this point Al-Tahtawi does not refer to pederasty immediately, nor to "ghulman," but rather simply to a predilection to young pre-adult males, which goes against the translation provided in Massad's text. For the purpose of a full dedication to the original text, I will be translating minutely the passage that is most important for us, given that it is the passage writers of the *Nahda* focus on, not to mention that this is the passage that Massad relies on first in his literature review. A comprehensive reading of this passage would allow me to unpack not only the nuances of Al-Tahtawi's argument, but also the loaded terms Al-Tahtawi used to denote same-sex sexual contact, thus to better contrast them with anterior translations.

Thus, following his praising of the Parisians' lack of predilection to juveniles, Al-Tahtawi goes on to say:

> It is not even mentioned amongst them, it goes against their nature and morals, for in their good sayings and mottos it is mentioned that the ghazal (flirtation, courtship) of one sex with the same is taboo, for it is not well in French that a man says: I have loved a ghulman (a young man); for this saying would be categorically rejected; thus if any of them were to translate a book from our books, they would change the wording completely, and in the translation of that phrase would say "I have loved a girl" or likewise; for they get rid of it (the mention of pederasty) because they see in it a moral corruption, and they are right; as each of the two jinsayn (genera) has in its genus a trait that attracts the other like the pole of the magnet in attracting iron for instance, especially with electricity in attracting things; and likewise, if the jins (here in the meaning of the plural) were to unite, this particularity would not exist, and this now becomes outside the natural state, and this matter to them (the Parisians) is of the greatest debauchery." (Al-Tahtawi, 87-88. Translation mine)

From the passage above, we understand that Al-Tahtawi was picking up on a certain condemnation of "sexual perversion" in 19th century Europe that is most familiar to us; in fact, we need not mention the we are speaking of a period that Foucault minutely interrogates and deconstructs to reveal the machination of power that pathologized all "unnatural" perverts into institutions of "rehabilitation."

Before I continue discussing Al-Tahtawi, the existing link between the portrayal "oriental sodomite," Foucault's history of sexuality, and the emergence of Islamicate configurations of identities as inherently oppositional to European Modernity needs to be unpacked.

In Jasbir Purar's "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots," she credit's Michel Foucault with the creation of the category of the monster within the broader history of sexuality. His genealogy of the monster, firstly as the human monster, who "combines what is [unnatural] with what is forbidden," then as the in/corrigible, those who necessitate the exercise of power unto their bodies in order to reform, and the onanist, the sexual deviant, is crucial for us to understand the emergence of the homosexual and the pathologization of same-sex contact.

Thus, monsters, those who are unnatural and amoral, at the same time creatures slaved to their baser whims and those who are agents of their own amorality, yet also those who are incorrigible and those who need that extra push to reform and conform, have been born concurrently and inherently with the birth of the sexual deviant in the psycho-juridico-medical institutions. As such, according to Puar, "Foucault tied monstrosity to sexuality through specific analyses of the deployment of gendered bodies, the regulation of proper desires, the manipulation of domestic spaces, and the taxonomy of sexual acts such as sodomy" (Puar, 119). It is thus Foucault's genealogy of the monster that allows us to understand the relationship between the depiction of the "oriental sodomite" and the history of European sexuality.

We see then that the birth of Foucault's Monster cannot be adequately separated from Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, for instance, when Egyptian male belly-dancers inspired disgust and, simultaneously, desire, in the colonizers. Furthermore, I suggest that the "oriental sodomite" is inseparable from Foucault's "Monster," wherein both have been inscribed with the dichotomies of slavishness and agency, and unnaturalness and amorality. We may then consider that, in our view, these abhorrents are roughly one and the same, tied to the same compendiums of power, the juridical, medical, and colonial institutions that created them both, emerging out of the rush of criminalization, pathologization, and controlment of these Monsters.

Moreover, there are several features of interest throughout this passage; primarily, that in talking about the French Parisians, Al-Tahtawi reveals much more about his society. In his argument on the naturalness of the two different "genus" in courtship rather than the same "genus," and in his "scientific" argument to support it, Al-Tahtawi reveals that the Egyptian Cairo elite still extoll pederasty, still wax poetry about young men, and in general are not in a consensus on whether same-sex sexual conduct is morally reprehensible even in verse-form.

Following that, we face another area of interest, that of Al-Tahtawi's classification of male and female. In Khaled El-Rouayheb's translation of jins, he remarks that it is most likened in premodern Arabic for "genus" to refer to "kind;" thus, it is sometimes translated to "biological sex" but never "sexual/ity" (El-Rouayheb, 159), hence my personal refusal to translate it in the passage above to anything else, as sex/sexuality carries with it loaded contexts that Al-Tahtawi was neither aware of nor was dealing with.

There is, however, one more feature of interest in this proto-anthropological treaty – that of European censorship of all mentions of same-sex contact:

> for it is not well in French that a man says: I have loved a ghulman (a young man); for this saying would be categorically rejected; thus if any of them were to translate a book from our books, they

> would change the wording completely, and in the translation of that phrase would say "I have loved a girl" or likewise; for they get rid of it (the mention of pederasty) because they see in it a moral corruption. (Al-Tahtawi, 88, translation mine).

We can especially glean from this passage that, by the time Al-Tahtawi was writing, French attitudes towards same-sex sexual contact were more hardline than anticipated. The history provided to us by Foucault et al. paints a picture of a growing pathologization of homosexuals leading up to the birth of the asylums. However, we understand that through the gender fear created by a long history of interaction with the Orient, the Occident amalgamated a set of morality around sodomy and pederasty that preceded the modern history of the rise of "European Repressiveness" (thus possibly leading to a second argument against the Repressive Hypothesis that Foucault deals with throughout his *History of Sexuality*).

Through looking at crusader-era depictions of sodomy, we conclude that an entrenched anxiety towards the "oriental sodomite" developed around this time, for the desiring of the other and his simultaneous othering was a necessary precursor for the rhetorical invasion of Jerusalem, previously inhabited by sexual beasts. By looking into accounts of English sailors in the 1600s, we notice that this fear towards the "perverted oriental" turned into panic. Even though same-sex contact might have been prevalent during this time in the English society, the image of the "oriental sodomite" got into full effect. This sentiment is recurrent in the account of Egypt's colonization, and the fear towards the sexualized oriental and his portrayal as needing rescue became accentuated through the "starting point" of modern colonization. Ultimately, through a close reading of Al-Tahtawi, we have understood that by the time of his writing, European authors had begun censoring Oriental works that mentioned pederasty in the slightest form.

Yet, even more so than noting the history of the image of the "oriental sodomite," we notice that by the time that the *Nahdawi* project started – the project by loosely-associated Arab intelligentsia such as Al-Tahtawi to "modernize" Arab societies through Victorian ideals and ethics, Arab writers had already synthesized a reactionary approach towards same-sex sexual contact, justifying this newly-minted homophobia through logic, science, nature, and morals.

We also understand that the history of sexuality in the Arab world does not start with Joseph Massad's thesis, through the adoption of native agents of the project propagated by the "Gay International," but rather is intermixed with the mainstream Foucauldian history of sexuality and tied to the same Victorian ethics and morality that created them both. This implies that we need to re-think how we understand the concept of "the homosexual" as a purely western identity category. This research also suggests that "Arab homophobia," or the populist response to gay rights movements in the Arab world, does not only stem from late 20th century American imperialism, but is also entangled with the inherent linking of Arab modernity with anti-sexual sentiment.

It is thus through this understanding that we once again reaffirm the need to revisit moments in time where these assumptions about the Orientals were formed, intrinsically, I believe, through the accounts of Nabil Matar and the kidnappings of British sea-farers, as well as through the early Medieval conquests of former "Christian" kingdoms, such as the states in the Iberian Peninsula, Sicily, and, ultimately,

Constantinople. Furthermore, I believe there needs to be more concrete philological work done on the specific sexuality-related terms and words we now use in Arabic, as well as those that have been around in the past two hundred years, in order to better understand the emergence of “Arab homophobia” and its link to historical and sociopolitical matrices.

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