

1996), which would become my first book-length intervention in queer Maghribi studies (Hayes 2000). After the 1991 strikes on a number of campuses of the City University of New York, members of the original strike committee were elected to a majority of the Doctoral Students' Council of the Graduate School and University Center, where I was attending graduate school. As I moved into the leadership of this group, one of our less activist tasks was organizing monthly socials with snacks and dancing. Anyone in attendance could bring mix tapes (yes, there were still cassettes back then!). Mine was identified with the label "Fag Music," and the aforementioned Deee-Lite number was always one of its most popular songs. It inspired many fabulous moves on the dance floor, none of them compatible with heterosexual masculinity. I misremembered the last word in the song title as *move* rather than *heart* and retain *move* here because, if *heart* suggests an inner being or essence, *move* was more compatible with not only our dance moves at those socials but also the political movement that led to our strengthened position as students when it came to confronting administrative attempts to raise our tuition. I thus use that Deee-Lite song to evoke a moment I connect to the *decolonizing* moves well represented by the three articles as well as a number of essays, reviews, and other pieces presented under this issue's special theme.

The dance moves mentioned were not the only "groovy" moves happening in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This period witnessed an explosion of queer studies, beginning with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's (1990) *Epistemology of the Closet* and Judith Butler's (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. A year later Diana Fuss (1991) published her collection *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, the journal *differences* released a special issue titled "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities" (de Lauretis 1991), and the collective Bad Object-Choices (1991) published *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video*. These were exciting times, and the relation between deconstruction and queer theory was immediately clear. By the time I began working on my dissertation, in part inspired by *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (Parker et al. 1992), the heyday of queer theory was still in the present, and one could say the same about postcolonial theory. By the mid-1990s *subsets* of queer postcolonial studies were beginning to emerge (Cruz-Malavé and Manalansan 2002; Luibhéid and Cantú 2005; Patton and Sánchez-Eppler 2000).

These developments coincided with the arrival on the literary scene of Francophone Maghribi writers who openly proclaimed their same-sex desires and sexual histories, beginning with the Moroccan Rachid O. (1995) and the Franco-Tunisian Eyt-Chékib Djaziri (1997).² Like writers who would follow them, these novelists were also on the move, especially in often working from France instead of their country of origin. Earlier in the 1990s a handful of scholars began to take the prominence of representations of homoerotic desire in Maghribi literature more seriously, particularly in conference papers (Canadé Sautman 1994; Long 1993;

This option was almost impossible in my graduate program in the 1990s, but the recent shift will increase possibilities for more comparatively queer work between French, Arabic, and other languages of the region.

Ghada Mourad's "'Let's Take a Leap': Decolonizing Modernity, Double Critique, and Sexuality in Mohamed Leftah's *Le Dernier Combat du Capitain Ni'mat*," published in this issue, analyzes a novel by the Moroccan writer Leftah. In so doing, Mourad engages heavily with the same collection of essays by Khatibi that I mention above. Given my discussion of the links between queer theory and deconstruction, we may conclude that Khatibi's theorization of decolonization *as* deconstruction was queer from the very beginning. Some of us might partly disapprove of Khatibi's particular version of queering (as Woodhull does in the passage quoted above), but it would be hard to deny that his "coupling" of decolonization with an insistence on sexual diversity prefigures queer postcolonial theory by almost a decade. Moreover, years ago Khatibi (1983, 150) called for the kind of work that Massad undertook in 2007: "To speak of 'sexuality' in Islam is to carry out, first of all, a translation from one language to another, from one civilization to another." All three essays herein make groovy moves that allow us to consider further Khatibi's triple nexus among queerness, decolonization, and deconstruction.

The key Khatibi concepts with which Mourad engages are "*pensée-autre*" and the "double critique directed at both Islamic and Western traditions and foundations, a kind of 'de-constitution of knowledge' modeled on Derridian deconstruction and Foucauldian archaeological methods." Until I read Mourad's essay, however, I had never considered the queer possibilities of Khatibi's "double critique." In work I did with Margaret R. Higonnet and William J. Spurlin in *Comparatively Queer: Interrogating Identities across Time and Cultures* (Hayes et al. 2010), we theorized the importance of comparative approaches to queer studies, which we characterized as a "double crossing" and playfully called "going both ways," with all its sexual implications. The eponymous protagonist of Mourad's primary literary text does indeed go both ways, which the novel describes in the most exquisitely explicit detail. As such, Leftah's novel is a recent addition to a corpus of representations of same-sex desire by Maghribi writers who do not necessarily openly identify as engaging in such desire (a corpus that, to be honest, has tended to interest me more than the more "open" writers listed above).

Like Massad (2007, 181–87), Leftah (2011, 99) includes an extensive consideration of the Queen Boat incident in Egypt in this novel. This passage also includes the second and third deployments of the word *homosexuality*. The first is in a description of the transformations Captain Ni'mat undergoes while coming to terms with his newfound love and desires. In all three deployments, *homosexuality* is more something that might cause a problem for Ni'mat than something he might want to identify himself with. For example, Ni'mat uses the verb *assumer*

argument into the past is anachronistic.” Challenging the work of the Tunisian sociologist Abdelwahab Bouhdiba and Paula Sanders, Gesink’s wonderfully detailed historicization of “intersex” does the denaturalizing work required to decolonize and deconstruct sex as defined by the male/female binary:

Prior to the nineteenth century, Muslim intellectuals recognized the khuntha as a legal sex. Furthermore, while reflecting and to some degree reproducing gender hierarchy, experts’ discussions of intersex do not seem to have been primarily motivated by a desire to *protect* men. It is clear, however, that something changed in the twentieth century as scholars became ideologically resistant to the possibility that Muslim societies tolerated degrees of deviance from binary sex.

In short, “maleness apparently did not require a functioning penis” in the history she reconstructs.

Shaherzad R. Ahmadi’s article, “‘In My Eyes He Was a Man’: Poor and Working-Class Boy Soldiers in the Iran-Iraq War,” might seem an outlier, since its detailed and historicized account of boy soldiers in Iran is less directly connected to sex or sexuality. Yet the intervention offers a counterhegemonic reading of boys’ participation in war that attends to class, gender, and childhood in Iran and does not overplay Islamic piety as a motivation. The article forces us to historicize the way we conceive of the modern male subject or individual before the law and the way “majority” itself (in the sense of no longer being a minor or “underage” when it comes to giving legal consent) is constructed, especially in relation to class. The question of sexual consent has been a much-discussed topic in the US media and political discourse, and in the narrative of boys becoming men, sex is what supposedly remains consistent as an adult gender comes to be embodied. While “desiring” Arabs or Iranians in the way we think of them in queer theory is not Ahmadi’s main concern, desires are clearly at play, and the intellectual decolonization she carries out is in line with Mourad’s and Gesink’s interventions. In *Queer Nations* I wrote, “We’ do not have a monopoly on queering; through our readings of Maghrebian novels, ‘we’ might also, in turn, be queered by them” (Hayes 2000, 20). These articles and other interventions in the themed issue demonstrate that this statement is not unique to the Maghrib or to literature. Such queering intellectual moves should be integral to the decolonization of Middle East studies. And what “groovy” moves they are!

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Notes

1. For a more extensive reading of the queer relation between deconstruction and Derrida's Algerian roots, see Hayes 2017.
2. Other relevant sources by these authors include O. 1996, 1998, 2003, 2013, and Djaziri 1998.
3. Other relevant sources by these authors include Bouraoui 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2010, and Taïa 2004, 2006, 2008.
4. On Schmitt and Sofer, see Hayes 1993, 155–56, 178n2; 2001, 85–91; Massad 2002, 366–70; 2003; 2007, 165–71; Schmitt 2003. On Murray and Roscoe, see Hayes 2001, 83–91; Massad 2002, 370–71; 2003; 2007, 170–71.
5. *Queer Beirut* (Merabet 2014) and *The Homoerotics of Orientalism* (Boone 2014) are reviewed in this issue.

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