

Echoes of Imperialism in LGBT Activism

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At least one early critical reaction to the emergence of the term ‘postcolonial’, expressed disquiet about its ‘premature’ celebration of the pastness of colonialism.² Writing in 1992 and citing the then continuing coloniality of Northern Ireland, Palestine, South Africa, East Timor and other places, Anne McClintock worried that this premature celebration ran ‘the risk of obscuring the continuities and discontinuities of colonial and imperial power’.³ While her examples focused on instances of enduring territorial colonialism, it is salutary to bear in mind that imperialism crucially also always had a non-territorial ideational dimension, expressed in projects such as the civilizing mission. It is in the form of this non-territorial dimension that imperialism today is more visible and ubiquitous, enduring long after the reduction of territorial imperialism to a few anachronistic vestiges, and inflecting even those apparently radical and oppositional spaces of politics in which one might least expect it.

In this chapter, I explore the ‘echoes of imperialism’ in one such space – that of global contention for the recognition of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) subjects, as well as of other sexual minorities who might not identify in these terms.⁴ In doing so, I hear two sorts of echoes. First, my critique of imperial tendencies within contemporary Western LGBT politics, parallels and tries to learn from an earlier critique levelled by Third World feminists such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty at white Western feminism. Just as these earlier critiques punctured lazy slogans of ‘global sisterhood’ that are inattentive to hierarchies of race, class and nationality within women’s movements, I question the putative singularity of an assumed global gay subject that seems to underpin some contemporary Western LGBT activism.⁵ Second, I attempt to peel away the layers of discourse that encrust such activism in our own time, to reveal the underlying political interests that sustain it. In doing so, I find it helpful to think about the political interests that

generated a late nineteenth century politics of imperial Victorian feminism that saw the rescue of distant global sisters as a means towards improving the condition of women in the imperial metropolis. Both temporal contexts present a bewildering array of tendencies: contemporary Western LGBT activism is a deeply divided space, some of whose constituents are complicit in imperial ventures even as others are deeply antagonistic to them. The past is no less complicated a space, so full of contradictory tendencies that it is difficult to regard our ‘postcolonial’ age as self-evidently more progressive or reflexive than times gone by.

The construction of a global discourse of LGBT rights and a politics of LGBT solidarity⁶ has been empowering for many of its participants. But it has not been an entirely benign development, free from questions of power and hierarchy. Struggles against heteronormativity within Western societies have tended to be marked by a fundamental tension between what might be described as a liberal politics of inclusion or assimilation into the mainstream – marked by such priorities as the right to marry or to serve in the military – and a more radical queer politics that seeks to challenge the very basis of institutions that are seen as oppressive, rather than merely seeking inclusion within them.⁷ This fundamental tension has also begun to manifest itself in Western advocacy efforts on behalf of Third World⁸ sexual minorities, with the more assimilatory strands of Western advocacy seeking to utilize Western hegemony for the advancement of sexual rights in other parts of the world, antagonizing queer activists and scholars who are deeply invested in contesting such hegemony even as they struggle for sexual freedoms. In the discourse of the former, as LGBT communities have won political and legal battles in the West and have begun to assimilate more deeply into their societies, LGBT rights have become a marker of modernity, resulting in the creation of new hierarchies – or what Jon Binnie calls ‘a new racism’ – in international politics.⁹ States that fail to respect rights around sexual diversity are, in a retrieval of standard orientalist tropes, increasingly characterized as backward and uncivilized, with the internationalization of LGBT rights taking on the character of a modern-day civilizing mission.¹⁰

Scholars have begun to criticize the increasingly apparent orientalism of some contemporary Western LGBT activism.¹¹ Yet some of these critiques have been overstated. A case in point is Joseph Massad’s recent indictment of Western LGBT activism vis-à-vis the Middle East. Massad argues that such activism seeks to replicate the trajectory of gay liberation in the West by attempting to transform practitioners of same-sex conduct in the Arab world into subjects who identify as homosexual.¹² Following Foucault, scholars regard sexuality as having been transformed in the Western world from an aspect of behaviour (what one did) to an aspect of identity (what sort of person one was) sometime in the late nineteenth century, through the operation of discourses of medicine and law.¹³ The dislocations produced by industrial capitalism and mass urbanization were simultaneously disrupting traditional family

structures and providing the conditions – for some – of individual material self-sufficiency and anonymity that enabled the configuration of new forms of community. These developments in turn provided the demographic basis for the struggle for rights later in the twentieth century, culminating in such epochal moments as the Stonewall riots that took place in New York City in 1969, widely regarded as marking the birth of the modern LGBT rights movement. In Massad's view, Western LGBT organizations operating in the Arab world seek to replicate this history by pushing those who engage in same-sex practices to 'come out' (i.e. identify) as homosexuals. Yet far from bringing the liberating consequences that this move had in the West, Massad judges that this push from behaviour to identity represents an imperialist imposition that is narrowing the space for same-sex behaviour. Governments that once turned a blind eye to discreet homosexual behaviour are increasingly cracking down on newly visible sexual minorities: it is identity rather than behaviour, in his view, that is considered intolerable and makes individuals vulnerable.¹⁴

The argument is troubling in a number of respects, not least because it appears to deny the agency and subjectivity of Arabs who are beginning to identify as sexual minorities, appropriating and reworking Western identities in their struggles for sexual self-determination. Massad alternately dismisses these individuals as unrepresentative, regards them as passive victims of a Western-imposed sexual re-education, or more ominously describes them as 'native informants' to Western activists.¹⁵ In the colonial archive, the native informant is a slippery and elusive character, at once powerful and politically suspect from the point of view of both the colonial authorities and the natives between whom he intermediates. Comprising, in the words of Thomas Babington Macaulay's infamous Minute on Indian Education (1835), 'a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect', he is relied on by the colonial authorities for the knowledge that will inform the power they exercise over the natives.¹⁶ Yet as Homi Bhabha has persuasively argued, his very mimicry of the colonial overlords constantly menaces the racial hierarchies upon which colonial rule is premised.¹⁷ He is the figure through whom the natives formulate their demands in a language intelligible to their colonial masters, yet his very closeness to the latter invites suspicion of traitorous collaboration with the colonizing power. In the context of Western LGBT advocacy in the Arab world, Massad's revival of the trope of the 'native informant' to describe Arabs who identify in terms of a Western sexual ontology stems from his view of them as an unrepresentative metropolitan minority whose motivation for identification in such terms is class-based: 'part of the package of the adoption of everything Western by the classes to which they belong.'¹⁸ Rather than treating the question of motivation as an empirical one, Massad understands it as a function of a self-orientalizing tendency to regard the West as superior in all respects rather than as being the result of reasoned, ethical

disagreement with local sexual ontologies. The insinuations of inauthenticity that attach to his representations of LGBT Arabs deny the possibility and legitimacy of appropriation of ethical categories from outside the moral universes into which they were born. In addition, the fact that Arabs who identify publicly as LGBT often do so at grave personal risk – something that finds no acknowledgement in Massad's argument – makes their comparison to colonial native informants (who profited enormously from their position) particularly inappropriate.

In this chapter, I focus on another problematic dimension of Massad's argument, namely his tendency to flatten out the space of Western LGBT activism vis-à-vis the non-Western world. Massad refers to the institutions of LGBT activism collectively as the 'Gay International' (reminiscent of W. H. Auden's 'homintern') and regards all such activism as being implicated in an imperial politics. This reflects the tendency of some postcolonial work to think of the 'West' in monolithic terms, even as it resists the essentialization of the 'Orient'.¹⁹ In this chapter I disaggregate the 'Gay International' into a number of strands and argue that while some of these have indeed been complicit in contemporary imperial projects, others have not. Critiques of activism that do not make such distinctions have the unfortunate consequence of shutting down activism around sexuality altogether, implicitly denying the seriousness of the homophobia against which it is directed. In contrast, demonstrating that there is no single politics to the so-called Gay International might be a first step towards determining whether there is anything worth salvaging in this politics of putative Western solidarity with Third World sexual minorities. The fractiousness of the 'Gay International' became particularly apparent in the debates that erupted amongst Western activists over how to respond to the execution in Iran in 2005 of two boys alleged to have committed a crime involving homosexual intercourse. Accordingly, much of this chapter focuses on the reaction to these executions, which became the site on which the internal politics of the so-called Gay International played itself out. In keeping with the themes of this book, the chapter attempts to historicize the different strands of the 'Gay International' in light of the record of Western intervention seeking to reshape gender relations in Iran (and other parts of the Third World) since the heyday of colonial times. In doing so, I find that while the contemporary 'Gay International' is a deeply divided space, some of whose constituents are complicit in imperial ventures even as others are antagonistic to them, this is no less true of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Western feminist interventions in the colonized world.

Hangings in Iran: Disaggregating the 'Gay International'

On July 19, 2005, two boys – Ayaz Marhoni and Mahmoud Asgari – variously reported to have been between 16 and 18 years of age, were hanged by the

government of Iran in the city of Mashhad for an alleged crime involving homosexual intercourse. Western activists were divided over how to respond.²⁰ Some regarded the boys as having been hanged on account of their sexuality and denounced the Iranian government, demanding that Western governments take punitive action. British activist Peter Tatchell, whose group OutRage! first brought the story to the attention of Western media, was quoted in a press release as saying that ‘this is just the latest barbarity by the Islamo-fascists in Iran ... the entire country is a gigantic prison, with Islamic rule sustained by detention without trial, torture and state-sanctioned murder’, before going on to claim that over 4,000 lesbians and gay men had been executed by the government since the 1979 revolution.²¹ Conservative US commentator Andrew Sullivan echoed this language, repeating the claim that the boys had been hanged by the ‘Islamofascist regime in Iran’ for ‘being gay’. Expressing disappointment that more gay organizations had not rallied to the war against ‘Muslim religious fanatics’, Sullivan emphasized that ‘this is our war too’.²² The linkage of Iran with fascism was reinforced by Doug Ireland, a New York-based journalist who described the Ahmadinejad government as being engaged in a ‘major anti-homosexual pogrom targeting gays and gay sex’.²³ The Human Rights Campaign, the largest LGBT civil rights organization in the US, called upon the then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to issue an ‘immediate and strong condemnation’ of Iran for its hanging of the teenagers who, it alleged, had been tortured and killed ‘simply for being caught having consensual sex’. It urged that ‘atrocities committed by foreign governments against all people must be condemned swiftly and forcefully by the world’s greatest democracy’.²⁴ The Log Cabin Republicans, an organization of gay and lesbian members of the US Republican Party, issued a press release in which it noted that ‘in the wake of news stories and photographs documenting the hanging of two gay Iranian teenagers, Log Cabin Republicans re-affirm their commitment to the global war on terror’. The group’s president, Patrick Guerriero, was quoted as saying that ‘this barbarous slaughter clearly demonstrates the stakes in the global war on terror. Freedom must prevail over radical Islamic extremism’.²⁵

It was not the first time that Western observers had expressed revulsion at the sexual mores of Iranian society. In an ironic reversal of contemporary attitudes, travelogues of Western visitors to Iran from the seventeenth century onwards frequently record disgust at the observation of same-sex liaisons within aristocratic circles in Tehran. Janet Afary has written about the prevalence of ‘status-defined homosexuality’ in pre-modern Iran, typically involving partners of different ages, classes or social standings.²⁶ She chronicles the abundant representation of same-sex love in classical Persian literature, the wealth of allusion to homoerotic relations in the Persian language, and the widespread prevalence of homosexuality and homoerotic expression in public spaces beyond the royal court, including monasteries and seminaries, taverns, military camps, bathhouses and coffeehouses.

While not free of moral judgments, she argues that until the late nineteenth century Iranian representations of same-sex love were far less judgmental than the contemporary Western regime of sexuality.²⁷

Afsaneh Najmabadi has argued that as Iranian elites came into contact with Europeans and realized that ‘polite’ European society held such practices to be abominable, their response was one of disavowal and dissimulation.²⁸ Iranians began to find themselves ‘explaining’ to European visitors that the latter had mistakenly read homosociality (men holding hands, embracing and kissing in public) as homosexuality. Homoeroticism in Sufi poetry began to be read as purely allegorical and metaphorical for communion between the devout and the divine. Practices of representation underwent dramatic shifts. While notions of beauty were largely undifferentiated by gender in early Qajar (1785–1925) paintings, with beautiful men and women being depicted with similar facial and bodily features, by the end of the nineteenth century the portrayal of beauty had become less androgynous and more gendered. Similarly, while biographical writing well into the nineteenth century contains numerous non-judgmental references to diverse sexual preferences, twentieth-century references to same-sex relationships become more disapproving. Modernist Iranian intellectuals such as the influential nineteenth century critic Mirza Fath‘ali Akhundzadah (1812–78) began to speak of homosexuality as situational, as something that Iranian men indulged in because of gender segregation. By implication, as the sexes were allowed to mingle freely in a modernizing Iran, homosexual relations would disappear. One of the central projects of early Iranian feminism was the transformation of heterosexual marriage from a loveless procreative contract into a romantic one; but the flip side of this was the stigmatization of other forms of desire, leaving – in Najmabadi’s words – ‘a birthmark of disavowal of male homosexuality on the modernist project of women’s emancipation’.²⁹ The larger point here is that by the late nineteenth century, the heteronormalization of Iranian society had come to be regarded as a marker of modernity. The irony is that the exact opposite has become true in the early twenty-first century.

I would like to anticipate and pre-empt the temptation to extrapolate from Najmabadi’s account, the claim that European imperialism is to blame for homophobia in contemporary Iran in a straightforward way. This would be a crude, polemical and reductionist conclusion to draw from Najmabadi’s complex and nuanced exposition of the transformation of gender relations in Iran. Rather, what emerges from this story is a crucial moment in which even as European imperialism passes judgment on the ‘Orient’, native elites respond to this challenge, in part, by accepting the European critique and seeking to act upon it. Thus, the heteronormalization of Iranian society (which paves the way for the later institutionalization of homophobia) has to be understood as a transaction involving European and Iranian elites, in which the latter exercise some degree of agency in choosing to reshape their societies in particular

ways in the course of the nineteenth century cultural conflicts between Iran/Islam and Europe/Christianity. Indeed, a growing body of queer scholarship in respect of other parts of the world has begun to locate the institutionalization of homophobia in the colonial encounter in just this way, and to explain it with reference to the desire of anti-colonial elites to construct virile, masculinized nationalisms capable of overthrowing the colonial yoke – a task that entailed the erasure of indigenous traditions of androgyny and same-sex desire.³⁰ Massad might suggest that a converse process of ‘homo-normalization’ of Middle Eastern societies is currently underway as a result of analogous transactions between the ‘Gay International’ and its ‘native informants’. It is certainly too early to conclude, in the case of Iran, whether the process will play out in anything like the same way. Moreover, and crucially to the thrust of my overall argument, one can note the structural similarity of these transactions between Western and Iranian elites in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries, while taking the view that they have very different political and ethical implications depending on whether they expand or constrict the space for sexual freedom. The more troubling historical continuity is that in both moments, some Western actors have arrogated to themselves (and some Iranian elites have conceded to their Western interlocutors) the power to define the content of modernity, so that being modern continues to mean becoming like the West.

Returning to the events of 2005, Western voices of condemnation of the hangings in Mashhad were divided in terms of the remedial action that they advocated. Some, like Sullivan and the Log Cabin Republicans, regarded incidents such as the Mashhad hangings as vindicating the use of force against ‘radical Islam’ wherever it manifested itself; others, like Tatchell and OutRage!, sought to clarify that their denunciation of the hangings did not amount to an endorsement of war against Iran.³¹ Indeed, Tatchell appears incongruous amongst the many Republican Party-affiliated gay voices in the US who happened to agree with him on this issue, given his history of involvement in left-wing causes and his membership of the Green Party in Britain. Although appearing to share a common position, the different reactions to the Iran hangings were underpinned by distinct sets of political considerations, which I discuss in the following sections.

The more institutionalized activists – those in organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) – responded in a very different fashion. Scott Long of HRW was sceptical of the accounts that Tatchell, Ireland and others were providing because they relied mainly on diasporic and exile groups as their sources. These groups, in his view, had long sought to refract situations in Iran that presented human rights concerns through the lens of LGBT rights, in a politically opportunistic attempt to attract the support of yet another international constituency in their struggle against the theocratic regime. In addition, Long believed that conflicting

reports claiming that the boys had been executed for raping a 13-year old boy, while quite conceivably trumped up by the regime to justify the sentence, should not have been dismissed out of hand without careful consideration.³² HRW, Amnesty and IGLHRC sought to reframe the issue as one about the execution of minors, a violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (both of which Iran has signed).³³ One crucial implication of this reframing was that if Iran was to be censured for its execution of children, the US lacked the moral standing to do so. Of the nine countries that are known to have executed juvenile offenders between 1990 and 2009, Iran topped the list with forty-six executions, while the US followed second with nineteen.³⁴ (The US Supreme Court declared the use of the death penalty against juvenile offenders unconstitutional in March 2005.)³⁵ In addition, some activists in these organizations worried that attacking Iran could legitimate the Bush administration’s demonization of the Iranian regime at a time when tensions were already running high on account of its nuclear programme and the election of the conservative Ahmadinejad to the office of the presidency only a few weeks before.

It may seem odd to suggest, as I have in this chapter, that the big human rights bureaucracies with their massive budgets and global reach appeared less implicated in an imperialist politics than individual freelance LGBT rights activists, journalists and bloggers. Yet it is certainly the case that insofar as the Western reaction to the 2005 hangings in Iran were concerned, it was the latter group that broke the story, articulated a response that dovetailed neatly with imperial security preoccupations, and set the agenda, capturing the interest and allegiance particularly of a white, Western, gay, male public. To many in this public, the professional human rights organizations appeared reactive and weak in their attempt to reframe the debate in ways that avoided a frontal attack on the sexual morality of the Iranian state. But the discussion here has been confined to a single event: in other contexts, the positions of these actors in relation to imperial projects might well be reversed. In other words, there does not seem to be a strong correlation between the levels of material and organizational resources possessed by activists and their distance from imperial projects.

What the reactions to the Mashhad hangings demonstrate is that the 'Gay International' – if it can be seen as a single entity at all – is an extraordinarily fractious space. Its constituents span the entire political spectrum, from right-wing activists concerned about furthering their incomplete assimilation into party, nation and state, to left-wing Greens looking for new causes to replenish spent agendas. It is united by a common Western sexual ontology, but its constituents disagree radically on whether, when and how to export this ontology to the rest of the world. And while some of its constituents seem eager to use gay rights as a means of consolidating Western hegemony in ways that remind us of the heyday of the 'civilizing mission', others seem wary of contributing to such an outcome.

The past, to which I have been comparing the activities of today's 'Gay International', is no less complicated a space. The discourse of suffragist imperialism always coexisted with an anti-imperialist feminism exemplified by figures such as Sylvia Pankhurst, who were able to see the links between patriarchal power in England and colonial practices, and struggled against both.⁶² Even as women like Gertrude Bell saw their presence in the colonies explicitly in the terms of Europe's civilizing mission,⁶³ others such as Annie Besant were staunch anti-imperialists playing leading roles within anti-colonial movements.⁶⁴ More pertinently to the subject of this chapter and this book in general, it was precisely his status as a sexual outcast from late Victorian society that gave the homosexual Edward Carpenter an affinity with a range of subaltern groups and movements, including those for decolonization, women's suffrage, workers' welfare and animal rights.⁶⁵ Indeed, Carpenter offers an ironic counterpoint to the contemporary orientalist discourse

of some Western LGBT activists when he favourably contrasts the valorization of bisexuality and hermaphroditism in Hindu mythology with the homophobia of European culture.⁶⁶ It is difficult to think of any Western activists today who draw on the resources of non-Western cultures to argue for greater toleration of sexual minorities within their own societies.

Notes

¹ Thanks are due to the editorial collective responsible for the forthcoming *Law like Love: A Queer Perspective of Law in India* (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2011), in which some of the material in this chapter appears under the title 'Queer in the Time of Terror', as well as the editors of this volume. An. McClintock, 'The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post-Colonialism"', *Social Text*, 31, 32 (1992), p. 88.

² *Ibid.*

³ This chapter deploys a distinction between 'LGBT' and 'queer' in two senses. The first is a political distinction between a liberal and a radical politics respectively, explained at greater length in the introduction to the chapter. The second is a distinction based on identity, with 'LGBT' referring to sexual minorities who identify in terms of Western identity categories such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (wherever such minorities may actually be located), and 'queer' functioning as an umbrella category encompassing non-Western sexual minorities such as *bijras* (South Asian transgendered subjects who have traditionally lived in intentional communities) and *kothis* (a term commonly used in India, referring to effeminate men who take on feminine roles in same-sex relationships), who cannot easily be accommodated within a Western-style LGBT identity politics.

⁴ C. Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, NC and London, 2003).

⁵ K. Kollman and M. Waites, 'The Global Politics of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Human Rights: an Introduction', *Contemporary Politics*, 15, 1 (2009), pp. 1–17.

⁶ M. Warner, 'Introduction', in idem, *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis, MN, 1993), p. xiii.

⁷ For a critical revival of the term 'Third World', see R. Rao, *Third World Protest: Between Home and the World* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 24–30.

⁸ J. Binnie, *The Globalization of Sexuality* (2004), pp. 68–76.

⁹ E. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1995 [1978]); N. Hoard, 'Arrested Development or the Queerness of Savages: Resisting Evolutionary Narratives of Difference', *Postcolonial Studies* 3, 2 (2000), pp. 133–58.

¹⁰ J. K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC and London, 2007); J. Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago, 2008), ch. 3.

¹¹ Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, p. 163.

¹² M. Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge. I: The History of Sexuality* (1998), p. 43.

¹³ Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, p. 182.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 172–3.

¹⁵ T. Babington Macaulay, Minute on Indian Education (2 February 1835), in *Bureau of Education: Selections from Educational Records, Part I (1781–1839)* (New Delhi, 1965), pp. 107–17.

¹⁶ H. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (2004 [1994]), ch. 4.

¹⁷ Massad, *Desiring Arabs*, p. 173.

¹⁸ Z. Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 196.

- 20 R. Kim, 'Witnesses to an Execution', <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20050815/kim>; P. Schindler, 'The Battle Over Iran', http://gaycitynews.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=17334312&BRD=2729&PAG=461&dept_id=568864&rft=8.
- 21 OutRage!, 'Execution of Gay Teens in Iran', <http://www.petertatchell.net/international/iranexecution.htm>.
- 22 Cited from Kim, 'Witnesses to an Execution'.
- 23 Doug Ireland, 'Iran's Anti-Gay Pogrom', <http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/2458/>.
- 24 Human Rights Campaign, 'Secretary Rice Urged to Condemn execution of Gay Iranian Teens', <http://www.hrc.org/1945.htm>.
- 25 Log Cabin Republicans, 'Log Cabin Republicans Denounce Execution of Gay Youth by Iran', http://online.logcabin.org/news_views/log-cabin-republicans-denounce-execution-of-gay-youth-by-iran.html.
- 26 J. Afary, *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran* (Cambridge, 2009), ch. 3.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 107.
- 28 A. Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (Berkeley, CA, 2005), chs 1, 2.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 7.
- 30 A. Narrain, *Queer: Despised Sexuality, Law and Social Change* (Bangalore, 2004), pp. 41–5; R. Vanita and S. Kidwai, *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History* (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 200.
- 31 OutRage!, 'Iranian Gay Group Backs 19 July Protests', <http://www.petertatchell.net/international/irandemo.htm>.
- 32 Interview with Scott Long, New York, 21 September 2009.
- 33 Human Rights Watch, 'Iran: End Juvenile Executions', <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2005/07/26/iran-end-juvenile-executions>.
- 34 Amnesty International, 'Executions of juveniles since 1990', <http://www.amnesty.org/en/death-penalty/executions-of-child-offenders-since-1990>.
- 35 BBC News, 'US Court Bans Juvenile Executions', <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/4308881.stm>.
- 36 P. Varnell, 'Toward a Gay Foreign Policy', <http://www.indegayforum.org/news/show/27139.html>.
- 37 See for example, Y. Klein Halevi, 'Tel Aviv Dispatch: Refugee Status', *The New Republic* (19 and 26 August 2002); D. J. Bernstein, 'Gay Palestinians suffer under Arafat', <http://www.yaleherald.com/article.php?Article=933>; P. Varnell, 'Israel, Palestine, and Gays', <http://www.indegayforum.org/news/show/27154.html>; W. Goodwin, 'Palestine's Oppression of Gays Should Not Be Ignored', <http://www.sodomylaws.org/world/palestine/pseditorials001.htm>; J. Kirchik, 'Palestine and Gay Rights', http://www.advocate.com/exclusive_detail_ektid33587.asp. For a critique, see Blair Kuntz, "'Queer' as a Tool of Colonial Oppression: The Case of Israel/Palestine", <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=10756>.
- 38 See for example the comparative religious writings of Paul Varnell at www.indegayforum.org. While he acknowledges the universality of homophobia across the monotheistic religions, Christian proscriptions of homosexuality are rationalised and contextualised, even if ultimately criticised, while Islam's lack of pluralism and internal contestation is emphasised.
- 39 G. C. Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, (Basingstoke, 1988), p. 296.
- 40 P. Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ, 1993), pp. 6, 119–20.
- 41 J. K. Puar, 'Mapping US Homonormativities', *Gender, Place and Culture* 13, 1 (2006), pp. 67–8.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 72.
- 43 See for example P. Varnell, 'Bombing for Justice', <http://www.indegayforum.org/news/show/27137.html>.
- 44 See for example L. Bush, 'Radio Address by Mrs. Bush', <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011117.html>.
- 45 The administrations of George W. Bush not only failed to extend LGBT rights in any respect, but also sought actively to pre-empt and restrict such rights. Most infamously, the Federal Marriage Amendment, which was a proposed amendment to the US Constitution that would have limited marriage in the US to unions of one man and one woman and would have prevented judicial extension of marriage rights to same-sex couples, was a centrepiece of the 2004 Republican presidential campaign. The amendment eventually failed to pass in both the House of Representatives and Senate.
- 46 Puar, 'Mapping US Homonormativities', p. 70.
- 47 N. Naghibi, *Rethinking Global Sisterhood: Western Feminism and Iran* (Minneapolis, MN, 2007), p. xx.
- 48 I. Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (1996), pp. 61–7.
- 49 Naghibi, *Rethinking Global Sisterhood*, p. 31.
- 50 Interview with Peter Tatchell, London, 23 October 2007.
- 51 Here too there are historical parallels. See A. Burton, 'The White Woman's Burden: British Feminists and "The Indian Woman", 1865–1915', in N. Chaudhuri and M. Strobel (eds), *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, (Bloomington, IN, 1992), who describes Josephine Butler's campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts, first in England and then in India. Burton argues that Butler turned her attention to India when, in 1886, with the successful conclusion of the campaign in England, she found herself and the considerable campaign infrastructure that she had built in danger of becoming redundant (p. 140).
- 52 C. Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism* (New York, 2006), p. 15.
- 53 Telephone interview with Arsham Parsi (Toronto), 18 October 2007.
- 54 M. Roshan and K. Shemirani, 'Gays in Iran', <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=10772>.
- 55 MAHA, 'The Need for Continued International Solidarity with Iranian LGBTs', http://www.ilga.org/news_results.asp?LanguageID=1&FileCategory=9&ZoneID=3&FileID=879.
- 56 'African LGBTI Human Rights Defenders Warn Public against Participation in Campaigns monthlyreview.org/increase310107.html. The letter accuses Tatchell of exaggerating rights violations committed by African governments, which then left local activists vulnerable to attack by such governments for claims they had never made. As Juliet Victor Mukasa (chairperson of Sexual Minorities Uganda) put it in a letter to Tatchell, excerpts from which were published in background notes to the statement: 'You will sit safely in London while our activists in Uganda pay the price for your deeds.' The letter also addresses a controversy in Nigeria, where differences seem to have arisen over how to respond to a same-sex marriage prohibition bill that had been introduced in the federal legislature. Many activists were opposed to Tatchell's call for a public campaign against the Nigerian government, believing that this would revive governmental interest in a bill that was virtually dead, thanks to behind-the-scenes pressure on Nigerian legislators.
- 57 Tatchell interview.
- 58 Interview with Kasha Jacqueline, Kampala, 25 August 2010.
- 59 Human Rights Watch, *'They Want Us Exterminated': Murder, Torture, Sexual Orientation and Gender in Iraq* (New York, NY, 2009), pp. 9–10.
- 60 S. Long, 'Unbearable Witness: How Western Activists (Mis)recognize Sexuality in Iran', *Contemporary Politics*, 15, 1 (2009), pp. 120–2.
- 61 Long interview.
- 62 Grewal, *Home and Harem*, p. 78.
- 63 G. Bell, *Persian Pictures* (1928).
- 64 B. Ramusack, 'Cultural Missionaries, Maternal Imperialists, Feminist Allies: British Women Activists in India, 1865–1945', in Chaudhuri and Strobel, *Western Women and Imperialism*.
- 65 S. Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love* (2009).
- 66 L. Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, NC and London, 2006), p. 59.

This is what happens when LGBT activism wins. How many more "victories" like this can our families endure? And remember: We are not talking about forcing a child to go off to some alleged "gay conversion" camp. It is that same love that compels me to speak today: LGBT activism will inevitably destroy itself because it runs contrary to God's design and plan. By resisting it, we do what is right for our nation, for our families and for the coming generations. And we can resist the agenda while treating our LGBT loved ones, neighbors, friends and co-workers with grace and kindness. #lgbtnews #gaynews #hiv #transgender Gays.com Glamour LGBT Support LGBT Activism LGBT News LGBT Single LGBT Gay Times Magazine Gay Pride Australia SoCal Transgender Group Transgender Voices. See more. LGBT Activism shared a link. 10 November 2015. The decision ended the nation's chances of visa-free travel through the European Union. Transnational LGBT Activism. Working for Sexual Rights Worldwide. 2014. Transnational LGBT Activism argues that the idea of LGBT human rights is not predetermined but instead is defined by international activists who establish what and who qualifies for protection. The result is a uniquely balanced, empirical response to previous critiques of Western human rights activists and a clarifying perspective on the nature and practice of global human rights advocacy. The first of its kind, this book responds in a balanced, self-reflexive, nuanced, empirically-based way to a number of sharp critiques of Western human rights activists, frameworks and "imperialisms."