



THE ENGLISH COMPLEMENT  
*Installment 2*

# HALAL THIS WAY

TOWARDS  
A VIABLE QUEERING  
IN SUNNI ISLAM

*a foundational thesis by*

**MAHER ALHAJ**

THE ENGLISH COMPLEMENT

*Installment 2: Chapter 1.1*

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# PART 1

## *On Convening the Problem*



“There are many kinds of *beings*—stones, persons, artifacts, numbers, propositions—but are there also many kinds of *being*? The world contains a variety of objects, each of which exists—but do some objects *exist in different ways*?”

—PROFESSOR KRIS MCDANIEL<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Kris McDaniel, “Ways of Being”, in *Metametaphysics: New Essays on the Foundations of Ontology*, ed. David John Chalmers, David Manley, and Ryan Wasserman (Oxford University Press, 2009), 290.

## CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

### 1.1 *On Universalizing Injustice as Injustice*

**T**O CONVENE THE PROBLEM (of what complicates the queer predicament of Sunni Arab spaces at this moment in time), I must first address the concept of *injustice*. This chapter was developed in response to the fact that the “West” demands Arabs and Muslims (and others) treat Queer communities in line with its own Western conceptions of justice (and with its own Western solutions for different instances of injustice). Of course, the scope of this conversation transcends this narrow focus and spans across our treatment of injustice in general.

**[Manifest Problem/s]** All humans belong to one species. As members of the same species, we have universal problems and concerns. My work here acknowledges injustice as a universal concept to all of us, and that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere (as expressed by the minister and activist Martin Luther King Jr.). That is, the experience of injustice is a universal concern to all of us. If we see vulnerable people abused in any space (i.e., there is a manifest or obvious problem in one part of the world), whether Western or not, we want to do something about it (because our struggles as a human species are all interconnected).

**[Destabilization/s]** However, while we are all members of the same species, we have been historically differentiated into various groups and/or collectives. These groups and/or collectives are not exactly the same. That is, various human groups inhabit different parts of the world, speak different languages, have different histories, belief systems, priorities, concerns, and so on. So even though some of our problems can be fairly characterized as universal (like violence being committed against Queer communities everywhere), our solutions to those universal problems cannot be universal, or all the same (because how we experience and understand these universal problems is contextual to the time and place we live).

**[Critical Problem/s]** The concern for me here (or what I consider to be the critical problem, as in the one not as “manifest” or obvious and requiring some analysis but is being mishandled, evaded, and so on) arises when a dominant and often abusive political system (in our case, a secular capitalist globalized neoliberal structure) enforces and imposes its own solutions to its own problems at a moment in time onto other spaces that do not share the same history and context as those problems and their solutions. There is a dissonance here because experiences of injustice are inseparable from their time, space, and context, and therefore, the solutions to these injustices must also be bound to their contexts in time and space. We as a human species exist in different ways (we manifest different ways of being in the world) and experience injustice in different ways. That is the case because we have different contexts of time and space that make up who and what we are and how we experience, understand, and want to live in the world (i.e., we “develop” differently).

**[The Message/s]** Therefore, we must tend to injustice developmentally, pluralistically, and responsibly in ways that honor alternative ways of being in the world that do not ignore various times, places, and contexts, and how they inform injustice and its solutions (not just in our own spaces, but anywhere and everywhere). While injustice is a *universal* concept with similarities and implications everywhere, the solutions to injustice are *contextual* (because the experience of injustice is contextual).

**[The Consequence/s]** Otherwise, one dominant system or way of being in the world gets to dictate what we mean by injustice for everyone everywhere and disregards other ways of being in the world (which leads to more violence). The dominant, universalizing, and imposing system becomes another form of injustice to the injustices it tries to alleviate (i.e., by universalizing and imposing its own way of life onto others who do not share its time, space, and context, and therefore, ends up violating other ways of being in the world, even annihilating them (because it is “powerful” and can)).

## CHAPTER 1.1

# On Universalizing Injustice as Injustice

**H**OLD THE FOLLOWING TO BE TRUE, though not without *qualification*<sup>75</sup>, that injustice<sup>76</sup> *anywhere* is a threat to justice *everywhere*<sup>77</sup>. I also hold it to be true that justice is the highest (or at least *a high*) moral ideal<sup>78</sup> of

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**75** As in “to limit the strength or meaning of a statement”; see “Qualify, (t.)”, in *Cambridge Dictionary* (Cambridge University Press), accessed April 26, 2021, find the URL in the Bibliography.

**76** By which I mean a lack of fairness within situations, events, and their relations to people everywhere.

**77** Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail [King, Jr.]”, African Studies Center – University of Pennsylvania, April 16, 1963, find the URL in the Bibliography.

**78** By “moral”, I simply mean “...pertaining to the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil, in relation to the actions, volitions, or character of responsible beings; ethical”; see “Moral, (adj.)”, in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed November 11, 2019, find the URL in the Bibliography. I am interested in morality as it manifests differently within various “orienting systems” or systems of “meaning-making” (which are what allow various human individuals and groups to make sense of the worlds they live in, akin to the way in which Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling Carrie Doehring uses it in her book (but in a broader sense beyond its use in pastoral care and, as such, would involve every aspect of one’s being and is not limited to religious, theological, intellectual introspection and/or “reflexivity”); see Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*; Revised and expanded edition (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015). Moral ideals are those collective agreements that are held as best practices, whether implicit or explicit, around which a group organizes themselves for their communal living. What is just and unjust is certainly one such example of a moral ideal negotiated within the varying societies and/or human collectives.

societies<sup>79</sup>. In fact, I consider these sentiments as *universally*<sup>80</sup> self-evident over the span of the various temporalities (times), spatial locations (spaces), and contexts<sup>81</sup>. In another articulation, I acknowledge the existence of injustice anywhere as a threat to the high moral ideal of justice everywhere, as *transtemporal*<sup>82</sup>, *-spatial*<sup>83</sup>, and *-contextual*<sup>84</sup>.

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**79** Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*, Second edition, Library of Theological Ethics (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013) 257.

**80** By universal, I mean *timeless* (does not change when time changes), *ubiquitous* (present everywhere), and *collective* (experienced by all human “kinds” across the globe). That is, it is *unbound* to any specific time, place, and context but present in all.

**81** By context, I mean “the situation within which something [such as people and their actions] exists or happens, and that can help explain it [gives it its particular meaning]”; see “Context, (n.)”, in *Cambridge Dictionary* (Cambridge University Press), accessed April 26, 2021, find the URL in the Bibliography. That is to say, injustice is a threat to the high moral ideal of justice, regardless of “the situation” (i.e., the *what*), *who* is included within it (as in which people of interest, for contextual situations, include within them people and materials), *when* (time), and *where* (space) it takes place. To rephrase, I simply understand context as the situation (within or through which an event exists or happens, which includes people and materials) through which an instance (example) of time and space, as well as the situation itself, are *woven* together at an instant (a precise moment where time could be hypothetically paused at a specific location to examine that situation). That is, I also use context in its meaning “to weave together” (listed under the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “obsolete”, i.e., no longer used and/or produced), as in what weaves and knits temporality and spatial locations together; see “Context, (v.)”, in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed November 10, 2019, find the URL in the Bibliography. As such, a pause to look at an assemblage of a particular moment in time, at a particular space, for a particular context, helps us explain and/or understand the particular meaning of the situation or event. Therefore, at different times and in different locations, varying contexts result in and have the potential to explain (among other things) the varying manifestations of human discourses and/or expressions of people and their varying systems of meaning-making. Furthermore, I am not saying that injustice is part of *all* contexts, but I am saying that all contexts are *amenable* to injustice.

**82** I use the prefix “*trans*” as in “through” or “beyond”; see “Trans- (Prefix)”, in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed November 10, 2019, find the URL in the Bibliography. That is, it transcends various histories and collectives of people. Temporality (including history, past, present, and so on.), as I understand it, has some sort of relationship with time, as in “...pertaining or relating to time, the present time, or a particular time”; see “Temporal (Adj.1 and n.1)”, in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed November 10, 2019, find the URL in the Bibliography. By trans-temporality, I mean it transcends various periods of time.

**83** As for a spatial location, I understand it as having “...extension in space; occupying or taking up space; consisting of or characterized by space”; see “Spatial, (adj.)”, in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed November 10, 2019, find the URL in the Bibliography.

**84** By trans-contextual, I mean it transcends various religious, political, geographic, and socio-economic contexts of people and their various systems of meaning-making.



That is, a fundamental *nature*<sup>85</sup> of injustice is that it is experienced by humans *universally* over time, space, and the varying circumstances through which injustice is contextualized. Such wisdom remains *immortal* despite its *misappropriation* (i.e., wrongful and/or dishonest use) by today's various immoral nation-states<sup>86</sup> (a misappropriation<sup>87</sup> that motivated the need for this chapter, which I start to discuss herein).

However, I must qualify such statements (i.e., injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, and that justice is a high moral ideal of societies) but not because I doubt the *existence* of injustice (its nature as an existing concept) is a universal living phenomenon, or its

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**85** As in the "...inherent or essential quality or constitution of a thing; the inherent and inseparable combination of properties giving any object, event, quality, emotion, etc., its fundamental character. In later use also more generally: kind, type"; see "Nature, (n.)", in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed November 10, 2019, find the URL in the Bibliography. This definition of "nature" is perhaps what some scholars in the Academy, such as Professor Samar Habib, may refer to as "tropes". That is to say, injustice, as in its existence against Queer individuals and/or communities, is a universal "trope" in the sense that it could and does happen to anyone everywhere. For her discussion on "tropes", see her introduction to *Islam and Homosexuality* (where she emphasizes that we have a universal physiology), Samar Habib, "Introduction", in *Islam and Homosexuality* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2010), xx–xxvii.

**86** In a very basic definition, a nation-state is an "...independent political state formed from a people who share a common national identity (historically, culturally, or ethnically); (more generally) any independent political state"; see "Nation-State, (n.)", in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed November 10, 2019, find the URL in the Bibliography. The world today is organized in terms of such entities. I am passing judgment on them as immoral for reasons that will become clearer in the remainder of this section and in Part 3.

**87** By misappropriation of the concept of justice, I mean misunderstanding it, wrongfully and/or dishonestly using or abusing it for certain agenda beyond the professed cases of injustice themselves. For example, "gay rights" (which I will define and discuss in Part 3) have been used as a political tool to address injustice against Queer communities in non-Western spaces by certain powerful nations (some of which have been believing, and sometimes acting violently on behalf of their belief, that their understanding of justice must be the exact understanding for all other nations, and therefore their solution for an injustice must also be the same for all others). This has manifested on the ground by either universalizing and imposing Western notions of justice in non-Western spaces and/or using the queer cause to accomplish other political agendas (that are not about queer justice). Such is a misappropriation of the queer cause, which I will discuss further in Part 3. However, all of this is to say, we should not give up on the universal idea that injustice anywhere is a threat to (the highly regarded moral ideal of) justice everywhere, irrespective of the mishandling of queer justice and its misappropriation within the global political arena.

implications are a universal threat. Similarly, I also do not doubt justice as a high moral ideal or its urgency as an ethical matter.

What I doubt instead (therefore the need for qualification) is the *implicit* (but also often explicit) kind of *political universalization*<sup>88</sup> that pertains to the *context* of injustice, or what I will refer to as the universalization of the *particularities* of injustice. To be clear, I doubt the kind of injustice-universalization that conflates a particular instance of injustice (at a particular instance of time, within a particular habitat, for a particular people, who are located within a particular historical genealogy or lineage of space and time) with other particular people (in other particular habitats, who are located within other historical genealogies of space and time). See Figure 4.

For example, universalizing the history of the injustice of queerphobia<sup>89</sup> in the United States of America (U.S.A.)<sup>90</sup> to other parts of the world, past and present. This assumes that queerphobia in America regarding American Queer communities who are located within a particular context of an American historical genealogy at a time (such as

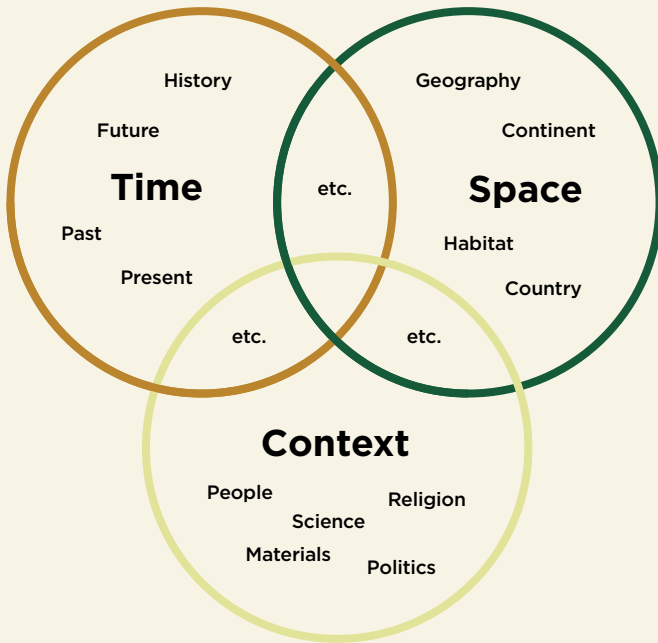
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**88** Politics, as in “the activities of the government, members of law-making organizations, or people who try to influence the way a country is governed”; see “Politics, (n.)”, in *Cambridge Dictionary* (Cambridge University Press), accessed April 26, 2021; find the URL in the Bibliography. Political universalization are political systems and politicians who impose their own subjective understandings of a particular injustice (and their particular solutions for it), onto all others in ways that may not be true to how the Other may experience it and/or is poised to best deal with it. I will discuss this more in the remainder of this section.

**89** As in the irrational fear, hate, prejudice, violence (and so on) that are often produced by individuals and institutions against Queer individuals and communities in the name of religion, science, politics, culture (and so on). Homophobia (the irrational fear of homosexuality and the violence produced by that) and transphobia (the irrational fear of the transgender community and the violence produced by that) are both examples of queerphobia. I am using queerphobia as an umbrella term to incorporate all the distinctive forms of phobias against various members of the Queer communities.

**90** For a historical overview of the USA and how it became the world’s most powerful, see “United States” (especially the section titled “The Rise to World Power”) in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed November 18, 2019, find the URL in the Bibliography.

## Contributors to the *Particularities* of Injustice as an Assemblage



**FIGURE 4: Contributors to the Particularities of Injustice**

at the onset of the twenty-first century) is the same as the injustice of queerphobia in Muslim and Arab spaces regarding the Queer communities in Muslim and Arab geographies who are located within a different historical genealogy or genealogies at a certain time.

In other words, another fundamental characteristic of injustice (part of its nature as a phenomenon) is that it manifests *differently* depending on the time (i.e., “when”), space (i.e., “where”), and context (i.e., “what”, “who”, etc.). Therefore, the meaning of and/or solution to a *particular* injustice (even when the existence of injustice about something is perceived as universal, such as the violence being committed against Queer communities everywhere) is *not* inherently universal.

In essence, I doubt the universality of the *particularities*<sup>91</sup> of injustice (as opposed to the universality of its fundamental *nature* as an existing phenomenon), which has to do with the context of unjust experiences as manifested, perceived, defined, lived, resisted, and counteracted, if at all<sup>92</sup>. Injustice *does* exist through various temporalities, spatial locations, and contexts of the world, and in many cases, it *does* have similarities or universal implications everywhere (e.g., shared experiences of violence endured by Queer communities). However, how it is manifested, perceived, defined, lived, resisted, and counteracted, if at all, are all contextual particulars happening to specific people within their particular histories, geographical locations, and contexts. As such, it is a great

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**91** As one of my editors suggested, this would include naming injustice the same way in different contexts. For example, American queerphobia against Queer “White” people is different from colonial queerphobia against Queer people of “color” and is also different from queerphobia by people of “color” against Queer people of “color” (because while they may all be similar, they do not share the same time, place, and context, and therefore cannot be equated).

**92** For injustice in one context may or may not be as such in another. For example, depending on the context, covering one’s hair might be viewed (by individuals or collectives) as both a sign of oppression and/or as a sign of piety and/or modesty.

disservice to assume that there exists a universal meaning and/or solution to non-universal articulations of injustice. See figure 5.

To recast, if injustice manifests differently based on time, place, and context, it then follows that the way injustice is articulated, defined, by whom, for whom, and for what purposes, as well as how it could be resisted and/or counteracted by a particular people, with particular understandings, experiences, interests, and histories, if at all, should also be as equally temporally and spatially contextualized. For injustice can only be understood within its own parameters of history (an example of temporality), habitat (an example of spatial location), and context (the particular kind of people and their circumstances within their systems of “meaning-making”<sup>93</sup>). As such, justice can only be *justly* achieved, appropriated, or negotiated from and through its own variables of temporality, spatial location, and context.

In short, I am worried about a *somewhere* unconditionally defining what an instance of injustice is for *everybody everywhere*, throughout time, space, and context<sup>94</sup>. While queer injustice anywhere is a threat

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**93** While systems of meaning-making refer to those which allow various human groups to make sense of the world, I do not necessarily imply that those meanings are human made. For Muslims, for example, God is the maker of everything (but also in ways that give humans some agency). This is a sophisticated topic of discussion within Sunni Islam beyond the confines of this section, but one with implications to queer accommodation within the tradition (for it involves a discussion on God’s Will, human agency, and who is in control over human sexual expression, which I will revisit in Part 4). With that said, a friend of mine (who helped edit this section) writes (in response to “meaning-making” as a term): “While I get what you mean, my ‘Eastern’ side does not care for this term because it implies that meaning is human ‘made’. My understanding of Islam compels me to believe that meaning is in the truest sense a reality that God reveals...so while humans interact with meaning, they do not in any real sense ‘make’ or ‘create’ it. Only God creates”. With that said, this relates to what some refer to as “radical monotheism”, which I will revisit in 4.1. Here, however, my use of the term “meaning-making” is to simply describe a system through which people find meaning, not necessarily “make” it.

**94** In the academic study of religion, some may call such needed critical reflexivity as a theological understanding of injustice. Theological *reflexivity* is one that “involves tracking how one’s pastoral [a historically Christian term which has something to do with giving religious/spiritual guidance] theology (espoused and embedded) shapes a care-giving relationship”; see Carrie Doehring, *The*



**FIGURE 5: Nature of Injustice**

to queer justice (and other forms of justice) everywhere, no *somewhere* (like the West, for example, as in its people and/or systems of meaning-making) can meaningfully define and tackle an instance of injustice for everyone everywhere. Injustice is defined differently by different people throughout various times, spaces, and contexts, and by the multiplicity of their various systems of meaning-making. As such, the meaning and/or solutions to instances of injustice should not be universalized and/or misappropriated by a (whatever and/or whomever) somewhere, for everybody everywhere.

If a *foreign* solution to a particular instance of injustice (i.e., one that grew out of a drastically different context and formed within a radically different particular historical genealogy, habitat, and people) were to be forcefully imposed onto another *seemingly* similar injustice, but within a *different* historical genealogy, habitat, and people, the solution may not only prove *irrelevant* but would likely be an *injustice* just the same.

That is to say, the forceful imposition of a Western solution to a Western problem onto a non-Western people with a similar but different problem, as I perceive it, is at the heart of how certain nation-states in the West have recently come to champion the queer cause for Queer communities in Arab and Muslim spaces. In other words, the West, because of its current military, economic, political, and cultural stronghold on the rest of the world, and with disregard to (or maybe especially because of) its own historical mishandling of its queer cause, has appointed itself as the judge, jury, guard, and executioner for those others who do not conform to its Western conceptions of an injustice at a moment of time, as well as to its proposed solutions for it<sup>95</sup>.

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*Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*, Revised and expanded edition (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 192.

<sup>95</sup> I will discuss this in further detail in Part 3.

However, the West's imposition of its own queer cause and universalizing it to other spaces (including Sunni Arab spaces) is not the only concern I have. To be sure, the other side of the problem (as it relates to my thesis) is how Sunni Arab spaces have been responding (with similar inadequacy) to this forceful Western imposition (and thereby, victimizing their Queer communities in the process<sup>96</sup>).

I am *not* suggesting that the West should not feel concerned about queer injustice in non-Western spaces or that it should not “intervene”<sup>97</sup>. I acknowledge the validity of (and/or the need for) such concerns, for we are all members of the same species<sup>98</sup>. In addition, the West should

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<sup>96</sup> I will discuss this in further detail in Part 4.

<sup>97</sup> I use this term with reservation, for the interventions by the West have been historically problematic.

<sup>98</sup> I do think there is validity in the concerns addressed by the West towards the injustice of Queer communities in Sunni Arab spaces at the present juncture, as well as in many other spaces. There is certainly some truth and well intention in addressing the matter. But the particular ways in which this has been done is what I consider problematic. The West, of course, is not just doing this work because it hates all differences. The West, for instance, does not mind that people eat different foods, dress differently (in general), produce different music, and so on. However, the West *does* respond much more reactionarily on issues that are more relevant to its own historical struggle as a collective of distinct entities. For example, the West responds in a more reactionary manner when it comes to issues of women's rights, queer rights, racism, what they define as “anti-Semitism”, and the like. The West assumes that if a “female” does not enjoy the liberty to dress as males do, that there is an injustice. That if non-Western Queer communities do not have equal positions and rights within their respective societies (and by that I mean politically similar rights to that of their Western counterparts, which are informed by Western development, history, and so on) that there is an injustice, and so on. This is the same with issues of race, such as anti-black racism and even anti-Semitism, etc. Such is the case, perhaps, because of the West's historically significant internal struggles with those issues. But how the now powerful West does this (approach solutions for the various kinds of injustices everywhere) assumes that we (as a human species) are all the same, have similar histories, spaces, and contexts, and that we all had and have the same struggles, and so on. While the existence of struggles in other places might be similar, those struggles are not exact replicas of one another. The universalization of a particular people's struggles, as if they were the same to all others, also assumes that one particular people's solutions are relevant to all, and that such solutions may be implemented without the agency of those about whom such “reform” is of interest (i.e., without “the Others” as independent agents, without considering their varying times, places, and contexts, and as such, without responsibility and commitment to the Others' various particular ways of being). Having said that, I acknowledge the unavoidable frustration and the impulse of wanting to do justice quickly (while also acknowledging that the “innocence” and



certainly try to address injustice wherever it is because it is a *responsibility* for everyone (for injustice anywhere remains a threat to justice everywhere)<sup>99</sup>. However, the West needs to carefully contemplate how and when to intervene, if at all. That is to say, the West needs to seriously reconsider its approach to addressing global injustice. For example, the West needs to question the validity of its proposed “universal” solutions to non-universal (i.e., particular) instances of injustice as they manifest globally (as in to question whether Western solutions to Western problems, that are often presented as solutions *to* all, are solutions and/or relevant *at all*)<sup>100</sup>.

In other words, it is about how the West could “intervene” *appropriately* and *responsibly*<sup>101</sup> without becoming its own form of injustice to

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intentions of this “justice” will be questioned due to how it has played out historically). I also acknowledge the need to “help” those whose struggles we identify with, but to do that without care is to also impose, cause harm, and create more oppression.

**99** Here I am reminded of the words of activist and “Black” Muslim leader, Malcolm X (i.e., el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz): “My thinking had been opened up in Mecca...I’m for truth, no matter who tells it. I’m for justice, no matter who it is for or against. I’m a human being first and foremost, and as such I’m for whoever and whatever benefits humanity as a *whole*”; see Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 65th print (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999), 373.

**100** To be sure, this is not just limited to the queer cause. This is about how militaristically, politically, and economically powerful nations have abused power in general. To give another example, and there are plenty, as part of its “solution” to “correct” or alleviate injustice due its own historical “anti-Semitism” and the mishandling of the Jewish People in Europe, major powerful Western nation-states have enabled, participated in, and legitimized the attempts at the annihilation and destruction of almost the entirety of another kind of People in the process (i.e., native Semitic Palestinians). That is, in its own fight against what it labels as the injustice of (its own myopic understanding of) “anti-Semitism”, the West has ironically, unjustly, and unapologetically sacrificed an entire *Semitic* population in the process.

**101** To understand the limit of their roles in the conversation, the receptivity to and viability of their solutions, and so on (all of which should come from what some call a “radical respect for alterity”). I use “radical respect for alterity” in general terms, as in we are, to an extent, “radically” different as various human collectives and we must respect that (I develop a framework to make sense of this in 1.3). However, for more on how Professor Doehring envisions it within the context of “pastoral care”, see Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*, Revised and expanded edition (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 1–4.

the injustices it is claiming to alleviate<sup>102</sup>. Otherwise, there seems to be an underlying assumption behind some of these problematic universalization tactics by which one way of being in the world (i.e., “Western”) is privileged above all others. For me, the truth, as I have come to know it, could not have been further from that. That is the case because, while we are of the same being (one species) as distinguished from other beings, we are not all of the same *kind*.

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**102** This is part of a bigger conversation on our coexistence as a *pluralistic* species which I started to discuss in the Preface, highlighted in the Introduction, and will continue to address throughout my thesis.

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

DEAR READER,

It is with great privilege that I can share this online publication with you. This installment is a part of my book, *Halal This Way: Towards a Viable Queering in Sunni Islam*.

My quest into this topic has been a lifelong journey, and being gay in a Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim context has defined my existence. I felt lost ever since I became cognizant of my queer-predicament. There was no clarity on what I was going through. The research to get the answers was not easy, and getting there was tremendously costly (both on personal and financial levels). What you read here is a product of that onerous journey.

To be truly honest with you, I needed to do this work on my terms and with my principles intact. I realized early on that the only way for me to do so is to start my own platform. This is why Halal This Way, LLC (the official publisher of this work) was conceived.

I am both humbled and proud of the work I have done on this topic so far. To be able to construct a viable path towards the theological and legal acceptance of queer matters in Sunni Islam at this moment in time is not an easy task. This work is especially complicated given the global political and socioeconomic context in which it operates. However, I am convinced that there is a viable way to do so, which I highlight in this publication (as a whole). As such, it is only a matter of time within Sunni Islam before many categories of Queer Muslims are accepted, accommodated, even celebrated.

With that said, it is very difficult for my work to continue, and for Halal This Way, LLC to succeed, without consistent funding. For me to continue this work full time (which I have been doing for the most part without financial support), and to take my organization off the ground, I need to raise funds. Among other things, this funding will help me continue the editing process, the typesetting of the book, cover the printing costs, and some living expenses. Most importantly, however, your generous contribution will help me build this platform and ensure its continuity.

I cannot thank you enough for your support and whatever one-time or monthly contribution you choose to make as an investment in me and in Halal This Way, LLC. It has been an honor to undertake this project and to share it with you. Please consider contributing to it if you are in a position to do so.

To contribute, please go to **[www.halalthisway.org](http://www.halalthisway.org)**. To connect with me personally, please email: **[maher@halalthisway.org](mailto:maher@halalthisway.org)**.

Salam, thank you, and best regards!

Maher Alhaj