



What Makes a Man? Sex Talk in Beirut and Berlin is intercultural dialogue of a new kind, comprising Rashid al-Daif's novelized account of his experience with the West-Eastern Divan program when he and Joachim Helfer spent time in each other's country, *How the German Came to His Sense*, Joachim Helfer's commentary on it and on his view of the exchange, in *The Queering of the World*, and five essays by specialists in Arab and German literature. While al-Daif narrates the events from a very personal perspective, creating a "novelised biography", Helfer's commentary aims to explain and correct those passages in which, in his opinion, al-Daif interprets homosexuality according to narrow-minded stereotypes.

It is interesting, however, that in doing so Helfer sometimes also falls into the trap of using stereotypes, in this case of an Orientalist nature. Al-Daif's account is entertaining and shows the author's attempts to understand a reality with which he is not familiar and that his society totally rejects. However, some of his comments may appear naive or even superficial. Helfer's *The Queering of the World* instead appears not as flowing, despite adding interesting comments to what al-Daif wrote. Its fragmented structure is due to the fact that Helfer does not present a report as such, but quotes the entire text of *How the German Came to his Senses* inserting his own comments in the relevant places.

The five essays that complete the book are useful studies of the two works. They look at al-Daif and Helfer's accounts according to specific study frameworks, which vary from the rhetorical, to the colonial, and to that of intercultural communication. Translated by Ken Seigneurie and Gary Schmidt, University of Texas Press, USA, 2015, ISBN: 9780292763104, 252 pp, Pbk, £19.95/\$30.00, ebook £18.95/\$30.00. Laura Ferreri

Sykes-Picot: The Legacy features five plays written by Hannah Khalil, Hassan Abdulrazzak and Joshua Hinds. This collection aims to encourage the debate on the implications of the Sykes-Picot agreement, a topic whose growing importance in the world of theatre became clear during a fundraising event "Gather for Gaza", organised in 2014 by Arts Canteen. Edited by Kenneth Pickering, published by Arts Canteen, April 2015. ISBN: 9781511430951, 144pp, Pbk, £7.99/ \$11.99, Kindle ed., £3.99 / \$6.34

