

*Abu Ghraib:
Arguing
against
Exceptionalism*

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"Such dehumanization is unacceptable in any culture, but it is especially so in the Arab world. Homosexual acts are against Islamic law and it is humiliating for men to be naked in front of other men," Bernard Haykel, a professor of Middle Eastern studies at New York University, explained. "Being put on top of each other and forced to masturbate, being naked in front of each other—it's all a form of torture," Haykel said.

—Seymour M. Hersh

THE TORTURE OF IRAQI PRISONERS at Abu Ghraib is neither exceptional nor singular, as many people, including Donald Rumsfeld, the Bush administration, the U.S. military establishment, and some good liberals would have us believe. The opposite is shown by the prison guard backgrounds of several soldiers facing prosecution for the Iraqi prisoner situation and by the incarceration practices within the U.S. prison industrial complex or even by the brutal sodomizing of Abner Louima by New York police. Nor is it, however, possible to normalize it as "business as usual" within the torture industry. Yet, as has been made clear by public and governmental rage alike, a line has been crossed. Why that line is so demarcated as the place of "sexual torture"—specifically, violence that purports to mimic sexual acts closely associated with homosexuality such as sodomy and oral sex, as well as sadomasochistic practices of bondage, leashing, and hooding—and not as the slow starvation of millions due to

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U.S. sanctions against Iraq, the deaths of thousands of Iraqi civilians since the U.S. invasion in April 2003, the plundering and carnage in Falluja—is indeed a *spectacular* question, one this essay seeks to address. The reaction of rage misses the point: this violence is neither an exception to nor a simple extension of the violence of an imperialist occupation. Rather, the focus on purported homosexual acts obscures other forms of gendered violence and serves a broader racist and sexist, as well as homophobic, agenda.

As George W. Bush stated of the abuse at Abu Ghraib, days after the photographs had been circulating among foreign press: “Their treatment does not reflect the nature of the American people.”¹ The word choice is intriguing. What is it, exactly, that is inimical to the “natural” tendencies of Americans? Is it the behavior of the U.S. soldiers conducting the abuse and clicking the digital shutter? Or the perverse behaviors forcibly enacted by the captured prisoners? What is “disgusting,” a commonly used word of description, about these photos? U.S. soldiers grinning, stupidly waving their thumbs in the air, the depicted sex acts themselves, simulated oral and anal sex between men, or the fact that the photos were taken at all? And why are these photos any more revolting than pictures of body parts blown apart by missiles and explosives? Amidst Bush’s claims to the contrary, the actions of the U.S. military in Saddam’s former torture chambers certainly narrows the gap between us and them—between the patriot and the terrorist—as the actions involve the exact same site, the same population, and nearly sequential time periods. But not without attempts to paint America as the victim: in response to the photos, Thomas Friedman frets that “We are in danger of losing something much more important than just the war in Iraq. We are in danger of losing America as an instrument of moral authority and inspiration in the world. I have never known a time in my life when America and its president were more hated around the world than today.”²

Bush denies that the psychic and fantasy life of Americans is depraved, sick, or polluted and rather affirms that it is naturally free from such perversions—that Americans could never enjoy inflicting such abuse as occurred at Abu Ghraib and would never even have the mindset or capacity to think of such acts. This discourse re-instantiates a liberal regime of multicultural heteronormativity intrinsic to U.S. patriotism. The claim of exceptionalism surrounding these events is being produced on three interrelated planes: that of the rarity of this particular form of

violence, that of the sanctity of the sexual and of the body in relation to the individual rights of privacy and ownership accorded to the body within liberalism, and that of the transparency of this abuse as defying the normative standards that guarantee the universality of the "human" in human rights discourses. All three of these sites occur, for example, in the following statement: "Metropolitan Community Churches especially condemns the use of sexuality as an instrument of torture, shame, and intimidation. . . . That prisoners were forced to perform sexual acts that violate their religious principles and personal consciences is particularly heinous." And later: "MCC pledges to continue to work for a world in which all people are treated with dignity and equality and where sexuality is celebrated, respected and used for good."³

The Americans being questioned for their involvement, tacit and explicit, in the torture attempt to justify their behavior by pointing to cultural differences between themselves and the Iraqis and their own lack of training. Soldiers whine plaintively on the news that they could have handled the situation better with more knowledge of the Muslim way of life. This cultural difference line has been used by both conservatives and progressives to comment upon the particularly intense shame with which homosexual and feminizing acts are experienced by Muslims (and for this, there is vast sympathy for the prisoners from the general public). The taboo of homosexuality (as feminized masculinity?) within Islamic cultures figures heavily in the explanations as to why the torture has been so devastating to its victims. This interpretation of sexual norms in the "Middle East"—repressed, but with perversity bubbling just underneath the surface—is part of centuries-long Orientalist traditions, an Orientalist phantasmatic that certainly informed the photographs of the torture at Abu Ghraib. Writing in the *New Yorker*, Seymour Hersh describes the use of scholarly texts to determine effective torture methods:

The notion that Arabs are particularly vulnerable to sexual humiliation became a talking point among pro-war Washington conservatives in the months before the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. One book that was frequently cited was *The Arab Mind*, a study of Arab culture and psychology, first published in 1973, by Raphael Patai, a cultural anthropologist who taught at, among other universities, Columbia and Princeton, and who died in 1996. The book includes a twenty-five-page chapter on Arabs and sex, depicting sex as a taboo vested with shame and repression. "The segregation of the sexes, the veiling of the women . . . and all the other

minute rules that govern and restrict contact between men and women, have the effect of making sex a prime mental preoccupation in the Arab world," Patai wrote. Homosexual activity, "or any indication of homosexual leanings, as with all other expressions of sexuality, is never given any publicity. These are private affairs and remain in private." The Patai book, an academic told me, was "the bible of the neocons on Arab behavior." In their discussions, he said, two themes emerged—"one, that Arabs only understand force and, two, that the biggest weakness of Arabs is shame and humiliation."

The government consultant said that there may have been a serious goal, in the beginning, behind the sexual humiliation and the posed photographs. It was thought that some prisoners would do anything—including spying on their associates—to avoid dissemination of the shameful photos to family and friends. The government consultant said, "I was told that the purpose of the photographs was to create an army of informants, people you could insert back in the population." The idea was that they would be motivated by fear of exposure, and gather information about pending insurgency action, the consultant said. If so, it wasn't effective; the insurgency continued to grow.⁴

I quote these passages at length to display the intricate relations between Orientalist knowledge production, sexual and bodily shame, and espionage. As Yoshie Furuhashi astutely pointed out, Edward Said's *Orientalism* cites *The Arab Mind* as an example of contemporary conduits of Orientalism that also include the knowledge formations of public policy, terrorism studies, and area studies.⁵ The model of terrorism used by the State Department swerves between a pyramid structure and a network structure. The former represents a known rational administrative format, phallic, and hence castratable. The pyramid form also appears in the film, *Battle of Algiers*, viewed for brainstorming purposes by the Pentagon in September 2003. In several of the Abu Ghraib photos, Iraqi prisoners are arranged naked in human pyramids, simulating both the feminized prone position, anus in the air, as if to receive anal sex, and the "activo" mounting stance of anal sex. What is significant here is not that the meaning of the pyramid has been translated from one context to another, but rather that this Orientalist "knowledge of the Arab" and its mimicry does not depend on contextual meaning to be symbolically and politically effective.

There is of course also a duality at work, for underneath the veils of repression can be found a sizzling indecency waiting to be unleashed. The most recent invocation of the perverse deranged terrorist is found in this

testimony by one of the prison guards at Abu Ghraib: "I saw two naked detainees, one masturbating to another kneeling with its mouth open. . . . I saw SSG Frederick walking towards me, and he said, 'Look what these animals do when you leave them alone for two seconds.' I heard [female officer] PFC England shout out, 'He's getting hard.'"⁶ At the heart of Orientalist notions of sexuality is the paradoxical view that the Orient is both the space of "illicit and dangerous sex" and the site of carefully suppressed animalistic sexual instincts.⁷

This Orientalist discourse has resurfaced in relation to the violence at Abu Ghraib, as both conservatives and progressives claim that the illegal status of homosexual acts in Islamic law demarcates sexual torture as especially humiliating and therefore very effective from a military security perspective.⁸ A parallel homophobic logic is deployed by many sources in the recent commentary on the Iraqi prisoner abuse scandal. Bush's administration claims that these forms of torture were particularly necessary and efficacious for interrogation because of the ban on homosexuality in Islam. Madhi Bray, executive director of the Muslim American Society, a non-profit Islamic organization located in Virginia, says that Islam calls for "modesty in dress"—"being seen naked is a tremendous taboo and a tremendous humiliation in Muslim culture"—and that homosexuality, considered a sin, "only becomes a problem when it is flaunted, affecting the entire society." Faisal Alam, founder and director of the international Muslim lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning (LGBTIQ) organization, Al-Fatiha, states that "Sexual humiliation is perhaps the worst form of torture for any Muslim." The press release from Al-Fatiha continues: "Islam places a high emphasis on modesty and sexual privacy. Iraq, much like the rest of the Arab world, places great importance on notions of masculinity. Forcing men to masturbate in front of each other and to mock same-sex acts or homosexual sex, is perverse and sadistic, in the eyes of many Muslims." In another interview Alam maintains that the torture is an "affront to [the prisoners'] masculinity."⁹ Patrick Moore, author of *Beyond Shame: Reclaiming the Abandoned History of Radical Gay Sex*, opines:

Because "gay" implies an identity and a culture, in addition to describing a sexual act, it is difficult for a gay man in the West to completely understand the level of disgrace endured by the Iraqi prisoners. But in the Arab world, the humiliating techniques now on display are particularly effective because of Islam's troubled

relationship with homosexuality. This is not to say that sex between men does not occur in Islamic society—the shame lies in the gay identity rather than the act itself. As long as a man does not accept the supposedly female (passive) role in sex with another man, there is no shame in the behavior. Reports indicate that the prisoners were not only physically abused but also accused of actually being homosexuals, which is a far greater degradation to them.¹⁰

These accounts by LGBT progressives tend to uphold versions of normative masculinity—i.e., passivo is naturalized as bad. This is perhaps an unintended side effect of the focus on homosexuality, which tends to reproduce misogyny in the effort to disrupt homophobia. Furthermore, we see the trenchant replay of what Michel Foucault termed the “repressive hypothesis”: the notion that a lack of discussion or openness regarding sexuality reflects a repressive, censorship-driven apparatus of deflated sexual desire. Given the centrality of Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality* to queer studies, it is somewhat baffling that some queer theorists have accepted at face value the discourse of Islamic sexual repression. Although in *Orientalism*, Said charges that the Occident sought out the illicit sex found in the Orient in order to liberate itself from its own performance of the repressive hypothesis, in the case of Abu Ghraib, conversely, it is the repression of the Arab prisoners that is highlighted in order to efface the rampant hypersexual excesses of the U.S. prison guards.

Given the unbridled homophobia demonstrated by the U.S. guards, it is indeed ironic, yet predictable, that the United States nonetheless emerges as more tolerant of homosexuality (and less tainted by misogyny and fundamentalism) than the repressed, modest, nudity-shy “Middle East.” Apparently, the United States still regards itself as the arbiter of civilizational standards. For example, Kelly Cogswell worries about the homophobic and misogynist backlash of the Abu Ghraib scandal as if the U.S. hasn’t already demonstrated its capacity to perpetuate their most extreme forms. Writing in the *Gully*, an LGBT political news forum, she stated: “Images of men forced to wear women’s underwear over their faces and engage in homosexual activity will also inflame misogyny and homophobia. Forget about Bush’s anti-gay marriage stand in the United States. By tolerating this behavior in Iraq and elsewhere, his administration has made homosexuality abhorrent world-wide. The image of an American woman holding a prisoner’s leash will be used as a potent argument against modernization and the emancipation of women.” Barbara Ehrenreich expressed compara-

ble concerns: "It was England we saw with a naked Iraqi man on a leash. If you were doing PR for Al Qaeda, you couldn't have staged a better picture to galvanize misogynist Islamic fundamentalists around the world. Here, in these photos from Abu Ghraib, you have everything that the Islamic fundamentalists believe characterizes Western culture, all nicely arranged in one hideous image—imperial arrogance, sexual depravity, and gender equality." Cogwell's and Ehrenreich's projections of gender equality as characteristic of the West is surely wishful thinking."

The picture of Lynndie England leading a naked Iraqi on a leash has now become a surface upon which fundamentalism and modernization, apparently dialectically opposed, can wage war. The image is both about the victories of liberal feminists, who argue that women should have equal opportunities within the military, and also about liberal feminism's failures adequately to theorize power and gender beyond female-male dichotomies that situate women as less prone toward violence than men and morally superior to them. Brimming with disappointment, Ehrenreich pontificates: "Secretly, I hoped that the presence of women would over time change the military, making it more respectful of other people and cultures, more capable of genuine peacekeeping. . . . A certain kind of feminism, or perhaps I should say a certain kind of feminist naiveté, died in Abu Ghraib." Moore articulated the death of a parallel yearning, as if gay male sexuality had never chanced upon its own misogyny: "The idea that female soldiers are as capable as men of such atrocities is disorienting for gay men who tend to think of women as natural allies." But the same image of England and the Iraqi prisoner also hints at the sexual perversions associated with sadomasochism, something not mentioned at all in the popular press. The comparisons now being proffered between the deprived England and the heroic Jessica Lynch, informed by their class-background similarities but little else, speak also of the need to explain away the solid presence of female Abu Ghraib torturers as an aberration.¹²

Continuously in the gay press, the Abu Ghraib photos are being hailed as "evidence of rampant homophobia in the armed forces."¹³ Aaron Belkin decries "the most base, paranoid, or extreme elements of military homophobia."¹⁴ Paula Ettelbrick, the executive director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, maintains that "this sort of humiliation" becomes sanctioned through the operation of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."¹⁵ The homophobia of the U.S. military is pounced upon, with

scarce mention of the linked processes of racism and sexism. Moore, who himself says the photos “evoked in me a deep sense of shame as a gay man,” in particular sets up the (white) gay male subject as the paradigmatic victim of the assaulting images, stating that “for closeted gay men and lesbians serving in the military, it must evoke deep shame.” Is it really prudent to foreclose the chance that there might be a gay man or lesbian among the perpetrators of the torture at Abu Ghraib? To foreground homophobia over other vectors of shame is to miss that these photos are not merely representative of the homophobia of the military; they are also racist, misogynist, and imperialist. To favor the gay male spectator—here, presumably white—is to negate the intersectional audience implicated as viewers of these images and, oddly, to privilege as victim the coherently formed white gay male sexuality in the West over “closeted” and acts-qualified bodies, not to mention the bodies of the tortured Iraqi prisoners themselves. In another interview Moore complicates this audience vectorship: “I felt the government had found a way to use sexuality as a tool of humiliation both for Arab men and for gay men here. . . .” The drawing together of (presumably straight) Arab men and (presumably white) gay men is yet another moment where the sexuality of Arab men is qualified as repressed and oriented toward premodern acts, the precursor to the identity-solidified space of “here.”¹⁶

Mubarak Dahir, writing for the *New York Blade*, intervenes in a long-standing debate among LGBT communities about whether the War on Terrorism is a gay issue by underscoring “gay sex” as central to the images: “The claim by some members of the gay and lesbian community that the invasion and occupation of Iraq is not a ‘gay’ issue crumbled last week when photos emerged of hooded, naked Iraqi captives at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad being forced to simulate gay sex acts as a form of abuse and humiliation.” And later: “As a gay man and as a person of Arab descent, I felt a double sting from those pictures. Looking at the blurred-out photos of hooded Iraqi prisoners being forced to perform simulations of gay oral sex on one another, I had to wonder what it was that my fellow Americans in uniform who were directing the scene found the most despicable: the fact that the men were performing gay sex, or that they were Arabs.”¹⁷ However, declaring that the torturous acts are “gay sex” invites other consequences, such as the response from Egyptian protesters in Cairo calling for the removal of the “homosexual

American executioners"¹⁸ and reaffirming that homosexuality is an unwanted import from the West, an accusation that feeds nicely into Bush's anti-gay marriage agenda.

But are the acts specifically ones of gay sex? And is it the case that, as Moore argues, homosexuality has been employed as the "ultimate tool of degradation" and as a "military tactic [that] reaches new levels of perversity"?¹⁹ Certainly this rendition evades a conversation about what exactly constitutes the distinction between gay sex and straight sex and also presumes some static normativity about gender roles as well. Calling the simulated and actual sex scenes replicative of "gay sex" is an easy way for all-mass media, Orientalist anthropologists, the military establishment, LGBT groups and organizations—to sidestep an acknowledgment of both "perverse" proclivities in heterosexual sex and of the gender normativity immanent in some kinds of gay sex.²⁰ Although the presence of women torturers should at least initially give us pause, the simulated sex acts must be thought of in terms of gendered roles rather than through a notion of sexual orientation. Former prisoner Dhia al-Shweiri notes: "We are men. It's OK if they beat me. Beatings don't hurt us; it's just a blow. But no one would want their manhood to be shattered. They wanted us to feel as though we were women, the way women feel, and this is the worst insult, to feel like a woman."²¹ In this regard three points are at stake: How do we deconstruct the fact of the literal presence of women and possibly of gay men and/or lesbians? How should one explore the analytic of gender positionings? And finally, what do we make of the participation of U.S. guards in the photos, behind the cameras, and in front of the computer screen?

As voyeur, conductor, dictator, dominatrix, those orchestrating these acts, several of whom appear to be erotically riled in the photos, are part of, not external to, the sex scenes themselves, sometimes even explicitly so. For example, Specialist Jeremy Sivits in his testimony states: "Staff Sergeant Frederick would take the hand of the detainee and put it on the detainee's penis, and make the detainee's hand go back and forth, as if masturbating. He did this to about three of the detainees before one of them did it right."²² This is hardly indicative of a detached, objective, distanced observer behind the camera, positioned only to capture the events via the click of the shutter. Reports of sodomizing with chemical light sticks and broomsticks and of Americans inserting fingers into prisoners'

anuses also fully implicate the U.S. guards and raise the specters of interracial and intercultural sex. Less overtly, the separation of participant from voyeur is complicated by the pleasures of taking, posing for, and looking at pictures, especially as the use of cameras and videos inform varied practices, such as watching pornography or taking nudie pics, between partners in all kinds of sex. Other photos, originally cropped for damage-controlled consumption, are now revealing multiple spectators, bystanders, and participants; in the case of the widely disseminated and discussed photo of a hooded man made to stand on a box with wires attached to his arms, legs, and penis—a classic torture pose developed in Vietnam—a U.S. guard is on the periphery, nonchalantly examining his digital camera. Even more trenchant is the collapsing of production and consumption, image and viewer. There is no inside or outside; there is rather movement, circulation, contingent temporalities, momentary associations and disassociations. Indeed one could argue what is exceptional here is not the actual violence itself, but rather the capture of these acts on film, the photographic qualities of which are reminiscent of vacation snapshots, mementos of a good time, victory at last, or even the trophy won at summer camp. Unlike images of the “collateral,” purportedly unavoidable deaths of war, these photos divulge an irrefutable intentionality. We have proof, finally, of what we know to be true not only in Iraq and Afghanistan and Guantánamo Bay, but in our very own prisons in the United States. These photos do not merely reflect the tortures committed; they also function as an integral part of the humiliating, dehumanizing violence itself: the giddy process of documentation, the visual evidence of corporeal shame, the keen ecstatic eye of the voyeur, the haunting of surveillance, the dissemination of the images, like pornography on the Internet, the speed of transmission an aphrodisiac in itself, “swapped from computer to computer throughout the 320th Battalion,”²³ perpetuating humiliation ad nauseum. Thus these images not only represent these acts and allude to their ever-expanding audiences, but they also reproduce the power dynamics that made these acts possible in the first place. As Susan Sontag argues, “...the photographs are us.” Comparing the Abu Ghraib images to the photographs of black victims of lynching, taken between 1880 and 1930 and depicting “Americans grinning beneath the naked mutilated body of a black man or woman hanging behind them from a tree,” Sontag argues that there has been a shift in the utility of photographs.

Once collectable items for albums and display in frames at home, photos are now "less objects to be saved than messages to be disseminated, circulated."²⁴ Obviously, technology has been a major catalyst in this transition from trophy to propaganda: the ubiquitous digital camera, software to assist in manipulating and perfecting images, Internet sites that function as virtual photo albums. It is a transition from stillness to proliferation, from singularity to fertility, like ejecting dandelion spores into the wind. But more importantly, mobility, motility, speed, and performance function as primary erotic and addictive charges of modernity. Clicking the "send" button is the ultimate release of productivity and consumption, and dissemination, the ultimate form of territorial coverage and conquest, becomes yet another layering of the sexual matrix. And unlike the reports compiled by Amnesty International, the Red Cross, and other humanitarian organizations that were easily ignored by the Bush administration, the photos and their circulatory modalities double as representation and information, as the representation of information.

To summarize, what emerges from these interpretations in terms of narratives regarding homosexuality and its intersections with the violence at Abu Ghraib is the following: (1) The sexual acts simulated are all specifically and only gay sex acts. (2) Homosexuality is taboo in Islamic cultures; therefore these are the worst forms of humiliation for Muslims to endure, insinuating that these forms of torture would be easier for other, less homophobic populations to tolerate. The reference to "taboo" also works to discount the presence of gay-identified Muslims in Arab societies, what Joseph Massad terms the gay Arab international. (3) American tolerance for homosexuality is elevated in relation to Islamic societies, as symptomatized by the unspecific, ahistorical, and generalized commentary on the taboo of homosexuality for Muslims. (4) The enactment of "gay sex" constitutes the worst form of torture, sexual or otherwise. (5) Therefore the Iraqi prisoners, having endured the humiliation of gay sex, are subjects worthy of sympathy—an emotive response more readily available than a sustained political critique of the U.S. occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq. (6) The question of race and how it plays out in these scenarios is effaced via the fixation on sexuality; gender is also effaced when the acts are said to originate from a homophobic military culture instead of a misogynist one. (7) Sexuality is isolated within the individual as opposed to situated as an integrated vector of power. (8) The

language favoring gay sex acts over torture once again casts the shadows of perversity outside, onto sexual and racial others, rather than contextualizing the processes of normativizing bodily torture. (9) Technologies of representation work to occlude the lines of connectivity (sexual, bodily, proximity, positionality) between captors and prisoners.

Despite the widespread absence of sexuality in public debates about 9-11 and the War on Terrorism, the “prisoner sexual abuse scandal,” as it is now termed, vividly reveals that sexuality is a central and crucial component of the machinic assemblage that is American patriotism. The use of sexuality—in this case, to physically punish and humiliate—is not tangential, unusual, nor reflective of an extreme case, especially given continuities between representational, legislative, and consumerist practices. Therefore the terms “scandal,” “sexual,” and “abuse” need to be semiotically discharged. Not that this treatment is not sexual, nor abuse, but rather that abuse is a commonplace occurrence in detention; thus, following Achille Mbembe on necropolitics, in which systems of domination are “anatomical, tactile, and sensorial,”²⁵ we can say simply that sexualized bodily abuse is a normalized facet of prisoner life and the sexual is always already inscribed in necropolitics. Furthermore, as postcolonial scholars have aptly demonstrated, the sexual is already part and parcel of the histories of colonial domination and empire building; conquest is innately corporeal. That is to say, this “scandal,” rather than being cast as exceptional, needs to be contextualized within a range of other practices and discourses, perhaps less obvious than the Iraqi prisoner abuse, that pivotally lasso sexuality in the deployment of U.S. nationalism, patriotism, and increasingly, empire. Despite the fantastical actions of those in charge of Abu Ghraib, in the discourses I have examined here, perversity is still localized to the body of the queer Muslim terrorist, insistently deferred to those outside the U.S. perimeter of supposed normality. The systemic failure of U.S. military operations at the prison is thus clearly not the fault of a handful of individuals but rather due to the entire assemblage of necropolitics, and sexuality reveals itself not as the barometer of exception, a situation out of control, an unimaginable reality, but rather as a systemic, intrinsic, and pivotal module of power relations.

NOTES

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2. Thomas Friedman, *New York Times*, 6 May 2004.

3. Troy D. Perry, "A Pastoral Statement from Metropolitan Community Churches," Office of the Moderator, May 2004, www.MCCchurch.org.
4. Seymour M. Hersh, "The Gray Zone," *New Yorker*, 24 May 2004.
5. Yoshie Furuhashi, <http://montages.blogspot.com/2004/05/orientalist-torture.html>.
6. Seymour M. Hersh, "Torture at Abu Ghraib," *New Yorker*, 10 May 2004, 44. For Edward Said's references to *The Arab Mind*, see his *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 308-9, 311, 312, 349.
7. Said, 167.
8. Press release, Al-Fatiha Foundation, "Al-Fatiha Condemns Sexual Humiliation of Iraqi Detainees, Calls for National LGBT Groups to Denounce Homophobic Human Rights Abuses," 10 May 2004. Founder and director Faisal Alam opines: "As queer Muslims, we must condemn in the most forceful terms the blatant acts of homophobia and sexual torture displayed by the U.S. military. These symbolic acts of abuse represent the worst form of torture."
9. Both Madhi Bray and Faisal Alam are quoted in Joe Crea, "Gay Sex Used to Humiliate Iraqis," *Washington Blade*, 7 May 2004, www.washblade.com/2004/5-7/news/national/iraq.cfm.
10. Patrick Moore, "Gay Sexuality Shouldn't Become a Torture Device," *Newsday*, 7 May 2004, www.newsday.com/news/opinion/ny-vpmoo073790888may07,0,7044518.story?coll=ny-viewpoints-headlines.
11. Kelly Cogswell, "Torture and America: So This Is Us," *Gully*, 13 May 2004, www.thegully.com/essays/iraq/040513_torture_abu_ghraib.html; Barbara Ehrenreich, "Prison Abuse: Feminism's Assumptions Upended," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 May 2004, www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-op-ehrenreich16may16,1,190206.
12. Ehrenreich; Moore.
13. Crea.
14. Ibid.
15. Duncan Osborne, "Pentagon Uses Gay Sex as Tool of Humiliation," *Gay City News*, 13 May 2004, www.gaycitynews.com/5_13/pentagonusesgayssex.html.
16. Moore, cited in Osborne.
17. Mubarak Dahir, "Gay Sex and Prison Torture in Iraq War," *New York Blade*, 14 May 2004.
18. Patrick Letellier, "Egyptians Protest 'Gay' Abuse in Iraq; LGBT Groups Hit Out at 'Torture' Confusion," *Gay.com/PlanetOut.com Network*, 18 May 2004.
19. Moore.
20. Amnesty International is among the few that did not mention homosexuality, homosexual acts, or same-sex sexuality in its press release condemning the torture, www.amnestyusa.org/iraq/iraq_index.html.
21. Crea.
22. See Kate Zernike, "Accused Soldier Paints Scene of Eager Mayhem at Iraqi Prison," *New York Times*, 14 May 2004.
23. Seymour M. Hersh, "Chain of Command," *New Yorker*, 17 May 2004, 39.
24. Susan Sontag, "Regarding the Torture of Others," *New York Times Magazine*, 23 May 2004.
25. Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11-40, 34.

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