

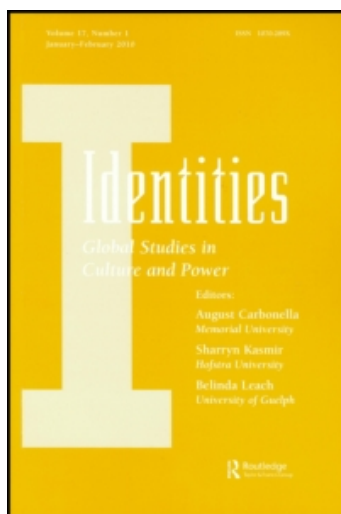
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Antiterrorism, Race, and the New Frontier: American Exceptionalism, Imperial Multiculturalism, and the Global Security State

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Antiterrorism, Race, and the New Frontier: American Exceptionalism, Imperial Multiculturalism, and the Global Security State

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Following Barack Obama's election as United States president, the illusion that the worst excesses of the Bush administration are now simply finished must be tempered by a sober assessment of the deeply consequential institutionalization of antiterrorism as the intransigent idiom of a new species of security state formation. Obama's assumption of responsibility for the conduct of the so-called War on Terror has committed him to the dominant ethos of antiterrorism and a multifaceted program of securitization, "domestically" and internationally. Furthermore, the task of reinvigorating United States nationalism by exalting American exceptionalism is one that deeply conjoins Obama with his predecessor. This is, perhaps, nowhere so evident as in Obama's dissimulations of the racial singularity and salience of his accession to the presidency. Indeed, he compulsively deracialized his election in favor of an American exceptionalist gesture of patriotic postracialism. This essay interrogates the relation between this "postracial" Americanism and a distinctly imperial multiculturalism. Through this "postracial" and assimilationist vision of empire, and by means of the crucial (racially ambiguous) figure of the Muslim, the United States has fashioned itself as the decisive police power of an incipient Global Security State, charged with putting in order the wild new frontiers of an unruly planet.

Key Words: Race, postracialism, War on Terror, the Muslim Question, Obama, United States, empire

From homeland security to a global security state?

In the wake of the election of Barack Obama to the United States presidency, the facile illusion that the most pernicious aspects of the administration of George W. Bush are now simply finished, or will be promptly rectified by a new regime in the White House, must be tempered by a sober and intrepid assessment of the deeply consequential institutionalization of antiterrorism. Antiterrorism must be recognized as not merely a paranoid and self-serving rhetorical ploy but rather as the intransigent idiom of a new species of security state formation (De Genova 2007a, 2009). As Marx incisively notes, "Security is the supreme social concept of civil society; the concept of the police"

(1843/1978: 43). The entrenchment of the Homeland Security State, domestically, has been inextricable from the so-called War on Terror's mission of *global* policing and the "exceptional" status of the United States regarding the task of subjugating and putting in order the wild new frontiers of an unruly planet. One need only note that, in his speech on the evening of the election, Obama found it imperative to proclaim to the world: "And to all those watching tonight from beyond our shores, from parliaments and palaces to those who are huddled around radios in the forgotten corners of our world . . . a new dawn of American leadership is at hand. To those who would tear this world down—we will defeat you" (4 November 2008). Here was the requisite signal and the belligerent affirmation of an imperial will to overpower those who might dare to set themselves up as the enemies of "this world," which is to say *this global regime of capital accumulation and its regnant sociopolitical order*.

To adequately assess the meaning of Obama's characteristically "presidential" avowal to assert the role of the United States as caretaker and police enforcer for "this world," however, it is necessary to more fully examine the decidedly *globalist* current in the already well-worn doctrines and dictates established by the Bush administration over the course of its self-anointed Global War on Terror. Of course, this more cosmopolitan dimension of Bush's politics has often been overlooked in the face of the bombastic United States chauvinism and effusive parochialism of the other alternating current in Bush's discourse—his militaristic and millenarian United States nationalism. It is precisely in dialogue with that latter "American exceptionalist" legacy of his predecessor that Obama also declared: "If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible . . . tonight is your answer. . . . So let us summon a new spirit of patriotism" (4 November 2008). Thus, the task of exalting and reinvigorating United States nationalism is one that deeply conjoins Obama and Bush, just as much as any dispute between them over the proper conduct of the so-called war against terrorism commits them together to a shared ethos of antiterrorism and a multifaceted material and practical program of securitization, "domestically" and internationally.

Obama's long-standing commitment to escalate and expand the war in Afghanistan—and now, also Pakistan—would seem to only further corroborate these extravagant, seemingly gratuitous, gestures of distinctly imperial "presidentialism" (Nelson 2006). In fact, it is *Pakistan* that is now identified as the centerpiece of this revised War on Terror. The new administration promptly outlined its revised policy in a White Paper issued within the first months of Obama's presidency: "In *Pakistan*, al Qaeda and other groups of jihadist terrorists

are planning new terror attacks. . . . the core goal of the United States must be to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens *in Pakistan*" (White House 2009: 1; emphases added). Thus, the ever-amorphous, unbounded, and limitless Global War on Terror continues to pursue its ever-mobile, and always-receding, target. After more than seven years of the Bush administration's official and unrelenting "state of emergency," therefore, this essay is centrally concerned with the ebullience surrounding the Obama presidency, especially inasmuch as it is celebrated as a presumed "return" to "normal." Indeed, one suspects that what we have been witnessing—and what the Obama presidency really signifies—may be precisely the *normalization* of the state of emergency.

Upon announcing his new strategy for the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Obama spoke in terms that were luridly reminiscent of his predecessor:

"The situation is increasingly perilous. . . . 2008 was the deadliest year of the war [in Afghanistan] for American forces. . . . So let me be clear: Al Qaeda and its allies – the terrorists who planned and supported the 9/11 attacks—are in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Multiple intelligence estimates have warned that al Qaeda is actively planning attacks on the United States homeland from its safe haven in Pakistan. And if the Afghan government falls to the Taliban—or allows al Qaeda to go unchallenged—that country will again be a base for terrorists who want to kill as many of our people as they possibly can. . . . In the nearly eight years since 9/11, al Qaeda and its extremist allies have moved across the border to the remote areas of the Pakistani frontier. This almost certainly includes al Qaeda's leadership: Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. . . . For the American people, this border region has become the most dangerous place in the world. But this is not simply an American problem—far from it. It is, instead, an international security challenge of the highest order. . . . The safety of people around the world is at stake" (27 March 2009).

Here, then, is a condensation of all the key specters associated with the post-September 11, 2001, historical moment (al-Qaeda, Osama bin-Laden, "planning attacks on the homeland," "terrorists who want to kill as many of our people as they possibly can"), reanimating the most vital energies of the so-called "war against terrorism." On the other hand, it is simultaneously figured as an "international security challenge," which is to say it is staged as a matter for global *policing*. Precisely as the official antiterrorist "state of emergency" may appear to have been downgraded and deliberately understated, its very normalization ensures that its perpetuation proceeds apace.

The institutionalization of the Homeland Security State and the normalization of the antiterrorist “state of emergency” alert us to the fact that none of these developments can be discounted as merely temporary and anomalous exigencies or aberrations of the Bush White House. These convulsions of United States power have made immediate and persistent demands on the security apparatuses of states throughout the world. Much more than merely a parochial exercise in United States nationalist insularity, therefore, this new round of state formation has sought to streamline the proliferating governmentalities of what may be productively considered to be an incipient *Global Security State*. This essay cannot fully elucidate the globalizing (and avowedly globalist) tendencies of antiterrorist security state formation. Rather, the identification of such a supranational and quasi-imperial project is posited here more simply as a broad conceptual framework and working hypothesis through which to pose more specific questions about new formations of “race” at the distinct intersection of American exceptionalism and an imperial multiculturalism enacted and embodied through the Obama presidency. What I am designating to be the *Global Security State* may be understood, following a methodological protocol in the work of Henri Lefebvre, to be an epistemological “object” already included in the very hypothesis that seeks to comprehend it, and in this sense “a *possible* object,” a “*virtual* object” (1970/2003: 3; emphases in original), in which the “possible is also part of the real,” and, inasmuch as it may remain partial, incipient, and incomplete, is nevertheless indicative of definite tendencies, directions, and orientations (45). In this regard, the escalation and proliferation of diverse governmental technologies of securitization, especially following the events of 11 September 2001, must be situated in relation to the larger historical framework of the global order of neoliberal capitalism.

Neoliberalism has been well established over the course of the last three decades as an effectively hegemonic, if nonetheless ever-tenuous and convulsively fraught, sociopolitical order on a global scale (see Brenner et al. 2009; cf. Brenner and Theodore 2002). David Harvey notes this hegemony of neoliberalism “as a universalistic mode of discourse as well as a foundation for public policies worldwide” that “increasingly defines the commonsense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world” (2009: 57). Harvey (2005, 2006) has persuasively elaborated the history of neoliberalism as both an ideological project, “a new economic orthodoxy regulating public policy in the advanced capitalist world” (2006: 15), and as “an unstable and evolving regime of accumulation” (29) distinguished by “the financialization of everything” (24). Harvey makes a potent case for his thesis

that neoliberalism is, in effect, a concerted and ruthless form of class warfare, which, despite its official aversion to state interference in the “private” affairs of the “free” market, has required the assiduous, if multifarious, exercise of state power “to optimize the conditions for capital accumulation no matter what the consequences” at the level of human well-being (25). In particular, neoliberalism has entailed “relentless attacks upon forms of social solidarity incompatible with a system based on personal responsibility and individual initiative” (Harvey 2009: 56–57).

The heterogeneous tactics of individualization within the larger strategy of neoliberalism refer us to the politics of *citizenship* and its recomposition of social relations of struggle. Michel Foucault was a prescient early critic of the neoliberal theory of “human capital” whereby wage laborers come to be refigured as individual “autonomous entrepreneurs with full responsibility for their own investment decisions . . . the entrepreneurs of themselves” (Lemke 2001: 199). With the neoliberal onslaught of privatization aimed at dismantling the welfare state (and other forms of state ownership) wholesale, on a global scale, many scholars, inspired by Foucault’s insights, have analyzed the demise of that now-defunct political rationality in terms of the emergence of a “post-social” reconceptualization of the state, the citizen, and their mutual relations and obligations (see Rose 1996; cf. Rose et al. 2006). These distinctly neoliberal technologies of “responsibilization” impose upon individuals a complex mandate for the care of themselves through a prudential disposition toward their own conduct and well-being. While one manifestation of this new governmentality is pronouncedly privatized and “liberal,” however, another—addressed to those (commonly, the racially subordinate) deemed to be intractably “imprudent” and incorrigibly “irresponsible”—is rather more state-driven, frankly authoritarian, and bluntly despotic (e.g., Garland 2001; Inda 2006; Simon 1997; Rosas 2006a; Wacquant 2009). It is here that we may discern the continuum that conjoins the neoliberal politics of criminalization with the larger global governmentality of securitization (De Genova 2007a, 2009; Puar and Rai 2002; Rosas 2006b; Zilberg 2010), and thus we are called to interrogate the profound correspondences between the neoliberal capitalist world order and an incipient Global Security State.

The American exceptionalist “state of exception”

In his 2009 speech on “national security,” delivered on 21 May, the eve of the Memorial Day holiday weekend, Obama implored that “national

security . . . must be a cause that unites us as one people and as one nation.” He declared:

“My single most important responsibility as President is to keep the American people safe. . . . And this responsibility is only magnified in an era when an extremist ideology threatens our people, and technology gives a handful of terrorists the potential to do us great harm. . . . *We know* that al Qaeda is actively planning to attack us again. *We know* that this threat will be with us for a long time, and we must use all the elements of our power to defeat it” (emphases added).

And further:

“Now, this generation faces a great test in the specter of terrorism. . . . Right now, in distant training camps and in crowded cities, there are people plotting to take American lives.”

All of this unnerving menace, Obama declared, even as he inadvertently acknowledged that it was indeed a mere “specter,” a phantom, was something to be accepted as a matter of *fact*, something that “we know.” Where he previously invoked the ever-secretive assurances of “multiple intelligence *estimates*,” now he made indubitable pronouncements. And here it is crucial to discern that he spoke not in the broad and inclusive “we” of United States nationhood so much as in the omniscient “we” of the security state. In this context, furthermore, Obama emphatically proclaimed anew: “Now let me be clear: We are indeed at war with al Qaeda and its affiliates,” and in the entrenched idiom of the Bush administration’s rationalizations for its overseas military adventures, vowed to “take the fight to the extremists who attacked us on 9/11” (21 May 2009). Furthermore, in an astounding confluence of events that coincided (as if fortuitously) with Obama’s speech, which gave renewed force to the critical purchase of Guy Debord’s concept of the society of the spectacle (1967/1995), and was very much reminiscent of numerous episodes during the Bush years—the universe appeared to conveniently verify the “objective truth” of a persistent terrorist menace, at home and abroad.¹ The day before Obama’s speech, the mass media reported that the Pentagon (in what was then a still-unreleased study) had determined that “one in seven” of the suspected terrorists released from their prolonged detentions in the Guantánamo Bay prison camp “returned” to “terrorist” activity (Bumiller 2009).² That same morning, the media reported furthermore that a “home-grown” terror plot involving four Black Muslim ex-convicts (replete with all the trappings of FBI entrapment) was spectacularly foiled

in New York City just the night before, and the suspects were being indicted on charges of “a conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction” (Baker and Hernandez 2009; Wilson 2009).³ The “specter of terrorism”—indeed, the spectacle of terror—was evidently alive and well (De Genova n.d.).

Obama gestured toward the statutory institutionalization of “preventative detention”—something that even the Bush administration had never broached (Stolberg 2009).⁴ In addition, in defense of his avowed policy of prospectively subjecting other alleged terrorists to military commissions (albeit, a reformed version), Obama reiterated one of the decisive metaphysical claims of antiterrorism:

“After 9/11, we knew that we had entered *a new era*—that enemies who did not abide by any law of war would present new challenges to our application of the law; that our government would need new tools to protect the American people, and that these tools would have to allow us to *prevent* attacks instead of just prosecuting those who try to carry them out” (21 May 2009; emphases added).

In this sense, Obama upheld the logic of the *state of exception* instituted by the Bush administration, even as he openly criticized its “sincere” but “hasty,” and ultimately misguided and injudicious, excesses. True to the precise extralegality of any such sovereign decision over the “exception” for which the juridical order may be suspended (Agamben 2003), Obama maintained that the “new era” of antiterrorist securitization presents exigencies for policing or military action that simply cannot be constrained by existing legal statutes and that the norms of constitutionality can be preserved only by means of these exceptional measures. Obama celebrated his strategy in terms of “principles that have been the source of our strength and a beacon to the world.” Thus, a reaffirmation of the Rule of Law, with regard to what he frankly depicted as the counterterrorist state of exception, supplied the predictable signal to again uphold “America” *as exception*—lauding “the unique genius of America . . . what makes the United States of America different as a nation.”

“American exceptionalism” has always played the role of an elastic sort of myth of origin, an adaptable foundational fiction, for United States nationalism. Indeed, it promotes a double-sided notion of the United States as *exceptional* in human history and worldly affairs. On the one hand, it is trumpeted as a refuge of liberty, a land of opportunity, and the champion of the natural and inalienable “rights of man,” and, as such, a nation uniquely anointed by divine providence (Tuveson 1968; cf. Horsman 1981).⁵ On the other, it is the “exception” among the

world's formerly colonial powers—an “empire of liberty,” the bastion of freedom which putatively disavows and repudiates the temptations of colonial subjugation (Williams 1980). In this respect, American exceptionalism has always operated to crucially distinguish the United States from Europe, and a critical understanding of its enduring salience is key to discerning the fault lines and dynamic tensions that fracture any simpler orientalist construction of a monolithic project of “Western civilization” that might otherwise unite them (Nayak and Malone 2009). In both aspects, nonetheless, this exceptionalist certitude is infused by an implacable and irrepressible optimistic faith in the intrinsic goodness of the “American” endeavor. American exceptionalism paradoxically enables what William Appleman Williams depicts as the odd coupling throughout United States history of “an intense consciousness of *uniqueness*” and “a hyperactive sense of *mission*” (1976: 27, emphasis in original), by which the grand and putatively irreducible “exception” in human affairs was to be promoted as the ultimate and exemplary *model*, the worthiness of which was presumed to be self-evident for emulation by all the world (Adas 2001). As Meghana Nayak and Christopher Malone have argued, this exceptionalist narrative supplies a rationale for answering the constitutively anxious question of how the United States could “establish itself as more humane and more successfully liberal than Europe and yet subdue and conquer Amerindians and eventually others in the name of Western civilization” (2009: 260; cf. De Genova 2006). Where as “America” was understood from its inception to be decisively derived of its European (and specifically, Anglo-Saxon) heritage, it was nonetheless insistently fashioned as a more refined, if not a veritably “pure” and perfect, distillation, poised to reinvigorate Civilization as such and initiate a new era of enlightenment and emancipation at the apex of human history (Morgan 1975; Williams 1976, 1980; cf. Horsman 1981). What has remained perennially at stake, therefore, in the American exceptionalist competition with Europe, is “a distinction . . . as to *who* will set the standards of civilization and normative power, and *how*” (Nayak and Malone 2009: 263; emphasis in original). And beneath this agonistic competition lurks a distinctively “American” moral economy of (self-)righteous deservingness and rightful entitlement.

This double-conception of the United States as exception has thus provided the unlimited charter, historically, for a kind of explicitly and sanctimoniously “anti-colonial” imperialism (De Genova 2007b; cf. Kaplan 1993, 2002; Adas 2001). Global economic and political power and military dominance have been unrelentingly promulgated as both the verification of the United States’ singular historical destiny among “nations” and the inevitable and rightful consequence of a purportedly

non-coercive preeminence that promises humanity's liberation. From the outright disavowal of the settler-state (indeed, genocidal) dimensions of United States history and the dissimulation of various other plainly colonial enterprises as mere aberrations and anomalies, to the zealous promulgation of a succession of visions of global order predicated on a United States "model" and dependent upon United States "leadership" (as in diverse examples ranging from the Monroe Doctrine to the Open Door policy, or from Wilsonian internationalist diplomacy and its championing of national self-determination and sovereignty, to Cold War-era notions of an anticommunist Free World), American exceptionalism has served as a particularly flexible and expansive justificatory ideology for diverse projects aimed at the assertion of United States global hegemony (Smith 2005). In effect, the putatively exceptional status of the United States has underwritten a dizzying cascade of exceptions. And yet, as Ann Stoler argues, "Imperial states by definition operate as states of exception that vigilantly produce exceptions to their principles and exceptions to their laws. From this vantage point, the United States is not an aberrant empire but a quintessential one, a consummate producer of excepted populations, excepted spaces, and its own exception from international and domestic law" (2006: 139–140). The exception of particular "populations" as intrinsically "suspect" or tendentially "dangerous," however, discloses the thoroughly *racial* subtext of this whole exceptionalist narrative of United States "national" formation (De Genova 2006; cf. Roediger 2008).

American *racial* exceptionalism: From "color-blind" to "postracial" Americanism?

On the night of his victory, Obama himself encouraged the widespread sense of relief and reassurance that his election to the presidency may be presumed to signal a reinstatement of "democratic" normalcy. On that occasion, he characterized his campaign and his election as having "proved"—for "anyone out there . . . who still questions the power of our democracy"—"that more than two centuries later, a government of the people, by the people and for the people has not perished from this Earth" (4 November 2008). The banality of this claim was notably underscored by the fact that Bush himself, in his remarks on the election, likewise celebrated Obama's victory as having "showed a watching world the vitality of America's democracy" (5 November 2008). But this essay is centrally concerned with the euphoric celebration of the election of an African American to the United States presidency as the proverbial crossing of a kind of racial Rubicon—in other words, a spectacular and monumental *departure* from the

racial status quo—marking the ostensible “end” of an historical norm of exclusive white political domination and inaugurating a new purportedly “postracial” era. Thus, after Obama’s election campaign had studiously evaded questions of race despite several efforts to cynically mobilize racist suspicion and contempt against his candidacy, the mass media—finally confronted with Obama’s victory—could speak of nothing so much as the election’s distinctly racial significance. The eruption that same night of various incidents of overtly racist violence perpetrated against Black people and other people of color, as well as the reports over the ensuing days that (white) “gun-owners” were mobilized to secure still larger caches of weapons and munitions, seemed to further verify that the moment of “postracial” ascendancy was one deeply ensconced in the enduring fact of white supremacy.

On the night of his election, Obama himself dissimulated the racial singularity and salience of his accession to the presidency. Indeed, he compulsively deracialized his election in favor of a precisely American exceptionalist gesture of patriotic *postracialism*. Obama alluded only elliptically to its racial significance in his reference to a 106-year-old woman (understood, strictly by implication only, to be African American) whom he figured to have been witness to more than a century of “change,” and for whom the struggle against racial segregation was, according to Obama, on par with the fall of the Berlin Wall or the national mobilization for war following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Across these and other examples, Obama contended that the “change” to be lauded was indeed but a feature of United States *national* splendor. “For that is the true genius of America,” Obama insisted, “that America can change. Our union can be perfected.” Obama affirmed repeatedly that the momentousness of the occasion served “to reclaim the American Dream and reaffirm that fundamental truth—that out of many, we are one” (4 November 2008). Many of these themes, here extravagantly deracialized, had, in fact, been rehearsed already in Obama’s famous speech directly and explicitly addressing the question of race. Compelled on that occasion to renounce the presumably “inflammatory” racial opinions of his former minister, the Reverend Jeremiah Wright, Obama spoke in a refreshingly frank way about the legacy of past racial injustices but rejected Wright’s “profound mistake”—his “profoundly distorted view of this country—a view that sees white racism as endemic”—and affirmed that “America can change. That is the true genius of this country.” In that speech, moreover, Obama had made a curious but telling assertion that would be widely repeated: “I will never forget that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible” (18 March 2008). Thus, the stubborn and protracted fact of white supremacy was magically converted

into a kind of *racial* American exceptionalism, whereby United States national greatness should now be measured and verified by the supposed “exceptions” to its own most heinous and atrocious rule of racial inequality and violence. On the night of his election, in place of any substantive engagement with questions of race, Obama accordingly invoked instead “a new spirit of patriotism” and proclaimed “a new dawn of *American* leadership” (4 November 2008).

Whereas Obama downplayed the salience of race and sidestepped any and all reference to African American particularity, his defeated opponent John McCain, in his concession speech on the night of the election, was remarkably forthright: “This is an historic election, and I recognize the special significance it has for African Americans and for the special pride that must be theirs tonight.” He continued:

“I’ve always believed that America offers opportunities to all who have the industry and will to seize it. Senator Obama believes that, too. But we both recognize that though we have come a long way from the old injustices that once stained our nation’s reputation and denied some Americans the full blessings of American citizenship, the memory of them still had the power to wound. A century ago, President Theodore Roosevelt’s invitation of Booker T. Washington to visit—to dine at the White House—was taken as an outrage in many quarters. America today is a world away from the cruel and prideful bigotry of that time. There is no better evidence of this than the election of an African American to the presidency of the United States. Let there be no reason now for any American to fail to cherish their citizenship in this, the greatest nation on Earth. Senator Obama has achieved a great thing for himself and for his country” (4 November 2008).

Thus, McCain candidly named the racial specificity of the election’s significance, only then to immediately retrieve it for the recuperation of an American exceptionalist narrative of nationalist self-congratulation. Furthermore, he notably insinuated that what in fact distinguished Obama and his singular achievement was precisely his *industriousness* (by implication, in contrast with other Black Americans). McCain did so, moreover, in remarkably overt and utterly revealing reference to none other than Booker T. Washington, who famously advocated the purest of bootstrap-style African American self-help, precisely through “industry,” and who likewise notoriously disavowed the value of political struggles for civil rights and other sorts of entitlements.⁶ McCain’s oblique endorsement of Washington’s homilies for “industry” therefore invoked anew what W. E. B. Du Bois criticized at the time as “a gospel of Work and Money” tantamount to promoting a policy of disenfranchisement and submission

(1903/1969: 87). Here, then, in McCain's analogy was an astounding enunciation of the new "postracialist" and "incorporative" common sense of what Howard Winant has called "contemporary racial hegemony" (2004: xviii–xix), invoking the racial past to more thoroughly efface and erase it in the present. David Theo Goldberg has designated this phenomenon as racial neoliberalism, committed to delegitimizing race in the public sphere and expelling it from the proper purview of the state (2009: 327–376), in effect desacralizing race (334) and privatizing racism (23, 339).

McCain deployed the Obama election to silence any further expression of racial complaint or grievance and to suppress anew any specifically racial objection to the claim that this is indeed "the greatest nation on Earth." Indeed, McCain subtly chastised Michelle Obama, yet again, for her candid remark, in the face of her husband's successes in the Democratic Party primaries, that she felt proud of her country for the first time in her adult life (Fox News 2008). Indeed, McCain celebrated the momentousness of the Obama election only to still more emphatically relegate the legacy of "the *old* injustices" and "bigotry" to a very distant past, "a century ago," and "a world away." In this manner, the Obama victory was immediately pressed to serve as the index of an American *racial* exceptionalism with regard to the proverbial "American dilemma" itself, whereby the white supremacy that has shaped the United States from its inception could now be treated merely as an anomaly—a regrettable exception to the rule of United States national grandeur. Hence, the momentous surmounting of a monumental racial barrier would suffice to demonstrate that all such legacies of racial oppression were in fact merely a thing of the now-remote past.

For his part, Bush celebrated the Obama victory in strikingly similar terms, but evaded any explicit acknowledgment of the particularities of race or any specific reference to African Americans as such. For Bush, overtly taking a cue from Obama himself, the election was evidence for all the world to behold of "the strides we have made toward a more perfect union." Furthermore, cannibalizing the American exceptionalism of Obama's depiction of his personal journey, Bush depicted Obama's accession to the presidency ("my story," in Obama's words) as "a triumph of the American story—a testament to . . . faith in the enduring promise of our nation." Nevertheless, Bush did then plainly gesture toward race by way of the only half-coded term "civil rights." Like McCain, he suggested the putative fulfillment and purported closure of a now decidedly *past* era of civil rights struggles over racial injustices: "Many of our citizens thought they would never live to see that day. This moment is especially uplifting

for a generation of Americans who witnessed the struggle for civil rights with their own eyes—and four decades later see a dream fulfilled. A long campaign has now ended, and we move forward as one nation” (5 November 2008). As for McCain, then, so also for Bush: by treating the concerns of the civil rights movement as the memories, from decades long past, of a prior and fast-fading generation, the Obama election could be endorsed as the proper “end” of that already *historical* era and as the verification of an American exceptionalist racial narrative of resilient perfectibility, inexorable progress, and dreams “fulfilled.” The Obama election was recuperable, therefore, for a renewed and reinvigorated exaltation of United States nationalism, as Bush went on to speak of “this amazing country” as “the greatest nation on the face of the earth.” Furthermore, with an only half-understated militarism and a precisely imperial worldliness, Bush went on to welcome the accession of “our next Commander-in-Chief” to that “most important responsibility—protecting the American people.”

However paradoxically, Obama similarly subordinated any recognition of the racial salience of his election to precisely the same devout postracialism and authorized its pronouncedly exceptionalist repackaging. In effect, Obama’s presidentialism mirrored Bush’s, as their respective postures were already prefigured by an obligatory United States nationalist script. In his Inaugural Address, with still more careful understatement than he had exuded on the night of his electoral victory, Obama acknowledged his own status as “a man whose father less than sixty years ago might not have been served in a local restaurant” only then to immediately (and preemptively) underscore “how far we have traveled.” Moreover, celebrating the United States as the ultimate simulacrum of global inclusiveness—“shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth”—and referring to the legacies of “civil war and segregation” as but a “dark chapter” from which the nation has “emerged stronger and more united”—he reaffirmed to the world that the United States should ever be seen as a beacon of the promise “that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself” and concluded therefore “that America must play its role in ushering in a new era” of global harmony and integration (20 January 2009). We may discern in this discursive terrain, which so strikingly unites Obama with his ostensible political adversaries, the project of a new regime of avowedly “postracial” *Americanism*, deeply conjoined with a *global* project of imperial multiculturalism, articulated redundantly and emphatically in the time-worn language of American exceptionalism.

Yet, this sort of officially “postracial” Americanism and its ostentatiously colorful service to the intertwined projects of United States nationalism and imperial power may also be understood to be, in fact, a culmination of the signature racial project of the Bush White House. Obama may be apprehensible, then, as the veritable culmination of the preceding administration, so prominently ornamented with the likes of Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Alberto Gonzalez, and John Yoo. What was abundantly manifest, but devoutly unremarked upon, in the Bush administration—the fact that it was actually the most racially diverse presidential cabinet in United States history—may have been carefully enacted as racial *neoliberalism*, a dogmatic “color-blindness,” whereby race is implicitly relegated to the status of something incidental which, frankly, no longer matters and is, in general, simply unspeakable. With the Obama presidency, in accord with the more ecumenical requirements of *neoliberalism*, racism is similarly privatized and race rendered a matter that the state will now actively disregard (Goldberg 2009) while reenlisting and reinvigorating the agonistic energies of racial formation for the recuperative hegemonic project of “postracial” United States nationalism (Winant 2004). What deserves further consideration, however, is the manner in which this distinctive American *racial* exceptionalism is finally apprehensible only in relation to what may be designated to be an *imperial* multiculturalism.

The Muslim Question: Antiterrorism as a racial project

The specter haunting Obama’s presidency is indubitably the horrendous spectacle of Black misery that erupted from the vicious abandonment by the United States state of the African American citizens of New Orleans in the wake of the Hurricane Katrina disaster in August of 2005, rendering them perfectly debased and unprotected (quasi-stateless) “refugees,” wholly exposed to the terrifying prospects of mass death, disease, hunger, indefinite displacement, irremediable dispossession, and perpetual poverty. Here, it is instructive to recall Du Bois’s memorable depiction of the great mass of formerly enslaved African Americans in the aftermath of emancipation—as “a horde of starving vagabonds, homeless, helpless and pitiable, in their dark distress” (1903/1969: 55).⁷ Katrina’s aftermath was the definitive display, if ever there was one, of the obscene truth of the Homeland Security State and its most elementary conceits about safeguarding and protecting the United States population from cataclysmic emergency. The charade of Homeland Security, of course, did not collapse, but rather continued shamelessly grinding along, setting its sights on an ever-escalating campaign of terror against deportable migrant labor, especially that of

undocumented Latinos—a peculiar “war on terror” indeed, which has fashioned “immigration” as its most precious target (De Genova 2007a, 2009; cf. Fernandes 2007).

If Katrina flagrantly exposed the fatuous logic of securitization domestically, the war and protracted occupation of Iraq did much the same with respect to the putative “antiterrorist” rationalizations for reenergized United States militarism, globally. As Goldberg poignantly suggests, “post-Katrina New Orleans, in short, is simply Iraq come home” (2009: 89). And a vital animating thread linking these apparently disparate processes of United States state formation is the force of racism. For it was the enduring and protracted legacy of white supremacy that so predictably and callously set up the Black Americans of New Orleans for extinction domestically while also readily fashioning its nefarious and ever-elusive transnational Enemy with the figure of the Muslim “terrorist” as a distinctly *racialized* one (Saito 2001; Ahmad 2002, 2004; Cainkar 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005; Puar and Rai 2002; Volpp 2002; Cole 2003: 47–56; Maira 2004, 2009; Chon and Arzt 2005; Daulatzai 2007; Puar 2007; Bayoumi 2008; Tehranian 2009; cf. Human Rights Watch 2002). Whereas Black hurricane victims would be left to fend for themselves against the prospect of death by merciless abandonment, however, any and all Muslims worldwide were now subject to extraordinary attention in the form of suspicion and surveillance, if not the utter abjection of indefinite imprisonment and relentless torture. This operationalization of suspicion with regard to Muslim identities has effectively reduced any and all Muslim persons into potential targets for the activation of a question, to be examined and cross-examined, inspected and interrogated, in an unrelenting quest to discern the fatal difference between the “good” ones and “bad” ones. In this respect, all Muslim particularities came to be pressed into the service of reiterating a generic conundrum concerning the identification and detection of Muslim “enemies”; this is what I have designated here to be *the Muslim Question*. Thus, the United States’ unabashed domestic profiling and selective persecution of Muslims, particularly non-citizen men, as alleged terror “suspects” was a decisive and defining feature of the new racial project of antiterrorism and the dire need to produce “culprits” in its amorphous and borderless war. Indeed, “detentions”—which is to say, more precisely, *indefinite* imprisonment without formal charges or any semblance of due process of law—have truly been the hallmark of the Homeland Security State, with male Arab and Muslim non-citizens overwhelmingly figured as its special targets (De Genova 2007a).

Obama’s postracialist racial persona is a notably complex condensation of a great heterogeneity of figures of identity and difference, for

which the Muslim Question, in particular, has been a persistent irritant. That his middle name is Hussein is, of course, only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. For, even if Obama could be uniformly, resoundingly, and conclusively figured as “Black,” or “African American,” on the occasion of his election, his “mixed” racial and “multicultural” heritage has, in fact, been a remarkably polyvocal affair, allowing him to be all things for all people, a cipher for the full gamut of postracialist obsessions—and thus, perhaps, also a man of a thousand disguises. At various junctures in the course of his campaign, he was both too Black (even alleged to be a militant Black nationalist) and not “Black” enough (not truly *African American*), while also being white (indeed, too white for some, and never quite white enough for others), “American,” but with a Hawaiian difference, “native,” but also “immigrant,” and, for some, suspiciously “foreign,” perhaps African, perhaps Indonesian, and, for his most vigilant adversaries, the ultimate embodiment of “the sleeper,” the War on Terror’s frightful secret agent, alleged to be a madrassa-educated Wahhabi Muslim extremist “passing” as one of “us,” merely waiting to be detonated for a mission of mass destruction. There was even a minor legal skirmish surrounding his disputed eligibility for the presidency based on questions regarding the validity of his birth certificate and the credibility of his claim to birthright United States citizenship. Nearly two years after Obama’s election, *Newsweek* (6 September 2010) found it more apt than ever to run a seemingly hyperbolic cover story on the absurdly contradictory figurations of the president’s alleged identities: “The Making of a Terrorist-Coddling, Warmongering, Wall Street-Loving, Socialistic, Godless Muslim President * (* who isn’t actually any of these things).” Although the magazine notably evaded questions of racial or national identity, the Muslim Question tellingly remained.

Beginning in late January 2008, during his campaign for the presidency, Obama was pressed to disavow the allegation of his suspected Muslim identity and, to the chagrin of some who sought in his candidacy a kind of racially inclusive redemption, responded irritably with the requisite quotient of dutifully anti-Muslim aversion. A campaign press statement declared definitively: “To be clear, Senator Obama has never been a Muslim, was not raised a Muslim, and is a committed Christian.” The statement went further, though, denouncing the contentions as “malicious, irresponsible charges.”⁸ His campaign website characterized the allegation that he was a Muslim as a “smear.”⁹ He never candidly denounced the campaign for its baldly anti-Muslim premises, however. Then, in June 2008 (by which time Obama had never yet made a campaign appearance in a mosque or before any Muslim or Arab American organizations), two Muslim

women supporters of Obama's campaign were prohibited from appearing in their headscarves behind their candidate on the podium where he was to address a Detroit rally under the unrelenting and unforgiving gaze of the mass media (Elliot 2008).¹⁰

The Muslim Question at the center of antiterrorism's racial project, then, commands some further consideration. Rather than a proverbial "specter" haunting the Obama presidency, however, the Muslim Question has been inescapably established as its very overt and rather prosaic "problem"—a problem of racial government and domestic policing as much as an enduring and protracted preoccupation of imperial global superintendence and securitization. In his first overseas trip as president, in a speech to the Turkish Parliament, Obama revisited and expounded upon these multiculturalist themes, even as he juxtaposed "America" to "the Muslim world"; he proclaimed:

"Let me say this as clearly as I can: The United States is not, and will never be, at war with Islam. . . . I also want to be clear that America's relationship with the Muslim community, the Muslim world, cannot, and will not, just be based upon opposition to terrorism. We seek broader engagement based on mutual interest and mutual respect. . . . The United States has been enriched by Muslim Americans. Many other Americans have Muslims in their families or have lived in a Muslim-majority country – I know, because I am one of them" (6 April 2009).

Thus, the United States is figured as a national formation capacious enough and sufficiently devoted to a universal inclusivity to be able to encompass Islam and to espouse its properly *American* Muslims, yet juxtaposed to a largely homogenized and monolithic "Muslim world." And, whether it is explicit or merely implied, this gesture always crucially represents the United States as the epitome of the civilizational formation that is known under the peculiar heading of "the West."

A "clash of civilizations" or civilization and its malcontents?

It is instructive to recall that, upon delivering his ultimatum to the Taliban regime as the prelude to war against the people of Afghanistan, Bush explicitly addressed himself to "Muslims throughout the world." He avowed: "We respect your faith. . . . Its teachings are good. . . . The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends" (20 September 2001). He thus made explicit the capricious distinction between "good" Muslims and "evil" ones, enemies who "hate us" (cf. Mamdani 2002, 2004). What was decisive in Bush's magnanimously "multiculturalist" discourse of

United States power, then, is the more fundamental friend/enemy distinction, which is inevitably premised upon submission and conformity to the reign of the global regime of capital accumulation—a world sociopolitical order ultimately upheld and enforced by the United States. Thus, the ultimatum to the Taliban also provided the occasion for an ultimatum to the world: “Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.” “Civilization” would be understood to signal submission and conformity; “terrorism” would stand as its all-encompassing alterity, signaling disaffection and defiance.

In this very crucial sense, then, Bush was fiercely committed *not* to the crudely anti-Muslim sort of discourse implicated in an endorsement of the identitarian “clash of civilizations” thesis propagated by Samuel Huntington (1993, 1996). Instead, Bush’s discourse was an assimilationist one preoccupied by the task of hierarchically sorting and ranking among Muslim “friends” and “terrorist” malcontents, all the while devoutly affirming a global project of imperial multiculturalism, whereby all merely “cultural” or identitarian differences could ultimately be accommodated and integrated within the planetary rubric of a singular Civilization, more or less coercively safeguarded and regimented under the supervision of United States military and political power. What bears repeating here is that Obama’s similarly magnanimous gestures of “mutual respect” to “the Muslim world” fundamentally recapitulate this same globalist sensibility.

The insistence upon the futility of imagining the future in any terms that might diverge from those of the antiterrorist present was forcefully and incessantly sustained throughout the Bush years. That pronounced sense of the permanence of the War on Terror signaled a peculiarly militarized reiteration of Francis Fukuyama’s triumphalism in the face of the supposed “end of communism” and the global hegemony of capitalism.

Imperial multiculturalism: Indian wars on the new frontier

Despite its universalist and teleological rhetoric of inexorable progress, Fukuyama’s original vision of the putative “End of History” (1989, 1992) was indeed one replete with the residual historical memory of a long saga of brutal coercion and colonization, tellingly articulated in the iconic terms of Manifest Destiny and the well-worn heroic mythology in which the West is perpetually reconstituted and reinvigorated through civilization’s violent confrontations with, and conquests of, an ever-receding frontier. Fukuyama concluded:

“Rather than a thousand shoots blossoming into as many different flowering plants, mankind will come to seem like a long wagon train strung

out along a road. Some wagons will be pulling into town sharply and crisply, while others will be bivouacked back in the desert, or else stuck in ruts in the final pass over the mountains. Several wagons, attacked by Indians, will have been set aflame and abandoned along the way. There will be a few wagoners who, stunned by the battle, will have lost their sense of direction and are temporarily heading in the wrong direction, while one or two wagons will get tired of the journey and decide to set up permanent camps at particular points back along the road. Others will have found alternative routes to the main road, though they will discover that to get through the final mountain range they all must use the same pass. But the great majority of wagons will be making the slow journey into town, and most will eventually arrive there. The wagons are all similar to one another: while they are painted different colors and are constructed of varied materials, each has four wheels and is drawn by horses, while inside sits a family hoping and praying that their journey will be a safe one. The apparent differences in the situations of the wagons will not be seen as reflecting permanent and necessary differences between the people riding in the wagons, but simply a product of their different positions along the road" (1992: 338–339).

In short, in Fukuyama's account, the manifest destiny of the entire planet must now be apprehensible as merely the universalization of the United States' colonial subjugation of the North American continent. In this account there are, of course, incorrigible differences—differences of the sort that can only be dealt with by means of crushingly violent reprisals and the utterly conclusive cultural politics of outright conquest. But the larger multiculturalist thematic contends nonetheless that "apparent differences" among diverse peoples ought not to count as "permanent and necessary" ones, but only as the result of their respective positions along a unitary passage toward the eventuality of a global capitalist consensus. Fukuyama's universalist claims for posthistorical homogenization, then, perfectly express the imperious sort of imperial multiculturalism that seeks to transpose the American exceptionalist narrative of nationhood through inclusion and assimilation into a planetary model for perpetual capitalist peace.

In light of Fukuyama's overt reference to wagon trains "attacked by Indians," the War on Terror's "great divide in our time . . . between civilization and barbarism" (Bush, 7 December 2001) may be more clearly located within the legacies of imperial "civilizing missions" and their multifarious discourses of *savagery*. Here, it bears emphatic note that the mortal combat between civilization and barbarism is something quite distinct from a purported clash of "civilizations" (in the plural). If antiterrorism's incorrigible "enemies of the 21st century"

(Bush, 11 December 2001) are alleged to reject the purportedly *universal* values not of “Western civilization,” but of Civilization itself, then the now-globalized showdown emerges as yet another heroic (and pre-ordained) struggle on a new frontier to conquer the Wild West. And, “if the West was at bottom a form of society,” as Richard Drinnon has persuasively argued, “. . . then on our round earth, Winning the West amounted to no less than winning the world” (1980: 464–465). Much as “the obverse of Indian-hating” had always been “the metaphysics of empire-building,” as Drinnon demonstrates, so also must we discern in the metaphysics of antiterrorism a renewed imperial project for the superintendence of global capitalism. Its obverse, an ardent loathing for the despicable “terrorist” Enemy, invokes yet another instance of intractable and inassimilable savagery, a residual but recalcitrant barbarism, in stark relief.

The sporadic eruptions of utterly retrograde passions against the illustrious forward march of humanity at the end of history could principally be expected, according to Fukuyama, from the dissensions of “the Islamic world.” But, as with earlier renditions of the Manifest Destiny theme, Fukuyama’s grand finale entails a teleological narrative whose drama is false and empty: the “end of history” spins around a foregone conclusion.

“It is true that Islam constitutes a systematic and coherent ideology . . . with its own code of morality and doctrine of political and social justice. . . . And Islam has indeed defeated liberal democracy in many parts of the Islamic world, posing a grave threat to liberal practices even in countries where it has not achieved political power directly. . . . [however] while nearly a billion people are culturally Islamic . . . they cannot challenge liberal democracy on its own territory on the level of ideas” (1992: 45–46).

This passage was revealingly accompanied by a seemingly prescient footnote: “They can, of course, challenge liberal democracy through terrorist bombs and bullets, a significant but not vital challenge” (1992: 347, n.9). Very much consonant with the prosaic managerial outlook of empire’s caretakers during the 1990s, terrorism was apprehensible as a kind of nuisance, not a “vital” threat and very much an after-thought, literally a footnote to the grandiose dictums of one of global capitalism’s most lauded soothsayers.

Despite their discrepant visions from the vantage point of the 1990s of an incipient world order distinguished by United States “unipolar” dominance, both Fukuyama and Huntington nonetheless concurred that the imminent source of global antagonism was very likely to be

Muslims. In Fukuyama's account, however, Muslims could be expected to play the part of wild "Indians," haplessly assaulting some of the less fortunate, "strung out along [the] road," in the wagon train of humanity. Muslims would supply the heroic drama of the end of history with savagery's proverbial last stand.

In the end, what has predominated in the discourse of antiterrorism is a revised variation of Fukuyama's "end of history" scenario, in which roaming bands of Muslim fanatics (transnational "networks") supply the figure of a reinvigorated savagery, mere "Indians" launching desperate and hopeless attacks—not vital contenders in a monumental "clash of civilizations" but, rather, the monstrosly irrational and aberrant acts of precisely *un*-civilized and atavistic nay-sayers who pitifully set themselves up as the final Enemy of "Civilization" itself and thus relegate themselves to their abject place outside of humanity proper. The menace of "terrorism" may now have seemed (in the rhetoric of the Bush administration) to pose a truly significant (indeed, epoch-making) challenge beyond Fukuyama's wildest nightmares. Indeed, it was abundantly staged as a kind of new (unprecedented and unforeseen) World War of monumental proportions—the veritable "clash" of the century, which would continue beyond any reasonable horizon.¹¹ Nevertheless, this was emphatically not Huntington's war of incommensurable and incompatible "civilizational" identities (at least, not officially). The Global War on Terror promised an indefinite, and apparently interminable, future of conflict and warfare, but these would be mere Indian wars on a new planetary frontier.

The War on Terror thus adamantly affirmed its posthistorical character. Now, indeed, there could be only one global (universal) "Civilization"—the empire of capital—in which all cultures, religions, and identities could be accommodated and assimilated, as long as they were properly subordinate to the mandates of capital accumulation. The resounding (explicit) ideology of the War on Terror has therefore been a kind of vapid and hypocritical imperial multiculturalism. Its cynical assimilationist universalism appears self-evident, however, only from the standpoint of those whose "differences" have already been effectively subordinated, domesticated, and "civilized." The submerged alternating current—an identitarian "clash of civilizations" devoted to hunting down and persecuting Muslims as always already susceptible to suspicion, and, hence, terrorism "suspects" by presumptive (racialized) definition—remains, nonetheless, the obscene underside of an unrelenting *disciplinary* mission to discern, sort, and rank who are the "good" ones and who are the "enemies."

Postracial games at “the end of history”

The most fundamental work accomplished through the War on Terror’s global racialization of “Muslim” identity is the production of a racial condensation that is inimical to the white (Christian, “European”) identity of “the West,” yet one that is precisely *ambiguous* and inherently heterogeneous. The racial ambiguity and instability of the figure of the Muslim is, then, productive—subject always to suspicion, commanding surveillance and further investigation in the incessant police work of uncovering the “terrorists” who, it may be supposed, refuse to be assimilated.

By now, against this racially ambiguous, but unequivocally non-white, “Muslim” figure of alterity to the Global Security State, it ought to not be difficult to discern the complex analogy that may be posited between Fukuyama and Obama. If Obama’s postracialist discourse of reanimated United States nationalism relies thoroughly upon American exceptionalism as its proviso for policing the global empire of capital under a resuscitated United States military hegemony, Fukuyama’s posthistorical discourse of the permanence of neoliberal capitalism relies similarly upon American exceptionalism as the premise for an imperial multiculturalism, in which virtually all differences of race, “culture,” and religion may be subsumed, assimilated, and finally subordinated (De Genova 2010b). Both men, of course, literally embody and epitomize white supremacy’s postracial and multiculturalist hegemony. Fukuyama is himself a descendant of migrants who were expressly racialized as not-white and historically rendered ineligible for United States citizenship on explicitly racial grounds. Like Obama, Fukuyama can cheerfully claim that his own father might not have been served in Washington, DC’s local restaurants. Against the mutually exclusive and intrinsically incompatible identitarian “differences” of “culture” promulgated by Huntington’s pluralist “clash of civilizations” thesis, Fukuyama and Obama, in their somewhat discrepant but deeply interrelated ways, have championed the globalist and assimilationist imperial project of “Civilization” that was always the durable ideological centerpiece of Bush’s rhetoric. In this respect, of course, they are the not-so-secret agents of United States nationalism and the empire of global capital. As the iconic spokesmen for a resplendently postracial Americanism and a devoutly imperial multiculturalism, the service of revivifying American exceptionalism is dutifully rendered, proffered as the legitimating narrative of an incipient Global Security State, securing Civilization itself against the atavistic savagery of its terrorist malcontents.

Notes

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1. For more extended elaborations of Debord’s conception of the society of the spectacle, see De Genova (2010a, n.d.).
2. Upon closer inspection, of the seventy-four former prisoners alleged by the Pentagon report to be engaged in terrorism, only twenty-nine were identified by name, and only five could be independently verified to have engaged in, or even simply threatened to engage in, “terrorist” activity (Bumiller 2009).
3. Among the so-called “homegrown” terrorists, denigrated as “jailhouse converts,” the alleged plot was strictly “aspirational” in that the FBI “fully controlled” the whole affair (Baker and Hernandez 2009), which “played out on a veritable soundstage of hidden cameras and secret microphones” (Wilson 2009). An FBI informant previously arrested and sentenced to five-years’ probation for “identity theft” cultivated and effectively recruited a motley crew composed of an alleged “crack addict,” a drug dealer, an unemployed purse snatcher medicated for schizophrenia or a bipolar disorder “living in squalor” amidst “bottles of urine,” and a “particularly violent” steakhouse employee who “lately had grown a beard and taken to reading the Koran” (Wilson 2009). Mosque members reported that the suspected government informant, “the stranger with all the money,” conspicuously “seemed to focus most of his attention on younger black members and visitors” (Rashbaum and Fahim 2009).
4. For an extended legal elaboration of the reasoning in favor of a statutory delimitation of permissible “preventative” detention, see Cole (2009).
5. Even the most prominent intellectual publicist and advocate of the idea of American exceptionalism, Martin Seymour Lipset, eventually professes his faith in the active intervention of divine providence in United States history (1996: 14).
6. One need only recall Washington’s lament, with regard to Black Americans: “Among a large class there seemed to be a dependence upon the Government for every conceivable thing. The members of this class had little ambition to create a position for themselves, but wanted the federal officials to create a position for them” (1901/1995: 43). And, further: “I had a strong feeling that what our people most needed was to get a foundation in education, industry, and property, and for this I felt that they could better afford to strive than for political preferment” (44).
7. Indeed, following what DuBois called the Reconstruction-era’s “full-fledged government” (1903/1969: 66) of “the emancipated Negro as the ward of the nation” (62),

- postemancipation African American mobility came to routinely signal for the propertied classes a failure of government—a dangerously inadequate reconstruction of Black servitude, such that Black people’s freedom of movement had likewise to be reconstructed as willful “vagrancy,” shadowing literal bondage with the ostensible “crime” of vagabondage (Hopper and Milburn 1996: 124). I am grateful to Lynn Lewis, whose research as an activist and scholar concerned with race and homelessness in the United States brought this particular reference, and the convergence of these themes, into clarity for me.
8. See: <www.barackobama.com/factcheck/2007/11/12/obama_has_never_been_a_muslim_1.php#obama-not-muslim>.
 9. See: <<http://my.barackobama.com/page/invite/christian>>.
 10. In all of this, it is instructive to recall that the ideological antecedent to racial *whiteness* in British colonial North America was the concise, proto-national, and deeply racialized, figure—“Christian”—in permanent and hostile opposition to Native American “savagery” (Roediger 2008: 9, 28).
 11. In the aftermath of the reckless occupation of Iraq in 2003, Fukuyama eventually distanced himself from the so-called “neoconservative” movement associated with the Project for a New American Century and became a vocal critic of Bush’s policies of apparently failed “nation-building” (see Fukuyama 2004, 2006). Notably, Fukuyama endorsed the candidacy of Barack Obama for president in 2008.

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