ELEVEN

The "War on Terror" as Racial Crisis

HOMELAND SECURITY, OBAMA, AND RACIAL (TRANS)FORMATIONS

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The election of Barack Obama to the U.S. presidency in 2008 presents racial formation theory as well as radical racial politics with a crucial historical juncture unsettling some of the very meanings conventionally affiliated with the concept of "race." This is the case for the larger social formation of the U.S. nation-state as well as for a global sociopolitical order in which the United States plays a preponderant role. The stakes for sociopolitical processes of racial formation and transformation have been predictably profound, but not in the facile ways that many observers might have optimistically forecast. In this respect, the mercurial figure of Barack Obama and the equivocal significance of his election must be understood as manifestations of a historical moment of *racial crisis*, situated within the larger, more extended, and distinctly amorphous racial crisis of the so-called War on Terror itself. In a way analogous to the police beating of Rodney King and the Los Angeles rebellion in 1992 following the acquittal of the brutalizers, which Michael Omi and Howard Winant rightly identified as a watershed moment in U.S. racial politics (1994, 145; cf. 1993), we are challenged to discern comparably momentous *racial* significance in the events of September 11, 2001, the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the subsequent Obama presidency. Above all, we must analyze their interrelations and correspondences. In the face of these tumultuous landmark episodes in the recent history of the United States (and despite injunctions to the contrary), we find ourselves, in Omi and Winant's words, "compelled to think racially, to use the racial categories and meaning systems into which we have been socialized"—because "opposing racism requires that we notice race . . . that we afford

it the recognition it deserves and the subtlety it embodies" (1994, 159). These flashpoints have plainly not entailed the sorts of crisis instigated or provoked directly by racially self-conscious social movements. Nonetheless, they have represented major disruptions or disjunctures in the "unstable equilibrium" of what Omi and Winant have incisively depicted as "the racial state" and its social order, and have commanded the requisite strategies and tactics of absorption and insulation through which to redomesticate racial unrest and restabilize dominant politics (1994, 86–87). Comparable to the L.A. rebellion, but in ways that are still more variegated, convoluted, and equivocal, these events signal crisis because they intensify and reveal "the ambivalences, fault lines, and polarizations which characterize U.S. racial identities today" (1993, 104–105) and, likewise, summon forth tremendous political energies devoted to the *rearticulation* of their meanings and consequential salience (1994, 89–91).

Notably, the illusions that congealed around the Obama presidency because of the historically unprecedented *racial* singularity of his election were inseparable from the expectation that he would supply a liberal panacea to remedy the anti-terrorist excesses of the administration of George W. Bush. Thus, we must theorize the seeming paradox that Obama was celebrated simultaneously as both a grand *exception* in U.S. history (the first African American president) and also an ostensible "return to *normal*." Both depictions contributed to the anxious sense that Obama's election signaled a kind of "restoration" of democracy (in contrast with the Bush White House's unabashedly illiberal recourse to often unbridled authoritarianism), while it spectacularly appeared nonetheless to verify democracy's enduring vitality and resilience (supposedly evincing a collective repudiation of the prior administration's securitarianism and unilateral militarism). In short, the seemingly monumental election of this Black man to the U.S. presidency was marshaled to confirm an overarching narrative according to which, finally, all was really well and good in "America." Indeed, Obama was quite evidently eager to be the first one to tell us so.

FROM HOMELAND SECURITY TO A GLOBAL SECURITY STATE?

Anti-terrorism 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 Karl Marx incisively notes, "Security is the supreme social concept of civil society; the concept of the police" (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 from the "exceptional" status of the United States regarding the task of subjugating and putting in order the wild new frontiers of an unruly planet. The facile illusion in the wake of the Obama election that the most pernicious aspects of the Bush administration would now be simply ended, or promptly rectified by a new regime in the White House, has had to be tempered by a sober and intrepid assessment of the deeply consequential institutionalization of anti-terrorism. 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."[1] Even as Obama gestured toward a "new" (and by implication, different) style of "leadership," 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, after all, 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 easily overlooked in the face of the bombastic U.S. chauvinism and effusive parochialism of the other alternating current in Bush's discourse—his militaristic and millenarian U.S. nationalism. It is precisely in dialogue with that latter, "American exceptionalist" legacy 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."[2] Thus, Obama alluded obliquely to the *racial* specificity of his election and to its widely presumed implausibility, only to enfold that

exceptional distinction into the task of reinvigorating U.S. nationalism. In this regard, more fundamentally, we may detect the work of exalting U.S. "nationhood" and inciting patriotism to be one that has deeply conjoined Obama and Bush, just as much as any dispute between them over the proper conduct of the so-called war against terrorism committed them together to a shared ethos of anti-terrorism and a multifaceted material and practical program of securitization, "domestically" and internationally.[3]

Only two months after his inauguration, upon announcing his new strategy for the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Obama spoke in terms 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.[4]

Here, then, was a prompt reaffirmation and tidy 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 that it is staged as a matter for global *policing*. Precisely as the official anti-terrorist "state of emergency" appeared to have been downgraded and deliberately understated, its very normalization ensured that its perpetuation would proceed apace.

Following more than seven years of the Bush administration's official and unrelenting "state of emergency," therefore, the ever amorphous,

unbounded, and limitless Global War on Terror has continued to fecklessly pursue its ever mobile and always receding target. Thus, social inquiry into the processes of racial formation is challenged to produce a viable critique of the ebullience surrounding the Obama presidency, especially inasmuch as it was celebrated as a presumed "return" to "normal." Indeed, what we have been witness to—and what the Obama presidency has really signified—is precisely the *normalization* of the state of emergency. Apart from his evident and urgent service as caretaker for the U.S. state's supervision of a general resuscitation of neoliberal capitalism in crisis, which will have to be considered beyond the purview of the present essay, Obama's enduring commitment to *war*-making (and global policing) must be theorized in terms of what may otherwise be deemed to be a crisis of *race*-making. This task is especially salient, furthermore, insofar as his presidency has been so excessively celebrated as a watershed for the *un*-making of race. For, the stakes may indeed be precisely a new sort of "price of the ticket," to borrow James Baldwin's memorable phrase (1985), whereby admission into a putatively post-racial "American"-ness for African Americans and other (U.S.-citizen) racial "minorities" is being refashioned in terms of a docile and willing servitude to the securitarian and militarist requirements of U.S. empire. Needless to say, such a revalorizing of "the price of the ticket" likewise recalibrates the qualifications for access to the space of the U.S. state and economy and for eligibility for U.S. citizenship, for the aspiring (migrant or would-be migrant) denizens beyond U.S. borders, on a global scale.

THE AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALIST "STATE OF EXCEPTION"

In his speech on "national security," delivered on the eve of the Memorial Day (militarist) holiday weekend in 2009, Obama implored that "national security . . . must be a cause that unites us as one people and as one nation":

> 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, using the omniscient "we" of the security state, was to be accepted as a matter of *fact*, something that "we know." Whereas he had previously invoked the ever secretive assurances of "multiple intelligence *estimates*" (emphasis added), now he made indubitable pronouncements. 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, he vowed to "take the fight to the extremists who attacked us on 9/11."[5]

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), 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.[6] The day before Obama's speech, the Pentagon (in an as yet unreleased report) was reported to have determined that "one in seven" of the suspected terrorists released from their prolonged detentions in the Guantánamo Bay prison camp had "returned" to "terrorist" activity.[7] Furthermore, as reported that same morning, 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 alleged participants were indicted on charges of "a conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction."[8] What Obama called "the specter of terrorism"—indeed, the spectacle of terror—was evidently alive and well (De Genova 2011b, n.d.). And it was not merely a matter of "foreign" malcontents but "home-grown" ones—African Americans and migrants racialized as Black—who would now have to answer to the dominant metaphysics of suspicion within a securitarian economy of culpability (cf. De Genova 2007a).[9]

In defense of an avowed policy of subjecting prospective alleged terrorists to military commissions (albeit a reformed version of them),[10] 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 Ameri-

can people, and that these tools would have to allow us to *prevent* attacks instead of just prosecuting those who try to carry them out" (emphasis added).[11] 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 regarding the "exception" for which the juridical order may be suspended (Agamben 2005), Obama maintained that the "new era" of anti-terrorist securitization presents exigencies for policing or military action that simply could not be constrained by existing legal statutes, and that the norms of constitutionality could be preserved, finally, 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, indeed, always promoted 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). On the other, it is also the "exception" among the world's formerly colonial powers—an "empire of liberty," the bastion of freedom that putatively disavows and repudiates the temptations of colonial subjugation (W. Williams 1980). American exceptionalism paradoxically enables what William Appleman Williams depicts as the odd coupling throughout U.S. history of "an intense consciousness of *uniqueness*" and "a hyperactive sense of *mission*" (1976, 27; emphases in original), by which the grand and supposedly 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).

The Janus-faced conception of the United States as exception has thus provided an unlimited charter for a kind of explicitly and sanctimoniously "anti-colonial" imperialism (De Genova 2007b; cf. Adas 2001; A. Kaplan 1993, 2002). In the ghastly aftermath of the First World War, reflecting upon the global fact of white supremacy established through European

colonialism, W. E. B. DuBois frankly identified this American exceptionalist conceit as blithe ambition. From the standpoint of the experience in the United States of "black and brown and yellow peoples," DuBois proclaimed his terse judgment: "It is curious to see America, the United States, looking on herself, first, as a sort of natural peace-maker, then as a moral protagonist in this terrible time. No nation is less fitted for this role" (1921, 50). At the end of the Second World War, again regarding the global question of colonialism, and with respect to the vexations of race and citizenship at home, so to speak, DuBois once more pronounced upon the inescapable requirement that the United States "abdicate its natural leadership of democracy in the world" (1945, 91). Indeed, the putatively exceptional status of the United States has effectively 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" (2006a, 139–140). The exception of particular "populations" as intrinsically "suspect" or tendentially "dangerous," furthermore, as DuBois was quick to note, discloses the thoroughly *racial* subtext of this whole exceptionalist narrative of U.S. "national" formation, historically (De Genova 2006; cf. M. Jacobson 2000; Roediger 2008).

American racial exceptionalism: from "color-blind" to "post-racial" Americanism?

On the night of his victory, Obama himself encouraged the widespread sense of relief and reassurance that his election to the presidency should 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."[12] 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."[13] But this chapter is centrally concerned, furthermore, with the euphoric celebration of the election of an African American to the U.S. presidency as the proverbial crossing of a kind of racial Rubicon—a spectacular and monumental *departure* from the racial status quo—marking the ostensible "end" of a historical norm of exclusive white political domination and inaugurating a new purportedly "post-racial" era. After Obama's election campaign had studiously evaded questions of race in spite of several efforts to cynically mobilize racist suspicion and contempt against his candidacy, therefore, 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, likewise, seemed to verify that the moment of "post-racial" 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 *post*-racialism. Obama alluded only elliptically to its racial significance when he referred to a 106-year-old woman (understood, strictly by implication only, to be African American) whom he figured as 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 U.S. *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."[14] Here, indeed, was the consummation of what Omi and Winant so presciently characterized in the early to mid-1990s as *"the new convergence in mainstream racial politics"* (1993, 100; emphasis in original)—"the emerging hegemony of the racial project of *neoliberalism,*" which evades any frank acknowledgment of racial themes in order "to close the Pandora's box of race" (1994, 147; emphasis in original).

Many of these themes, now 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." True to the spirit of Omi and Winant's formulation of racial neoliberalism, Obama promoted "a false universalism" that could "only serve to mask underlying racial conflicts" (1994, 152). This false universalism, in Obama's hands, was none other than the parochialism of a reanimated U.S. national chauvinism. Indeed, in that speech, 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."[15] Thus, the stubborn and protracted fact of white supremacy was magically converted into a kind of racial American exceptionalism, whereby U.S. 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, moreover, 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."[16] Whereas he 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.[17]

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.[18] McCain's oblique endorsement of Washington's homilies for "industry" therefore invoked anew what DuBois criticized at the time as "a gospel of Work and Money," tantamount to promoting a policy of disenfranchisement and submission (1969, 87). Here, then, in McCain's crafty analogy, was an astounding enunciation of the new "post-racialist" and "incorporative" commonsense of what Howard Winant has called "contemporary racial hegemony" (2004, xviii–xix), invoking the racial past in order to more thoroughly efface and erase it in the present. Like Omi and Winant, David Theo Goldberg has depicted this phenomenon in terms of a 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, moreover, 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.[19] "Let there be no reason now for any American to fail to cherish their citizenship," he admonished. 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 U.S. 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."[20] As for McCain, then, so also for Bush: by treating the concerns of the civil rights movement as the fading 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 U.S. 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, as we have seen, Obama similarly subordinated any recognition of the racial salience of his election to precisely the same devout post-racialism and authorized its pronouncedly exceptionalist repackaging. In effect, Obama's presidentialism mirrored Bush's, as their respective postures were already prefigured by an obligatory U.S. 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." He concluded that "America must" therefore "play its role in ushering in a new era" of global harmony and integration.[21] Thus, 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 "post-racial" *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 "post-racial" Americanism and its ostentatiously colorful service to the intertwined projects of U.S. nationalism and imperial power may also be understood as, 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. "Today less than ever," Omi and Winant remarked already in the 1990s, "does minority status correlate with victim status." (1994, 158). Indeed, during the Bush years, it became transparently evident that people of color could dutifully and unreservedly play some of the highest-profile roles in the global administrative work of securitarian and militarized victimization. What was abundantly manifest but devoutly unremarked on in the Bush administration—the fact that it

was the most racially diverse presidential cabinet hitherto in U.S. history—may have been carefully enacted as racial neo*conservatism*, a dogmatic "colorblindness" whereby race is implicitly relegated to the status of something incidental that frankly no longer matters and is, in general, simply unspeakable. With the Obama presidency, in accord with the more ecumenical requirements of neo*liberalism*, racism is similarly privatized, and race rendered a matter that the state will now actively disregard (Goldberg 2009; Omi and Winant 1994, 147–157), while it reenlists and reinvigorates the agonistic energies of racial formation for the recuperative hegemonic project of "post-racial" U.S. 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 an *imperial* multiculturalism.

THE MUSLIM QUESTION: ANTI-TERRORISM 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 U.S. state of the African American citizens of New Orleans in the wake of the Hurricane Katrina disaster in August 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 DuBois'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" (1969, 55).[22] Here in the Katrina aftermath, furthermore, 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 U.S. 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 in Iraq and the protracted occupation of that country did much the same with respect to the putative "anti-terrorist" rationalizations for reenergized U.S. 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 U.S. 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 so readily fashioning its nefarious and ever elusive transnational Enemy with the figure of the Muslim "terrorist" as a distinctly racialized one (Ahmad 2002, 2004; Bayoumi 2008; Cainkar 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005; Chon and Arzt 2005; Cole 2003, 47–56; Daulatzai 2007; Maira 2004, 2009; Puar 2007; Puar and Rai 2002; Saito 2001; Tehranian 2009; Volpp 2002; cf. Human Rights Watch 2002). Whereas Black hurricane victims were left to fend for themselves against the prospect of death by merciless abandonment, however, any and all Muslims worldwide were now subject to suspicion and surveillance, if not the utter abjection of *indefinite* imprisonment and relentless torture. Thus, the U.S. state's unabashed domestic profiling and selective persecution of Muslims, particularly noncitizen men, as alleged terror "suspects" was a decisive and defining feature of the new racial project of anti-terrorism and the dire need to produce "culprits" in its amorphous and borderless war. Indeed, "detentions"—or, more precisely, indefinite imprisonment without formal charges or any semblance of due process of law—truly became the hallmark of the Homeland Security State, with male Arab and other Muslim noncitizens overwhelmingly figured as its special targets (De Genova 2007a).

Obama's post-racialist racial persona, notably, is a 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, 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 more polyvocal affair, allowing him to be all things for all people, a cipher for the full gamut of post-racialist obsessions—and thus, perhaps also a man of a thousand disguises. Omi and Winant

astutely alerted us in the 1990s to the profound complications that have emerged with "the multipolarity of racial identities" (1994, 158). Obama is perhaps the paradigmatic case for this sort of racialized complexity and its multifarious orientations on the shifting terrain of contemporary racial politics.

At various junctures in the course of his campaign, from diverse standpoints, Obama was both too Black (even alleged to be a militant Black nationalist) and also not "Black" enough (not truly African *American*), while also white (indeed, too white for some, and plainly 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 ultimately, 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 U.S. citizenship. Beginning in late January 2008, Obama was notoriously 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, he 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."[23] His campaign website characterized the allegation that he was a Muslim as a "smear."[24] 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 organization), two Muslim women supporters of Obama's campaign were prohibited from appearing in their head scarves behind their candidate on the podium where he was to address a Detroit rally under the unrelenting and unforgiving gaze of the mass media.[25]

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

was 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:

> 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.[26]

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, while it is 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 known under the peculiar heading of "the West."

A "CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS," OR CIVILIZATION AND ITS MALCONTENTS?

Upon delivering his ultimatum to the Taliban regime as the prelude to war against the people of Afghanistan, it is instructive to recall, George W. 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."[27] Bush 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 U.S. power, then, is the more fundamental friend/enemy distinction, which is inevitably premised on submission and conformity to the reign of the global regime of capital accumulation—a world sociopo-

litical order ultimately upheld and enforced by the United States. Hence, the ultimatum to the Taliban also notoriously 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 never fiercely committed 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 with the task of hierarchically sorting and ranking 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 U.S. 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.

IMPERIAL MULTICULTURALISM: INDIAN WARS ON THE NEW FRONTIER

The insistence on the futility of imagining the future in any terms that might diverge from those of the anti-terrorist 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. In spite of 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.

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 his much-touted essay with a quite revealing allegory:

> 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. . . . 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, accordingly, 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 multiculuralist script contends nonetheless that "apparent differences" among diverse peoples ought not to count as "permanent and necessary" ones, but should only be the result of their respective positions along a unitary passage toward the eventuality of a global capitalist peace. Fukuyama's universalist claims for post-historical 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"[28] may be still more clearly located within the legacies of imperial "civilizing missions" and their multifarious discourses of *savagery*. Here, it bears noting emphatically that the mortal combat between civilization and barbarism is something quite distinct from a purported clash of "civilizations" (in the plural). If anti-terrorism's incorrigible

"enemies of the 21st century"[29] are alleged to reject the purportedly *universal* values not of "Western civilization," but of Civilization itself, then the now globalized showdown emerges nevertheless as yet another heroic (and preordained) 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 anti-terrorism a renewed imperial project for the superintendence of global capitalism. And 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 be principally 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" (347n9). 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 afterthought, literally a footnote to the grandiose dicta of one of global capitalism's most lauded soothsayers. In Fukuyama's account, 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 dominated in the discourse of anti-terrorism 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. "Terrorists" are depicted not as vital contenders in a monumental "clash of civilizations," however, but rather as precisely *un*-civilized and atavistic naysayers engaged in monstrously irrational and aberrant acts, who pitifully set themselves up as the final Enemy of Civilization itself, and thus relegate themselves to their abject place outside humanity proper. (In Obama's lurid phrase, these anachronistic enemies were merely "those . . . huddled around radios in the forgotten corners of our world . . . who would tear this world down"). The menace of "terrorism" may have come to appear (in the rhetoric of the Bush administration) as posing a truly significant (indeed, epoch-making) challenge beyond Fukuyama's wildest nightmares, and 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. 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 post-historical character all the same. 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, as terrorism "suspects" by presumptive (racialized) definition—remains nonetheless the obscene underside of an unrelenting *disciplinary* mission to discern, sort, and rank, after all, who are the "good" ones and who are ever elusive "enemies."

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," while yet, precisely, *ambiguous* and inherently heterogeneous. The racial ambiguity and instability of the figure of the Muslim is productive, then—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 nonwhite "Muslim" figure of alterity to the Global Security State, it ought not be difficult to discern the complex analogy that may be posited between Fukuyama and Obama.[30] 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 U.S. nationalism and the empire of global capital. If Obama's post-racialist discourse of reanimated U.S. nationalism relies thoroughly on American exceptionalism as its proviso for policing the global empire of capital under a resuscitated U.S. military hegemony, Fukuyama's post-historical discourse of the permanence of neoliberal capitalism relies similarly on 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 2010). Both men, of course, literally embody and epitomize white supremacy's post-racial and multiculturalist hegemony. Fukuyama is himself a descendant of migrants who were expressly racialized as not-white and historically rendered ineligible for U.S. 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. As the iconic spokesmen for a resplendently post-racial Americanism and a devoutly imperial multiculturalism, Fukuyama and Obama dutifully render the service of revivifying American exceptionalism, proffering it as the legitimating narrative of an incipient

Global Security State, securing Civilization itself against the atavistic savagery of its terrorist malcontents.

CODA: THEORIZING RACIAL (TRANS)FORMATIONS

As we have witnessed the dramatic transformation and rearticulation of race *in* the United States since the social upheavals of the 1960s, the racial formations theory originally elaborated by Omi and Winant has proven to be remarkably well suited for analyzing "the *centrality of race*" (1994, 138; emphasis in original) and its constitutive role in U.S. social and political life, as both a premise and an ever malleable refraction of social struggles and political conflicts. In the agonizingly unstable equilibrium that is U.S. global hegemony in the twenty-first century, beleaguered and overextended as it may be, we cannot escape the enduring epistemological and methodological centrality of race, as this essay seeks to demonstrate. However, that centrality must be persistently reconceptualized and still more explicitly formulated in terms sufficiently flexible to apprehend *the imbrication of the United States in the world*, and the inextricable presence of those worldly concerns within the ostensibly "national" space of the U.S. racial state.

Omi and Winant's insistence that "race" is always entangled in dynamic social relations of struggle and political conflicts, and therefore retains a pervasive and persistent (seemingly intractable) significance—precisely because its forms and substantive meanings are always eminently historical and mutable—has proven enduringly versatile. The analytic framework of racialization and racial projects, furthermore, attends to the unforeseen extension and rearticulation of racial meanings to social relations, practices, or groups that may have previously been racially unclassified, or differently classified, in the unresolved historically specific contexts of struggle (1994, 55–56; cf. Winant 1994, 58–68). Nevertheless, today more than ever, it is evident that the United States cannot be adequately conceptualized as simply an insular and self-contained "society," a parochial "national" social formation unto itself. Rather, the United States is a historically specific spatial and political conjuncture that particularizes the global relation of *the political* in terms of a necessary *mediation* between the global regime of capital accumulation and the territorial definition of coercive state power

on a "national" scale (Holloway 1994). In fact, it was never sufficient to comprehend the United States—and its racial order in particular—in any terms except those that could problematize the restless and relentless (veritably colonial) production of the ever unstable "inside" and "outside" of its nation-state space (De Genova 2006).

If the study of race does indeed ensnare us within "a world of paradox, irony, and danger" (Omi and Winant 1994, xi), the contemporary economic and political weight and military dominance of the United States on a planetary scale necessarily also insinuate the politics of race and the processes of racial formation into the world at large, with all manner of incumbent paradoxes, ensuing ironies, and explosive perils (De Genova 2007b). One need only note that it is a standard and long-established convention of U.S. militarism to refer to the theater of warfare or colonial occupation, always and everywhere, as "Indian country" (see, e.g., R. Kaplan 2004, 2005; cf. Drinnon 1980; Silliman 2008). Or one need only recall the facility with which the term nigger could be deployed to disparage such disparate overseas racial targets as Filipinos during the U.S. invasion in 1898 or Iraqi "sand niggers," particularly during the first Gulf War in 1991. Simultaneously, the processes of racial formation "in" the United States cannot be adequately comprehended as long as they are treated as somehow autochthonous. The imperial project of the United States and its compulsive war-making, globally, have been a constant source of reanimated and reenergized struggles over race-making "domestically." Thus, the subtle meanings and putative substance of "race," however treacherously misleading in its apparently "national" involution, have become ever more transnationally convoluted.

This, indeed, is the sense of *global* horizon that DuBois already understood with astounding perspicuity and forceful urgency in his formulation of "the color line" as a problem of planetary scope and import.[31] DuBois was perhaps singularly eloquent in his damning interrogation of white supremacy in the early part of the twentieth century as "the ownership of the earth forever and ever, Amen" (1921, 30) with its "new religion of whiteness" (31) and its unanimous global "doctrine of the divine right of white people to steal" (48). By the middle of the twentieth century, while still confronting a world thoroughly throttled by European and Euro-American colonialism and white racial dominance, DuBois already noted the steady demise of the bankrupt ideology of racial inferiority and

the putative "natural" incompetence of people of color for "civilization" and self-government. "We are not nearly so sure today as we used to be," he wrote at the end of World War II, "of the inherent inferiority of the majority of the people of the earth who happen to be colored." However, because "government and economic organization [had] already built a tremendous financial structure upon the nineteenth-century conception of race inferiority," DuBois contended, such altered perspectives on race (and the accumulation of historical, anthropological, and biological facts to bolster them) continued to change little or nothing about actual human behavior in the modern world. In this context, DuBois could recognize the persistence of the colonial system as "a method of investment yielding unusual returns" (1945, 55), "a method of carrying on industry and commerce and of distributing wealth" (56), which was therefore a crucial part of a global "battle between capital and labor" (55) and which had ensured that the colonies were "the slums of the world" (17). "This," he concluded, "is what the imperialism of our day means" (54).

If Du Bois had famously forecast in 1903 that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line" (1969, 3), by mid-century he had come to rearticulate this key insight as "the problem of the future of colonies" (1945, 57). "The color line," therefore, always already implied an open-ended sense of futurity that would be grounded, nevertheless, in the racialized historicity of a precisely colonial universality. And, much as DuBois had earlier forecast that "a belief in humanity is a belief in colored men" and women, that "the destinies of this world will rest ultimately in the hands of darker nations" (1921, 49), he remained resolute in his sense that this problem of the future of colonized humanity would be "fundamental for the future of the world" (1945, 9). Certainly, the tumultuous drama of decolonization that ensued irreversibly discredited the most intransigent dogmas and most tawdry rationalizations of the colonial racisms. However, the enduring material and practical consequences of a world rigorously organized and regimented according to the pallid doctrines of white racial supremacy predictably ensured that the ostensibly decolonized future of the colonies has not ceased to be a world of slums inhabited by "the majority of the people of the earth who happen to be colored" (54). DuBois supplied a memorable descriptive outline of the quintessential features of life in the colonies of his time: "black boys diving for pennies; human horses hitched to rickshaws; menial service in plethora for a wage near nothing; absolute rule over slaves, even to life and death;

fawning, crawling obeisance; high salaries, palaces, and luxury coupled with abject, nauseating, diseased poverty" (19–20). Much of this admittedly "imperfect" sketch of the bygone colonial world has changed only inasmuch as it is now crowned with the semblance of national sovereignty and "independence" and superintended locally—by elites of color. By the grace of neoliberalism's most stalwart and sacrosanct conceits about the bright prospects for "developing countries" and their "emerging markets," furthermore, postcolonial elites are now unencumbered as never before by any residual sense of responsibility for the "uplift" of "the people," much less any lingering sense on the part of the impoverished multitudes that they should expect from their putative leaders anything other than self-aggrandizement (see, e.g., Mbembe 1992).

This postcolonial travesty and its inevitable and unapologetic "post-racialism," as this chapter seeks to elucidate, has furthermore been extended and intensified in unforeseen ways. For even some of the highest-profile (and publicly visible) work of global superintendence over the avowedly "anti-colonial" empire of capital has now fallen into the capable hands of men and women of color. It ought not surprise us that such unprecedented racial (trans)formations should have finally ensued within the United States. Indeed, to understand these developments otherwise would be tantamount to reinscribing yet again the racial American exceptionalism that has been the hallmark of the Obama presidency. It was exactly the profundity of decolonization (and the most telling evidence of its truly planetary scope and scale) that conditioned and incubated the radicality of the insurgency against the racial state and the severities of white supremacy, "domestically," within the United States, during that same historical period (see, e.g., Singh 2004). The inescapable enlistment and capacitation of "native" ruling elites in the formerly colonized zones of the earth—mirrored by the political incorporation of people of color into the administration of U.S. cities in the immediate aftermath of what Omi and Winant rightly designated "the Great Transformation" (1994, 95–112)—have now been matched by an analogous racial recruitment of seasoned and exceedingly competent personnel in the topmost echelons of the state within the world's greatest military power. "This," if we may recall DuBois's haunting phrase, "is what the imperialism of our day means." This, indeed, is one of the most remarkable distinctions of the contemporary global empire of capital, and perhaps its signature innovation.

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1. Barack Obama, "Remarks of President-Elect Barack Obama: Election Night," Chicago, www.barackobama.com.

2. Ibid.

3. Obama's long-standing commitment to escalate and expand the war in Afghanistan—and then, within the first months of his presidency, also Pakistan—only further corroborated these extravagant, seemingly gratuitous gestures of distinctly imperial "presidentialism" (cf. D. Nelson 2006). In fact, it was *Pakistan* that quickly came to be identified as the centerpiece of this revised War on Terror. A 2009 White Paper outlined the administration's new policy: "*In Pakistan*, al Qaeda and other groups of jihadist terrorists are planning new terror attacks . . . the core goal of the U.S. must be to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens *in Pakistan*." White House, "White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan," Washington, DC, http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/afghanistan_pakistan_white_paper_final.pdf (accessed January 16, 2012), p. 1; emphases added.

4. Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on a New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan," White House Office of the Press Secretary, March 27, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-a-New-Strategy-for-Afghanistan-and-Pakistan/.

5. Barack Obama, "Text: Obama's Speech on National Security," *New York Times,* May 21, 2009.

6. For more extended elaborations of Debord's conception of the society of the spectacle, see De Genova 2011a, n.d.

7. Upon closer inspection, of the seventy-four former prisoners alleged by the Pentagon report to have been engaged in terrorism, only twenty-nine were identified by name, and only five could be independently verified to have either

engaged in or even simply threatened to engage in "terrorist" activity. See Elisabeth Bumiller, "Later Terror Link Cited for 1 in 7 Freed Detainees," *New York Times,* May 20, 2009.

8. Among the so-called "home-grown" terrorists, denigrated as "jailhouse converts," the alleged plot was strictly "aspirational" in that the FBI "fully controlled" the whole affair, which "played out on a veritable soundstage of hidden cameras and secret microphones." An FBI informant previously arrested and sentenced to five years' probation for "identity theft" cultivated and effectively recruited a motley crew comprising an alleged "crack addict," a drug dealer, an unemployed purse snatcher medicated for schizophrenia or a bi-polar disorder and "living in squalor" amidst "bottles of urine," and a "particularly violent" steak-house employee who "lately had grown a beard and taken to reading the Koran." 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." See Al Baker and Javier Hernandez, "4 Accused of Bombing Plot at Bronx Synagogues," *New York Times,* May 20, 2009; Michael Wilson, "In Bronx Bomb Case, Steps and Missteps, on Tape," *New York Times,* May 22, 2009; and William K. Rashbaum and Kareem Fahim, "Informer's Role in Bombing Plot," *New York Times,* May 22, 2009.

9. For an important discussion of the particular salience of the figure of migrants who come to be racialized as "Black," see Nopper 2008.

10. Obama gestured on this occasion toward the statutory institutionalization of "preventative detention"—something that even the Bush administration had never broached. See Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Obama Is Said to Consider Preventive Detention Plan," *New York Times,* May 21, 2009. For an extended legal elaboration of the reasoning in favor of a statutory delimitation of permissible "preventative" detention, see Cole 2009.

11. Obama, "Text: Obama's Speech on National Security."

12. Obama, "Remarks of President-Elect Barack Obama: Election Night."

13. George W. Bush, "President Bush on Obama's Victory," Real Clear Politics, press statement, November 5, 2008, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2008/11/president_bush_on_obamas_victo.html (accessed January 16, 2012).

14. Obama, "Remarks of President-Elect Barack Obama: Election Night."

15. Barack Obama, "Barack Obama's Speech on Race" (Philadelphia), transcript, *New York Times* March 18, 2008.

16. Obama, "Remarks of President-Elect Barack Obama: Election Night."

17. John McCain, "McCain's Concession Speech," transcript, *New York Times* November 5, 2008.

18. 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" (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).

19. Fox News, "Michelle Obama Takes Heat for Saying She's 'Proud of My Country' for the First Time," February 19, 2008, http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,331288,00.html (accessed April 24, 2012).

20. Bush, "President Bush on Obama's Victory."

21. Barack Obama, "President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address," White House Office of the Press Secretary, January 21, 2009. Available at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/president_barack_obamas_inaugural_address/ (accessed January 16, 2012).

22. Indeed, following what DuBois called the Reconstruction era's "full-fledged government" (1968, 66) of "the emancipated Negro as the ward of the nation" (62), post-emancipation African American mobility came to routinely signal for the propertied classes precisely 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.

23. See Lynn Sweet, "Obama 'Has Never Been a Muslim': Obama's Gibbs' Memo on Madrassa Smear," *Chicago Sun-Times,* http://blogs.suntimes.com/sweet/2007/01/obama_has_never_been_a_muslim.html (accessed February 4, 2012).

24. See "The Truth about Barak Obama's Faith," Fight the Smears, n.d., http://my.barackobama.com/page/invite/christian.

25. Andrea Elliot, "Muslim Voters Detect a Snub From Obama," *New York Times,* June 24, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/24/us/politics/24muslim.html?fta=y (accessed January 16, 2012). In all of this, furthermore, it is instructive to recall that the ideological antecedent to racial whiteness in British colonial North America was, precisely, the concise protonational and deeply racialized figure of "Christian," in permanent and hostile opposition to Native American "savagery" (Roediger 2008, 9, 28).

26. Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama to the Turkish Parliament," Ankara, Turkey, April 6, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Obama-To-The-Turkish-Parliament/ (accessed January 16, 2012).

27. George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People," White House, September 20, 2001, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920–8.html (accessed February 4, 2012).

28. George W. Bush, "We're Fighting to Win—And Win We Will," Remarks by the President at USS *Enterprise* Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia, on Pearl Harbor Day,

White House, December 7, 2001, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/12/20011207.html (accessed February 4, 2012).

29. George W. Bush, "President Speaks on War Effort to Citadel Cadets," White House, December 11, 2001, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/12/20011211–6.html (accessed February 4, 2012).

30. 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.

31. For a crucial theoretical exegesis of DuBois's deployment of the idea of the color line, with particular attention to its original formulation as a concept operating within a *global* horizon, see Chandler 2006, 2010.

Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century

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