Facebook and Fanatics: Islam and the Arab Revolutions

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ABSTRACT

2011 prompted a discursive rupture in western perceptions of its perennial Arab-Islamic Other. Drawing on a Foucauldian distinction between the 'savage' and the 'barbarian' this paper offers an analysis of the ways in which the binaries at the heart of the 'clash of civilizations' doctrine have mutated rather than transformed in western foreign policies vis-à-vis the Arab Revolutions. Post-structuralist and postcolonial theory is drawn on to stress the ways in which discourses of the Other are layered so as to perpetuate rather than transform subjugating dichotomies. The author argues that support for despotic regimes in the Middle East has long been conceived as a means of apostatizing the Arab-Islamic Other from his existentially threatening 'barbarian' heritage. Today, it is suggested, the Arab Revolutions have seen the foreign policies of western governments shift their representation of the Arab-Islamic Other from 'barbarian' to 'savage' imagery so as to maintain hegemonic authorship of what constitutes the 'universal' discourse of humanity. While the article focuses on repressive hegemonic discourses it concludes by looking at the way these are being challenged, inverted, and undermined by the emancipatory revolutions that began in 2011.

KEYWORDS

Arab Spring, Islam, Human Rights, Religion, Secularism, Foucault, Postcolonialism

Introduction[1]

2011 *re*humanized the Arab-Islamic world. The dogma of democratic exceptionalism, human rights heathens, and terrorist fanatics has apparently been exorcised by the cries for bread, freedom, and dignity emanating from Tunis, Cairo, Benghazi, and beyond. For their part, western elites have undergone a brief period of self-flagellation for long having evoked a "false choice" between repression and extremism in the Arab-Islamic world (BBC, 2011a). The hyprocrisy of decades of western government collusion with Middle Eastern despots has been unmasked and so forced the renunciation of the unholy secular-modern alliances with Ben Ali, Mubarak and Gaddafi. Today a discursive about-turn seems to be ongoing. The

humanity of the Arab-Islamic world is being rehabilitated and its people promised their entrance into the 'universal' discourses of secularism, human rights, and democracy. But doubts linger. Those cries for bread, freedom, and dignity have reverberated alongside chants of *Allahu Akbar* (literally, *God is great*). And this *Allah* remains the old-world God, the *barbarian* God lingering in the Orientalist imagination of western history. And so the question comes to be asked, for *whom* exactly are the Arab-Islamic people now voting and what exactly are we witnessing? The victory of the secular-modern Facebook revolutionary or the renaissance (*Nahda!*[2]) of the Arab-Islamic fanatics? Are, so the insinuated fear goes, the barbarians back at the city gates?

This paper takes the so-called 'Arab Spring' as a culminating allegory for decades of western foreign policy towards the Arab-Islamic world,[3] and argues that the discursive about-face described above is only a partial evolution of an age-old discourse representing the Arab-Islamic Other as barbarously inhuman; the antithesis of the secular-modern world order that western governments seek to export. The following theoretical section draws on a Foucauldian distinction between the barbarian and the savage to frame how postcolonial western foreign policy divides the world into a layered series of subordinate Others. The next three sections of the paper, building on this theoretical basis, construct an extended case study of the Arab Spring through which the discursive about-face sketched above is brought into empirical focus. The first part of that case study begins by extrapolating the implications of the theorized othering process by detailing how a logic of *business with barbarians* has justified western support for dictatorial regimes, irrelevant their gross despotism. The next section then goes on to argue that western foreign policy makers are presently engineering a discursive shift and dividing the Arab-Islamic Other between western-friendly users of Facebook and rejectionist fanatics who remain portrayed as barbarians at the gate. The closing chapter will critique this discursive metamorphosis as little more than a form of linguistic sophistry turning from images of the *barbarian* to those of the *savage* in order to maintain the dominance of a paradoxically "discriminatory universality" (Kapur, 2006, p.673). The conclusion offers some thoughts, however, on how this process might be being subverted and undermined as we speak.

A few words on the binary categories deployed in this paper are necessary before commencing. I will refer throughout to 'western' governments/policies/elites and the 'Arab-Islamic' world. This active focus on the 'West vs. the Rest' dichotomy is deliberate. The analysis seeks to suggest that the Arab Revolutions represent only the *superficial* unraveling of the dominance of this dichotomy. In order to do so it is necessary to work through these binaries rather than actively eschewing them at the outset as ontologically unfounded. This paper should not, having said that, be read as reifying such binaries. Neither the 'west' nor the 'Arab-Islamic' are hegemonically congruent categories (See Dabashi, 2008 for a

provocative articulation). Hereafter I will forgo, for stylistic reasons, the ubiquitous use of inverted commas around these terms but they should always be read with their presence implied. More importantly, the concluding section of the paper will turn to the ways in which the Arab Revolutions might be rupturing the continued saliency of these binaries even as this paper suggests new ones may be being formed.

Barbarians and Savages

Two figures haunt the western postcolonial imaginary: the savage, and the barbarian. The two terms are usually conflated as adjectival similes but, following Foucault, this paper suggests they can usefully signify distinct categorizations of the Other. As Foucault (2004, p.195) summarizes:

> "The barbarian is the opposite of the savage... The savage is basically a savage who lives in a state of savagery together with other savages; once he enters a relation of a social kind, he ceases to be a savage. The barbarian, in contrast, is someone who can be understood, characterized, and defined only in relation to a civilization, and by the fact that he exists outside it. There can be no barbarian unless an island of civilization exists somewhere, unless he lives outside it, and unless he fights it."

The barbarian is a figure existing *outside* (the end of) history. He is the source of existential *challenge* to the 'universal.' The savage, by contrast, is the *premodern* figure- the native to be civilized through the white man's burden- waiting, in short, for redemption. This distinction expands Makau Mutua's (2001) three-fold *savage-victim-savior* metaphor for the use of human rights as a symbol of the secular-modern 'universal.' The barbarian exists outside this triad; as the violent challenger to the 'progress' it supposes itself to represent. The savage, by contrast, becomes the "noble savage... whom the jurists or theorists of right dreamed up, the natural man who existed before society... and who was the element around which the social body could be constituted" (Foucault, 2004, p.194). The savage is not *outside* history but rather *before* (or at the commencement of) history. Salvation from his premodern 'heart of darkness' is thus presented as possible. The barbarian, by contrast, cannot be saved. He "stalks the frontiers of states" and seeks to penetrate "a civilization, setting it ablaze and destroying it." There "can be no barbarian without a preexisting history: the history of the civilization he sets ablaze" (Foucault, 2004, pp.195-6). He is deemed "inimical to the... political claims of dominant power relations" and "cognitively unthinkable, beyond the ability of current knowledge to comprehend [his] difference" (Douzinas, 2007, p.113). The barbarian is outside history, existing as the irredeemable *Schmittian* Other[4].

The barbarian/savage distinction frames this paper's exploration of western governments' foreign policy responses to the Arab Revolutions of 2011-12. This section will first place that conceptual metaphor in

theoretical context, beginning by looking at the macro-discourses of civilizational struggle that have provoked such theorizing. We thus begin with the notion that the so-called end of history has set a new "standard of civilization" (Donnelly, 1998). This standard is made up of a secular affirmation of instrumental rationality, human rights as 'universal' goods, and democracy as the modern structure through which to institutionalize the standard. Each of these elements of secular-modern liberalism is an essentially contested concept[5], but they have coalesced nonetheless to form a "false ideological universality" (Žižek, 2009, p.126) that has been given free power political reign in the post-Cold War world.

The new 'universal' standard of civilization privileges the secular as the foundation that "comes to ground and secure a place for the good, rational, and universal" that human rights and democracy embody (Hurd, 2011). This paper focuses in particular on the human rights literature since human rights advocacy, as a more *ad hoc* set of standards than complete models of secular democracy, has become a very common means by which foreign policies aimed at transforming states are pursued. Human rights are a necessary part of the new civilizational standard and its "indiscriminate association of the secular with good governance" (Ibid). However, whatever the particular mode of expression, this new standard of civilization is acting "as a source of power and authority… [and] inevitably, power invites challenge" (Ignatieff, 2001, p.102). Today this 'challenge' is perceived as emerging from the Arab-Islamic "neo-barbarians" (Al-Azmeh, 2011) at the gates of history.

The 'challenge' posed by the Arab-Islamic world "has been there from the beginning" (Ignatieff, 2001, p.102). The modern-day identification of this 'challenge' takes us, just as George W. Bush's (2001) post-9/11 political declaration of a new crusade (Cockburn, 2002), full circle to the era in which the "cross fought the crescent" (Ali, 2002, p.43). Today this cross has become part of a discrete heritage whose influence on the 'universal' secular-modern discourse is denied[6]. The "clash of civilizations" (Huntington, 1997) takes on a new meaning in this context. Islam is portrayed as fighting not Christendom, but a universal humanity enshrined at the 'end of history' (Fukuyama, 1993). This occurs because Arab-Islamic societies are understood "as that which is not secular" and so apart from the domain of "rational self-interest and universalist ethics" (Ibid). They have become Foucault's barbarian; the figure imagined as *outside* and fighting against the march of history.

These civilizational metaphors are of course not useful for having any objective validity. But they help us to understand nevertheless how the 'universal' values that western governments posit can become discriminatory. The 'universal' is simply "the self-representation of the [western] metropole" while the backward, barbarous and savage 'cultural' is a "description of the periphery" (Rajagopal, 2003, p.206).

Those who first authored the discourses in question set the content of the 'universal': the western origins of the human rights discourse being, for example, a **"**simple historical fact" (Donnelly, 1985, p.69; Rajagopal, 2003, p.175). We find in consequence of all this strong resistance to considering alternatives to the American or French paradigmatic models of secularism and a notable obsession with the Turkish model over less obviously western alternatives found in places like India (Bhargava, 2010). This notion of the 'universal' as being hegemonically authored by the powerful is the point at which postcolonial theory becomes particularly theoretically relevant for this paper's discussion. As Douzinas (2007, p.100) succinctly puts it:

> "The colonial French, the imperial English, the Americans today stand for the universal. Imperialism, colonialism, foreign conquest and occupation are all part of the mission to export and instill universal values as understood by the chosen nation on the heathen."

None of this is to say that democracy, human rights and secularism are *only* colonial discourses of subjugation. It is instead to note that it is convenient for the powers that employ the moral language with which they have been imbued to portray any 'challenge' in a zero-sum civilizational light. The challenger must be pushed outside history such that the pretense to universality can be maintained given the absence of persuasive transcendent justificatory philosophies of natural rights or, for that matter, God. Peoples outside the (post)colonial metropole are made to fall either *before* (savages) or *outside* (barbarians) history. The "specific cultural and ethnographic fingerprint" (Mutua, 2002, p.5) of the advocated models of democracy, secularism, and human rights is erased with this move and so universality becomes about "conformity" to the hegemonic civilization rather than the "creativity" (Tyson and Said, 1993) a universally authored discourse would necessarily entail. As Mutua (2002, p.5) summarizes vis-à-vis human rights:

> "The advocacy of human rights across cultural borders is then an attempt to displace the local non-western culture with the 'universal' culture of human rights. Human rights therefore become the universal culture."

This 'universal' culture represents a universe to be conformed to and not the democratically negotiated multiplicity of a "pluriverse" (Esteva and Prakash, 1998). The question for those who believe that the civilizational content prescribed in this particular universe is absolutely desirable becomes which rival universe/civilization/culture poses the greatest challenge. This essay focuses on the Arab-Islamic challenge typified in Huntington's (1993) belief that "Islam has bloody borders" and is coming ever closer to "penetrating" the "civilized heartland" (Megret, 2006, p.282). Islamist 'fanatics' have become Foucault's

barbarian but, as we will see in the empirical sections to follow, attempts are being made to shift towards savage representations given the discursive rupture the Arab Revolutions have created.

The Arab-Islamic Barbarian

Today the barbarian is a Muslim. The purported challenge posed is not only that he "pursues his political objectives by deploying armed force as an instrument of the struggle" (Mutua, 2002, p.10). The challenge is also posited to be an *intellectually* existential one. Foucault believed that "if a philosophy of the future exists, it will have to be born outside Europe" (Foucault, 1999, p.113). He thus suggested, alongside Nietzsche, that the "madness of Islam" could be a means of interrogating Europe's "senile short-sightedness" (Almond, 2004, p.4; Almond, 2003). But, unlike Foucault, most Europeans have been less intrigued with the opportunities for self-reflection Islam presents and more contemptuous of what are seen as its existentially threatening precepts. It is clear, for example, that much of the 'universal' content of the end of history rests on an *individualist* conceptualization of society. The belief that such individualism can be placed in a binary against 'collectivist' societies underlies many of the theories purporting to explain the supposed economic backwardness of the Arab-Islamic world. Grief (1994) goes as far as to trace the roots of Arab-Islamic 'underdevelopment' almost a millennium into the past by suggesting that 14th century collectivist Maghribi trading practices explain patterns of rent-seeking and patrimonial networks today. Indeed, it is not without reason that academics have pejoratively labeled neopatrimonial authoritarian states *Sultanistic* regimes (See Chehabi and Linz, 1998). The roots of the belief that Islam is opposed to neoliberal economics and 'universal' modernity rests in these old dogmas but they gain particularly threatening saliency when combined with the belief that the Arab-Islamic barbarian will use *violence* to resist his transformation.

The "fear lurking behind all of these images" of fanatical theocracy, democratic exceptionalism, human rights heathens, and neoliberal rejectionism "is the menace of *jihad*… a fear that the Muslims (or Arabs) will take over the world" (Said, 1977, p.287). It is notable here that the arch-Orientalist Bernard Lewis (1990; 1998) talked earlier than Huntington of a clash of civilizations. This fear of Islam has only grown in the post-9/11 world. But beyond terrorism we can also productively point to the sexualized fear of the barbarian 'penetrating' the civilized heartland through the example of the "politics of the veil" (Scott, 2007). This discourse is especially useful in dissecting how barbarian and savage metaphors are layered onto the Arab-Islamic body. The key is in that hyphenated descriptor Arab-Islamic. The veil is a symbol of the latter Islamic character and not necessarily the former Arab ethnic category. It is symbolic of the existential barbarian challenge to the 'universal' and it gains particularly threatening potency when located in schools; the "cradle of laïcité" (Scott, 2007, p.22). Scott's (Ibid, p.167) discussion of the "clash of gender

systems" is a simple rearticulation of the wider clashing civilizations thesis. The hyphenation of the Arab-Islamic is, however, problematic. It creates what Scott (Ibid, p.47) describes as a fundamental paradox in fighting this Arab-Islamic barbarian: "the stated goal was to civilize... those who finally could not be civilized." The strategies seeking to overcome this paradox are where we turn now.

Converting Barbarians

The extended case study of the Arab Revolutions following this theoretical exposition is intended to elucidate empirically the western foreign policies hoping to overcome the civilizing paradox. The next section argues that the barbarian metaphor has, until recently, excluded the Arab-Islamic Other from the 'universal' entirely. At times this has led to facilities like Guantanamo Bay working to violently "annihilate the exception" (Johns, 2005). Here we focus on exclusion through the support of western foreign policy makers for tyrannical regimes in the Middle East. This method of exclusion is argued to have been a deliberate strategy in which human rights and democratic values were derogated in favor of secular authoritarian client regimes implementing 'modernizing' neoliberal economic policies as a first step in stripping the *Arab* body of its *Islamic* barbarism. Beforehand it is necessary to theoretically outline how such a conversion was thought possible.

Orientalism has always had two faces: the fearful and the paternalistic. The Orientalist discourse seeks to combine themes of the Arab-Islamic as a threat with notions of submissiveness and inferiority (Alatom, 1997). Our Foucauldian metaphor is useful here; while the *Islamic* is barbarian, the *Arab* is simply savage. Edward Said describes, alongside the imagined "barbarity" of the Arab-Islamic Other, a paternalistic contempt for the "lazy" Oriental body whose essential weakness is a lack of "rationality'" shared by the barbarian and savage alike (Said, 1977, pp.178-253). The layering upon the Arab-Islamic world of the barbarian and savage metaphors works to ensure that "the region and its people conceptually emasculated... in short, dehumanized" (Said, 1977, p.291). The Arab savage might be 'civilized' and 'saved' from his backwardness, however, if his hypenated Arab-Islamic identity can be broken; apostasizing him from Islam and allowing for him to be *rehumanized* albeit in a premodern form. The possibility for this metaphorical conversion lies in the *excess* of the Orientalist imaginary, as Homi Bhabha (1994, p.66) puts it:

> "It is the force of ambivalence that gives the colonial stereotype its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures... for the stereotype, must always be in *excess* of what can be empirically proved or logically construed."

The nightmarishly aggressive and yet simultaneously primitive portrayal of the hyphenated Arab-Islamic Other allows for the possibility of the Orientalist discourse's repetition since the converted barbarian can be rendered simply a passive and subordinate savage. The ambivalence of Orientalist prejudice, and its possibility for adjustment, along the savage-barbarian axis, is panoptically wide in scope (See Said, 1977, 1994, 1997; Sardar, 1999; Karim, 2000; Tuastad, 2003). It extends, for example, deeply into popular culture. Hollywood has shown us the Palestinian terrorist *and* the "bumbling" but unthreatening Arab *Sheikh* (Shaheen, 2003, p.190). Disney's Aladdin gave children a savage Arab hero making do in a barbarian Islamic world: "It's barbaric, but hey, it's home!" (Little, 2002). And corporate media has presented the Arab-Islamic terrorist (Saeed, 2007) *and* the good Arab-Islamic woman fighting against her barbarian menfolk[7] (Eltahawy, 2012). The cultural material for the shift in representation from barbarian to savage has thus long been in discursive place.

Nonetheless the shift to the savage metaphor does not allow the Arab-Islamic *direct* entrance into the 'universal.' Here Mutua's (2001) *victim* label is instructive. While the Facebook revolutionaries of the Arab world might seem superficially 'modern' it is critical that they depend on their western 'savior.' Using 'modern' tools and technologies like Facebook is not enough on its own. Even if apostatized from their barbarian culture these savages are portrayed as still being lingering victims of its historical artifacts. As such they remain *premodern* until the prospect of an "Islamic Awakening" following the Arab Revolutions, for example, becomes *unthinkable.* Particular individuals (examples from Egypt are discussed below) might be suggested to have gained entrance into the 'universal' but the society, *as a whole,* remains a savage victim of its barbarous past. Indeed, this paper takes up Khouri's (2011b) suggestion to "drop the Orientalist term Arab Spring" because as he puts it:

> "Revolutionary, self-assertive Arabs frighten many people abroad. Softer Arabs who sway with the seasons and the winds may be more comforting."

The savage remains in this naturalistic limbo with the risk that he will always revert back to his barbarian state- as spring leads back to winter- until he is in one (very distant) day finally exorcised completely from the roots of his collectivity. All this is critically important because, as the final section of this essay comes to suggest, the underlying intention of this layering of closely associated forms of Others is to ensure that the people who make up the Subaltern (Spivak, 1988) savage culture are always kept one step away from speaking for themselves the discourses constituting what it means to be modern, secular, democratic and, even, *human.*

The empirics of the paper to follow seek to demonstrate these theoretical suggestions through a type of Foucauldian genealogical analysis at the archeological level of analysis. Genealogies "reveal discontinuities" and so "do not treat the past as a series of interpretations" (Milliken, 1999, p.248) but write a "history of the present" (Foucault, 1977, p.31) in which "discreet and apparently insignificant truths" (Foucault, 1984, p.77) regain their significance. This paper's analysis of the Arab Revolutions, drawing on media reports and academic insights into (post)colonial power/knowledge structures, thus highlights the 'discontinuities' represented by the shift from the barbarian to savage metaphors. In so doing it is hoped that naïve efforts to "anchor" ourselves in *Tahrir* square (Booth, 2011) in the name of an emancipatory 'universal' humanity will be balanced by the need to recognize the continuing processes of subjugation being implemented through the foreign policies of western governments.

Business and Barbarians

The "great paradox" of the human rights discourse, according to Makau Mutua (2002, p.4), is the inconsistency of the west" in supporting and protecting "despotic and kleptocratic regimes." This paradox vanishes when the barbarian Other is discursively perceived as "completely outside of western liberal democracy, defined as a threat to the nation-state- as backward, uncivilized and dangerous." As such the barbarians "are legitimately denied human rights protections, as they are cast in opposition to such values and protections" (Kapur, 2006, p.680). The Orientalist prejudices of western foreign policy makers have long suggested that "history does not record a single instance of successful constitutional government in a country where the Muslim religion is the state religion" (Little, 2002, p.14). In this discursive context we even find human rights groups viewing "Islam and human rights" in direct conflict and pondering whether human rights "violations may actually increase in the absence of an authoritarian secular state" (Modirzadeh, 2006, p.202).

When the human rights discourse increasingly labors under the belief that 'if democracy, then human rights' (Evans, 2001) there emerges a sort of tautological straitjacket in which Arab-Islamic democratic 'exceptionalism' puts the possibility of human rights out of reach. The "indiscriminate association of the secular with good governance… stabilizes an understanding of Islam as that which is not secular" and, it follows, not democratic (Hurd, 2011). As Dwight Eisenhower put it, "they have lived so long under dictatorships of one form or another, how can we expect them to run successfully a free government?" (Little, 2002, pp.27-28). This depiction of Islam "as an undemocratic commingling of Islam and politics that stands against the modern Christian or secularized Christian separation of church and state" (Hurd, 2011) has long been rooted in (post)colonial Orientalist tropes buttressing the intensity of the fear of the Arab-Islamic that has driven western foreign policy for decades.

It has been in consequence of these prejudices that western governments have continued to support dictatorial regimes across the region even while praising the so-called Eastern European 'third wave' of democratization. The Middle East has until recently be exceptional "in that the cold war's end has not signaled great power retreat from patronage of authoritarianism" (Bellin, 2004, p.149). The regions various dictators have themselves played "on the west's multiple security concerns" in order to maintain the patronage of western governments (Ibid). It was on these grounds that Mubarak and his despotic colleagues justified their perpetual use of 'emergency' regulations to curtail civil liberties. These hated ordinances were in fact one of the greatest grievances of the protest movements still ongoing in the region today. In Egypt such regulations had been in effect since 1967 and in Syria since 1962. This 'emergency' doctrine actually has its roots in the colonial era. The British administration, for instance, used such laws during the Mau Mau revolt of 1952 on grounds that "underlying all [the disturbances] is a rapid return to the savage and primitive" (Rajagopal, 2003, p.179). This parallel between the direct colonial application of power upon the Other and the indirect use of client despots to achieve the same end shows the extent to which remarkably little had changed, until recently, in the policies of western governments towards the Arab-Islamic world. The consequences of using such 'emergency' regulations are described by Balakrishnan Rajagopal (2003, p.181) as follows:

> "The effect of using the term 'emergency' is to characterize the situation as one of 'law and order' rather than a political challenge to the regime concerned – in effect, a public relations tool. Legally, the effect is to create a legal void, wherein neither the rules relating to the conduct of war (*jus in bello*) nor human rights are applicable."

The concept of the 'emergency' legitimates the silencing of alternative political discourses. These discourses must be silenced because they fall *outside* the 'universal' history being propagated by western states. A legal void is necessitated in order that rights can be abrogated and democratic freedoms curtailed both by the direct interference of western governments and local undemocratic governments. The perpetual state of 'emergency' in the Arab-Islamic world has been justified with consistent reference to the barbarian Islamists at the gate. It is the intrinsically antithetical nature of Islam to the secular and democratic that has justified western support for tyrannical regimes. As Foucault (2004, p.196) succinctly put it, "for the barbarian, the model government is necessarily a military government." The barbarian had to be kept inside Foucault's Panopticon: outside 'universal' society and exorcised from history.

But western governments have never been content to simply leave the barbarian in prison. In Foucault's terms they have sought to *discipline* more than *punish*. The paradox, as discussed above, related to the

attempt to discipline/civilize into annihilation an Islamic character chained to the Arab ethnic category. Nonetheless, the civilizational thesis that reifies the 'paradox' was complemented by the *modernization* thesis as a potential means of overcoming it. The belief was simply that while "people may not be forced to be free... at least they should be forced to be modern" (Douzinas, 2007, p.95). The state-centric logic of western political theory suggests that "the state- as the motor of economic development- needs to engage in repression of political and civil rights in order to guarantee economic and social rights or simply, development" (Rajagopal, 2003, p.195). This trade-off thesis justifies what Donnelly (2003, p. 199) refers to as "developmental repression" and thus support for dictatorial regimes. While the "marketization of freedom" (Rajagopal, 2003, p.199) obviously provides immediate gains for western economies, most notably in energy security, it also works to break the civilizing paradox and potentially bring forth the secular, modern and democratic and *human.* Indeed, Rajagopal (2003, p. 199) notes that:

> "The "human" in human rights is the *homo oeconomicus*, the modern market being he who is possessed off full rationality, and whose attempt to realize his/her full potentialities are confined within the moral possibilities of the state and the material conditions of the global market. Therefore, certain forms of resistance to the dominance of the modern market or the state are inherently incapable of being subsumed under the banner of human rights."

The 'barbarian' falls into the latter form of incompatibility with human rights. The resistance Islamism takes up is constituted by a belief that "rationalist epistemology erodes divine authority, expresses and accelerates western power, and inhibits the establishment of a legitimate Islamic social system" (Euben, 2002, p.34). This "epistemological imperialism" (Al-Masseri, 1994, p.403) is connected specifically to a critique of the definition of what is "worth knowing" as "presumably only material phenomena" (Tadjbakhsh, 2010, p.181) epitomized by the "moral possibilities of the state and the material conditions of the global market." This intellectual challenge, the one that so fascinated Foucault and Nietzsche, provokes the definition of Islamism in barbarian terms that place the hyphenated Arab-Islamic outside the terms of compatibility required by modern-secular definitions of democracy and human rights. Support for dictatorial regimes that acquiesce to western economic policy allows, however, architects of western government policy to begin the process of socializing the barbarian away from these perceptions of inherent incompatibility. Foucault's savage, it must be noted, is this very *homo economicus*:

> "The natural man or ideal element dreamed up by economists: a man without a past or history, who is motivated only be self-interest and who exchanges the product of his labor for another product... The savage *homo economicus* whose life is devoted to exchange and barter. The savage is essentially

a man who exchanges. He is the exchanger: he exchanges rights and he exchanges goods. Insofar as he exchanges rights, he founds society and sovereignty. Insofar as he exchanges goods, he constitutes a social body which is, at the same time, an economic body." (Foucault, 2004, p.194)

There is some evidence that neoliberal economic policies are perceived in terms of this moderating conversion of the barbarian into the savage man. For instance, Gumuscu (2010, p.843) argues that in Turkey the "embourgeoisement of the devout bourgeoisie" through the "new consumerism" of globalization resulted in the conversion of "the Islamist party into a centrist conservative party" (Ibid, p.837). The key word here is *moderate*, the underlying assumption is that the natural Islamic barbarian is *extreme* and that it is through economic modernization than he can be slowly tamed and secularized. The process is not without conflict, as the emergence of an Islamic middle class remains perceived by secularists as posing a subversive threat, even if they appear 'moderate' on the surface (Baskan, 2010).

Nonetheless, the support for dictatorial regimes that promote secular neoliberal economics comes to allow at least the possibility of provoking a 'passive revolution' (Tugal, 2009) designed to 'absorb' the Islamic 'challenge' and transcend the barbarian threat. Turkey is regularly distorted into an ideal-type here. The assumption is that authoritative secular rule forces the hand of the Islamists such that their *Nahda* avoids the active revolutionary content of say the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The Islamists *themselves* are thus revolutionized into passive acquiescence. If any *Alhamdulillahs* are still heard they should be simply the equivalent of the western atheist still proclaiming 'Thank God' now and again: a simple cultural artifact without existential potency. Tugal (2009, p.93) describes the decline in every-day Islamic phrases in the Turkish context as a result of this process. The declining use, that is, of terms like *Allāhu Akbar* that so worry the western imagination, and introduced this paper. The theory is that, eventually, Arab-Islamic citizens will become "confused about whether to call themselves Islamist or not" (Ibid, p.193). They will slowly forget their barbarian heritage.

All the abuses of human rights and curtailment of democratic freedoms that support for tyranny entails are simply the 'necessary suffering' (Baxi, 1998) that the Arab-Islamic Other must endure as this passive revolution is pushed for. It is thus through business with barbarians that the Others might be transformed into savages and eventually allowed entry into the 'universal' goods of secularism, democracy, and human rights. This of course is not the view of the revolutionaries themselves and fears are emerging among them that a new "neoliberal Egypt" will work to "hijack" the revolution (Hickel, 2012). For Orientalist discourses, nonetheless, "Islamic societies must westernize or perish" (Mutua, 2002, p.4) and so the burden of responsibility for the belief that Islam's intellectual and practical content may be eternally

incompatible with the content of the 'universal' is shifted onto the shoulders of Arab-Islamic society alone. No deeper interrogation of the 'universal' is being welcomed.

Facebook and Fanatics

2011 has seen the logic underlying *business with barbarians* reach an inevitable dilemma; the dilemma of judging whether the civilizing paradox has been transcended. At first sight, western leaders seemed optimistic. The slow attempt to socialize the barbarian through business and brutality appears to have proved true a claim made by Ignatieff (2001, p.104) in 2001 that "where Islamic societies have managed to modernize, create a middle class, and enter the global economy- Egypt and Tunisia being examples- a constituency in favor of basic human rights" and, thus, secular democracy, human rights, and neoliberalism can emerge. A decade later this constituency has apparently come of age. Barack Obama described the Egyptian Revolution as a "moment of transformation" in which "a new generation" has embraced an "interconnected world" (Obama, 2011). Taking the protests as a whole Obama said he heard "echoes of Germans tearing down a wall." But 2011 is not the "Fourth Wave" of democratization. As Noam Chomsky (2011) puts it:

> "Washington and its allies keep to the well-established principle that democracy is acceptable only insofar as it conforms to strategic and economic objectives: fine in enemy territory (up to a point), but not in our backyard, please, unless properly tamed."

The dilemma for Washington and its allies in 2011 is whether or not the westernized Middle East it has sought to foster has been "properly tamed." Policymakers have thus increasingly come to ask themselves whether they have really succeeded in eugenically breeding away the barbarian through business. For them Khouri (2011a) is wrong to argue that it is "provincial to focus attention... on whether Facebook drove these results or what will happen if Muslim Brothers play a role in the governments to be formed." This question may well be provincial to the protestors involved but it is paramount to those "major western powers that created the modern Arab states and then fortified and maintained them as security states after the 1970s" (Ibid). The idea of "self-determinant and free Arab citizenries" alongside "grassroots political, social and religious movements" able to "re-order the role of the armed forces and police" (Ibid) cannot be countenanced unless the Islamic barbarian has been exorcised and the protestors still at work can be confirmed as being secular-modern Facebook revolutionaries.

The dilemma is reflected in statements made by western governments prior to the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia becoming *fait accompli.* The US vice president Joe Biden said Hosni Mubarak had been an ally

who was "very responsible" with regard regional geopolitics (Biden, 2011). Hillary Clinton initially, and without a hint of irony, also claimed that Mubarak's departure might threaten Egypt's transition to democracy (Sheridan, 2011). Indeed, the mantra at first was of 'orderly transition.' Obama's eventual claim that the rights of Egyptians were 'universal' human rights that "the United States will stand up for everywhere" (Johnston and Brower, 2011) appears to reflect an understanding that the Tunisian and Egyptian protestors had irreparably unmasked decades of western state collusion with their respective dictators. Chomsky (2011) argues that this about-face can be explained through Obama's "Germans tearing down a wall" metaphor:

> "One 1989 comparison has some validity: Romania, where Washington maintained its support for Nicolae Ceausescu, the most vicious of the east European dictators, until the allegiance became untenable. Then Washington hailed his overthrow while the past was erased. That is a standard pattern."

The search for proof that the barbarian has been "tamed" and so client tyrants can be safely abandoned centers on the search for a "valid human rights 'voice'- one that can authoritatively comment on and criticize human-rights problems... [and] is implicitly taken to be 'western,' and 'white'" (Rajagopal, 2003, p.188). This voice must be explicitly secular, moderate, and 'modern.' Any 'Islamic' voice was considered tainted by a link to the Fanatics of Islamism and in the Egyptian case the fear that the Muslim Brotherhood would use Mubarak's departure to undo what the policies of western governments had gained through their policy of business with barbarians. This fear returns to the belief that the Islamic 'challenge' is a zero-sum affair, since "the freedoms articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights make no sense within the theocratic bias of Islamic political thought" (Ignatieff, 2001, p.103). There remains a belief that there is no possibility for religious freedom, political liberty and individual rights under Islam. Western states believe that there is an unbridgeable divide between Islamism, "arguably the most dynamic and most popular political trend in the region and the powerful emancipatory force of the human rights discourse" (Hicks, 2002, p.362). It is cognitively unthinkable for them to ask whether it is "conceivable that we might have human rights activists who are Islamists, that is to say Islamist human rights activists" (Ibid, p.362). Instead, "the fundamentalist label helps to recycle the old Orientalist stereotypes about fanatical, frustrated people" (Furedi, 1997, p.87). The result was described in the previous section as a "recipe of freedom" that Kapur (2002, p.213) describes as:

> "A civilizing mission that could be won through the abrogation of sovereignty to secure sovereignty, the abrogation of peace to secure peace, and the abrogation of democracy to secure democracy."

The measuring stick used in 2011 to assess the success of this recipe was the emergence of Rajagopal's "human rights voice." He notes that when a non-westerner is cited as this legitimate voice they are "sometimes miraculously transformed into 'western' voices" (Rajagopal, 2003, p.188). The Egyptian case followed this pattern. The good, secular, democratic, "human rights voice" became Wael Ghonim, head of Marketing for Google Middle East and North Africa. Ghonim is considered as having been instrumental in setting up Facebook pages that kick-started the mass protests in Egypt. He stood as the perfect example of the transformation of the barbarian into the western-friendly (*savage*) user of Facebook that would allow control over the authorship of the secular-modern order to remain with western governments. Ghonim will soon reappear in this paper in a new and more subversive form but in the early stages of the Arab Revolutions he became symbolic of this discourse. As the British Prime Minister David Cameron (2011) put it, the revolutions are perceived as belonging to "a new generation" that has apostatized itself from its barbarian heritage and believes that western "technology- the internet and social media- is a powerful tool in the hands of citizens, not a means of repression." Facebook, we were first told, had beaten the fanatics, and so the barbarian Arab-Islamic world had become a savage one.

Salvation and Savages

The proceeding chapters have argued that the barbarian's banishment rested on modernizing economic forces that would force the emergence of acceptable secular-modern-democratic-human rights voices in the Arab-Islamic world. What has profoundly worried western elites about the Arab Revolutions, however, is the apparently *autonomous* emergence of revolutionary change in the region. Western states have never promoted "autonomous human rights movements" but preferred instead a state of "human rights dependency" in which foreign governments are "more responsive to pressures from western governments than from their own people" (An-Na'im, 2000, p.22). There has therefore been deep concern at the way in which the Arab Revolutions have unmasked a state of dependency that is itself "a reflection of a profound and fundamental violation of human rights" (Ibid, p.22). The Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions have upset the Orientalist view that only a Lawrence of Arabia could award the Arabs their freedom. The Egyptian secular-modern "human rights voice" Wael Ghonim made these fears clear when he refused to meet Hillary Clinton and so inverted the beliefs of western elites that modern technology had enabled the revolutions by using the same technologies to prevent Chomsky's "standard pattern" of western governments erasing their collusion with tyranny and addressing Clinton with terrific irony thus:

> "Dear Hillary Clinton, thanks to the Internet, we can search for anyone's quotes within any period of time. Did you ever try this?" (Radia and Marquardt, 2011)

Weiss (2011) emphasizes the rhetorical force of the fears such autonomy provokes when he states that "this feels like Obama's 9/11- the day Arabs blindsided a president. I'd thought this is what he wanted for the Arab world: democracy! But the market dropped, and the cable shows are filled with mistrust of the Arab street. The talking heads can't stop talking about the Islamists." Those Islamist fanatics certainly have refused to leave the imagination. The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the *Nahda* party in Tunisia appears to confirm the worst fears of western foreign policy: the paradox had not been broken, the barbarians are still at the gate, and all this talk of democracy and human rights was mere sophistry. Weiss (Ibid) summarizes succinctly the real threat that the autonomy of the Arab Revolutions poses for western foreign policy, outside these Orientalist fantasies, when he writes that:

> "The danger to America and Israel is that the Egyptian revolution will destroy this false choice of secular dictator-or-crazy Islamists by showing that Arabs are smart articulate people who can handle real democracy if they get to make it themselves."

The Libyan Revolution, however, gave western policymakers a chance to rehabilitate a state of dependency. The Arab-Islamic Other splintered in Libya more clearly than in Egypt or Tunisia. Colonel Gadhafi personified the Arab-Islamic barbarian psyche. The revolutionaries, on the other hand, represented the savage primitiveness of the Arab. These savages were still victims of latent barbarity and so required their savior- a NATO military intervention.

The *détente* in the relationship between Gadhafi and Europe that had occurred only a few years prior to the revolution was so entrenched by 2011 that Silvio Berlusconi was sending Italian women to Libya for "cultural exchanges" ending in marriages and grotesque Orientalist visions of the Arab-Islamic 'harem' (Kington, 2010). Those who bring such issues to the forefront now and question the motives behind the foreign policies of western governments are accused of questioning the goodness of defending Libyan civilians and thus the human rights discourse plays its final ethical card that "genealogy is no substitute for moral argument" (Donnelly, 1998, p.20). Clinton, her pride hurt after the Egyptian revolution, reentered the debate. She invoked the Facebook metaphor and claimed that technology means "young people know what is going on everywhere and will not tolerate the status quo" since "human rights, democracy and development are inextricably linked" and such claims "are not western principles or US ideals, they are truly universal." She closed with an attack on that Arab-Islamic barbarian Other *par excellence*- Iran[8]- claiming that "the success of peaceful protest has exposed the extremists" and that "the denial of human dignity in Iran is an outrage" (Clinton, 2011). The Arab despots still leading the Arab League, meanwhile,

provided useful cover in supporting the Libyan intervention; barbarians elsewhere still proved that they have their uses in justifying the western military interventions (BBC, 2011b).

The great irony of the Libyan case was found in Gaddafi's persistent discursive use of the specter of the barbarian set free; al-Qaeda, Islamism or simply "somebody with a beard" to justify his repression (Gaddafi, 2011). But his discursive invocation of the troops that had led western leaders to briefly ally with him- and play the *business with barbarians* game- fell on deaf ears. He had been cut a drift and representations of the Other had shifted from a homogenized barbarian mass of Islamism to an oppressed, freedom-loving savage people that required western assistance. Senator John Kerry (2011) very directly invoked the image of the western 'free world' as the paternalistic and protective 'savior' in Libya with these words:

> "The specter that haunts me is… ordinary people facing off against an autocrat's airpower and well-armed soldiers, counting on the free world to protect them against massacre after we have applauded and bolstered their bravery with our words."

Western leaders like Kerry need a victim that cannot save itself because "the metaphor of the victim is the giant engine that drives the human rights movement. Without the victim there is no savage or savior, and the entire human rights enterprise collapses" (Mutua, 2001, p.228). However, more than simply the human rights movement risks collapse. The victim metaphor is vital because it justifies the hegemony of the secular-modern-democratic 'universal' western civilization by portraying the savage culture as "weak, powerless, prone to laziness, and unable on his own to create the conditions for his development" (Ibid, p.232).

In a final perversion of history neoconservatives have come to argue that the 'shock and awe' of Iraq and the removal of that arch-barbarian Saddam Hussein emasculated the barbarian culture's belief in its traditional rulers strength so as to pave the way to the protest movements of today, making "Egypt's Revolution, Bush's Victory" (Harshaw, 2011). This perverse post-hoc justification for Iraq fits into Mutua's (2002, p. 9) words that "unless the native is stripped of human dignity, he cannot be re-manufactured." In an effort to strip such dignity away the British foreign office has pressured its savage Libyan rebels to apologize on behalf of the entire Libyan people for the role the dictator they deposed played in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing (McGreal, 2011). This effort to force the nation as a whole to atone for its barbarous past while bombs were dropped made Libya, and it was revealing here read the Arabic-language press, look like "the Iraq scenario repeating" itself (Ma'an, 2011). Thankfully that fear has not yet been realized

but the Libyan intervention still represents for many in the Arab-Islamic world simply a continuation of subjugating postcolonial discourses.

Libya, Egypt and Tunisia have long been "consigned to the 'waiting room of history', in a state of 'nothingness' until" today's "redemptive moment, when the combined spirit of liberal internationalism, human rights and democracy" has supposedly brought them salvation (Kapur, 2006, p.672). Barbarian culture represents a "museumized people" for whom "there is no history, no politics, and no debate" until the savior awards them entry into the 'universal' (Kapur, 2002, p.216). The Other is always the "inferior I, someone who aspires (or should aspire) to reach the same level of civilization or governance we have... These unfortunates are the infants of humanity, ourselves in a state of nascency... The victim is like us in reverse, we know his interests and impose them 'for his own good'" (Douzinas, 2007, p.85). The barbarians are thus now savages being saved. Ignatieff's "Empire Lite" (Ignatieff, 2003) goes on a pace, finding a way to face the "ongoing brutality and cruelty of the barbarian part of humanity in a morally acceptable way. From sanctions to limited wars, from occupations to nation building, and the international administration of culprit and failed states, the aim is to protect (us) and save and correct (the others)" (Douzinas, 2007, p.141). In the end this discourse has not come very far from Europe's first colonial encounters with the Arab-Islamic Other and in perpetually denying them a right to participate in authoring the 'universal' values of democracy, secularism and human rights, these discourses come to represent simply:

> "The metamorphism of a racist state into one that is caring and compassionate... A site for reconciling moments of rupture and exclusion, and bringing the past into synch with the norms and values of liberalism, rather than bringing about a deeper interrogation of those norms and values." (Kapur, 2006, p.667)

Conclusion

The 'universal' discourses of secularism, democracy, and human rights manifest a western foreign policy that works to Other the world into several subordinate categories. This essay has identified the barbarian as the most incompatible of these, typified by the Arab-Islamic Other. The savage, in contrast, is a kind of denizen subject that is a potential candidate for entrance into the 'universal' end of history. This savage must be framed as a victim of his cultural-civilizational heritage and remade by way of apostasy from his original culture as a kind of raw human subject. He thus requires his western savior and its self-authored 'universal' discourses. The purpose of this imaginative layering of subordinate Others is to keep the claim to represent the 'universal' unchallenged and to "create a world in which American and European interests

are not threatened… by [inconsistent] political and cultural paradigms" (Douzinas, 2007, p.68). The Arab-Islamic Other has long been excluded on these grounds. Today western foreign policies are hailing his conversion into a savage. What the Arab Revolutions have shown, however, is that democracy and human rights are essentially contested concepts that nonetheless transcend cultural specificity as long as their political content is not foreclosed. It is thus important to conclude by considering how discursive binaries might be being unmade and attempts to re-subordinate the Other might be unraveling.

In his book *Revolution 2.0* Wael Ghonim (2012) reflects on Facebook not as a symbol but as a tool. For him, as Chalcraft (2012, p.8) puts it, the revolutions were not driven by "the 'Facebook effect' but the daring appropriation of Facebook." Attempts to reduce the Arab Revolutions down to this symbol of western modernity are, indeed, not being acquiesced to. Instead, the revolutionaries continue to radically disorient expectations and reject binaries. Ghonim has endorsed an Islamist candidate in the Egyptian presidential race; Islam is no anathema to this Facebook revolutionary (Issacharoff, 2012). Neither, on the other hand, is Islam an answer to all and everything. One Islamic sheikh's judgment of Ghonim's character might be productively extended to the character of the revolutions at large:

> "Your problem, Wael, is that you only follow your own logic and you don't want to have a role model to follow." (Ghonim, 2012, p.7)

The revolutionaries still calling for bread, freedom, and dignity are skeptical of any such model. This is true of both the self-declared secular and the avowedly Islamic. In Tunisia, where the revolutionary path has advanced furthest, secular and Islamist figures are forging a new path (Haugbølle and Cavatorta, 2012). "Overcoming the urge to classify actors as secularist or Islamists will take some work" (Hurd, 2012). Hope can nevertheless be found in the ties between the Arab Revolutionaries and growing social movements in the west critical of the neoliberal project (Hardt and Negri, 2011). This paper has talked repeatedly about western governments and foreign policies but such interconnections between *people* might force the hand of these elites. What, above all, is particularly encouraging is the resilience of the revolutionaries' energy, whether we are talking about those still in *Tahrir* Square, or the Syrians standing up against bloodshed and attempting to return their revolution back to its peaceful origins. In such a context this paper hopefully serves as a cautionary warning about "the violence and cynicism of the geopolitical forces at work in the region" (Chalcraft, 2012, p.11). But the ideas drawn out should be foregrounded only as forces to be resisted and not reified. The hope of the Arab revolutionaries is that such oppressive discourses are being concluded and not reintroduced through the subtle manipulations this paper has described.

Today the secular-modern 'universal' lacks a fundamental goodness that "does not exclude any other and does not try to impose the preferences of [the] self upon the stranger" (Douzinas, 2007, p.355). Ignatieff (2001, p.102) accurately notes, for example, that human rights discourse "is now so powerful, but also so unthinkingly imperialist in its claim to universality, that it has exposed itself to serious intellectual attack." The problem with this otherwise astute remark is its pejorative description of challenges to these discourses as "attacks." Here we miss an opportunity to reconstitute the "universal" in an inclusive manner. But the protests ongoing in the Arab-Islamic world today represent an "irruption of the excluded" and a "political event par excellence" that "changes the political scene and then disappears" (Douzinas, 2007, p.106). Those western policymakers who reject the right of alternative cultures and civilizations to author what constitutes the 'universal' count on their layering of subordinate Others to hold back the challenge these masses pose until they disappear. But if we truly desire an emancipatory 'universal' discourse we must consider this irruption an opportunity since:

> "When the radically excluded protest the wrong they suffer, they present themselves as representatives of the whole society, as stand-ins for the universal." (Douzinas, 2007, p.106)

The rhetorically dehumanized Arab-Islamic barbarian Other has proclaimed itself a part of a universal humanity. For too long a binary opposition between the secular-modern order and Islam has held that the Other seeks to destroy its precepts. Standing behind this "state-instituted and highly securitized secular-religious oppositional binary" is a banal focus on defending "interests in the region, defined primarily as ensuring Israeli security, pursuing the war on terror, and guaranteeing access to oil" (Hurd, 2011). Today the world appears to be changing. The Arab Revolutions mark a watershed because "a century after some Arabs started agitating for their freedoms from Ottoman and European colonial rule" the Arab-Islamic Other perceives "a breakthrough to our full humanity" (Khouri, 2011a). Whether western policymakers will put aside existential fears that the Islam represents a threat an open question. But this question is one that the Arab revolutionaries are asking repeatedly.

Foucault was ever fearful of "reconstituting the very categories of bourgeois civilization" that he sought to go beyond (Chalcraft, 2012, p.11). It was perhaps for this reason he looked with fascination towards Islam (Almond, 2004) whilst ever cautioning that the Arab-Islamic world could not be intelligently addressed "if we start out from a position of hatred" (Hurd, 2007, p.132). Perhaps when Time magazine has bestowed the (Arab-Islamic) 'Protestor' its person of the year award (TIME, 2011), the Arabic noun *Tahrir* has become globally associated with people protesting for their freedom, and the Arab-Islamic people of the Middle East are refusing to define their future in binary terms, we see evidence of a decline

in the hatred that has existed for so long. What the revolutionaries seek is not the denial of a new future based on the recycling of old dichotomies but rather to reclaim the future "as a virtual space- blank, colorless, shapeless, a space to be made over, a space where everything is still to be won" (Hebidge, 1993, p.278). Giorgio Agamben has suggested that the political project of humanity rests in exposing the potentialities latent in the indistinguishable zone hidden in every age-old dichotomy (DaSilva, 2005). His words on a revolution that never quite happened twenty years ago are thus a good way to conclude. These words capture the hope that is felt in the wake of the Arab Revolutions for a new future but they are tempered by the inevitable fear that there will always be some who reject a new way forward:

> "Whatever singularity, which wants to appropriate belonging itself, its own being-in-language, and thus rejects all identity and every condition of belonging, is the principal enemy of the State. Wherever these singularities peacefully demonstrate their being in common there will be Tiananmen, and, sooner or later, the tanks will appear." (Agamben, 1993, p.86)

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End Notes

1. The author is grateful to Amélie Barras for her thoughtful help, advice, and comments while writing this paper. Any omissions or errors remain the author's own responsibility.
2. The Arabic word *Nahda* literally translates as 'renaissance' but here refers to the Tunisian Islamist *Ennahda* Movement who won a majority in the Tunisian Constituent Assembly elections held in 2011, following the ousting of former President of Tunisia Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.
3. The use of the name 'Arab Spring' to describe the political changes ongoing in the Middle East has proved controversial. (See Khouri, 2011b) This paper thus takes up the term Arab Revolutions- the colloquial name predominant amongst the protestors themselves. This issue is discussed in the subsection of the first part of this paper entitled *Converting Barbarians.*
4. The "Schmittian Other" refers here to Carl Schmitt's (2007) notion of the enemy Other as the key constitutive element of his violent concept of the political.
5. For definitions, dilemmas, contradictions, and criticisms of 'liberalism' as a 'holding' concept for human rights, democracy, secularism, and so on, see Sandel (1982), Koerner (1985), and Kelly (2005).
6. See Scott (2007) for a discussion of how symbols of Christianity have been discursively converted into 'discrete' forms of heritage apart from the west's wider advocacy of the 'universals' of human rights, democracy and secularism. These 'discrete' symbols are placed in opposition to 'ostentatious' Islamic symbols such as the veil.
7. Here I refer to Mona Eltahawy's (2012) controversial article *Why Do They Hate Us?* While her piece is polemical the reference here is more to the obsessive attention devoted by the western media to women's rights in the Middle East and their attempts to explicitly link (the very real) injustices faced by women in the region absolutely to the Islamic faith. For example, her piece sat alongside other startlingly Orientalist articles like Sadjadpour's (2012) *The Ayatollah Under the Bed(sheets)* that depict the Islamic faith as somehow sexually perverted.
8. The Islamic Republic of Iran, of course, is not part of the Arab-Islamic Middle East. Nonetheless as Said (1997, pp.81-133) showed long ago Orientalist discourses on Persian culture mirror those found vis-à-vis Arab culture.