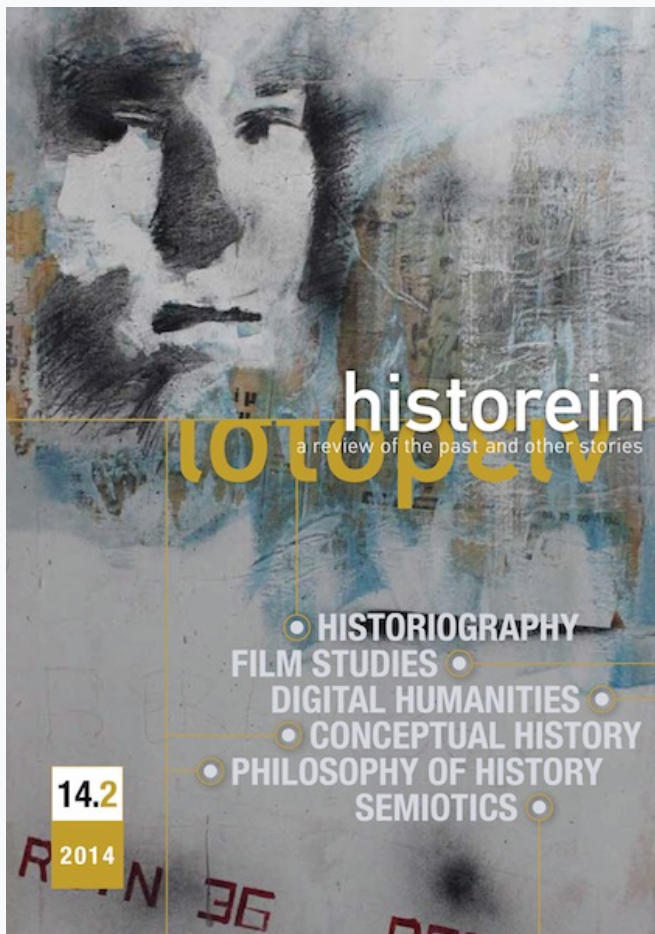


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**Review essay: Shattered experiences and revolution; A. Agathangelou and N. Soguk, (eds), Arab Revolutions and World Transformations**

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# *Shattered experiences and revolution*

Anna M. Agathangelou  
and Nerzat Soguk (eds)

*Arab Revolutions and World  
Transformations*

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The contributors to this edited volume, a reproduction of an issue of the journal *Globalizations*,<sup>1</sup> come from different disciplines, such as sociology and political sciences, international relations and Middle East politics, anthropology, development and cultural studies, Arabic literature and philosophy. According to the editors' introductory remarks,<sup>2</sup> the contributors were asked to reflect particularly on the latest "Arab revolutions"<sup>3</sup> and locate their analysis within the framework of postcolonial critique. The latter include, among others, the commitment to see the Arab revolutionaries beyond the stereotype of "Arab masses . . . as prisoners of the 'Oriental soul'" (1), and the west as the only "authentic agent of democracy" (2). On the contrary, the Arab revolutionaries are not only put in direct dialogue with other contemporary global movements subverting and resisting authoritarian rule (such as Occupy Wall Street), but their struggles are challenged with intra-African modalities of nonviolent resistance, and the move from political and religious into territorial identities<sup>4</sup> that are coming to contest the legacy of the west.<sup>5</sup>

All contributions are particularly interesting as regards the understanding of the "revolutionary" character of the specific uprising phenomena. More particularly, the studies show the possibility that the revolution and the right to democracy may well also concern people from the ex-colonised world, whereas the way the revolution could be executed, with the weapons and analytical tools of western modernity, is openly challenged. As mentioned by Nerzat Soguk in his article, these revolutions surpass the western modern imagination regarding cosmopolitanism (45), or the western tradition of conceptualising the public space and the resistance to the urban environment,<sup>6</sup> thus posing, at first, the issue of alternative ethical imperatives of the revolutionary modalities.<sup>7</sup> This volume contributes to the enrichment of the problematic regarding the Arab uprisings, by urging us to rethink our analytical tools about the use of people's imagination and feelings (affect) in historical and spatial terms,<sup>8</sup> as well as from the perspective of the encounter between the local and the global. In other words, we are reminded how important social poetics and aesthetics can be when people experience the revolutionary process.

Let us start from the beginning. In their introductory remarks, the editors separate the texts into three units that function as "entry points analytically and empirically" (4). These units are, first, "The Arab spring and emerging analytical encounters"; second, "Arab spring revolutions, revolutions of the world"; and finally "Global poetics and aesthetics of revolutions".

We believe that the three units present a very interesting complementarity, which opens up in our mind the field of discussion on three basic issues: first, locating and raising the problem of "revolution" within the framework of

postcolonial critique; second, analysing the different encounters between the local and the global; and finally critically understanding social phenomena through social poetics and aesthetics of people as agents, beyond orientalist dominant discourses and representations of otherness.

More analytically, kicking off from the Arab revolts, the volume contributes to the discussion regarding activist movements and democracy.<sup>9</sup> As it sees them at the intersection of the past with the present, and the local with the global, from our perspective three main analytical topics appear: a first that sees these revolts in the frame of postcolonial critique, a second that takes into consideration the encounters of the local with the global and a third that primes the importance of the poetics and the aesthetics in order to obtain a critical understanding.

### *In the frame of postcolonial critique*

By commenting and elaborating on the issue of revolution, the contributors of this collective volume engage in an open dialogue on the political and academic field. Almost all the relative analyses locate the issue of “revolution” beyond the complexities and dissonances of modernity. They suggest moving beyond western priorities for the organising of democracy, and, by surpassing the modalities of resistance, to pay attention to the alternative values which locally and historically surpass colonial violence or postcolonial fundamentalism and terrorism.

It is a fact that by comprehending revolution as a series of multiple ruptures as it is inscribed in the western linear representation of time, we relate it to civil disobedience or resistance, in the modality of the dichotomy between power and resistance, democracy and revolution. However, the emblematic Tahrir Square, as

well as the developments described above, suggest, on a global and local scale, the hypothesis of the “continuing democratic revolution”. In that sense, the dualism between democracy and revolution seems to be surpassed by suggesting their merging or conjunction. We will come back to this issue in the last part of this review.

Mahmood Mamdani,<sup>10</sup> in a most motivating contribution, reflects on postcolonial rule and standards between two trends: the return to cultural rules or moving ahead with modern national identities. To this question he answers that Tahrir is a democratic reform. By pointing to the peaceful character of these revolts, he claims that we can better follow the comparisons within Africa at the end of the postcolonial condition (see above). Another contribution that complements Mamdani’s article from an international perspective, following the theses of Tariq Ali and Noam Chomsky, characterises the revolutions as a demand for democracy against the elites, corruption, etc.<sup>11</sup> According to classic Marxist approaches, these revolutions did not aim at the democratisation of the tyrannical regimes, but rather opposed Egyptian capitalism and its dynamics. These regimes in the region are compared to Latin American dictatorships, seeing in these identical forms of rule that were convenient for US imperialism.<sup>12</sup> The prevalent dominant discourse of international law includes assumptions by the “responsible states of the West” which promote the idea of “unity” against the “Africanised landscape”, the stereotype of the division into segments, existing in the area.<sup>13</sup> However, as suggested by Dallmayr (see note 19 below), we can appeal to and enrich our conceptual cargo with values and social movement practices from older Muslim or other local traditions.

***When the local encounters the global***

It would seem that the revolutions are not simply a matter of “democratic transition”, as claimed by westerners, nor should the political sphere be separated from economic activities. In this framework we wonder about the ways global hegemonies encounter local priorities. To these “encounters” we could first of all include the concept of “the public space” in the urban conditions of a megacity, which create the prerequisites of empowering the powerless under the modality of the “Arab streets” (see note 5 below). In addition, it seems difficult to understand revolution alternatively without paying attention to the people’s local aesthetics and poetics. Anna Agathangelou’s analysis (31–44) refers to squares, where discussions about sex and poetics have returned, as major contestation sites between the west and the east. In this way she reminds us of the dignity of revolutionary bodies to overthrow governments and markets on squares and streets, while we are also made aware of the fact that the revolutionary process has a lot more to teach us about our bodies and our sexuality. Mainstream discourse has concealed what happened previously in Iran,<sup>14</sup> during the green revolution, while, nowadays, the silencing of revolts in the heart of the Gulf monarchies has intensified.<sup>15</sup> Ironically, this seems to be the best tactic, so as not to distort the global orientalist fantasies of the political scene in the postcolonial world, precisely due to these revolts (see note 11 below). Similarly, these revolts endangered the balances of power and hegemony of the west with the fossil-fuel rich and authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and the Gulf states.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, the famous rhetoric regarding “democracy and tyrannical regimes” usually expressed by diplomats and the mainstream mass media is,<sup>17</sup> on the one hand, far removed

from the reality of the area, while, on the other, it deorients public opinion not only without, but also within, the areas in revolt.

The importance of the revolts for the people experiencing them is obviously not only a local or national issue, but it has caused a restructuring of the global allocation of power, thus openly challenging the hegemony of American imperialism in the MENA region in the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> It is particularly interesting to read two specific texts in parallel: the first pinpoints the instrumentalisation of Islam in Turkey, Iran and Egypt, mostly during the twentieth century, urging us to rethink the legacy of the great Muslim philosophers and political thinkers of the distant past and to connect it with the aspirations of contemporary democratic thought and practices.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the second one seeks the importance of resistance and adaptation to the exhibition of authoritarianism on behalf of the elites.<sup>20</sup> That is why the discourse analysis of the new political imaginary is as interesting as the attempt to clarify new forms of politics on a global level. All that leads to the opening of the linear representation of time by western philosophy and history. Additionally, it reveals transformations and legacies useful for the reinvention of a new cosmopolitanism, or, perhaps more to the point, of cosmopolitics,<sup>21</sup> since other philosophies of history are engaged, such as the one by Ibn Khaldun (see notes 5 and 19 below).

***Priming social poetics and aesthetics***

The texts of the volume that could be classified under the heading of social poetics and aesthetics – this would include most of them – are those that make a difference in changing the prevalent orientalist narrative and indicate how the revolts and revolution may be experienced by their protagonists, through particular global modalities. As Agathangelou mentions (see note 7 be-

low), “sex and poetics are major contestation sites of alternative ethical imperatives of being in time including practical and conceptual shifts in world-making projects” (38). Within the broader concept of revolutionary changes, new forms of life and action are coming up, not necessarily in the shape of previous activist movements (32). Communicative and embodied performances seem to be the ways in which sociability and subjectivities in situ are shaped, either within conditions of oppression or those of uprising. The importance of humour as a local trope of the resistance to humiliation and oppression in Egypt and Tunisia in order to survive the nightmare of authoritarian rule<sup>22</sup> may not be accidental. In the same vein, we should note the importance this volume places on how critical publicity is produced. To this aim, the arrival of Al Jazeera is considered to be catalytic; as an Arab internationalised channel broadcasting the news in Arabic and English, information comes to the Arab world directly, without the mediation of the dominant western mass media. We should note that this condition of new media has opened space for the freedom and empowerment of the people.<sup>23</sup> Of equal importance is the critique and reflection of the role of new social media, as well as the deconstruction of simplistic westernised and neorientalistic propaganda that prioritises the role of Facebook in these revolutionary processes. As it is very correctly suggested, social media should be subjected to the same kind of critical empiricism we apply to other political phenomena.<sup>24</sup>

### ***When anthropology meets philosophy***

The volume as a whole, as well as the introductory remarks, show the importance of critical analysis of both processes and history as it goes about rediscovering and reconsidering the “values, exchanges, violences and eras-

ures of bodies and voices that characterise the passage to the ‘new’” (6). However, the editors raise the following interesting questions, without the arrogance of expecting immediate answers, as the phenomenon is still ongoing: “Is this crisis ‘political’?” (5) Thus, we could add, if it is not political what could it be then? What is the role of religious, political and philosophical aspirations? And if “this revolution is made by women, the youth and labour units?” (3–5), we wonder what this intersection means.

In this part of the review essay, we will try to expand on the discussion around the previous questions. By using the methodological tools of political anthropology and philosophy, we will try to challenge historical materialism and Marxist aspirations.

The two main topics to be discussed here are related to the revolutionary processes of the revolt phenomena taking place mostly in North Africa and the related discussion on the rather different aspects of the “political” in a local and global perspective. However, if we pay attention to the local social problems, such as unemployment, authoritarian violence and poverty, a meaning and cause for these social revolts can be identified. As we read in the introduction, “As a 28-year-old protester said when his ribs were broken by the police: ‘But I don’t care – just look around you. The energy of the Egyptians is amazing. We’re saying no to unemployment, no to police brutality, no to poverty.’” (2).

The present volume presents the issue in the most interesting direction of critical analysis, which is the postcolonial critique. Through the contribution of multiple disciplinary methodologies, western hegemony regarding both the conceptual and social insufficiencies of people in the MENA region is deconstructed. Those dominant discourses used to see the lo-

cal people as lacking in possibilities to acquire “civilisation” and thus to achieve democracy or conduct revolutions, etc., or lacking the abilities to produce all that outside the conceptual world, values and metaphysics of the west.

By revolution, we mean a great moment or event in time, which interrupts time by cutting (rupturing) the before and after, meaning nothing can be the same after the rupture. By conceiving “revolution” as multiple ruptures in the representation of western linear temporality, we can relate it to civil disobedience, resistance and democracy. The “continuous revolutions”, however, characterise the modernity condition in science and art,<sup>25</sup> through which the linear concept of historical time now opens up into various temporalities, coordinated in the modality of different styles. These two modifications seem to motivate us to reflect when we face the multiple, “from below” everyday practices adopted by people facing cruel neoliberal governmentality and authoritarian rule. This bottom-up perspective can be found in anthropological approaches that have brought meaningful data from the field<sup>26</sup> before, during and after the Arab uprisings. At the other end, we have the neo-orientalistic approaches that see the return to Tahrir Square as the result of 9/11 postconflict policies for implementing democracy in the Arab world.<sup>27</sup>

All these multiple social dynamics of the past and present, taking or non-taking place in situ,<sup>28</sup> lead people to the squares though the modality of a potentially continual return. Does this return concern the “right to resistance” as a continuous expression of civil disobedience? According to Gourgouris,<sup>29</sup> cited in Agathangelou (42), “revolution now means . . . the people’s removal of their consent to power”. However, this return, apart from the removal of people’s consent to power, makes clear the affective side of embodied experiences, repulsed

by the political institution of modernity with the aim to reframe democracy. In this way the revolutionary process seems to meet democracy by making use of the postcolonial tradition of bodily resistances at the “conjunction of existential conditions and labour relations” (42).

Locating the ways the Arab revolution moves “beyond Western modernity”, as we clearly read within this volume, we wonder if these uprisings have adopted postcolonial resistance in order to overcome the postcolonial reality, too.<sup>30</sup> The modality of affective empowerment on the squares against colonial and postcolonial violence has become the idiom par excellence of these revolutions.<sup>31</sup> In addition, it is a common admission that current historical developments openly raise the issue of democracy: a simultaneously radical ideal/imperative of freedom for all, politics, practices, and theoretical justification of rules. However, if the crisis of democracy also means the crisis of secularisation,<sup>32</sup> we are leading to the assumption that there is no regulatory cosmos, spirit or history; thus globalisation evolves without universal values. As anthropology had already shown, if secularisation is defined in the frame of western modernity, knowledge and reasonable thinking, religion and cultural beliefs are thus automatically categorised as an alternative reality of the cosmos. However, the new embodied experiences of nonviolence and love on the square seem to challenge the modern cosmopolitanism in a way that shapes and conceptualises new cosmopolitics.<sup>33</sup> The being (être à) and the dissatisfaction, the resistances, the absolute singularity as our total civic virtue converge on a diagonal line of unity beyond national homogeneity and international standards; thus, they coincide in the sense of the global.<sup>34</sup>

If every single individual could represent a cosmos, a point where facts and histories inter-

sect, then we are facing what Agathangelou and Soguk call “shattering experiences” (3). These shattering experiences of different singularities within the framework of the Arab revolution seem to concern three categories of people, such as “youth”, “women” and people from “labour unions”. This does not mean that the other powerless people, as subaltern categories, are unrepresented. On the contrary; through these three categories of precarious living par excellence in the era of neoliberal governmentality, all the subaltern poor people living on the edges (poor neighbourhoods in Cairo, desert villages, etc.)<sup>35</sup> that could not appear in Tahrir could metonymically be considered to be represented.

However, the ways this articulation could take place and be embodied by different categories of people remains open to reflection in social theory. We could raise some points in order to broaden the discussion on the issues mentioned in this volume.

A new practice of responsibility is emerging: I am responsible for my actions, since I am able to think and to decide the limits of my power, the correlation of powers, what it is I desire right now; I am not committed to absolute principles nor to any party or religion; I can create the political moment each time by participating and not be excluded as an exception (see youth, women, labour worker).<sup>36</sup> Conceptually, this is related to the Greek slogan *φύγετε* (“leave”), which actually was the motto both in the Arabic (*irhal*) as well as in the Spanish squares. Responsibility is the knowledge that there is no other way to solve the problem; that there is no one out there to solve this problem for us, unless we make a new, free start through people’s assemblies. Empowerment occurs as affective recovery through the Spinozian concept of passion management, as if they act under the guidance of reason.

The affective recovery leads to the demand for the redefinition of civic virtues, beyond western secularist prerequisites of rationality, conscience and emancipation.

At this point, we can clearly assume that the appropriate concept giving joint meaning to western priorities and local needs is that of “dignity”, or *al karamah* in Arabic. The latter seems to be locally defined, thus adding new meanings to late modern western priorities.

The role of dignity is characterised by the element of the lived experience that it offers. And that is because personal identity and universality are articulated within this exact value/notion. By adopting the new transindividual perspective,<sup>37</sup> beyond individualism and statism or tribalism, the steps of a process that we observed in the historical examples discussed above, combine dignity with democracy, binding them together, and renewing the latter. Dignity, in return, one of the main popular demands in Tahrir square (“freedom, justice, dignity”) becomes the notion by which we can articulate revolution and democracy. Comparing it to the modern French revolutionary slogan of “Liberté, égalité, fraternité”, the “political” seems to have acquired nowadays the ethical–emotional, the missing side of modern western reasoning and conscience.<sup>38</sup>

This realisation brings us face to face with the meaning of ethics in the public space, as it is shaped in the postcolonial framework: with the long-term orientalist assumptions about Muslim and Arab culture, as well as the spread from outside of human rights activism, in the last decade.<sup>39</sup> As the latter promotes the concept of “dignity”,<sup>40</sup> we realise that people’s practices seek to redefine it through local values. They endorse dominant moral assumptions appointed to them and act through cul-

tural and religious terms. Because “dignity” can signify equally the right to work, as we have seen in popular discourse during the uprisings (see above), we have to reconsider the understanding of cultural ethics and religious traditions in the MENA region after the imposition of the Protestant modality of religion and secularism. Beyond any ideological representation of religion and culture, we have to focus on the issue of religiosity in everyday life and the ways this is in conversation with social interactions and technologies of the self.<sup>41</sup>

In other words, how can we critically understand the local and the global aspirations without taking into consideration two complementary processes: the detailed ways religion matters as a discursive tradition and embodied experience for people themselves, on the one hand, and religion as a social and political issue in the historical process, on the other? Both have worked at the intersection of the local and the global, before, during but particularly since the colonial encounter. Islamic medieval aspirations give us ideas as to where else to search, but they do not epitomise the ways religious feelings may work in everyday people’s choices now. We need to follow both this selective process in which Islamic traditions were adjusted to the grammar of western modernity during colonial and postcolonial times, as well as the present local needs defined within the frame of the globalised market economy and neoliberal governmentality.<sup>42</sup>

Another point to be raised equally within the glocal framework relates to “class structure”. Does the class structure analysis correspond to the needs of a glocal perspective, or do we need to take into consideration the multiple ways people in situ, from below and under particular socioeconomic and political conditions, poetics and aesthetics, are locally and globally experiencing life, producing and re-

producing themselves and their collectivities? We need to move beyond material production to the total reproduction in the holistic anthropological sense of the “fait social total” and the “technologies of the body” – just to mention the inspiring ideas and concepts in the classical works of anthropologist Marcel Mauss.<sup>43</sup>

To pose the same issues somehow differently, this seems to be a matter of an articulation between relations of production and the reproduction of personhood; a negotiation among the embodied self and its multiple subject-positions, since the final historical result comprises an articulation not only of the structural determinations of the modes of production, but also the history of modes of submission, the ways subjectivities were constructed, through power and people’s agency using selectively the legacy of the past in their present agency. Of course, this articulation gives an element of complexity to the process that cannot be easily reduced to a simple and unique cause-and-effect determination of the class-structure analysis. Anthropological and historical studies and other fieldwork reports alert us to the significance of resilience of/to local autocracy and the multiple mobilisations from below, as tropes of “resistance”, “subversion”, “submission” and social activism taking place in a *longue durée* process, engaged in religious feelings and politics.<sup>44</sup>

These approaches could challenge those methods that seem to have an obsession with the grand theories of “dependence”, promoting the dichotomy of interior and exterior as a problem of successive imperialisms (that is, the latest American one).<sup>45</sup> These approaches seem to underestimate the immanent dimension of the analysis, following people as agents with particular practices, motivations and modalities of participation in political engagement in a glocal context.<sup>46</sup> Geertzian “thick



description” can no longer concern only people’s cultural interpretations<sup>47</sup> but also must take into consideration their involvement in different hegemonic interventions, from inside and outside equally, as well as the multiple combinations of these spatial categories.<sup>48</sup> One such example of a critique of the present contribution could concern the transcendence of the dualities of individual/community or interior/exterior to a single, simultaneous and even interactive process. This hypothesis corresponds both to the philosophical questions and the anthropological analysis based on fieldwork observations regarding the technologies of the self, religiosity, social mobility, market economy, social activism, etc. Both the “international” and the “transnational” representation of world unity consists of a simple relationship that cannot discern any residue or uncontrolled interaction between their members (states, regions, groups, individuals, generations, gender); on the contrary, the comparatively more complex and more intensive type of the compound “glocal” offers the required diagonal perspective. The latter connects the residue identified among the people and individuals and the supernatant institutions or symbolic references constituting the characteristic image – a metaphor for the cross-sectional relationship. In addition, this could concern a mixing of emotional and rational communication, connected through global aspirations and performances of local embodied experiences.

Following this bottom–up line, we could safely proceed to a more detailed analysis beyond essentialisms from above regarding the right of the Arab people (or others) to revolt in their own ways, selectively following traditions, in order to install the modalities of democratic regimes with religious or other ethical past and present, modern or postmodern aspirations. In this way, we could not only reframe

our perspective of seeing and categorising the orientalised Other, but also reconsider democracy, resistance and, through them, the self at home. For this reason, we propose to put the anthropological glocal study of power, hegemony and technologies of the self in dialogue with transindividual embodied Spinozian modalities of empowerment through the management of passions. Actually, these perspectives “from inside” could contest the previous grand narratives “from outside” that offered a regulatory shaping of imposed democracy and/or revolution. The squares have shown a new model of political ontology: the activity of the gendered, youth and other working or unemployed people living in permanent precarity to become a multitude<sup>49</sup> with a will for a popular hegemony.<sup>50</sup> Similarly we can claim that the squares showed a model of democracy as a metastable balance of high-energy levels between conceptualisation and praxis of the political in the public space. Could the passion of the multitude coexist with the practical reasoning, understood as a balancing of two modes of communication, defining thus both the conception of new forms of self-knowledge and of politics?<sup>51</sup> A balance of this kind as a concept of public space reminds us of the Spinozian lesson<sup>52</sup> of political moderation, as opposed to the moderation of the purist rationalists, and the inconsistency between words and actions of antistate activists.

Could we take this lesson of democracy as a metastable balance of high-energy levels? If so, what could the implication of three less-privileged categories of people, such as “women, youths and labour units” signify for the reclaiming of social justice and equality, freedom and dignity? Everyday needs of existence under neoliberal governmentality are accelerating solidarity at work, the will for education, love with each other and harmony with the environment. This is not on the agenda of ne-

oliberal elites, but creates among people the wish to reframe the political in more global, total and ethical terms: in a way, to be inclusive with minorities, gender and other pariahs, in addition to the working class.

When the practices of the masses and individuals in the Arab revolutions provide new ethical imperatives from below with a potential to produce new universal ideals useful to the whole world, then can't we feel we are facing one of the best examples of cosmopolitics since the end of the postcolonial condition, as well as the birth of a new era of freedom, equality and dignity at work and the civic public space?

At this point, it would be appropriate to highlight the value of understanding, always in relation to historical developments, how the ethical dimension can actually provide the main answer to the universally posed questions of democracy, revolution, citizenship and civic virtue; we need to pay due attention to the delicate and complex interweaving of the ethical with the political in the public sphere in order to reframe democracy through revolutionary processes.

NOTES

\* The authors are listed alphabetically following academic convention. They have both contributed equally to the writing of this review essay.

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- 2 Anna M. Agathangelou and Nerzat Soguk, "Introduction. Rocking the Kasbah: Insurrectional Politics, the 'Arab Streets' and Global Revolution in the 21st Century," in volume under review, 1–8.
- 3 Samir Amin, "An Arab Spring time?" *Pambazuka News* 534 (8 June 2011), <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/fea->

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- 4 See Mahmood Mamdani's discussion of the Soweto uprisings in the 1970s. "An African Reflection on Tahrir Square," volume under review, 10–11.
- 5 Nevzat Soguk. "Uprisings in 'Arab Streets', Revolutions in 'Arab Minds'," volume under review, 47.
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- 8 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).
- 9 Bayat Asef, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010; Walter Ambrust, "The Revolution Against Neoliberalism." *Jadaliyya*, 23 February 2011, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/717>; Alain Badiou, *The Rebirth of History: Times of Riots and Uprisings* (London: Verso, 2012); Costas Douzinas, *Philosophy and Resistance in the Crisis: Greece and the Future of Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013); Slavoj Žižek, "Too much democracy?", 14 April 2013. <http://www.lacan.com/toomuch.htm>; Jacques Rancière. *Hatred of Democracy*, trans. Steve Corcoran. London: Verso, 2007; Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Truth of Democracy* (New York: Fordham University Press), 2010; Étienne Balibar, "Historical Dilemmas of Democracy and Their Contemporary Relevance for Citizenship," *Rethinking Marxism* 20/4 (2008): 522–538; and Wendy Brown, "Neo-liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy," *Theory & Event* 7/1 (2003): [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory\\_and\\_event/v007/7.1brown.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v007/7.1brown.html)).
- 10 Mamdani, "An African Reflection," volume under review, 9–16.
- 11 Wazir Jahan Karim, "Stratagems and Spoils in US Policy in the Middle East," volume under review, 51–57.

- 12 Henry Veltmeyer, "Unrest and Change: Dispatches from the Frontline of a Class War in Egypt", volume under review, 59–66.
- 13 Siba N. Grovogui, "Looking beyond Spring for the Season: An African Perspective on the World Order after the Arab Revolt," volume under review, 17–22.
- 14 Farideh Farhi, "Tehran's Delayed Spring?" volume under review, 67–72.
- 15 Mary Ann Tétreault, "The Winter of the Arab Spring in the Gulf Monarchies," volume under review, 79–88.
- 16 Halit Mustafa Tagma, "Model, Event, Context: Globalization, Arab Social Movements and the Modeling of Global Order," volume under review, 73–77.
- 17 Sam Okoth Opondo, "Libya's 'Black' Market Diplomacies: Opacity and Entanglement in the Face of Hope and Horror," volume under review, 111–118.
- 18 Jackie Smith, "Globalizations forum on Middle East Protests: Commentary," volume under review, 105–110.
- 19 Fred Dallmayr, "Radical Changes in the Muslim World: Turkey, Iran, Egypt," volume under review, 89.
- 20 Steven Heydemann and Reinoud Leenders, "Authoritarian Learning and Authoritarian Resilience: Regime Responses to the 'Arab Awakening'," volume under review, 97–104.
- 21 Isabelle Stengers, *Cosmopolitiques*, vols 1–7. Paris: La Decouverte, 1996–7; Pheng Cheah, ed., *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
- 22 Iman Mersal, "Revolutionary Humor," volume under review, 119–124.
- 23 Habibul Haque Khondker, "Role of the New Media in the Arab Spring," volume under review, 125–130.
- 24 Barrie Axford, "Talk About a Revolution: Social Media and the MENA Uprisings," volume under review, 131–136.
- 25 Douzinas, *Philosophy and Resistance in the Crisis*, 175.
- 26 See, indicatively, Saba Mahmood, "The Architects of the Egyptian Uprising and the Challenges Ahead," *Jadaliyya*, 14 February 2011, [www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/645/](http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/645/); Samuli Schielke, "Boredom and Despair in Rural Egypt," *Contemporary Islam* 2/3 (2008): 251–270 and "Ambivalent Commitments: Troubles of Morality, Religiosity and Aspiration among Young Egyptians," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 39/2 (2009): 158–185; Charles Hirshkind, "Civic Virtue and Religious Reason: An Islamic Counterpublic," *Cultural Anthropology* 16/1 (2001): 3–34 and "Beyond Secular and Religious: An Intellectual Genealogy of Tahrir Square," *American Ethnologist* 39/1 (2012): 49–53.
- 27 From the same pool of liberal analyses come ideas of binary oppositions between fundamentalist and westerners that usually attribute these revolts to social media and Facebook. See Gilles Kepel, *Passion arabe: Journal 2001–2013* (Paris: Gallimard, 2013) and Olivier Roy, "The Transformation of the Arab World," *Journal of Democracy* 23/3 (2012): 5–18. However, we cannot contest that youth and women are the ones who started this as they find themselves in full condition of precarity at work and life under neoliberal governmentality and the general crisis (economic, political, social and moral).
- 28 See the development and industrialisation that never arrived and the effect of huge unemployment among the young people living between "boredom and despair". Samuli Schielke, "Boredom and Despair" and; Selim H. Shahine, "Youth and the Revolution in Egypt," *Anthropology Today* 27/2 (2011): 1–3.
- 29 Stathis Gourgouris, "Uprising in Egypt: Withdrawing Consent," *The Immanent Frame*, <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2011/02/15/withdrawing-consent/>.
- 30 Hamid Dabashi, *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* (London: Zed Books, 2012); Albert Memmi, *Decolonization and the Decolonized*, translated by Robert Bononno (Minne-

- apolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).
- 31 Gavin Brown and Jenny Pickerill, "Space for Emotion in the Spaces of Activism." *Emotion, Space and Society* 2/1 (2009): 24–35; Marina Sitrin, *Everyday Revolutions: Horizontalism and Autonomy in Argentina* (London: Zed Books, 2012).
- 32 Talal Asad, "Thinking about the Secular Body, Pain, and Liberal Politics," *Cultural Anthropology* 26/4 (2011): 657–675; Étienne Balibar, *Saeculum: Culture, religion, idéologie* (Paris: Galilée, 2012); Charles Hirshkind, "Is There a Secular Body?" *Cultural Anthropology* 26/4 (2011): 633–647.
- 33 Cosmopolitics challenges the "common sense" by taking the risk of doing things differently, beyond the current imagination and seeing the cosmos as a composition of multiple and divergent worlds. The latter cannot exist either under the dominant western categorising between societies of knowledge, and the real and secular world versus societies of beliefs and unreal worlds. Cosmopolitics aims to surpass the permanent negotiations of cosmopolitanism over "cultural respect" and difference. See the related discussion in *Cultural Anthropology Online*, "Cosmopolitanism: Conversation with Authors," [http://www.culanth.org/curated\\_collections/13-cosmopolitanism/discussions/8-cosmopolitanism-conversation-with-the-authors](http://www.culanth.org/curated_collections/13-cosmopolitanism/discussions/8-cosmopolitanism-conversation-with-the-authors). Marisol de la Cadena, "Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections beyond 'Politics'," *Cultural Anthropology* 25/2 (2010): 334–370.
- 34 This category, coming from sociologists [Victor Roudometof, "Translationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and Glocalization." *Current Sociology* 53/1 (2005): 113–135], could equally conceptualise, as mentioned in Wikipedia, the "local in spirit but global in character" or the reconciliation with multiple systems of knowledge and cultural diplomacy in glocal terms. In any case, we are entering the discussion of how theory can also be produced by the "global south": Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Theory from the South: or How Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa* (London: Paradigm Press, 2012).
- 35 This association by metonymy came to mind after the challenge raised by Talal Asad during a fruitful Skype interview we had with him, on 8 December 2011. Within the framework of the workshop on "Karama (dignity) and tradition in the Middle East and North Africa: Negotiating subjectivity and civic virtue through social revolts" that we organised at the University of Macedonia, Asad was very concerned with the idea that these revolts were about "dignity", if, the millions of extremely poor people living in the area, are missing from these revolts. Today, more than two years later and after all this data produced from the field, we dare to suggest that poor people in Egypt could be considered as being represented in those revolts by metonymy, through the extremely discriminated categories of exclusion under neoliberal governmentality, ie young people and women.
- 36 Silvia Federici, "Precarious Labor: A Feminist Viewpoint." Of Whirlwinds: Metaphor, Purpose, Intersections, accessed 5 November 2014, <http://inthemiddleofthewhirlwind.wordpress.com/precariou-labor-a-feminist-viewpoint/> and *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (New York: Autonomedia, 2005).
- 37 Michalis Bartsidis, "Transindividualità e alterità a Balibar," in *Strategiedelle relazioni. Riconoscimento, transindividuale, alterità*, ed. Nicola Marcucci and Luca Pinzolo (Rome: Meltemi, 2010); Bartsidis, Michalis, ed., *Διατομικότητα. Κείμενα για μια οντολογία της σχέσης* [Transindividuality: Essays for an ontology of relations], trans. Loukia Mano-Christidis (Athens: Nissos, 2014).
- 38 Fotini Tsiibiridou and Michalis Bartsidis. "Dignity' as Glocal Civic Virtue: Redefining Democracy in the Era of Neoliberal Governmentality,"

- in *Crisis, Resistance, and Prospects: The Arab Revolutions and Beyond*, ed. Sabah Alnasseri (ed.) Routledge (forthcoming); Michalis Bartsidis and Fotini Tsibiridou. "Η επιστροφή της «πολιτικής ηθικής»: παγκοσμιοτικά κινήματα «αξιοπρέπειας»" [The return of "political ethics": Glocal grassroots "dignity" movements], *Θέσεις* [Theseis] 126 (2014): 43–74.
- 39 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* (Washington: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986); Samuli Schielke, "Second thoughts about the anthropology of Islam, or how to make sense of grand schemes in everyday life," ZMO Working Paper No. 2 (2010). [http://www.academia.edu/4347204/Schielke\\_Samuli\\_2010Paper\\_No.2\\_2010\\_](http://www.academia.edu/4347204/Schielke_Samuli_2010Paper_No.2_2010_), Working Paper.
- 40 Seyla Benhabib, *Dignity in Adversity: Human Rights in Troubled Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).
- 41 Ovamir Anjum, "Islam as a Discursive Tradition: Talal Asad and his Interlocutors," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and Middle East* 27/3 (2007): 656–672; Saba Mahmood, "Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (2009): 836–862.
- 42 Joana Pink, ed., *Muslim Societies in the Age of Mass Consumption: Politics, Culture and Identity between the Local and the Global*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009; Patrick Haenni, *L'Islam du marché: L'Autre révolution conservatrice* (Paris: Seuil, 2005); Fotini Tsibiridou, "Life Style and Consumerism in the Muslim World: Neoliberal Biopolitics and Islamist Experiences", in *Semiotics of the Everyday*, eds. Lia Yoka and Grigoris Paschalidis (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing [forthcoming])
- 43 "Marcel Mauss, A Category of the Human Mind: The Notion of Person; the Notion of Self," in *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History*, eds. Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins and Steven Lukes, 1–25 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
- 44 Bayat Asef, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010) and Jessica Winegar, "The Privilege of Revolution: Gender, Class, Space, and Affect in Egypt," *American Ethnologist* 39/1 (2012): 67–70.
- 45 Gilles Kepel, *Passion arabe*; Olivier Roy, "The Transformation of the Arab World." *Journal of Democracy* 23/3 (2012): 5–18.
- 46 Marina Sitrin, *Everyday Revolutions: Horizontalism and Autonomy in Argentina* (London: Zed Books, 2012).
- 47 Clifford Geertz, "'From the Native's Point of View': On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding," in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 55–70.
- 48 Lila Abu Lughod, *Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001).
- 49 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2004).
- 50 Costas Douzinas, *Philosophy and Resistance in the Crisis: Greece and the Future of Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 176–196.
- 51 Bartsidis and Tsibiridou, "Η επιστροφή της «πολιτικής ηθικής»."
- 52 Barouh Spinoza, *Political Treatise*, trans. Samuel Shirley; intro and notes by Steven Barbone and Lee Rice (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000) and Étienne Balibar, *Spinoza and Politics*, trans. Peter Snowdon (London: Verso, 1998).