## UCO 1AC – UTSA LN

### The most thought-provoking thing in our thought-provoking society is that we are Still. Not. Thinking. From the beginning, we were taught that the tradition of democracy was a torch passed down to a select few descendants of an imagined Greek ancestry – that it was a spark that gave our civilization legitimate authority to dictate the affairs of world politics so as to ensure the survival of our righteous way of life. This ray of light, we were told, brought hope to a world that would otherwise grovel in the darkness brought upon us by regimes led by religious zealots and self-absorbed dictators. Recent events in the so-called Middle East and North Africa have added a new chapter to this saga – and so far, our leaders have held fast to their professed commitment to guide the world in the “right direction.”

### This is reflected in not only in our leaders’ response, which has labeled the revolts an extension of the American Revolution, an Awakening, an resurgence of force led by Westernized youths who share our values and modes of protest – but also in the way that the media and academic circles have immediately approached the question posed by the topic itself. While challenging Orientalist assumptions about the viability of democracy in Arab societies, these endeavors rely upon the same pillars of representation, as El-Mahdi explains:

El-Mahdi, 2011

(Rabab, asst. prof of Poli Sci @ American University in Cairo, “Orientalising the Egyptian Uprising,” April 11, Online: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/1214/orientalising-the-egyptian-uprising>)

Since the beginning of the Egyptian uprising in January 25th a new grand-narrative about this so-called “revolution” and more broadly the Arab world is being constructed by the media (international and local), academics, politicians, and the local elite.[1] This narrative appears to be replacing the long held “Arab Exceptionalism” narrative, which held sway for decades and argued that Arabs because of sociological and cultural reasons are ‘immune’ to democracy and democratization. While many have criticized this earlier discourse as Orientalist and lacking in analytical rigor, its seamless replacement dubbed the “Arab Awakening,” is being constructed on the very same bases of representation. The fundamental pillars of these Orientalist understandings of Arab societies and individuals are based on: 1) “othering”- ‘they’ (Arabs or Muslims) are different from ‘us’ (Western, specifically European) who are the normative standard; and, 2) romanticization and exotization - this oriental “other” is mystical and mythical. As Edward Said explained years ago, Orientalism is not only confined to “Western” depictions of the Middle East –and particularly Arabs and Muslims- but it is also internalized and propagated by “local” elites. As such in the new grand narrative of “Arab Awakening” both academics and the media (international and local) are appropriating, interpreting, and representing the recent events along the same pillars of othering and, romanticization, while casting universalist-Eurocentic judgments. In the case of Egypt, the recent uprising is constructed as a youth, non-violent revolution in which social media (especially facebook and twitter) are champions. The underlying message here is that it these “middle-class” educated youth (read: modern) are not “terrorists,” they hold the same values as “us” (the democratic West), and finally use the same tools (facebook and twitter) that “we” invented and use in our daily-lives. They are just like “us” and hence they deserve celebration. These constructions are clear from a quick look the CNN, Time, Vanity Fair and others representations of the so-called leaders or icons of this revolution. They are all middle (upper) class Egyptians under the age of thirty. Most of them have one or more connection to the West, either by virtue of education (Time’s cover feature of seven “youth,” included three students from the American University in Cairo), work (e.g. Wael Ghoneim, sales manager at Google), or training. According to the BBC, Dr Gene Sharp –the author of “Non-Violent Revolution Rulebook” is “the man now credited with the strategy behind the toppling of the Egyptian government” through activists “trained in Sharp’s work.” This same profile of young people similarly monopolized television talk-shows in Egypt. And while many of these individuals did take part in the uprising –in different capacities – their status icons of the “revolution” in when the majority of the Egyptian population and those who participated in the uprising are of the subaltern classes is both disturbing and telling. This majority of people who have never heard of Dr. Sharp or Freedom House, never studied at AUC, or worked for Google. More profoundly, they are antagonistic about “Western” influence and presence in Egypt. Thus the class composition of dissent has been cloaked by a new imaginary homogenous construct called “youth.” In this construct, the media and academic analysts lump together the contradictory and often conflictual interests of ‘yuppies’ (young, urban, professionals of the aforementioned connections and backgrounds) with those of the unemployed, who live under the poverty line in rural areas and slum-areas. Under this banner of “youth” the “yuppies” and upper middle-class young people are portrayed as the quintessential representative of this uprising. Alongside the icon of the homogenous and palatable for Western consumption youth, is the tailoring and reduction of the values, tools, and tactics of the uprising to fit a ‘Western ‘and ‘local’ upper-middle class audience. In this regard, two features of the uprising are getting paramount emphasis: non-violence and the use of social media. Obama’s speech following Mubarak’s ousting emphasized the non-violence of the uprising quoting the word silmiya (peaceful). The media cameras also focused on the placards bearing the same word. This selective focus on one form of tactic is in-factual. Moreover, it functions as the reverse mirror image of the “terrorist” stereotype hinting of a pernicious fetishization and exotization. There is no doubt that the anti-regime demonstrations were non-violent compared to the state-security use of ammunition. However, by the 28th of January all NDP (National Democratic Party) headquarters and most police stations were set on fire. This was a clear reaction to the state’s systematic violence against subaltern classes, those who bore the brunt of the regime’s daily torture and humiliation precisely because of their position within the neoliberal class matrix in Egypt. Unlike, the middle-class “facebook” youth, they were not immune to state violence outside the realm of political activism. The exclusion of this part of the story further benefits the narrations of this uprising as a “facebook” middle-class “revolution.” Such narration is also based on the Orientalist binary of “traditional” versus “modern,” and “East” versus “West,” with the latter categories seen as supreme. Hence, it cannot include the use of molotov hand-bombs, which is “violent-traditional” (read: Oriental) alongside with facebook, which is “peaceful-modern” (read Western). The “educated,” “Western,” and “exposed” cosmopolitan Egyptians who are portrayed as the sole agents of this “revolution” cannot torch police-stations, and those who did –the subaltern- should be and are excluded from the picture. The active agents of this narration are not only the media and politicians, but academics and international donors’ funding agencies. Over the past weeks, there is hardly a day that passes without a visit to Cairo by a state-official, a donor representative, or an international academic –from Secretary of State Hilary Clinton to political scientist Alfred Stepan and the whole range in between. After paying a pilgrimage to Tahrir Square and scheduling a couple of meetings with the cosmopolitan activists of Cairo, they feel re-assured and entitled to propagate the same story about this so-called “revolution” and its agents. On the other hand, the so-called right steps up to propagate “democratic transition” in Egypt. Unfortunately, these different parties have the financial, moral, and political power for such narration to prevail. Once again we are witnessing the “empire” painting the picture of the “fringe” and within this fringe the subaltern- “the fringe of the fringe”- are being outcast.

### This process of “painting the fringe” is the historical imperative of any Empire that seeks to validate the globalization of its values. In the construction of these global frames of analysis, we prefigure our approach to difference in terms of a metaphysical binary of assimilating it or banishing it – when we read the events in the Middle East and North Africa only in terms of their potential to yield liberal, capitalist, American-style democracy, we reduce the Arab Spring to one more object to be dealt with through the usual one sentence plans as if we were Western bureaucrats – something that can be defined and delimited into those aspects American enough to be valued and assisted, while those cast out from this global picture, the radically other, will continue to be silenced and exterminated.

Karavanta, 2001

(Assimina, prof @ American College of Greece, “Rethinking the Specter: Ama Ata Aidoo’s Anowa,” *Mosaic* 34:4, Dec, ProQuest)

The contemporary momentum is informed by the celebrated prophecy of a "global coming" that ensures peace in the world-with a few "necessary" interruptions of violence against the barbarian "others," who must be "corrected" for not abiding by the requirements of the global market. The paradox of global peace relying upon regional wars (the events in Kosovo and Bosnia constitute one of the most recent examples) demands that we, both the people living in "safe" territories as well as the ones living in "fragile areas," listen to the spectral silence becoming painfully audible in the thousands of the refugees, exiles, and displaced "others" who are proliferating out of the merciless fulfillment of capitalist and imperialist logic. These 11 others," presently absent and absently present, escaping representation at the same time that they are represented, repeat the problematic of belonging at a global moment that calls itself "post" (i.e., after the violence of the colonial mechanisms), revealing that this "post," this after, is an illusion. Thus, the "absent presence" of these "radical others" haunts the politics of our global "post" moment by unconcealing the failures of its unfulfilled prophecies with their spectral silence. What is important in all the theoretical attempts to think the potential dynamics of the specter and to listen to its deluging silence is the impossibility of escaping the language of the centre, which sets the standards for the processes of representation and identification. To speak about the specter, therefore, is an impossible task. For the specter is "the marginal-the radical Other-that is either accommodated to or banished from the totalizing circle articulated by the concentering logos of Imperial metaphysics" (Spanos, Anatomy 195); it is what escapes representation (even when it appears to be fully represented) and is the performance of silence; it is the body of the unwanted "other," the body of the "unanswerable" one, who haunts the logic of the centre, demanding a rethinking of thinking, a rethinking of difference. Therefore, forgetting the silence of the specter means forgetting the "other," forgetting being itself. This forgetting implies the tendency to relax in the comfort that our "post" so euphorically promises and not contemplate the "other," whose exclusion, accommodation, or even violation feeds the illusion of this comfort.

### What we are indicting is a disinterested perspective that confronts this unique historical moment from a safe distance – when we propose a response to the revolts under the disinterested paradigms of the status quo, we neglect the ghosts of our past – the very ghosts that reveal the hypocrisy and terminal failure of Westernization. Under this paradigm, the uniqueness or singularity of the revolts is effaced – they become knowable, answerable – we muzzle the revolutions by giving a pre-determined voice to the voiceless periphery rather than allowing them to speak the failure of our values and policies.

Spanos, forthcoming

(William, Professor of English & Comp Lit @ Binghamton, “Arab Spring 2011: A Symptomatic Reading of the Revolution,” forthcoming, full text posted on Caselist)

This “Westernization,” if not “Americanization” of the Revolution in the Arab countries of North Africa and the Middle East is especially borne witness to by the immediate and then more considered responses of American officialdom and the media to the sudden domino effect of the Tunisian uprising in Egypt. The Obama administration was caught by surprise by the apparent amorphousness of the uprising in Tahrir Square – a symptom of an intelligence service that, as WikiLeaks vis a vis U. S. diplomacy has made disturbingly clear, operates according to the unerring dictates of an exceptionalist American geopolitical scenario rather than to the humane imperatives of justice. It’s initial pronouncement thus predictably minimized the question of the nature of the revolt itself in favor of tacitly supporting, if not overtly endorsing, Hosni Mubarac’s thirty-year old secular dictatorial regime – a regime in which the state of exception had become the norm -- on the long-standing basis of the latter’s partnership with the U. S. in keeping the “peace” with Israel, that is to say, in the geopolitical project of securing the supply of oil and/or neutralizing the power of a militant Islam. When, after several days, during which the revolt intensified, accumulated greater support from the Egyptian people at large, demonstrated its predominantly secular nature, and revealed its irreversibility – a momentum epitomized by the rebels’ nonnegotiable demand, following Mubarac’s strategic announcement in February that he would resign seven months later in September, that he vacate his office immediately and their call for free elections – the Obama administration began to distance itself from the Egyptian dictator, without, however, breaking its ties with the regime. This initiative, which the media, by and large, mimicked, was epitomized by the president’s famous call to this erstwhile ally of the United State to terminate his rule “now,” which, however, at the same time insisted, against the demands of the rebels, on a gradualist process of transition of power from dictatorship to democracy mediated first by Omar Suleiman, Mubarac’s second in command, and then, when this figure was denounced as a puppet of the dictator, by the “neutral” military establishment. Disregarding its patently singular aspects, in other words, the Obama administration and the mainstream media have predictably represented the Revolution in the Arabic world according to the predictable dictates of the contemporary version of American exceptionalism. I mean, more specifically, the Orientalist geopolitical global order, now, as a self-fulfilled prophecy called “the clash of civilizations,” inaugurated by the United States’ intervention in the Middle East as the protector of the state of Israel – and the supply of oil -- at the outset of the Cold War and culminating in the George W. Bush administration’s declaration of the “war on terror” and its establishment of the state of exception as the rule in the name of “Homeland Security” in the wake of 9/11/01. What the panoptic gaze of the Obama administration and the media sees in the squares of Cairo, Tunis, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya, and elsewhere in the Arab world is, in fact, despite the potential for American-style democracy, a volatile multitude (if not a mob) that, according to the discursive regime established in the West by a long colonial/Orientalist tradition, is thus susceptible to the manipulation of the fanatic directionality of a theocratic, if not Jihadist, Islam. This is made manifestly clear by the insistent, pervasive, and anxious reference to – the overdetermination of -- the fate of a “beleaguered” Israel and to the Islamic element in the revolution (the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the specter of Islamic Iran) at the expense of the patent multiplicity of resisting perspectives. This regressive late Orientalist perspective is especially evident in the Arab leaders and intelligentsia whom the American media have selected to analyze the unfolding events in North Africa and the Middle East. I think, for example, of CNN’s consistently choosing members of the governments under siege – for example, Sameh Shoukry, the Egyptian ambassador to the United States -- and native born “Arabist experts,” such as Fouad Ajami and Fareed Zacharia, whose pro-American positions are quite well known, to inform the American public about the revolution. This perspective, which is undertaken in the avowed name of objectivity, not only systematically obfuscates the reality it is supposed to illuminate; it also, and more important, insidiously serves the neocolonial purposes of the United State. A retrieval of Edward Said’s brilliant contrapuntal reading of Rudyard Kipling’s passing reference in his novel Kim to the “Great Mutiny” of 1857, which he puts into the mouth of a loyalist Indian soldier of the British army, will immediately underscore this. In that reading of Kipling’s Orientalist novel celebrating British imperialism, it will be recalled, Said foregrounds that which Kipling leaves unsaid (must disavow) about the “mutiny” and the vicious retaliation of the British: For an Indian, not to have those feelings [“of solidarity with the victims of British reprisal”] would have been to belong to a very small minority. It is therefore significant that Kipling’s choice of an Indian to speak about the Mutiny is a loyalist soldier who views his counntrymen’s revolt as an act of madness. . . . “A madness ate into all the Army, and they turned against the officers. That was the first evil, but not past remedy if they had then held their hands. But they chose to kill the Sahib’s wives and children. Then came the Sahibs from over the sea and called them to most strict account. To reduce Indian resentment, Indian resistance (as it might have been called) to British insensitivity to “madness,” to represent Indian actions as mainly the congenital choice of killing British women and children – these are not merely innocent reductions of the national case but tendentious ones. And when Kipling has the old soldier describe the British counter-revolt – with its horrendous reprisals by white men bent on “moral” action – as “calling” the Indian mutineers “to strict account,” we have left the world of history and entered the world of imperialist polemic, in which the native is naturally a delinquent, the white man a stern but moral parent and judge. Thus Kipling gives us the extreme British view on the Mutiny, and puts it in the mouth of an Indian, whose more likely nationalist and aggrieved counterpart is never seen in the novel. . . . So far is Kipling from showing two worlds in conflict that he has studiously given us only one, and eliminated any chance of conflict appearing altogether. Equally important, this regressive late Orientalist perspective is also borne witness to by the “analyses” of the “area experts” – Middle Eastern, globalist, former American diplomats – whom the television news media – CBS, ABC, NBC, CNN, PBS – have relied on, against public oppositional intellectuals in the tradition of Edward Said -- Rashid Khalidi, Alexander Cockburn, Noam Chomsky, Amy Goodman, [ ] among many others -- to interpret the volatile events unfolding in a lightning-like way in North Africa and the Middle East. They have been almost invariably “experts” trained in North African or Middle Eastern graduate school area studies programs of the kind Said has decisively exposed as ideological state apparatuses rather than authentic educational institutions. Whether Richard Haass, director of the Council of Foreign Relations and former foreign policy advisor to the George W. Bush administration ; Paul Wolfowitz, former Deputy Defense Secretary in the George W. Bush administration, Richard Perle, a leading member of PNAC (Project for the New American Century), to name only a few who have been carefully selected by the mainstream media to analyze the uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East. These policy pundits, whatever the differences between their analyses, have all, in a concerted effort to annul its “eventness,” represented the revolution according to the unerring ideological dictates of the Western, particularly American discursive regime I have been all too briefly attempting to characterize: to “stabilize” the revolutionary movement the volatility of which threatens American hegemony in the Middle East by identifying it ultimately as a manifestation of the “clash of civilization.” **[continues…]** Following the deeply inscribed vocational logic of the “American calling,” to put the above in a way that resonates from the American Puritans to George W. Bush, American officialdom and its ventrilloquized media, have systematically and predictably represented the world historical events in North Africa and the Middle East from above rather than from below: from “a center elsewhere,” to retrieved Jacques Derrida’s enabling but virtually forgotten terms that define the Western (logocentric) tradition. . They insistently appeal to “secular” history, in opposition to (their representation of) “Islam” it is important to emphasize, but they view this history from a transcendental rather than historical point of view. More precisely, their perspective on historical events constitutes a “naturalized supernaturalism” (Said) or a “political theology” (Schmitt). The technology of the media – the mobile television camera, instant electronic mobility, the roving correspondent, and so on – that contributed enormously to the modern Western notion that history has been de-theologized, that is, “secularized” -- conceals this perennial panoptic view from above – the “center elsewhere “ -- that renders the below “lowly,” if not entirely invisible (non-existent). The media, by way of the correspondents’ presence and the instantaneity of his/her message, convey the impression of their disinterestedness. They give the viewer at home the sense that they are there, in the midst of the historical events in Tahrir Square. And this impression is enhanced by occasional sound-bite conversations with the rebels. But this technological underscoring of the sense of “being there” (as opposed to “hearsay”) is an illusion. As in the synecdochical case of the insidious representational strategy of the still-to-be-understood – and, in the long view, immensely influential -- anti-protest Vietnam War film, John Wayne’s The Green Berets, the mainstream media, despite the baffling contradictions of its latest manifestation (the cell phone and the instant communicating enabled by Facebook) render the very being – the singularity -- of the historical actors invisible. And they achieve this by imposing the “secular” -- naturalized supernatural -- discursive regime endemic to the West and especially the United States on their words and actions. To recall my initial rhetoric, they name the unnamable, Speak the unspeakable, Identify the unidentifiable, give (prescribed) Voice to voiceless, and thus, like the Adam of the Old Testament, domesticate the “beast” of revolution. **[continues…]** To reiterate, it is not a particular oppressed class or a combination of classes recognizable to the oppressive regime that has ignited the revolts in Tunis and Cairo and elsewhere in the Arab world; it is, rather, the “people” (as opposed to “the People,” die Volk) in all their amorphous and indefinable singularity or “the multitude” (the “un-homed” understood as partaking of a state of radical “in-betweenness”): the very disposable non-entities, or, in Hannah Arendt’s term, the “superfluous,” to which the nation-state has reduced their humanity, now, however, understood positively. To appropriate and foreground a term that, in its indefinite generality, has insinuated itself into my discourse as a directive, the Revolution, in short, is a revolution of the vanquished – those whom the discursive regime (and practice) of the dominant culture (in this case the authoritative regimes ventriloquized by Western colonialism) have bereaved of a language and, therefore, in Hannah Arendt’s term, a polity. “Yes,” Michel Foucault wrote proleptically, echoing Walter Benjamin, I would like to write the history of the vanquished. It is a beautiful dream that many have had to finally give back language to those who, until the present, have not be able to make use of it., to those who have been constrained to silence by history, by the violence of history, by all the systems of domination and exploitation. Yes. But there are difficulties. First, those who have been vanquished . . . are those to whom by definition language has been denied! And if, however, they speak, they do not speak their own language. They are not mute. No, they speak a language that one would not understand (entendue) and that one would feel now the need to hear. On the basis that they are dominant, a language and its concepts have been imposed on them. And the ideas that have been thus imposed on them are the scars of the oppression to which they were forced to submit. These scars, these traces which have impregnated their thought. I would even say, which impregnated their bodily attitudes. Taking my directive from Foucault’s resonant term, let me invoke here an emergent language, not different from but more precise than the usual “other,” “wretched of the earth,” “plebe,”“subaltern,” “minority,” “dispossessed,” “émigré,” “alienated,” “unhomed” “oppressed,” and so on, being thought by a loosely affiliated group of alienated “Western” intellectuals of the post-colonial global, particularly post- 9/11/01 occasion, to address the radical singularity of the subject emerging out of the rubble of the fallen structured/regimented imperial world. I call them post-poststructuralist to emphasize their radicalization and worldling of the nothing – the global zero zone, as it were -- disclosed by the earlier poststructuralist interrogation of the unerring structuring logic of Western metaphysical thinking vis avis temporality. The Arabic Revolution – the essentially passive (but no less violence) violence in the face of the violence of a totalized state power justified by the establishment of the state of exception as the norm -- I suggest, has been instigated by the multitude of identityless identities -- those who don’t count (have, for all practical purposes, no being – are as the nothing that Western knowledge will have nothing to do with -- in a global age and place where what counts is determined, even in the East and South, by some version of the Western nation-state system: “bare life” (homo sacer: the excluded included by the state or, in its positive phase “whatever being”: qualunque (Giorgio Agamben, following, not incidentally, the directives of Hannah Arendt ),

### The assertion of a global democratic moment contained in the contemporary naming and mapping of the Arab Spring reflects this same binaristic paradigm - either the revolts are mirror images of American democracy, or they must be brought back into the fold through increasingly coercive measures – this imperial logic is the driving force behind terrorism and threatens the survival of the human race

Baudrillard, 2004

(Jean, “This is the Fourth World War,” An Interview with *Der Spiegel*, *IJBS* 1:1, Online: <http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/spiegel.htm>)

Spiegel: Monsieur Baudrillard, you have described the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington as the “absolute event.” You have accused the United States, with its insufferable hegemonic superiority, for rousing the desire for its own destruction. Now that the reign of the Taliban has collapsed pitifully and Bin Laden is nothing more than a hunted fugitive, don’t you have to retract everything? Baudrillard: I have glorified nothing, accused nobody, justified nothing. One should not confuse the messenger with his message. I have endeavored to analyze the process through which the unbounded expansion of globalization creates the conditions for its own destruction. Spiegel: In the process, don’t you simply deflect attention from the fact that there are identifiable criminals and terrorists who are responsible for the attacks? Baudrillard: Of course there are those who committed these acts, but the spirit of terrorism and panic reaches far beyond them. The Americans’ war is focused on a visible object, which they would like to destroy. Yet the event of September 11th, in all of its symbolism, cannot be obliterated in this manner. The bombing of Afghanistan is a completely inadequate, substitute action. Spiegel: All the same, the United States has brought to an end a barbaric form of oppression and, in the process, has given the Afghani people an opportunity for a new, peaceful beginning. Or at least this is how your colleague, Bernard-Henri Lévy, sees it. Baudrillard: The situation doesn’t appear to me as so unequivocal. Lévy’s triumphalism strikes me as strange. He treats B-52 bombers as if they were instruments of the world-spirit. Spiegel: So there is no such thing as a just war? Baudrillard: No, there’s always too much ambivalence. Wars are often begun in the name of justice, indeed this is almost always the official justification. Yet, while they themselves want to be so justified and are undertaken with the best of intentions, they normally don’t end in the manner in which their instigators had imagined. Spiegel: The Americans have attained some unquestionable successes. Many Afghans are now able to hope for a better life. Baudrillard: You wait and see. Not all the Afghani women have discarded their veils yet. Sharia is still in effect. Without a doubt, the Taliban Regime has been smashed. However, the network of the international terror organization, al-Qaida, still exists. And Bin Laden, dead or alive, has, above all, disappeared. This lends him a mythical power; he has achieved a certain supernatural quality. Spiegel: The Americans would be successful only if they were able to present Bin Laden or his body on television? Baudrillard: That would be a questionable spectacle, and he, himself, would continue to play the role of martyr. Such an exhibition would not necessarily demystify him. What is at issue is more than the control of a territory or a population or the disbanding of a subversive organization. The stakes have become metaphysical. Spiegel: Why can’t you simply accept that the destruction of the World Trade Center was an arbitrary, irrational act of blind fanatics? Baudrillard: A good question, but, even if it were a matter of addressing the catastrophe in-itself, it would still have symbolic meaning. Its fascination can only be explained in this way. Here something happened that far exceeded the will of the actors. There is a general allergy to an ultimate order, to an ultimate power, and the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center embodied this in the fullest sense. Spiegel: Thus, you explain terroristic delusion as the unavoidable reaction against a system which has itself become megalomaniacal? Baudrillard: With its totalizing claim, the system created the conditions for this horrible retaliation. The immanent mania of globalization generates madness, just as an unstable society produces delinquents and psychopaths. In truth, these are only symptoms of the sickness. Terrorism is everywhere, like a virus. It doesn’t require Afghanistan as its home base. Spiegel: You suggest that globalization and resistance to it is like the course of an illness, even to the point of self-destruction. Is this not what is particularly scandalous about your analysis-that it completely leaves morality out? Baudrillard: In my own way, I am very much a moralist. There is a morality of analysis, a duty of honesty. That is to say, it is immoral to close one’s eyes to the truth, to find excuses, in order to cover up that which is difficult to bear. We must see the thing beyond the opposition of good and bad. I seek a confrontation with the event as it is without equivocation. Whoever is unable to do that, is led to a moral falsification of history. Spiegel: But if the terrorist act takes place as a form of compulsion or fate, as you claim, is it not then at the same time exculpated? There is no longer a morally responsible subject. Baudrillard: It is clear to me that the conceptual nature of my analysis is doubled-edged. Words can be turned against me. However, I do not praise murderous attacks - that would be idiotic. Terrorism is not a contemporary form of revolution against oppression and capitalism. No ideology, no struggle for an objective, not even Islamic fundamentalism, can explain it. Spiegel: But why should globalization turn against itself, why should it run amok, when, after all, it promises freedom, well-being and happiness for all? Baudrillard: That is the utopian view, the advertisement more or less. Yet there is altogether no positive system. In general all the positive historical utopias are extremely murderous, as fascism and communism have shown. Spiegel: Surely you cannot compare globalization with the bloodiest systems of the 20th century. Baudrillard: It is based, as colonialism was earlier, on immense violence. It creates more victims than beneficiaries, even when the majority of the Western world profits from it. Naturally the United States, in principle, could liberate every country just as it has liberated Afghanistan. But what kind of peculiar liberation would that be? Those so fortunate would know how to defend themselves even with terror if necessary. Spiegel: Do you hold globalization to be a form of colonialism, disguised as the widening of Western civilization? Baudrillard: It is pitched as the endpoint of the Enlightenment, the solution to all contradictions. In reality, it transforms everything into a negotiable, quantifiable exchange value. This process is extremely violent, for it cashes out in the idea of unity as the ideal state, in which everything that is unique, every singularity, including other cultures and finally every non-monetary value would be incorporated. See, on this point, I am the humanist and moralist. Spiegel: But don’t universal values such as freedom, democracy, and human rights also establish themselves through globalization? Baudrillard: One must differentiate radically between the global and the universal. The universal values, as the Enlightenment defined them, constitute a transcendental ideal. They confront the subject with its own freedom, which is a permanent task and responsibility, not simply a right. This is completely absent in the global, which is an operational system of total trade and exchange. Spiegel: Rather than liberating humanity, globalization only in turns reifies it? Baudrillard: It pretends to liberate people, only to deregulate them. The elimination of all rules, more precisely, the reduction of all rules to laws of the market is the opposite of freedom-namely, its illusion. Such out-dated and aristocratic values such as dignity, honesty, challenge and sacrifice no longer count for anything. Spiegel: Doesn’t the unrestricted recognition of human rights build a decisive bulwark against this alienating process? Baudrillard: I think that human rights have already been integrated into the process of globalization and therefore function as an alibi. They belong to a juridical and moral superstructure; in short, they are advertising. Spiegel: Therefore mystification? Baudrillard: Is it not a paradox that the West uses as a weapon against dissenters the following motto: Either you share our values or…? A democracy asserted with threats and blackmail only sabotages itself. It no longer represents the autonomous decision for freedom, but rather becomes a global imperative. This is, in effect, a perversion of Kant’s categorical imperative, which implies freely chosen consent to its command. Spiegel: So the end of history, the absolute sway of democracy, would be a new form of world dictatorship? Baudrillard: Yes, and it is completely inconceivable that there would be no violent counter-reaction against it. Terrorism emerges when no other form of resistance seems possible. The system takes as objectively terrorist whatever is set against it. The values of the West are ambivalent, at a definite point in time they could have a positive effect and accelerate progress, at another, however, they drive themselves to such extremes that they falsify themselves and ultimately turn against their own purpose. Spiegel: If the antagonism between globalization and terrorism in reality is irresolvable, then what purpose could the War Against Terrorism still have? Baudrillard: US President Bush aspires to return to trusted ground by rediscovering the balance between friend and foe. The Americans are prosecuting this war as if they were defending themselves against a wolf pack. But this doesn’t work against viruses that have already been in us for a long time. There is no longer a front, no demarcation line, the enemy sits in the heart of the culture that fights it. That is, if you like, the fourth world war: no longer between peoples, states, systems and ideologies, but, rather, of the human species against itself. Spiegel: Then in your opinion this war cannot be won? Baudrillard: No one can say how it will all turn out. What hangs in the balance is the survival of humanity, it is not about the victory of one side. Terrorism has no political project, it has no finality; though it is seen as real, it is absurd. Spiegel: Bin Laden and the Islamists do indeed have a social project, an image of a rigorous, ideal community in the name of Allah. Baudrillard: Perhaps, but it is not religiosity that drives them to terrorism. All the Islam experts emphasize this. The assassins of September 11th made no demands. Fundamentalism is a symptomatic form of rejection, refusal; its adherents didn’t want to accomplish anything concrete, they simply rise up wildly against that which they perceive as a threat to their own identity. Spiegel: Yet this doesn’t change the fact that in the course of history cultural evolution takes place. Doesn’t the global expansion of Western culture demonstrate the power of its appeal? Baudrillard: Why not also say its superiority? Cultures are like languages. Each is incommensurable, a self-contained work of art for itself. There is no hierarchy of languages. One cannot measure them against universal standards. It is theoretically possible for a language to assert itself globally, however, such reduction would constitute an absolute danger. Spiegel: For all intents and purposes, you refuse the idea of moral progress. The unique, which you defend, is in itself not a value at all. It can be good or evil, selfless or criminal… Baudrillard: Yes, singularity can assume all forms, including the vicious or terroristic. It remains all the same an artwork. For the rest, I don’t believe that there are predominantly good or evil cultures-there are, of course, disastrous diversions, but it is not possible to separate the one from the other. Evil does not retreat in proportion to the advance of the good. Therefore the concept of progress is, outside of the rationality of the natural sciences, in fact, problematic. Montaigne said: “If the evil in men were eliminated, then the fundamental condition of life would be destroyed.”

### Not only do these attempts to map the components of the revolution create the impetus for imperial violence, but they are doomed to failure – revolutions are the result of complex social interactions, not linear systems – attempting to control the direction of these revolts only drives volatility underground, increasing the risk of explosive violence as Taleb and Blyth explain:

Taleb and Blyth, 2011

(Nassim, Distinguished Professor of Risk Engineering at New York University's Polytechnic Institute/Mark, Professor of International Political Economy at Brown University, “Thee Black Swan of Cairo,” *Foreign Affairs*, 90:3, EBSCO)

How Suppressing Volatility Makes the World Less Predictable and More Dangerous Why is surprise the permanent condition of the U.S. political and economic elite? In 2007-8, when the global financial system imploded, the cry that no one could have seen this coming was heard everywhere, despite the existence of numerous analyses showing that a crisis was unavoidable. It is no surprise that one hears precisely the same response today regarding the current turmoil in the Middle East. The critical issue in both cases is the artificial suppression of volatility--the ups and downs of life--in the name of stability. It is both misguided and dangerous to push unobserved risks further into the statistical tails of the probability distribution of outcomes and allow these high-impact, low-probability "tail risks" to disappear from policymakers' fields of observation. What the world is witnessing in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya is simply what happens when highly constrained systems explode. Complex systems that have artificially suppressed volatility tend to become extremely fragile, while at the same time exhibiting no visible risks. In fact, they tend to be too calm and exhibit minimal variability as silent risks accumulate beneath the surface. Although the stated intention of political leaders and economic policymakers is to stabilize the system by inhibiting fluctuations, the result tends to be the opposite. These artificially constrained systems become prone to "Black Swans"--that is, they become extremely vulnerable to large-scale events that lie far from the statistical norm and were largely unpredictable to a given set of observers. Such environments eventually experience massive blowups, catching everyone off-guard and undoing years of stability or, in some cases, ending up far worse than they were in their initial volatile state.Indeed, the longer it takes for the blowup to occur, the worse the resulting harm in both economic and political systems. Seeking to restrict variability seems to be good policy (who does not prefer stability to chaos?), so it is with very good intentions that policymakers unwittingly increase the risk of major blowups. And it is the same misperception of the properties of natural systems that led to both the economic crisis of 2007-8 and the current turmoil in the Arab world. The policy implications are identical: to make systems robust, all risks must be visible and out in the open--fluctuat nec mergitur (it fluctuates but does not sink) goes the Latin saying. Just as a robust economic system is one that encourages early failures (the concepts of "fail small" and "fail fast"), the U.S. government should stop supporting dictatorial regimes for the sake of pseudostability and instead allow political noise to rise to the surface. Making an economy robust in the face of business swings requires allowing risk to be visible; the same is true in politics. Both the recent financial crisis and the current political crisis in the Middle East are grounded in the rise of complexity, interdependence, and unpredictability. Policymakers in the United Kingdom and the United States have long promoted policies aimed at eliminating fluctuation--no more booms and busts in the economy, no more "Iranian surprises" in foreign policy. These policies have almost always produced undesirable outcomes. For example, the U.S. banking system became very fragile following a succession of progressively larger bailouts and government interventions, particularly after the 1983 rescue of major banks (ironically, by the same Reagan administration that trumpeted free markets). In the United States, promoting these bad policies has been a bipartisan effort throughout.Republicans have been good at fragilizing large corporations through bailouts, and Democrats have been good at fragilizing the government. At the same time, the financial system as a whole exhibited little volatility; it kept getting weaker while providing policymakers with the illusion of stability, illustrated most notably when Ben Bernanke, who was then a member of the Board of Governors of the U.S. Federal Reserve, declared the era of "the great moderation" in 2004. Putatively independent central bankers fell into the same trap. During the 1990s, U.S. Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan wanted to iron out the economic cycle's booms and busts, and he sought to control economic swings with interest-rate reductions at the slightest sign of a downward tick in the economic data. Furthermore, he adapted his economic policy to guarantee bank rescues, with implicit promises of a backstop--the now infamous "Greenspan put." These policies proved to have grave delayed side effects. Washington stabilized the market with bailouts and by allowing certain companies to grow "too big to fail." Because policymakers believed it was better to do something than to do nothing, they felt obligated to heal the economy rather than wait and see if it healed on its own. The foreign policy equivalent is to support the incumbent no matter what. And just as banks took wild risks thanks to Greenspans implicit insurance policy, client governments such as Hosni Mubarak's in Egypt for years engaged in overt plunder thanks to similarly reliable U.S. support. Those who seek to prevent volatility on the grounds that any and all bumps in the road must be avoided paradoxically increase the probability that a tail risk will cause a major explosion. Consider as a thought experiment a man placed in an artificially sterilized environment for a decade and then invited to take a ride on a crowded subway; he would be expected to die quickly. Likewise, preventing small forest fires can cause larger forest fires to become devastating. This property is shared by all complex systems. In the realm of economics, price controls are designed to constrain volatility on the grounds that stable prices are a good thing. But although these controls might work in some rare situations, the long-term effect of any such system is an eventual and extremely costly blowup whose cleanup costs can far exceed the benefits accrued. The risks of a dictatorship, no matter how seemingly stable, are no different, in the long run, from those of an artificially controlled price. Such attempts to institutionally engineer the world come in two types: those that conform to the world as it is and those that attempt to reform the world. The nature of humans, quite reasonably, is to intervene in an effort to alter their world and the outcomes it produces. But government interventions are laden with unintended--and unforeseen--consequences, particularly in complex systems, so humans must work with nature by tolerating systems that absorb human imperfections rather than seek to change them. Take, for example, the recent celebrated documentary on the financial crisis, Inside Job, which blames the crisis on the malfeasance and dishonesty of bankers and the incompetence of regulators.Although it is morally satisfying, the film naively overlooks the tact that humans have always been dishonest and regulators have always been behind the curve. The only difference this time around was the unprecedented magnitude of the hidden risks and a misunderstanding of the statistical properties of the system. What is needed is a system that can prevent the harm done to citizens by the dishonesty of business elites; the limited competence of forecasters, economists, and statisticians; and the imperfections of regulation, not one that aims to eliminate these flaws. Humans must try to resist the illusion of control: just as foreign policy should be intelligence-proof (it should minimize its reliance on the competence of information-gathering organizations and the predictions of "experts" in what are inherently unpredictable domains), the economy should be regulator-proof, given that some regulations simply make the system itself more fragile. Due to the complexity of markets, intricate regulations simply serve to generate fees for lawyers and profits for sophisticated derivatives traders who can build complicated financial products that skirt those regulations. The life of a turkey before Thanksgiving is illustrative: the turkey is fed for 1,000 days and every day seems to confirm that the farmer cares for it--until the last day, when confidence is maximal. The "turkey problem" occurs when a naive analysis of stability is derived from the absence of past variations. Likewise, confidence in stability was maximal at the onset of the financial crisis in 2007. The turkey problem for humans is the result of mistaking one environment for another. Humans simultaneously inhabit two systems: the linear and the complex. The linear domain is characterized by its predictability and the low degree of interaction among its components, which allows the use of mathematical methods that make forecasts reliable. In complex systems, there is an absence of visible causal links between the elements, masking a high degree of interdependence and extremely low predictability. Nonlinear elements are also present, such as those commonly known, and generally misunderstood, as "tipping points." Imagine someone who keeps adding sand to a sand pile without any visible consequence, until suddenly the entire pile crumbles. It would be foolish to blame the collapse on the last grain of sand rather than the structure of the pile, but that is what people do consistently, and that is the policy error. U.S. President Barack Obama may blame an intelligence failure for the government's not foreseeing the revolution in Egypt (just as former U.S. President Jimmy Carter blamed an intelligence failure for his administration's not foreseeing the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran), but it is the suppressed risk in the statistical tails that matters--not the failure to see the last grain of sand. As a result of complicated interdependence and contagion effects, in all man-made complex systems, a small number of possible events dominate, namely, Black Swans. Engineering, architecture, astronomy, most of physics, and much of common science are linear domains. The complex domain is the realm of the social world, epidemics, and economics. Crucially, the linear domain delivers mild variations without large shocks, whereas the complex domain delivers massive jumps and gaps. Complex systems are misunderstood, mostly because humans' sophistication, obtained over the history of human knowledge in the linear domain, does not transfer properly to the complex domain. Humans can predict a solar eclipse and the trajectory of a space vessel, but not the stock market or Egyptian political events. All man-made complex systems have commonalities and even universalities. Sadly, deceptive calm (followed by Black Swan surprises) seems to be one of those properties. As with a crumbling sand pile, it would be foolish to attribute the collapse of a fragile bridge to the last truck that crossed it, and even more foolish to try to predict in advance which truck might bring it down. The system is responsible, not the components. But after the financial crisis of 2007-8, many people thought that predicting the subprime meltdown would have helped. It would not have, since it was a symptom of the crisis, not its underlying cause. Likewise, Obama's blaming "bad intelligence" for his administration's failure to predict the crisis in Egypt is symptomatic of both the misunderstanding of complex systems and the bad policies involved. Obama's mistake illustrates the illusion of local causal chains--that is, confusing catalysts for causes and assuming that one can know which catalyst will produce which effect. The final episode of the upheaval in Egypt was unpredictable for all observers, especially those involved. As such, blaming the CIA is as foolish as funding it to forecast such events.Governments are wasting billions of dollars on attempting to predict events that are produced by interdependent systems and are therefore not statistically understandable at the individual level. As Mark Abdollahian of Sentia Group, one of the contractors who sell predictive analytics to the U.S. government, noted regarding Egypt, policymakers should "think of this like Las Vegas. In blackjack, if you can do four percent better than the average, you're making real money." But the analogy is spurious. There is no "four percent better" on Egypt. This is not just money wasted but the construction of a false confidence based on an erroneous focus. It is telling that the intelligence analysts made the same mistake as the risk-management systems that failed to predict the economic crisis--and offered the exact same excuses when they failed. Political and economic "tail events" arc unpredictable, and their probabilities are not scientifically measurable.No matter how many dollars are spent on research, predicting revolutions is not the same as counting cards; humans will never be able to turn politics into the tractable randomness of blackjack. Most explanations being offered for the current turmoil in the Middle East follow the "catalysts as causes" confusion. The riots in Tunisia and Egypt were initially attributed to rising commodity prices, not to stifling and unpopular dictatorships. But Bahrain and Libya are countries with high GDPS that can afford to import grain and other commodities. Again, the focus is wrong even if the logic is comforting.It is the system and its fragility, not events, that must be studied--what physicists call "percolation theory," in which the properties of the terrain are studied rather than those of a single element of the terrain. When dealing with a system that is inherently unpredictable, what should be done?Differentiating between two types of countries is useful.In the first, changes in government do not lead to meaningful differences in political outcomes (since political tensions are out in the open).In the second type, changes in government lead to both drastic and deeply unpredictable changes. Consider that Italy, with its much-maligned "cabinet instability," is economically and politically stable despite having had more than 60 governments since World War II (indeed, one may say Italy's stability is because of these switches of government). Similarly, in spite of consistently bad press, Lebanon is a relatively safe bet in terms of how far governments can jump from equilibrium; in spite of all the noise, shifting alliances, and street protests, changes in government there tend to be comparatively mild. For example, a shift in the ruling coalition from Christian parties to Hezbollah is not such a consequential jump in terms of the country's economic and political stability. Switching equilibrium, with control of the government changing from one party to another, in such systems acts as a shock absorber. Since a single party cannot have total and more than temporary control, the possibility of a large jump in the regime type is constrained. In contrast, consider Iran and Iraq. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and Saddam Hussein both constrained volatility by any means necessary. In Iran, when the shah was toppled, the shift of power to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was a huge, unforeseeable jump. After the fact, analysts could construct convincing accounts about how killing Iranian Communists, driving the left into exile, demobilizing the democratic opposition, and driving all dissent into the mosque had made Khomeini's rise inevitable. In Iraq, the United States removed the lid and was actually surprised to find that the regime did not jump from hyperconstraint to something like France. But this was impossible to predict ahead of time due to the nature of the system itself. What can be said, however, is that the more constrained the volatility, the bigger the regime jump is likely to be. From the French Revolution to the triumph of the Bolsheviks, history is replete with such examples, and yet somehow humans remain unable to process what they mean. Humans fear randomness--a healthy ancestral trait inherited from a different environment. Whereas in the past, which was a more linear world, this trait enhanced fitness and increased chances of survival, it can have the reverse effect in today's complex world, making volatility take the shape of nasty Black Swans hiding behind deceptive periods of "great moderation." This is not to say that any and all volatility should be embraced. Insurance should not be banned, for example. But alongside the "catalysts as causes" confusion sit two mental biases: the illusion of control and the action bias (the illusion that doing something is always better than doing nothing). This leads to the desire to impose man-made solutions. Greenspans actions were harmful, but it would have been hard to justify inaction in a democracy where the incentive is to always promise a better outcome than the other guy, regardless of the actual, delayed cost. Variation is information. When there is no variation, there is no information. This explains the CIA's failure to predict the Egyptian revolution and, a generation before, the Iranian Revolution--in both cases, the revolutionaries themselves did not have a clear idea of their relative strength with respect to the regime they were hoping to topple. So rather than subsidize and praise as a "force for stability" every tin-pot potentate on the planet, the U.S. government should encourage countries to let information flow upward through the transparency that comes with political agitation. It should not fear fluctuations per se, since allowing them to be in the open, as Italy and Lebanon both show in different ways, creates the stability of small jumps. As Seneca wrote in De clementia, "Repeated punishment, while it crushes the hatred of a few, stirs the hatred of all . . . just as trees that have been trimmed throw out again countless branches." The imposition of peace through repeated punishment lies at the heart of many seemingly intractable conflicts, including the Israeli-Palestinian stalemate. Furthermore, dealing with seemingly reliable high-level officials rather than the people themselves prevents any peace treaty signed from being robust. The Romans were wise enough to know that only a free man under Roman law could be trusted to engage in a contract; by extension, only a free people can be trusted to abide by a treaty. Treaties that are negotiated with the consent of a broad swath of the populations on both sides of a conflict tend to survive. Just as no central bank is powerful enough to dictate stability, no superpower can be powerful enough to guarantee solid peace alone. U.S. policy toward the Middle East has historically, and especially since 9/11, been unduly focused on the repression of any and all political fluctuations in the name of preventing "Islamic fundamentalism"--a trope that Mubarak repeated until his last moments in power and that Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi continues to emphasize today, blaming Osama bin Laden for what has befallen him. This is wrong. The West and its autocratic Arab allies have strengthened Islamic fundamentalists by forcing them underground, and even more so by killing them. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau put it, "A little bit of agitation gives motivation to the soul, and what really makes the species prosper is not peace so much as freedom." With freedom comes some unpredictable fluctuation. This is one of life's packages: there is no freedom without noise--and no stability without volatility.

### This criticism also extends to the way we approach the resolution as debaters and educators – a disinterested perspective is something we first learn to deploy in spaces like this classroom. Under the rubric of switch-side debate, our academic inquiry becomes a site for the legitimization of the status quo – we are conditioned to view the world from above, to impose our knowledge upon the world to shape it around our assumptions, not to be open to that which challenges the basis of our usual academic method.

Spanos, 2011

(William, Spurlock’s one and only friend, “William V. Spanos,” Interview between Christopher Spurlock and Spanos, Summer/Fall, Online: <http://kdebate.com/spanos.html>)

CS: When we had our discussion in Binghamton, you asked me if teams were ever marginalized or excluded for reading arguments based on your work. Some have argued that this move is most frequently enacted during debates with an argument aptly referred to as "framework" where one team will define and delimit their ideal 'world picture' of a carefully crafted resolution and then explain why the opposing teams argument have violated the parameters of this 'frame.' In earlier comments on debate you had criticized the disinterested nature of the activity and its participants - the detached model of debate where anything goes so long as you "score points" and detach yourself from the real (human) weight of these issues. How might debaters approach debate or relate to our resolutions in a more interested sense? WVS: The reason I asked you that question is because I've always thought that the debate system is a rigged process, by which I mean, in your terms, it's framed to exclude anything that the frame can't contain and domesticate. To frame also means to "prearrange" so that a particular outcome is assured," which also means the what's outside of the frame doesn't stand a chance: it is "framed" from the beginning. It was, above all, the great neo-Marxist Louis Althusser's analysis of the "problematic" - the perspective or frame of reference fundamental to knowledge production in democratic-capitalist societies -- that enabled me to see what the so called distinterestness of empirical inquiry is blind to or, more accurately willfully represses in its Panglossian pursuit of the truth. Althusser's analysis of the "problematic" is too complicated to be explained in a few words. (Anyone interested will find his extended explanation in his introduction --"From Capital\* to Marx's Philosophy" -- to his and Etienne Balibar's book \*Reading Capital\*. It will suffice here to say that we in the modern West have been \*inscribed\* by our culture --"ideological state apparatuses (educational institutions, media, and so on)-- by a system of knowledge production that goes by the name of "disinterested inquiry," but in reality the "truth" at which it arrives is a construct, a fiction, and thus ideological. And this is precisely because, in distancing itself from earthly being --the transience of time --this system of knowledge production privileges the panoptic eye in the pursuit of knowledge. This is what Althusser means by the "problematic": a frame that allows the perceiver to see only what it wants to see. Everything that is outside the frame doesn't exist to the perceiver. He /she is blind to it. It's nothing or, at the site of humanity, it's nobody. Put alternatively, the problematic -- this frame, as the very word itself suggests, \*spatializes\* or \*reifies\* time -- reduces what is a living, problematic force and not a thing into a picture or thing so that it can be comprehended (taken hold of, managed), appropriated, administered, and exploited by the disinterested inquirer. All that I've just said should suggest what I meant when, long ago, in response to someone in the debate world who seemed puzzled by the strong reservations I expressed on being informed that the debate community in the U.S. was appropriating my work on Heidegger, higher education, and American imperialism. I said then -- and I repeat here to you -- that the traditional form of the debate, that is, the hegemonic frame that rigidly determines its protocols-- is unworldly in an ideological way. It willfully separates the debaters from the world as it actually is-- by which I mean as it has been produced by the dominant democratic I capitalist culture --and it displaces them to a free-floating zone, a no place, as it were, where all things, no matter how different the authority they command in the real world, are equal. But in \*this\* real world produced by the combination of Protestant Christianity and democratic capitalism things -- and therefore their value --are never equal. They are framed into a system of binaries-Identity/ difference, Civilization/barbarism I Men/woman, Whites/blacks, Sedentary/ nomadic, Occidental/ oriental, Chosen I preterit (passed over), Self-reliance I dependent (communal), Democracy I communism, Protestant Christian I Muslim, and so on -- in which the first term is not only privileged over the second term, but, in thus being privileged, is also empowered to demonize the second. Insofar as the debate world frames argument as if every position has equal authority (the debater can take either side) it obscures and eventually effaces awareness of the degrading imbalance of power in the real world and the terrible injustices it perpetrates. Thus framed, debate gives the false impression that it is a truly democratic institution, whereas in reality it is complicitous with the dehumanized and dehumanizing system of power that produced it. It is no accident, in my mind, that this fraudulent form of debate goes back to the founding of the U.S. as a capitalist republic and that it has produced what I call the "political class" to indicate not only the basic sameness between the Democratic and Republican parties but also its fundamental indifference to the plight of those who don't count in a system where what counts is determined by those who are the heirs of this quantitative system of binaries.

### With this in mind, Derek and I affirm the singularity of this year’s resolution. This is a defense of those aspects of the revolution that cannot be named or approached under the existing ideological frame of reference which guides and pre-determines the outcomes of our analysis of the Arab revolts. These are specters that haunt those of us who occupy the colonial center – an alterity that cannot be assimilated into the dominant order, a ghost that is created in every attempt to deny the driving force of the revolts while resurrecting a ventriloquized voice in its place.

### We will defend this as a necessary summary of our advocacy, but you should evaluate our 1AC holistically, not as a plan text alone.

### Our approach to the resolution breaks with the academic orthodoxy that seeks to study the revolts as an object that can be neatly fitted into existing analytical frames or otherwise ignored entirely – at this unique historical juncture, we advocate a strategy of indirection that shatters the urge to provide a mediated reading of the revolts – Spanos says it best:

Spanos, forthcoming

(William, Professor of English & Comp Lit @ Binghamton, “Arab Spring 2011: A Symptomatic Reading of the Revolution,” forthcoming, full text posted on Caselist)

Since the only language available for the purpose of “naming” this void is that intrinsic to the Western/American problematic, however, this first initiative must of necessity proceed by indirection. In other words, it must begin by determining what the void disclosed by the event I am calling Tahrir Square is not. As the representations by American political officialdom and the media massively testify, the vast majority in the United States (and Europe), both liberal and conservative, has expressed sympathy for the revolution, ranging from anxious approval to enthusiasm. But these official and mediatic readings have been almost invariably represented from the Western, especially American, perspective. In general, they have, predictably, viewed the uprising on the analogy of the (exceptionalist) American Revolution: a revolt not simply against the tyranny of “undeveloped” or “anti-modern” authoritarian regimes, but also, as the insistent focus on the inordinate wealth accumulated by the various despots suggests, the luxurious life style (decadence) achieved at the expense of the oppressed people of their ruling elite and, thus, a demand for American-style – capitalist -- “democracy.” More particularly, these official and mediatic American representations almost universally perceive the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, and Libya as, above all, the initiatives of huge populations of “Westernized” dissident Arab youths. *.* I mean disaffected young men and women who have been educated according to “progressive” Western “secular” standards – disinterested inquiry, global English, individualism, self-reliance, gender equality, the can-do perspective, the parliamentary nation-state, technology, and so on -- that the despotic regimes, in order to ensure their economic survival, have been compelled by the globalization of capital to adopt, and who, through their articulateness, have gained the support not only of most of the traditional categories of the oppressed: peasants, workers, servants, the aged, and so forth, but, in some degree, of their more religiously-oriented – and thus “benighted” -- Muslim parents and grandparents. [continues…] In this resonant passage of historical cartographic dis-location or de-centering, the marginalized nothing that, according to Heidegger and the poststructuralists, has come in the post-modern era to haunt the metropolitan discourse of the West is indissolubly joined with the “local” (“provincial”) – or “subaltern” (vanquished) – that has come, in the global post-colonial era, to haunt the imperial polity of the West. This reconstellation means, above all, that the West’s perennial cultural Other must now be understood on the analogy of the nothing disclosed by the coming to its self-destructive end of Western thinking: not as an identifiable – a nameable – entity, which can be accommodated, managed and administered (recolonized) – but as an amorphous and unnameable force: precisely as the spectral “phantasm” its ontological counterpart has been called by the imperial discourse of Western “science,” though now, of course, to be thought positively, i.e., as pure potentiality. To return, after this detour into ontology, to the very worldly (ontic) events in North Africa and the Middle East, what I am suggesting, is 1) that the official West’s, particularly the American state’s, and its ventriloquized media’s, representation of the Arab Revolution, constitutes a frantic effort to bring to presence -- give a fixed identity or, at best, a related and relatable system of names to its existential force for the ultimate purpose of containing its differential dynamics within the admissible spatial parameters of the disciplinary discursive regime, which his to say, policing “it.”. Thus, as I have observed, the unrelenting and pervasive media spectacle – aided and abetted, alas, by all too many Western political radicals -- of a trial-and-error naming of the revolutionary force – the disgruntled “poor,” the “fellaheen,” the “unemployed,” “youth,” the “female sex,” the “working class,” the “adherents of Western style (capitalist) democracy,” “foreign intervention,” the “Muslin Brotherhood,” “Islamic jihadists,” the “military,” and so forth, or some combination of these related disciplinary/policing categories of the Western discursive regime – a wishful thinking that, of course, as in so many social upheavals of the past, can all too easily become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Thus also, however – and this needs underscoring to register the “being” of it non-being -- the spectral quality of that revolutionary force that these Western categories would police -- accommodate, contain, domesticate, and administer at all costs in behalf of its ”higher cause” (the “big Other”): “its” refusal, like Bartleby the scrivener’s “I prefer not to,” to justify his inclusion in this now fragile triumphalist global history), to be answerable to the vocational calling of the interpellative Western state. (I will return to Melville’e seminal figure of this nobody (homo tantum: “mere man and nothing more,” ) To return to Said’s articulation of the possibilities disclosed by the coming to its cataclysmic liminal end of the logic of Western imperialism by way of its precipitation of a vast population of de-centered, unhomed migrants, “unassimilated to the emerging structure of institutional power,” who exist “between the old and the new, between the old empire and the new state,” this refusal of the Arab rebels to be interpellated by the higher call of the West, is precisely what he anticipates in what follows, though here pursuing the directives of the damaged, exilic German Jew, Theodor Adorno: “The past life of émigrés is, as we know, annulled,” says Adorno in Minima Moralia, subtitled Reflections from a Damaged Life . . . Why? Because anything that is not reified, cannot be counted and measured, ceases to exist.” Thus the émigré consciousness – a mind of winter, in Wallace Sevens’ phrase – discovers in its marginality that “a gaze averted from the beaten track, a hatred of brutality, a search for fresh concepts not yet encompassed by the general pattern, is the last hope for thought.” Adorno’s general pattern is what in another place he calls the administered world” or, insofar as the irresistible dominants in culture are concerned, “the consciousness industry.” There is not just the negative advantage of refuge in the émigré’s eccentricity; there is also the positive benefit of challenging the system, describing it in language unavailable to those it has already subdued: In an intellectual hierarchy which constantly makes everyone, unanswerability alone can call the hierarchy directly by its name [note the reversal of the interpellative calling. The circulation sphere, whose stigmata are borne by intellectual outsiders, opens a last refuge to the mind that it barters away, at the very moment when refuge no longer exits. He who offers for sale something unique that no one wants to buy, represents, even against his will, freedom from exchange. (CI, 333) Said acknowledges that what Adorno offers here “are certainly minimal opportunities,” but he also notes, in a telling locution, that Adorno elsewhere “expands the possibility of freedom by a form of expression whose opacity, obscurity, and deviousness . . . moves from the dominant system, enacting in its ‘inadequacy’ a measure of liberation”: an “inadequacy” that, in resembling the unpredicatable errancy of life, “’is able . . . to represent an unregimented one.’” Lest this Adornian “respite from regimentation” be interpreted as “too privatized” (and Eurocentric), Said concludes tellingly by demonstrating the “public” (and Eastern) face of this revocational vocation – this radical anti-narrative sense of “beginning” -- in the provocative words of “an Islamic intellectual like Ali Shariati, “a prime force in the early days of the Iranian Revolution, when his attack on ‘the true, straight path, this smooth and sacred highway’ – organized orthodoxy – contrasted with the devastations of constant migration”: man, this dialectical phenomenon, is compelled to be always in motion . . . . Man, then, can never attain a final resting place and take up residence in God. . . . How disgraceful, then, are all fixed standards. Who can ever fix a standard? Man is a “choice.” A struggle, a constant becoming. He is an infinite migration, a migration within himself, from clay to God; he is a migrant within his own soul. (CI, 333-334) It is precisely this “migratory,” “anti-systemic,” “unregimented” energy – this revolutionary “sense of beginning (without end),” to invoke the ungrounded ground principle of Said’s worldly criticism, “which occurs in all genuinely radical efforts to start again” (CI, 334) – that, in sharp contrast to the will to closure endemic to the official and mediatic Western (means-and-end) representational vocation vis a vis the event – and to the authoritarian Arab client (ventriloquized) states against which it has irrupted – that characterizes the Revolution being enacted in North Africa and the Middle East.