

## Performing Spirituality in the Public Sphere in the Post-Arab Spring Context

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### Abstract

It is commonly acknowledged that many thinkers have predicted a drop in mainstream religious participation and traditional belief, and a retreat of religion from the public sphere in favor of reason and rational thinking. However, religion did “return from exile” with ferocity partly after the Iranian Revolution and remarkably after the 9/11 attacks and the Arab Spring heralding the gradual decline of secularization theory. This comeback of religion does not mean the end of secularism, but rather the conflation or marriage between religion/Islam and secularism forcing Islamic discourse to enter a new phase of post-Islamism and secular discourse to enter a new era of post-secularism. In addition to deconstructing the afore-mentioned concepts and highlighting the role of performance of protest in mobilizing the protesters during the Arab uprisings, my paper is concerned with investigating the issue of spirituality in performance studies and highlighting the reformulation of religion’s place in the Arab public sphere in the post-Arab Spring era. It also argues that the multi-faceted, hybrid and revolutionary post-Islamist public sphere has contributed to the emergence of youth religiosity as a model that is independent of the ideological establishment.

**Keywords:** Religion; Spirituality; Post-Islamism; Post-secularism; Public sphere; Performance

### Introduction

There is no doubt that religion is playing a greater role in public spheres around the globe. Some scholars even consider religion a constitutive feature of public spheres, not only in the East, but also in the Western world. According to Berger [1], a former theorist of secularization, “the world today is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever,” and that “the whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled ‘secularization theory’ is essentially mistaken” (p. 2). Contrary to the early expectations of secularization theory, religion appears to be increasing, rather than decreasing, in importance in the contemporary public sphere. For Corstange [2], religion’s extension into politics transcends particular doctrines, geographic regions, and levels of economic development, as is demonstrated by the worldwide proliferation of religio-political movements since the 1970s (p.116). Religion did “return from exile” with ferocity partly after the Iranian Revolution and remarkably after the 9/11 attacks and the Arab Spring heralding the gradual decline of secularization theory and the remarkable revival of religious movements. These worldwide trends toward “deprivatization” defy the expectation of religion’s retreat to the private sphere, prompting Casanova [3], to ask, “who still believes in the myth of secularization?” (p.3). This comeback of religion does not mean the end of secularism, but rather the conflation or marriage between religion/Islam and secularism forcing Islamic discourse to enter a new phase of post-Islamism and secular discourse to enter a new era of post-secularism.

The global resurgence of religion into the public sphere brings to the fore the fact that most disciplines, including performance studies, were reluctant to address the issue of religion due to the fact that most

of these disciplines adopted mainly Marxist, nationalist and secular hermeneutical methodologies. In the words of Bonnie Marranca [4] “the secularization of the spiritual has been a project of the entire twentieth century” (p. 19). In his “The Alchemical Marriage of Art, Performance, and Spirituality”, Edmund Ligan [5] claims that “contemporary artists usually avoid making claims about the spiritual aspects of their work. That is because they lack their symbolist predecessors’ staunch faith in the spiritual efficacy of art” (p. 43), and this pushes Marranca to say that “we don’t have a vocabulary” for talking about such things. However, since the 9/11 attacks, scholars have embarked upon the quest of exploring the religious and spiritual dimensions of their works contributing to the desecularization of the public sphere. The recent protests and revolutions in the Arab world have also displayed that religion is used as a mobilizing ideology manifested by a number of ritual performances in the Arab squares and streets. My paper, then, is concerned with investigating the issue of spirituality in performance studies during the Arab uprisings and highlighting the reformulation of religion’s place in the Arab public sphere. It also argues that the multi-faceted, hybrid and revolutionary post-Islamist public sphere has contributed to the emergence of youth religiosity as a model that is independent of the ideological establishment.

### Performing the Arab Spring: Spirituality Revisited

Before talking about performative traditions during the Arab uprisings and the relation between performance and spirituality, it is necessary to take note of the basic developments and the essential dynamism of performance studies. Many scholars find it hard to define performance studies because of its fluidity and interdisciplinarity. Richard Schechner, the father of performance studies, claims that performance studies resists or rejects definition because it includes all human behaviours and crosses all disciplines. In his *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, Schechner [6] describes

performance studies as “inter” – in between” and maintains that there “is no finality to performance studies, either theoretically or operationally. There are many voices, opinions, methods, and subjects” (p. 1). This shows that one of the key features of the twenty-first century performance is its boundlessness and its capacity to cross borders. The fact that performance exists everywhere and any event, action, or behaviour can be studied as a performance makes performance studies’ borders porous and ever-expanding. It desires to bring ever new forms of performance into the conversation. It is an inter-disciplinary and de-centered field, crossing boundaries and always in pursuit. To show that the field is always on the making, McKenzie [7] asserts that while performance studies as a discipline “cannot be thought without citing theater and ritual” (p. 49), the importance of anthropology to the field wanes and the influence of scholars like Victor Turner and Richard Schechner gives way to French poststructuralists like Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, and Lacan, and to work coming out of speech act theory, like that of Judith Butler.

Interestingly, in his “Performance Studies in an Age of Terror” (2003), John Bell [8] focuses on the shifting and shifted definitions of performance after 9/11. A few days after the 9/11 events, Karlheinz Stockhausen, the famous German musician, [9] opines that the attack on the World Trade Centres is “the greatest work of art that is possible in the whole cosmos” (Qtd in Lentricchia and McAuliffe. 350). Stockhausen’s point has expanded the scope of performance studies and hence the term performance, Bell [8] claims, seems to be “invaluable for understanding not only what the 9/11 terrorists did, but also for understanding much of what has happened before and after 9/11, and what will happen in the years to come as our country develops its worldwide “war on terrorism”” (p.7). Thus, performance has become a wide open and democratic public sphere providing all with access to it. In a similar vein, this paper deals with the Arab protests and revolutions as performances since the concept of performance can help us understand what is going on around us. In this regard, Bell [8] argues that “at the onset of the 21st century, the idea of performance and the young tradition of performance studies are critical to any understanding of our present situation. We can use and develop the tools of performance studies to explain to ourselves and to others what is going on around us. The analytic frameworks of “theatre,” “drama,” and “art” analysis clearly don’t allow us this opportunity... But performance studies does” (p. 7). Very importantly, Bady Aaron [10] speaks about Arab uprisings as TV shows or movies: “The Tahrir show has been suppressed in Syria and cancelled in Yemen, and plans for a screening in Saudi Arabia seem to be on indefinite hold. Showings in Iraq and Palestine were scheduled, but the tickets were never made available, whereas in monarchies across the rest of North Africa, the Tahrir show seems to have gone straight to video. And in Bahrain, the theatre owners simply burned the place down” (p. 141). By the Arabic term “Tahrir” (Liberation in English), Aaron refers to the Egyptian Tahrir Square where millions of Egyptians congregated to overthrow the Hosni Mubarak Regime. Since then, the Tahrir Square has been seen as the icon of Egyptian Revolution in particular and the Arab revolutions in general. In brief, it has been a source of inspiration for the emergence of many squares in the Arab World, but some of these squares were suppressed such as in Syria, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, and others postponed like in Arab monarchies, Palestine and Iraq.

During the Arab Spring, performance has been widely employed to explain how social movements, campaigns and uprisings come into being and develop. It has been appropriated by protesters and subordinated groups to create alternative publics and discourses in

order to participate in, contest, and begin to reconstruct the dominant public sphere, thereby producing multiple competing publics. Social movements can be seen as special kinds of performances using oppositional or revolutionary language that is clear to sympathetic spectators but unintelligible to the totalitarian watchdog of culture. Besides, demonstrations, marches, protests, press conferences, presentations, and violent confrontations can all be thought of as performances of collective actors geared to a variety of audiences - the media, authorities, counter-movements, the public. These are movement performances at a broad level of analysis, but the specific workings of movements also have performative aspects, such as internal discussions and debates, planning sessions, conflicts among members, and narrative performances, all of which have their own internal audiences. What is at issue here is that performance contributes to the democratization of the public sphere in the sense that social actors bring their ideas about how the world is or should be, offering them up to social discussion, scrutiny, and vetting, and, then, act.

In his article “The Image of the Martyr in Syrian Performance and Web Activism”, Edward Ziter [11] confirms that much less commented on, but necessary to a full understanding of the uprising, “has been activists’ use of performance and visual culture to bolster and spread an ethos of creative resistance and the failure of the regime to posit equally compelling performances and images in defence of their continued rule” (p. 116). Symbolic public performances such as marches, funerals, eulogies, mock trials, protest songs, sit-ins and pray-ins were in part responsible for the remarkable durability and success of the uprisings and protests. Importantly, the Arab Spring has signalled the emergence of ‘travelling performance’ (thought of as a counterpart to Edward Said’s travelling theory) in the sense that the same performative traditions were simultaneously performed during the protests in different countries. These instances of “twice behaved behavior,” or “restored behaviour” [12], to use Schechner’s concepts, demonstrate the power of performance to inspire and inflame, but also to generate a sense of community with actors who never meet face-to-face. It is significant here to note that performance takes part in creating an imagined transnational public spheres. At issue is that the Arab Spring has showed that ritual performances can play a crucial role in mobilizing people to act either in the public sphere or the virtual one (Facebook, YouTube etc.) where protesters from different ideologies congregated to form a real and revolutionary Halqa demanding the changing of the regimes. So, the Arab Spring stage was too large to accept all opinions.

Due to the secular nature of the public sphere, the question of spirituality in performance studies was even ignored and neglected. The term sacred underwent a reduction in scope, leaving performance studies with an impoverished capacity to engage with religious groups, communities and constituencies. Bonnie Marranca [24] says that the notion of the spiritual is very difficult to grapple with and “often I have found in speaking to people about this theme that there is uncomfortableness with discussions of religion and the spirit. There has come to be a taboo around them. It is so difficult to know how to speak of such ideas, images, or feelings because we have so little vocabulary today to address them” (p. 19). Following the same line of thinking, Joy Crosby [13] stresses that

performance studies emphatically does not employ the word sacred in the stories it tells about itself; not in describing its choice of objects or demarcating its sphere of intervention. Given the degree to which thinking about ritual has shaped thinking about performance within

the field, this silence in relation to notions of the sacred comes as something of a surprise... Performance Studies defines its intellectual and political investments in opposition to the term sacred (p. 6).

Yet, given the return of religion in the last decades, we have witnessed a surge of interest in spirituality in the field of performance studies in that artistic traditions and performative practices have opened themselves up to the sacred. Numerous contemporary scholars and artists are directly engaging with the dimensions of the spiritual in performance studies. Accordingly, Vincent P. Pecora [14] asserts that "religion itself is as much a function of performance and theatre" (p. 510). He says that Emile Durkheim had already gone a long way toward elaborating religion not as a system of beliefs but in large part as a theatrical experience (p. 510). This is to say that the origin of performance is secular and profane, and it is the emergence of performance that makes religious rituals possible. For Brian Boyd, there is some evidence that performance activities preceded religious rituals in our evolutionary past. He emphasizes that there is good evidence "to reverse the assumption of many theorists that performance and the arts grew out of religion. Rather, rituals tied to religious beliefs are the evolutionary offspring of play and performance" (p. 44). Similarly, Eli Rozik (2002) finds no empirical evidence that performance and theatre evolved from religious rituals [15,16].

On the other hand, taking Shechner's definition of performance as "ritualized behaviour" [12], there are performances that are purely spiritual in impulse. Ta'ziyeha, as a performance of mourning which commemorates the martyrdom of Hussein, the grandson of the prophet Mohamed, is a religious performing tradition that dates back to many centuries. For Hamid Dabashi [17], Ta'ziyeha became a paramount mode of mobilization during the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and immediately following, during the war with Iraq (1989-1988) (p. 92). For Khalid Amine and Marvin Carlson [18], "Al-halqais very ancient, dating back at least to ninth-century Sufi practice, where the term was applied to the circle of students that gathered around a religious master for instruction" (p. 72). What is at stake is that religious performances have played a pivotal role in mobilizing people in the Arab Spring. In Morocco, for example, most of the slogans raised in the demonstrations were spiritual. I would like to present two famous slogans raised by the Moroccan demonstrators: 1) May Allah be with you Morocco/ the state is not a state of being/housing is in toilets and death is in boats. 2) (May God make you love your peoples/ till you are beaten like the unemployed/ And not anyone receive the beats of the unemployed). The inference that can be drawn here is that the demonstrators expressed themselves through idioms of luck and God's intervention, and looked at themselves as victims in need of a saviour. What happened in the Tahrir Square will continue to be one of the most symbolic scenes in Egyptian memory for decades to come, particularly the massing Friday prayers, prayers for the absent, and the Muslim and Copts protected each other during prayer, fearing attack from the security forces. Interestingly enough, the protesters were clever in their effective utilization of Friday prayers, which carried symbolic names and titles like "Friday of rage", "Friday of departure", "Friday of dignity", "Judgement Friday" etc.

Viewed in this light, non-Western performative traditions are rooted in religious and ethical views. Because of this, Bell [19] states that there are many Eurocentric narratives that always define "Islamic and Arabic performance as "traditions of absence". Furthermore, he avers that "despite ongoing and insightful analyses of particular aspects of Islamic and Middle East performance culture, the

preponderant sense of Islamic performance among American college students and their teachers is almost entirely negative, if not simply nonexistent" (p. 6). In fact, Islamic theatrical and performative traditions are misrepresented, if not ignored, by the writings of the priests of theater and performance studies. For example, known as the bible of world theatre history, Brockett and Hildy's *History of the Theatre* (2003) covers the history of theatre till the 1960's. Brockett and Hildy claim that Islam was responsible for the absence of Islamic theatrical and performative forms. In his article "Islamic Performance and the Problem of Drama", Bell [19] argues that "this sweeping denunciation is stunning in its scope and ignorance. Yet because their *History of the Theatre*'s so widely used and respected, Brockett and Hildy's faulty scholarship remains dominant, the voice of authority" (p.7) [20].

### The Performance of Religion in the Arab Public Sphere: Moving towards Post-Islamism and Post-Secularism

The public sphere inevitably refers back to Jürgen Habermas, who famously valorized the "bourgeois public sphere" as a site where modern Europeans made "rational use of their rationality." It can be seen as a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk and a realm of social life in which public opinion can be formed. What attracted Habermas to the notion of a public sphere is its potential as a foundation for a critique of society based on democratic principles. Because it is a realm in which individuals gather to participate in open discussions, everyone has access to it; no one enters discourse in the public sphere with an advantage over another. Defined as an arena, independent of government and also enjoying autonomy from partisan economic forces, the public sphere, Habermas contends, [21] arises as part of civil society, incorporating adults who have gained maturity and intellectual autonomy in another of its parts, the family. It is oriented to forming rational-critical opinion on matters of universal interest to citizens, and through this to informing state policy. But it is debased and corrupted when the state-society division collapses amid bureaucratization, organized interest-group politics, and mass society in the twentieth century... The model of the bourgeois public sphere presupposed strict separation of the public from the private realm in such a way that the public sphere made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state, was itself considered part of the private realm (pp. 302-06).

As a matter of fact, the distinction between public and private was sometimes difficult to sustain especially with the development of capitalism and the intervention of large-scale organizations leading to the decline of the autonomy of the public sphere. This undermined the classical notion of the public sphere. In his article "The Public Sphere in the Field of Power", Craig Calhoun [22] confirms that the transformation of civil society, not surprisingly, complicated the idea of the public sphere as the part of civil society devoted to open, ostensibly neutral and rational-critical formation of opinions on matters of public concern (p. 305).

Unlike performance's democratic spirit and its invitation to hear many voices, Calhoun claims that the early bourgeois public sphere was structured precisely by exclusion, failing to allow for a multiplicity of publics and counterpublics. Counterpublics can be understood as dissident networks of communication excluded by the dominant public sphere and its hegemonic discourse. He [22] ascertains that "bourgeois intellectuals and political actors struggled to win social

space from aristocratic domination but also to exclude plebeian and proletarian voices from the public sphere they helped create" (p. 309). What is more important here is the fact that those intellectuals and political actors were inspired by secular and liberal ideologies taking religion out of the public sphere. For example, Emile Durkheim [23] says that "all religions are born old or are already dead" (p. 15). Karl Marx famously dismissed religion as "the opium of the people." Friedrich Nietzsche declared that "God is dead." Therefore, for secularists religion was dealt with as a remnant of the European Middle Ages synonymous with superstition, ignorance and supernatural thinking. Being surpassed by reason's superior conceptual precision, religion was excluded from the public sphere becoming both marginalized and privatized. In this sense, the public sphere has been inspired by secular trajectories which completely dismissed religion from public discussion. Today, however, there are omnipresent signs of a radical change in mentality due to the prominent re-emergence of the sacred involving religious deprivatization and de-secularization of the public sphere. Stated in bolder terms, religion is no longer seen as a past "intellectual formation", or a "conversation-stopper."

The climate that led to the emergence of the public sphere was secular and hence religious voices were suppressed. This situation continued till the early 1980s when the Iranian revolution inspired by religious dogma stirred religion from historical dust to circulate in the global sphere. Habermas has spent most of his career celebrating the secular nature of the public sphere by arguing against the use of "religiously informed moral argument" in the public sphere, but recently has radically revised his thinking. In his "Notes on a Post-Secular Society", Habermas [24] affirms that during "secularization, religion did not disappear tout court. It simply disappeared from the public sphere... Having become a private matter. Today religion is returning to the public sphere. I define this return of religion in the public sphere as "post-secularism." In addition to highlighting the "limits of secular reason", he contends that "religion is gaining influence not only worldwide but also within national public spheres." In his article "Religion in the Public Sphere", Habermas [25] condemns all those who keep trying to sentence the religious discourse in the public square to silence, to eliminate and liquidate it altogether. What is most startling is his simultaneous assertion of the need for and right of religious discourse in the public sphere, and his criticism of the insufficient use of reason in the public sphere by the secular realm because of its refusal to grant validity to the religious perspective. Stated in other terms, Habermas stresses the importance of mutual toleration between secular and religious trajectories in the public sphere, and recognizes that religious reasoning is a source of truth that secular reasoning alone cannot provide, and without which it is unbalanced. So, religious reasoning must be restored to the public square.

The Arab public sphere has also been subject to the aforementioned metamorphoses of the global public sphere. Emerging under the yoke of European colonialism, the newly independent Arab secular governments, such as Jamal Abdel Nasser's in Egypt and Habib Bourguiba's in Tunisia, saw religion and Islam in particular as a force working to pull the people backwards. For example, John Esposito [26] says that "for Bourguiba, Islam represented the past; the West was Tunisia's only hope for a modern future" (p. 161). As such, Islam in their eyes could only serve to reduce their societies' chances of building that modern state. On this basis, it sufficed to claim Islam as the religion of the state and a source of its legislation as it related to personal status. However, any relation that Islam would have to the public

sphere was rejected and elicited state repression. The Arab states failed to maintain a public sphere through which dialogue can take place among various communities and sectors of society. Instead, the state acted in society as a group among others, providing a public sphere solely for the state's elite, which led the opposing elites to seek other spheres through which they could engage in politics. It is in this context that we can understand the emergency laws enacted by the Arab regimes, which banned public assemblies in the public sphere, blocking internal debate, except among its loyalist elite. More significantly, the Arab public sphere has been infiltrated by the regime's apparatuses. The Arab regimes have used their authority to assimilate the public spheres that paid allegiance to them and undermined those which did not pledge them loyalty. This state's intervention into the public sphere has reduced the legitimacy and effectiveness of the public sphere pushing critics to claim that the Arab world has no public sphere. This situation continued till the advent of the Arab Revolutions that have redefined and reshaped the Habermasian classic model of the public sphere.

Crucially, religious symbols and expressions seem to have permeated the Arab public sphere especially after the Arab Spring. The Arab revolutions have showed that rather than blaming religion, religion should be credited as a symbolic and mobilizing force that can be used in favour of promoting the values of freedom and democracy and stopping injustice. Mosques in the Arab revolutions were the main centres for the mobilization and massing of protesters, and sometimes for their aid and protection from the oppression of the authorities. In some countries, mosques have provided almost the only window for protest. It is true that the Arab revolutions did not carry a religious slogan and did not adopt religious demands like the application of Sharia and the formation of an Islamic state, but religious movements, with all their spectrums, had a presence in the revolutions. The Arab Spring has contributed to the emergence of youth religiosity as a model that is independent of the ideological establishment. It has showed that the master-disciple model, the main pillar of the educational model of activist Islam, within Islamic movements and leader-member relationships within leftist and nationalist parties are waning due to the emergence of the new media and other sources of knowledge. That is to say, this new form of media created a new public sphere, even if a virtual one, which limited the efficiency of classical means of ideological production, heralding a novel model of youth religiosity. One of the most notable effects of the virtual public sphere was the breaking of the master-disciple formula empowering the Arab social self to have access to multiple sources of Islamic/political knowledge, and to choose what it finds suitable, or to adopt an idea, or several ideas, without the need to enrol in the educational model of the ideological establishment. Unlike the individual religiosity where religion is exclusive to the private sphere, youth religiosity is a type of religiosity that is widespread in the public sphere and that is liberated from the grip of social institutions. The emergence of youth religiosity has led to the fragmentation that affected the Islamic movements and parties' map after the Arab Spring.

Used as the bogeyman against the West by the secular ruling elite, the Islamists, seen as "subaltern counterpublics", were dismissed and excluded from the "entitled public sphere" building "their institutions as places of asylum" and work "in an age of secrecy." So, they did not withdraw completely from the public sphere but adopted performance of surveillance and of presence during the nineties, for the decline of the socialist camp led to the waning of the ideological apparatus of the Arab Left giving the chance to the Islamists to fill the void. However, when the Islamists reached the reign of power in Sudan, Saudi Arabia,

Iran and Afghanistan, they have largely failed to present an alternative model of socio-economic development. This failure of political Islam has led to the emergence of new trend from within Islamic movements reaching its maturity during and after the Arab revolutions. This new trend is called 'post-Islamism'. The term post-Islamism is not a new idea, but it was coined by Asef Bayat in the late nineties to describe the shifts in the Islamist experience in the Iranian context in a research article "The Coming of a Post-Islamist Society" (1996), and then later in a much broader context in his book, *Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn* (2007). Bayat [27] defines post-Islamism as

A project, a conscious attempt to conceptualize and strategize the rationale and modalities of transcending Islamism in social, political, and intellectual domains. Yet, post-Islamism is neither anti-Islamic nor un-Islamic or secular. Rather it represents an endeavour to fuse religiosity and rights, faith and freedom, Islam and liberty. It is an attempt to turn the underlying principles of Islamism on its head by emphasizing rights instead of duties, plurality in place of singular authoritative voice, historicity rather than fixed scriptures, and the future instead of the past. It wants to marry Islam with individual choice and freedom, with democracy and modernity, to achieve what some have called an "alternative modernity"...In short, whereas Islamism is defined by the fusion of religion and responsibility, post-Islamism emphasizes religiosity and rights (p. 11)

So, the unifying factor between post-Islamism and post-secularism is the move towards a politics of liberalism that tolerates religion. What can be inferred here is the fact that the Arab Spring has redefined the Arab public sphere after the failure of both secular and Islamist projects.

It is essential to note that post-Islamism is not the dead end of Islamism. It is a variant of Islamism that will characterize the Arab political sphere for the next couple of decades. It is true that Islamist movements and parties' discourse has been diverse and fragmented but they all agreed on the establishment of an Islamic state. Nevertheless, during and after the Arab Spring, most of those avid defenders of the Islamic state have turned out to be vehement callers for the establishment of a civil state. Interestingly enough, in his latest article "The Transformation of the Arab World," Roy [28] argues that the "failure of political Islam that I pointed to twenty years ago is now obvious. This does not mean that Islamist parties are absent from the political playing field - quite the contrary. But their utopian conception of an "Islamic state" has lost credibility (p. 8-9). Early examples of this social trend include the reform movement in Iran in the late 1990s and the country's Green Movement, Indonesia's Prosperous Justice Party, Egypt's *Hizb al-Wasat* (Centre Party), Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), and the Al-Nahda in Tunisia. Morocco's Justice and Development Party (PJD) and *Jamaa't Al-Adl Wa Al-Ihsan* (Justice and Charity). Egypt's Islamic Brotherhood might seem to be the newcomer in the field, but its discourse still oscillates between Islamism and post-Islamism.

Due to this ideological shift, Asef Bayat [29] maintains that many of the Arab uprisings are post-Islamist 'refolutions' (a mixture of reform and revolution) that have transcended Islamist politics in terms of their rejection of both the authoritarian Islamic state and authoritarian secular state. For instance, Nadia Yassine, the daughter of the late Abdel salam Yassine, the founder of Justice and Charity Movement, declares to the media that "we can say loud and clear that the Justice and Charity movement is not calling for the installation of a religious state and that it is in favour of a civil state. It is the first time that we

are saying this in such an explicit manner because the context, linked notably to the emergence of the February 20 Movement, demands it". In Moroccan Parliament, the Justice and Development Party's politicians now downplay religious themes and questions related to religious faith in favour of more political and secular matters. This leads me to say that in the post-Arab spring context, political pragmatism takes precedence over the clear definition of a recognisable ideology. Similarly, in his article "There Will Be No Islamist Revolution", Olivier Roy [28] argues that "there is a growing discrepancy between ideological references and real practices (p. 17)." Hence, post-Islamists are "mugged by reality", to use Ghaffar Hussain's terms [30].

In contrast to the bourgeois public sphere and since the post-Arab Spring public sphere is now more inclusive in the sense it has managed to bring together all social strata for a rational debate, the post-Islamists enjoy no religious monopoly in the public sphere. There are other movements, such as the Sufis, the Islamists, the Salafists and the fundamentalists. For Corstange [12], religion's influence on the public sphere is complex because people can invoke it for different purposes. It has what scholars have called a "Janus face," serving as "the carrier not only of exclusive, particularist, and primordial identities but also of inclusive, universalist, and transcending ones" (p. 118). Phrased in different terms, religion's public role is consequently ambivalent and constructs not only bellicose communal identities but also democratic civil society. So, religion is multidimensional and multi-vocal in the public sphere. Put concisely, the Arab Spring has re-shaped and liberated the Arab public sphere from the taxonomies and clutches of the traditional public sphere, as previously elucidated by Habermas. The Arab public sphere is now in the process of becoming plural and open to all ideologies and walks of life despite.

## Conclusion

All in all, it is primordial to note that spirituality has become a prominent feature within performance studies. This interest in spirituality in the field of performance studies springs from the emergence of ritual performances as mobilizing tools in the Arab Spring turning the symbolic presence of religion in the public sphere from a quiet presence to a vocal and visible one that takes different forms. Indeed, the public sphere was "naked, considering religion as an "individual metaphysic" - a kind of covert, rather shameful hobby" (Griffith and McAlister 19). But, with the return of religion into heart of culture and politics, the public sphere is in the process of de-secularizing itself. Thanks to the Arab Spring, a new type of inclusive public sphere encompassing post-Islamism and post-secularism is in formation in the Arab world.

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