Libya and the production of violence: space, time and subjectivity in contemporary humanitarian intervention

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities

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Abstract

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The thesis explores the production of violence in the intervention in Libya in 2011. In March that year an uprising against then leader Muammar Gaddafi resulted in an international intervention authorised by the United Nations (UN), which involved a no-fly zone, and aerial bombing campaign to protect civilians in Libya. The intervention is seen as the first military intervention authorised by the UN to refer to the ‘responsibility to protect’ (R2P) norm. This thesis analyses the processes involved in the production of the international intervention in Libya through the categories of time, space and subjectivity. In doing so it draws upon neo-Foucauldian accounts of contemporary security practices, and postcolonial imaginative geographies of security and insecurity. My argument is threefold. The first argument concerns the political topography of intervention and R2P. It challenges claims of spatial separation in which political territories are clearly demarcated and separated, arguing that the security practices of liberal states are now predicated on a deterritorialised network of surveillance, monitoring and border control in which borders are not obsolete but are highly differential in impact. The second claim of the thesis concerns a displacement in the ethical measurement of humanitarian war to a temporal plane. The success of intervention is measured not in terms of lives saved, or the extent of rebuilding and reconstruction after conflict, or the humanitarian impact, but in the speed at which intervention is mobilised. The third central claim of the thesis is that humanitarian intervention depends upon, reproduces and perpetuates divisions and distinctions between people who are worthy of protection and those who may be killed. The moral universe of intervention is one where people are divided according to legitimacy based upon a series of assumptions about race, gender, class, religion and nationality. Those deemed legitimate potential subjects are worthy of saving, and many others are seen as illegitimate, and can be sacrificed without regret. The thesis concludes by arguing that the assumptions of humanitarian intervention serve to normalise violent responses to insecurity and crisis, reducing the space for non-violent alternatives. I argue that as a response, we should emphasise the possibilities for non-violent resistance.
Declaration

I hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUMF</td>
<td>Authorisation for the Use of Military Force</td>
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<td>BAE</td>
<td>British Aerospace</td>
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<td>CAAT</td>
<td>Campaign Against the Arms Trade</td>
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<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
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<td>CoE</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
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<td>DESO</td>
<td>Defence Export Services Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DfID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DoD</td>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCO</td>
<td>Foreign and Commonwealth Office</td>
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<td>G4S</td>
<td>Group 4 Securicor</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCHQ</td>
<td>Government Communications Headquarters</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMG</td>
<td>Her Majesty’s Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICISS</td>
<td>International Commission for Intervention and State Sovereignty</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>IS/ISIL/ISIS</td>
<td>Islamic State/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISAF</td>
<td>International Security Assistance Force</td>
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<td>LIFG</td>
<td>Libyan Islamic Fighting Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI6</td>
<td>Military Intelligence, Section 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoD</td>
<td>Ministry of Defence</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSA</td>
<td>National Security Agency</td>
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<td>NTC</td>
<td>National Transitional Government of Libya</td>
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<tr>
<td>R2P</td>
<td>Responsibility to Protect</td>
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<tr>
<td>SACEUR</td>
<td>Supreme Allied Commander in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAS</td>
<td>Special Air Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAV</td>
<td>Unmanned Aerial Vehicle</td>
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<td>UAE</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>UKBA</td>
<td>United Kingdom Border Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>UNSMIL</td>
<td>United Nations Support Mission in Libya</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>VPR</td>
<td>Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme</td>
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Introduction: Theorising the Libya intervention through space, time and subjectivity

The Libya intervention began on 19 March 2011, as the US started enforcing the UN-authorised no-fly zone over Libya in what was named Operation Odyssey Dawn. US fighter planes targeted Gaddafi’s air force as well as tanks, trucks and artillery units. Shortly afterwards, on 31 March 2011, the Libya operation was handed from US to NATO control. The operation had two main elements: the enforcement of the no-fly zone, in which Libyan airspace was patrolled and closed to all flights, and the protection of civilians from attack. The NATO operation was named Operation Unified Protector, and formally ended on the 31 October 2011. This end to NATO operations came shortly after the events of the 20 October, on which day the conflict came to a nominal and brutal end with the capture and summary killing of Muammar Gaddafi. Gaddafi’s convoy was bombed by NATO aircraft attempting to leave Sirte and escape Libya. NATO stated that the strike was launched by either a French plane or a US predator drone (Gaynor and Zargoun 2011). By this point, NATO was providing ‘close air support’ to the opposition, including assisting in attempts to capture Gaddafi. Fleeing his car from oncoming rebel soldiers, Gaddafi sought shelter in a nearby storm drain, where he was found and killed (Hilsum 2012: xvii). His bloodied and dying face appeared on front pages across the world the following day, drawn from mobile phone footage of the incident. There were conflicting accounts of Gaddafi’s death, with reports that he was sodomised and beaten prior to being shot in the head and chest (Fahim and Gladstone 2011; Hilsum 2012: xvii) contrasting with the rebel leadership’s account that he died of bullet wounds in an exchange of crossfire. Interim Prime Minister Mahmoud Jabril alleged that Gaddafi was killed in cross-fire while being carried to an ambulance by rebel fighters, after being wounded in the air strike (Walt 2011).

There was to be no condemnation of Gaddafi’s killing from Western governments participating in the intervention and no investigation into the incident (Human Rights Watch 2012b: 41-45). British Prime Minister David Cameron (2011c) stated that the day marked an opportunity for the Libyan people of “building themselves a strong and democratic future.” He added that he was “proud of the role Britain has played in helping them to bring that about” (Cameron 2011c). He also paid tribute to the “bravery of the Libyans who have helped to liberate their country” (Cameron 2011c). Obama (2011c) stated that the 20 October “is a momentous day in the history of Libya.” He said to the Libyan people that after participating in the intervention which brought about the end of
Gaddafi in Libya, the US would “partner as you forge a future that provides dignity, freedom and opportunity” (Obama 2011c). This tone from both the US and the UK was one of a more cautious victory than the excesses of the Blair and Bush era. There was no bullish celebration of ‘we got him’ or ‘mission accomplished.’ Rather, as noted above, the rhetoric arising from Western capitals during the intervention and at its close was one of limited intention and discrete action which had achieved clearly circumscribed humanitarian and democratic aims.

The differences between the bloody end of the Libyan intervention and the terms used to describe it by elites are striking. This thesis examines the ways in which the intervention in Libya was produced as a limited and humanitarian exercise of civilian protection. There are two primary reasons for my interest in Libya as a case study of contemporary intervention. First, because Libya was a test-case for the ‘responsibility to protect’ (R2P) norm, and seen as an important milestone for the development of normative practice in international politics. The intervention was said to be borne out of the increasing salience of civilian protection in foreign policy, and the need to stand up for human rights norms in the face of large scale political repression. Secondly, and related to this, there was a huge gap between the material impact of the violence of intervention, and the narrative with which that violence was represented by its participants. Contrast the statements of Obama and Cameron on Gaddafi’s death with that of a National Transitional Council [NTC – the interim Libyan government] official speaking candidly and anonymously who gave the following account: “[t]hey [NTC fighters] beat him very harshly and then they killed him. This is a war” (Gaynor and Zargoun 2011). The critical question for me is not which statement is a more honest account of the reality of war. Both narratives form part of the discursive production of violence in global politics. The anonymous NTC statement intentionally draws our attention to the material violence of war, highlighting the ridiculousness of the aspiration that a war can be fought without anyone getting hurt. The critical imperative of this thesis is to reveal this space between the material and the representational in the framing of humanitarian intervention in Libya by examining its limits of its framing in the normative discourse of R2P. The critical point is not simply a mismatch between the aspirational beginnings and violent endpoint of the conflict. An overriding aim of the thesis is to resist such easy progressive narratives which attest to essentially good intentions dogged by unfortunate circumstances in the fog of war. The violence of war is produced and reproduced at a series of points in time which can be cut through to reveal their inherent limitations.
The contributions of this thesis are as follows. First, it provides a robust critique of humanitarian intervention in its normative context of R2P discourse, using the case of military intervention in Libya in 2011. Secondly, I build upon critical neo-Foucauldian approaches to security studies by making an argument about the conflation of success with speed in contemporary interventions, and explore the ethico-political implications of this trend using the work of Virilio. Thirdly, I contribute to an increasingly important branch of critical security studies that combines insights from critical geopolitics and postcolonial critique, by making an argument about the geographies of violence and their differential impact in contemporary security practices; including but not limited to military intervention. The following section delineates the key themes in literature on humanitarian intervention and R2P, and outlines the ways in which my research addresses flaws in this literature, before locating the Libya intervention in this section of this literature on R2P.

**Humanitarian intervention in perspective**

Humanitarian intervention has been subject to extensive examination in a broad academic literature. In the 1990s a number of liberal scholars explored its status as international norm (Abiew 1999; Chesterman 2001; Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1996; Teson 1997, 2005) by attempting to establish the legal and normative framework through which intervention could be appropriately justified. Wheeler’s (2000) contribution sought to move the debate from the discipline of law to international relations (IR) by looking at the problem of intervention in the context of international society. A great deal of the literature on humanitarian intervention sits at this intersection between IR, international law and ethics. Bellamy (2003) and Wheeler (2000) attest to a split between ‘pluralists’ and ‘solidarists’, roughly approximating to realists and liberals respectively. The debate has primarily been conceptualised by the three dominant approaches in IR of realism¹, liberalism and constructivism², with the English School lying somewhere between the three³. With its focus on ethics, norms and values, debate over the right or duty of intervention has been more dominated by liberal perspectives (Pattison 2008, Heinze 2009, Hudson 2009). Most of this liberal literature frames the ethical, moral and legal debate over

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¹ For a review of realist thought on humanitarian intervention see Fiott (2013).
³ Although Bellamy (2003: 9) refers to Martin Wight’s three traditions of ‘realism, rationalism and revolutionism.’
intervention in terms of a binary, between human rights and state sovereignty. As Ayoob (2002: 82-83) asks, how does the increasing concern for human rights over the past few decades square with the cornerstone of international society: sovereignty? This is how the debate over intervention is most often framed. This thesis outlines and destabilises what I will argue is a false binary in the debate, between the human and the state. As I outline in Chapter 1, liberal thought produces such binaries, which serve a limiting function of legitimising particular institutions. The thesis will demonstrate the ways in which the traditional binary of the humanitarian intervention debate, between human rights and state sovereignty, has limited our ethical engagement and response to violence, by itself privileging violent institutions. As such it moves away from this literature in the IR tradition, towards critical security studies, which offers methodological tools for questioning the violent institutions at the heart of humanitarian intervention. Instead of asking ‘why intervene’? or ‘is intervention just?’ this thesis asks the question how has intervention been produced as a response to crisis.

The contribution of my dissertation lies not with building upon gaps in these literatures. Rather, my research springs from dissatisfaction with the inherent weaknesses and silences of liberal approaches to global politics, with one being an unwillingness to oppose the use of military force as a solution to complex political crises. As a result, my research is more similar in its critique to work which examines the uneasy relationship between liberalism and the use of force. This relationship points to a seemingly paradoxical ethics of intervention as humanitarian war. Campbell’s (1998) contribution makes a powerful case for rejecting the liberal framing of the intervention debate. He insists that beneath the question ‘why fight’ lies a series of “second order questions, of when, where, how, or who with and what with, one should fight” (Campbell 1998: 520). In a swipe at the liberal discourse on intervention, Campbell (1998: 521) argues that although we can focus on the “the materialisation of the [humanitarian] ethos in particular contexts … little can be achieved by searching for abstracted theoretical formulas.” It is in the spirt of Campbell’s call for serious engagements with the specific contexts of ‘emerging political complexes’ and the powerful institutions of international intervention that this thesis sets out its study of the case of Libya. Malmvig’s (2001) poststructuralist critique of intervention engages with similar themes, opposing the false binary that argues that sovereignty being eroded by the humanising forces of liberal rights. She argues that rather than erode sovereignty, legitimations of humanitarian intervention are reinforcing the norms of state sovereignty, with all its violences (Malmvig 2001: 252). Orford (2003) provides a critical postcolonial
and feminist reading of intervention, outlining the identities produced through liberal discourse on humanitarian intervention. Her book is a critical counter-balance to the liberal focus on international law that seeks to advance a legal case for intervention. Instead, she asks about the inequalities and hierarchical identities underlying liberal literature on abstracted ethics, rights and duties. The thesis takes inspiration from and shares similar concerns as these contributions from critical IR scholarship, this thesis can be more thoroughly located in the critical security studies rather than IR tradition. As such it is driven by concerns about the discourses and institutions of security, and the ways in which these intersect with moral discourses such as human rights and R2P.

R2P, Libya and resistance

In the past fifteen or so years there has been an increasing concern with the relationship between humanitarian intervention and R2P and human security. The norm of R2P arose from the report of the International Committee on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS 2001), which was commissioned to establish a framework for reconceiving international law in light of human-rights based interventions in the 1990s. There is a significant scholarly literature on R2P and intervention which examines the relative successes in implementing the aims, ideals and practice recommendations of the ICISS report (Bellamy 2009, 2011; Chesterman 2011; Evans and Sahnoun 2002; Pattison 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Weiss 2011, 2012). More recent work has focused on the role of R2P in Libya (Berti 2014; Cubukcu 2013; Jones 2011). Much of this work examines the legal, ethical or strategic implications of the deployment of R2P in Libya. For example, Dunne and Gifkins (2011) explore the place of humanitarian intervention after Libya, arguing that the intervention has furthered the legitimacy of the R2P norm. Thakur (2013) emphasises the need for international consensus in the wake of regime change in Libya in an R2P intervention. This literature frames itself as outlining the difficulties of implementing a cosmopolitan framework for action in a world in which sovereignty and non-intervention remain legal norms of international law. It can be located in a broader interest in human security as an emerging normative regime in global politics, as advanced most notably by Kaldor (2007).

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4 See also Thomas (2001).
The norm of R2P has been central to the NATO action in Libya as it was the first military intervention to be framed in these terms. The intervention in Libya has been termed the test-case of the emerging norm of R2P. Libya was the first time the UN Security Council authorised a military intervention for the protection of civilians, explicitly referring to R2P principles. Resolution 1973, which authorised the intervention, calls for “all necessary measures … to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack” in Libya (UN 2011: 3-4). It authorises intervention to “ensure the protection of civilians and … the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance” (UN 2011: 1). The resolution reaffirmed the importance of the principle of civilian protection, citing the Libyan regime’s abdication of this responsibility as the central cause of the intervention. The operation in Libya was invariably portrayed as a success of the norm for R2P and for the international community in supporting it. In the words of two prominent commentators, “Libya demonstrated R2P in action and proved that the principle can be applied successfully” (Axworthy and Rock 2011). Western and Goldstein (2011:50) argue that despite doubts about its viability, “NATO’s success in protecting civilians and helping rebel forces remove a corrupt leader [in Libya] has become more the rule of humanitarian intervention than the exception.” They hail the operation as evidence that since its failures in the early 1990s, “the international community has grown increasingly adept at using military force to stop or prevent mass atrocities”. Supporters of R2P see Libya as a notable milestone in the development of the international norm. Gareth Evans (2012), one of the authors of the ICISS report, declared that R2P had “come of age” in Libya, an intervention which he stated had saved thousands of lives. In an article entitled ‘End of the Argument: how we won the debate over stopping genocide’, Evans (2011) argues that the Libyan intervention “unquestionably worked – certainly in preventing a major massacre in Benghazi and arguably in preventing many more civilian casualties elsewhere than would otherwise have been the case.”

Western and Goldstein (2011: 50) also claim that “NATO's intervention in Libya reflects how the world has become more committed to the protection of civilians.” For Weiss (2011), Libya is indicative of the success of the R2P norm and its prioritisation of human life in foreign policy. He states that “Libya suggests that we can say no more Holocausts,

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5 The first UN resolution to refer to R2P principles in the context of a military conflict was Resolution 1769, which authorised the deployment of peacekeepers to the Darfur region of Sudan (UN 2007), but Resolution 1973 was the first time the Security Council had authorised force for the protection of civilians.
Cambodias, and Rwandas – and occasionally mean it” (Weiss 2011). For Weiss, Libya proves that powerful states will sometimes shoulder the costs of an intervention in a country with little geostrategic importance and slim chance of threatening national interests, but that even this is a noble improvement. Similarly, Pattison (2011a: 253) writes that the Libya intervention shows “that states are sometimes prepared to use military intervention in order to discharge their responsibility to protect vulnerable populations.” A military intervention framed in R2P terms is a step in the right direction, he argues, because it shows that ethical engagement with human rights and the protection of civilians is at least on the agenda of the international community, and will sometimes be acted upon. Bellamy (2011: 265) hails Libya as the intervention which shows that the “debates about preventing and responding to mass atrocities are no longer primarily about whether to act, but about how to act.” Similarly, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has gone as far as to say that now “our debates are about how, not whether to implement the Responsibility to Protect” (Evans 2012). Bellamy (2011: 264) argues that Libya is a vindication of R2P principles and the prioritisation of human protection by the international community. R2P is presented by its supporters as the ‘only game in town’. That it is imperfect, inconsistent and may need constant assessment is accepted, but the appositeness of the essential model is uncontested. The noble aims of the intervention, determined and codified in the ICISS report, are sufficient to frame the international response to Libya in 2011 as moral, effectively limiting examination of the intervention’s consequences.

The intervention in Libya has been judged a success by various foreign policy and military-strategic analysts. Michael O’Hanlon (2011a, 2011b) viewed the Libyan intervention as a success for the Obama administration and an ‘ugly’ victory for NATO, emphasising that “an ugly operation is not the same as a failed operation” (2011a). He notes at the end of March 2011 that the Libya operation was “off to a far better start” than the Kosovo intervention twelve years previously. At the end of August, when Tripoli was liberated from Gaddafi’s forces, O’Hanlon (2011b) proclaims the operation a limited provisional success for Obama’s evolving foreign policy doctrine, although cautiously emphasises the unique conditions in Libya which enabled such an intervention. Ivo Daalder and James G. Stavridis6 (2012: 3) argue that the Libya operation “has rightly been hailed as a model intervention.” Their piece is an exercise in institutional justification, as the authors proclaim that “NATO’s involvement in Libya demonstrated that the alliance remains an essential

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6 Respectively US Permanent Representative to NATO and NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR).
source of stability”. The successful intervention showed that “a politically cohesive NATO can tackle increasingly complex, and increasingly global, security challenges” (Daalder and Stavridis 2012: 4). Anders Fogh Rasmussen also celebrates NATO’s role in responding to the crisis in Libya. Seemingly challenging calls for further reductions to European defence spending, Fogh Rasmussen (2011a: 3) argues that “Libya is a reminder of how important it is for NATO to be ready, capable and willing to act.” The intervention shows that “military might still matters in twenty-first century geopolitics” and that in “an unpredictable environment, hard power can enable peace.” He outlines a number of potential security threats, insisting that “if European defence spending cuts continue, Europe’s ability to be a stabilising force even in its neighbourhood will rapidly disappear” (Fogh Rasmussen 2011a: 5). He goes on to reiterate the point that “the obvious solution to all these problems would be for Europe to spend more on defence” (Fogh Rasmussen 2011a: 6). Libya is the “wake-up call” to NATO’s European members to beef up defence spending to reverse its decline relative to US military pre-eminence. Speaking at the close of military operations in Libya, Fogh Rasmussen (2011b) claims that “we did the right thing, in the right way, and we achieved the right result.”

It is apparent, then, that the intervention in Libya has been framed in terms of a firm success, both in the liberal literature on R2P, and in the policy and strategy circles of Euro-American foreign policy. The intervention was framed in humanitarian and cosmopolitan terms of protecting civilians and supporting a democratic transition in Libya. This was not a war of aggression, but a war of protection and aspiration. Furthermore, it was judged that the intervention achieved its normative and strategic aims. The Libya case provides a salient recent example of this increasing fusion between narratives of progress, violence and democratisation/development and civilian protection. There is also a small but significant critical literature on the Libyan uprising, and the broader Western response to the Arab Spring. A portion of this critical literature has focused on Western policy as ‘post-interventionist resilience building’ (Chandler 2012) or ‘exporting neoliberal governmentality’ (Tagma, Kalaycioglu and Akcali 2013). In these terms, the intervention in Libya can be interpreted as part of a wider project to build resilient neoliberal subjects in post-authoritarian Middle East and North African (MENA) states, informed in large part by EU-level governmentality reforms (Joseph 2013). Much of this critical questioning can
be theoretically located in an interest in the biopolitics of war. The new interventionism of the post-9/11 era has been, in these accounts, informed by the imperatives of empowerment of self-governing neoliberal subjectivities rather than the desire to impose the liberal peace and control territories. This is an important literature that troubles cosmopolitan human rights and democratisation narratives by pointing out systemic logics of fostering resilient subjectivities and building stability. This thesis shares many of the concerns of this literature on the biopolitics of war, but departs from it in several key ways that I detail below. Specifically, the work presented here can be more thoroughly located in a small but significant literature in critical security studies on postcolonial imaginative geographies of violence. This is a literature that focuses on the intersection between time, space, subjectivity and violence.

Importantly, this critical postcolonial security studies literature opens a space for resistance to dominant imaginings in security discourse. There has been a significant strand of literature focusing on new modes of resistance in the context of the Arab Spring (Agathangelou and Soguk 2011; Grovogui 2011; Soguk 2011; Sassen 2011). In the context of this research, the discourse of success of R2P in Libya can be seen as an expression of the West struggling to retain some semblance of control over events in Libya and beyond, as people rose to challenge the received way of doing things in the MENA region, including historical Western complicity with authoritarian regimes there. Opondo (2011: 662-663) looks at the complex history of diplomatic entanglement between the intervening governments and Gaddafi’s regime, making a case that ‘duplicitous exchanges’ made Gaddafi’s Libya possible. Similarly, Sidaway (2012) contributes to a critical geopolitical engagement with Libya, detailing the historical imaginative geographies of Libya in the European imagination. This critical literature provides a welcome counter-narrative to the liberal proclamations about the successes of R2P and intervention in Libya. As Burgess and Constantinou (2013: 365) point out, “the political landscape of the Middle East is changing, and with it many of the rote certainties about how things are done or ought to be done in and with the region.” As ever, the complexities of a region and the contestation of subjectivities within it deserve careful critical attention that cuts through the received simplistic narratives of liberal intervention, democratisation from above, or neoliberal

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8 See the UK government’s policy report ‘Building Stability Overseas’ (HMG 2011), which emphasises the need to create systemic stability in the developing world to prevent crises, including a strong private sector.
development. My work sits against the backdrop of emerging critical engagements with the Libya intervention, in terms of both attempting to grapple with the logics of Western response to the crisis, and of understanding and conceptualising resistance in Libya in a way that escapes the assumptions of democratisation through violent intervention.

Concets and methodology

This thesis answers the primary research question of ‘how was violent military intervention produced as a reasonable response to the uprising in Libya?’ I ask how instead of why in order to move away from the notion of concrete interests and linear causality that predominates in realist and Marxist accounts of humanitarian intervention. I ask how instead of should to move away from the moral trap of liberal theorising on humanitarian intervention that forces the observer into a limited, and limiting debate over the justice of violence. I am more interested in the discourses surrounding violence and its justification, particularly in the ways in which we come to view violence and death as legitimate or otherwise. Asking this research question displaces the liberal debate by including its discourse in the terms of the production of violence. This methodological approach is informed by the assumption that there is no easy separation between the discursive and the material. The two categories are themselves a production of language, outside of which we cannot logically point to a material and external ‘reality’ which we can access without representation. As Judith Butler (1993: 8) states, “there is an ‘outside’ to what is constructed by discourse, but this is not an absolute ‘outside’, an ontological thereness that exceeds or counters the boundaries of discourse.” There is a material ‘reality’ in which we live, but our access to it is mediated by language. We can have no ‘pure’ representation of reality which is not in some way shaped by the interpretation and assumptions of the one who is doing the representing. What does this mean in the context of my question? Taking seriously the contributions of Butler means that I acknowledge that violence of war is produced discursively in the speeches of leaders and foreign secretaries as well as on the ground in Libya where bombs were dropped and buildings destroyed, or in the events of

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9 See Kissinger (1992), Mearsheimer and Walt (2003), Chomsky (1999) and Ali (2000). In different ways, work in these traditions seeks to identify ‘real’ motives behind humanitarian intervention.

10 Butler (1993: 8) effectively refutes criticisms of poststructuralism which reduce its claims to that of ‘there is no reality.’ She argues that “the point has never been that ‘everything is discursively constructed’; that point … belongs to a kind of discursive monism or linguisticsim that refuses the constitutive force of exclusion, erasure, violent foreclosure, abjection and its disruptive return within the very terms of discursive legitimacy.” Her point is that we should pay attention to the material impact of normalising discourse.
the 20 October 2011 described above. My research question asks how this violence comes into being in the discourse of humanitarian intervention, and in particular how violence comes to be seen as desirable, ethical and successful.

In addressing this research question, my interest focused on three main areas of enquiry: time, space and subjectivity. An interest in the distinctions of legitimate and illegitimate subjectivity drives my critique of liberal discourse on R2P and humanitarian intervention in Libya. In this respect the thesis builds upon critical studies in security that draw upon postcolonial contributions of Said, Bhabha and Spivak amongst others (Barkawi and Laffey 2006; Bilgin 2010; Mgbeoji 2006; Stanski 2009). There is also a well-established tradition of theorising subjectivity in critical IR theory. 11 This thesis draws upon this work to demonstrate the ways in which violence is mobilised to enforce lines of legitimate and illegitimate subjectivity. As Stern (2006: 187-188) argues, “attempts to secure a notion of ‘who we are’ invite violence when these notions are not shared by members of the community in question, when ‘who we are’ must be forcibly instilled through disciplinary tactics, when ‘who we are’ also depends on belligerently defining and even killing ‘who we are not.’” Similarly to this critical IR scholarship, my thesis draws upon the work of Foucault and Butler, who call for a questioning of the lines of legitimacy in dominant discourses on subjectivity. They argue that dominant accounts of the subject are in themselves violent, because they make distinctions about whose lives matter and about what types of lives are legitimate, as well as allowing for the disciplinary enforcement of legitimate subjectivity.

This focus on subjectivity can shed some light on the relationship between violence and inequality. My argument in this thesis is that the violence of intervention is underpinned by a continual process of othering, in which others are deemed illegitimate and marginal. In order to delineate this process I used the postcolonial notion of imaginative geography, deriving from the work of Said. In Orientalism (2003), Said argued that colonialism is produced through imaginations of others and their spaces as different, barbaric or dangerous. Imaginative geography is a tool with which to outline the relationship between violence and alterity, as imagined through space and subjectivity. It provides a counterbalance to dominant geographies that served as a tool of colonial authorities, and presented themselves as authentic knowledge about the other. Said (2003: 55) argues that “there is no

use in pretending that all we know about time and space, or rather history and geography, is more than anything else imaginative.” The imperative of imaginative geography is to uncover the imagined content of discourses that appear to be positive, definitive or authentic. The use of imaginative geography in critical social science has been popularised by Derek Gregory, whose (1995) article made a case for the use of Said’s work in critical human geography. His later work *The Colonial Present* (2004) demonstrated this potential in a critique of the ‘war on terror’ that sat at the intersection between critical geography, security studies and international politics. Similar critiques have been presented by Bialasiewicz et al. (2007) and Closs Stephens (2011). These works accept Said’s basic premise that the ways we think about history and geography are bound up with assumptions about legitimate subjectivity and its illicit others. Closs Stephens (2011: 260) argues that “the task of unpacking and resisting the imaginative geographies of the War on Terror must begin by interrogating the temporal narratives that underpin them and how the rhetoric of friends and enemies, good guys and bad, is made possible by an understanding of time as linear and progressive.” This thesis takes up this task in relation to humanitarian intervention in Libya rather than the ‘war on terror’, but the methodological commitments are the same. Identities are not produced in a vacuum, but are intertwined and co-constitutive with cultural mappings of space and time.

Part of my thesis looks at the processes of othering at play during the Libyan intervention, asking how Libyans were imagined as different and inferior. This is an important part of the dominant imaginative geography of ‘superior self’ and ‘inferior other’ that I argue underlie justifications for humanitarian intervention. As my research developed, however, I was increasingly drawn to the way in which violences were manifested in contexts ‘outside’ the normal frame of humanitarian intervention. I wanted to push further at the margins and limitations of humanitarian intervention by moving the frame beyond its received limits. The dominant frame of war in the context of humanitarian intervention, from liberal scholarship to elite discourse, views it as a limited application of violence, for ethical purposes, within a highly circumscribed space (the territory of Libya) and time (the period of the NATO operation between March and October 2011). The aim of the thesis is to destabilise this dominant frame by focusing outside of this limited context by building an

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12 See also Orford (2003: 82-125) on the imaginative geography of humanitarian intervention. Orford’s focus is a postcolonial reading of the texts of international law.

13 Hutchings (2008) and Inayatullah and Blaney (2004) have explored the role of time and history in imaginings of international politics.
imaginative geography of violence, complicity and insecurity that extends beyond the space of Libya, or Britain, or any of the other participants in intervention. My claim is that humanitarian intervention is sustained by an imaginative geography of territorial separation that excludes the realities of contemporary security practices. This claim builds upon an emerging but still marginal literature on critical geographies of violence (Dabashi 2012; Gregory 2004; Shapiro 2007, 2013). The thesis argues that the intervention in Libya should be understood in the context of a broad network of deterritorialised and privatised violence that involves a militarised immigration and asylum policy across the EU. My key claim is that war cannot be understood as a discrete activity that happens elsewhere in chaotic regions that can be ‘fixed’ through intervention. Rather, intervention is a part of a broader geography of violence in which the lines between war and peace, and between domestic and international, have become increasingly blurred.

Chapter outline

The thesis unfolds as follows. Chapters 1 and 2 provide the conceptual grounding of the rest of thesis by outlining the categories of space, time and subjectivity that inform the research question and subsequent empirical chapters. In Chapter 1 I set out a critique of liberal subjectivity at the basis of the human rights and human security claims of humanitarian intervention. The chapter provides a conceptual grounding for the critical analysis of subjectivity in humanitarian intervention in Libya that unfolds in the later chapters. The key claim of the chapter is that the Kantian image of the subject at the heart of human rights claims enables distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate subjects. The focus of the critique is on the dualism and universalism of liberal claims about the subject. It is my claim that universalism and dualism enable the distinctions and hierarchies of subjectivity underpinning contemporary security practices such as intervention. Chapter 2 outlines the spatio-temporal methodology that informs the analysis of the Libya intervention presented in the rest of the thesis. I outline a critique of two visions of liberal progressive teleology, in the work of Kant and Fukuyama. The chapter then outlines the ways in which a critical spatio-temporal methodology challenges these dominant liberal understandings of space and time. This has three points of critique. First, it depends upon a logic of separation in which spaces are clearly separate and bounded. This is necessary to the constitution of humanitarian intervention as a solution to crisis. The second point of critique of the liberal view of space/time is its progressive and universal nature. The third point of critique of the liberal imaginary of space and time focuses on the conflation of
speed and progress, drawing upon the work of Virilio to examine the way in which violence is narrative and legitimated through the fetishisation of technology.

Chapters 3 and 4 outline my case study of the international intervention in Libya in 2011. Chapter 3 identifies the process of othering in hegemonic Western texts on the Libyan intervention in 2011, which I argue is a key element in the production of violence in this context. The chapter builds a picture of dominant representations of Libyan subjectivities during the conflict in 2011. The chapter outlines the constitution of the subjectivity of the Libyan rebel across a range of texts, delineating the key features of representation of the rebels as juvenile, chaotic and potentially dangerous. The key claim of the chapter is that the intervention was sustained by a hierarchical ordering of subjectivities, between the chaotic and childlike rebels, and the mature parents of the intervening forces. It is through such discourses that intervention is continually reproduced as a legitimate and reasonable response to crisis. Chapter 4 further problematises the production of military intervention as limited and rational through the discourses of precision bombing and R2P. My aim in this chapter is to reveal the inconsistencies, instabilities and absurdities in the dominant discourse on humanitarian violence. I argue that R2P is troubled by a number of inconsistencies concerning the efficacy of precision bombing, refugee and migration policy, and the complicity of democracies in upholding authoritarian regimes.

Chapter 5 outlines the imaginative geographies contextualising humanitarian intervention in Libya. First, I look at the broader imaginative geography of intervention in which danger and crisis is constructed across the postcolonial world, informing a narrative of rescue, improvement and reform. I argue that intervention as a policy response is ‘written in’ to the script in which the spaces of others are represented as disordered, failing or failed. I argue that intervention is sustained by a broader network or geography of violence in privatised and deterritorialised security practices. As argued consistently throughout the thesis, these imaginative geographies of violence and failure are riven with assumptions about legitimate and illegitimate lives, and about who should be saved and who can be left to die. The chapter further destabilises the liberal narrative on intervention by examining alternative subjectivities produced by the war in Libya not featured in the dominant discourses on the uprising. The key claim of the chapter is that resistance in Libya was not solely violent, but was as diverse and multifaceted as all expressions of subjectivity. As such, we should resist the dominant imaginative geographies of failure and success that posit violence as
ameliorative and ethical. Examples of non-violent resistance cut through these binary imaginative geographies in a way that is distinctly challenging.

The underlying claim of the thesis is that liberalism serves as the ethical justification for a network of violence that is almost self-perpetuating. The logics of the system are so hardened in our collective imagination about the Western way of life that they appear difficult to challenge. Like a house of cards, the system of neoliberal violence of which humanitarian intervention is an increasingly important part, can appear to be so stable, rational and permanent as to be resistant to critique. However, also like a house of cards, it is vulnerable, insecure and fragile in many ways.14 These fragilities are systematically exposed through the thesis. They include the claims that some lives are worth more than others, that war has become a limited and ethical activity that saves lives, and that progress has been brought about through increasingly advanced and swift military technology. The call that this thesis answers is to challenge the rationality of violence to solve humanitarian crises. Its purpose is to oppose the claim that refusing to support military intervention is not to advocate isolationism or parochialism, but to refuse the claims of democracies that they are fighting for peace abroad even as they support arms industries that profit from murder the world over. It is to retain at once a caution that we may not have answers to problems of insecurity abroad, but that we can stand in solidarity with non-violent activists resisting their own oppressions and injustices everywhere.

14 I am grateful to Mohammed Ghalayini for pointing out this metaphor to me in relation to militarised orders that seem almost impossible to oppose.
1. A critique of the Kantian subject

Introduction

The dominant narrative on the purpose of humanitarian intervention is that it was an action proposed by the international community in response to absolute evil, to save civilian life and protect human rights. The rest of this thesis seeks to destabilise and challenge this narrative so that it no longer makes sense. The first part of this process is to examine and challenge the discourse on human rights in which intervention is framed. The purpose of this chapter is to question the conception of liberal subjectivity at the basis of human rights claims in humanitarian intervention. In order to do so I outline a critique of the liberal conception of subjectivity in the work of Kant, which I relate to contemporary practitioners and supporters of intervention. The philosophy of Kant has strongly influenced the normative and theoretical framework behind humanitarian intervention, and I frame his image of the transcendental subject as a basis for contemporary human rights claims in international politics. In the second part of the chapter I outline an alternative conception of subjectivity. This critique of the Kantian subject has three elements. The first part of the critique focuses on the idea that subjects are discursively produced rather than transcendent of material existence. The second part of the critique draws attention to the differentiation which underpins Kantian universalism. I draw upon Butler’s conception of grievability to highlight the vast inequalities of life chances which form the context of contemporary humanitarian intervention. The final section of the chapter builds upon this notion of differentiation by outlining the concepts of splitting and mimicry in postcolonial work. I argue here that an image of subjectivity in contemporary global politics should take seriously the importance of colonial legacies in contemporary subject formation. The concepts of splitting and mimicry provide a way of analysing subtle processes of differentiation and othering which as I argue in the later chapters, are integral to the production of violence in humanitarian intervention. The critique presented here highlights the weaknesses of the Kantian image of the subject, rooted in its dualism and universalism. These elements of the Kantian subject render it unable to consider the huge inequalities in the value of life, and processes of differentiation which contemporary humanitarian intervention depends upon and reproduces. By the chapter’s end I will have advanced a conception of subjectivity that is discursively performed and not transcendent, historically and contextually particular and not universal, and implicated in the production of the violence of law rather than a basis of peace through the creation of law.
The Kantian subject

Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* advanced his conceptions of reason and the subject, and is a key text of the liberal Enlightenment. His liberal conception of history and philosophy placed the subject at the foundation of all thought and reflection. In *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant was concerned with presenting the possibility of a universal science of philosophy. He distinguished between ‘pure’ and ‘empirical’ knowledge, the latter of which is concerned with objective phenomena and the former with transcendental categories. Transcendent, or *a priori* knowledge is “knowledge altogether independent of all experience… not such as is independent of this or that kind of experience, but such as is absolutely so of all experience” (Kant 2003: 1-2). Humans are capable of *a priori* knowledge because of the advanced level of cognition enabled by the human brain. *A priori* knowledge is universally applicable, a test which distinguishes specific, empirical knowledge from abstract and pure knowledge (Kant 2003: 3-4). In this way, Kant’s philosophy advanced a path between empiricism and rationalism, arguing that the unity and transcendence of reason allows us to present universal knowledge on abstract subject matter such as human existence and the trajectory of history. Kant (2003: 15) stated that reason “is the faculty which furnishes us with the principles of knowledge *a priori*. Hence, pure reason is the faculty which contains the principles of cognising anything absolutely *a priori*.” Reason is a transcendent faculty, by which is meant it is above existing phenomena and our cognition of them. Kant (2003: 4) stated that “certain of our cognitions rise completely above the sphere of all possible experience, and by means of conceptions, to which there exists in the whole extent of experience no corresponding object, seem to extend the range of our judgements beyond its bounds.” Reason belongs to a transcendent sphere which is separate to the materiality of existing phenomena, even of our own bodies. Our ideas, as well as reason, “become transcendent … they detach themselves completely from experience, and construct for themselves objects, the material of which has not been presented by experience” (Kant 2003: 317-318). This particular quality of humans enables reflection on matters of an abstract quality and of universal validity.

Kant’s conception of the subject of knowledge is progressive and universal. Humans are always capable improving and advancing gradually towards the historical endpoint of liberation. This is due in part to the “natural disposition of the human mind” (Kant 2003: 13). Human reason, he states:
without any instigations imputable to the mere vanity of great knowledge, unceasingly progresses, urged on by its own feeling of need, towards such questions as cannot be answered by any empirical application of reason, or principles derived therefrom (Kant 2003: 13).

The subject’s universality is based upon the foundational unity of consciousness. All subjects have the unique human capacity for transcendent reason. He states that “I conclude, from the transcendent conception of the subject which contains no manifold, the absolute unity of the subject itself” (Kant 2003: 213). The subject is indivisible in that it has a separate and unified sovereign existence. Our capacity for transcendent self-reflection separates us from our material surroundings and provides the basis for the unity of consciousness. Kant (2003: 227) states that “I cogitate myself in behalf of a possible experience, at the same time making abstraction of all actual experience; and infer therefrom that I can be conscious of myself apart from experience and its empirical conditions.” The subject is rooted in its material, empirical surroundings, but has the transcendent capacity to reflect beyond these conditions. He goes on to argue:

I consequently confound the possible abstraction of my empirically determined existence with the supposed consciousness of a possible separate existence of my thinking self; and I believe that I cognise that is substantial in myself as a transcendental subject, when I have nothing more in thought than the unity of consciousness, which lies at the basis of all determination of cognition (Kant 2003: 227).

At the basis of the unity of consciousness is the universal capacity for reason and self-conscious thought. Kant (2003: 81) writes that “the transcendental unity of apperception is alone objectively valid.” Our thoughts on empirical phenomena will not be equally and universally valid, but our capacity for transcendent reflection on empirical phenomena is universal, based as it is on (individual) experience rather than (universal) abstraction. Reason is ahistorical as well as universal. Kant (2003: 311) states that “reason is consequently the permanent condition of all actions of the human will … it must not be supposed that any beginning can take place in reason; on the contrary, reason as the unconditioned condition of all action of the will, admits of no time-conditions.” Reason transcends the specifics of history as well as the particulars of human experience. In sum, the Kantian subject is capable of abstract reason, a capacity which is transcendent of history and culture and is universal. These universal qualities provide the basis for the liberal belief in equality of all humans.
Kant’s belief in the unity and universality of the human subject provided the basis for his reflections in *Perpetual Peace* on the potential for international law to ameliorate the existence of humanity. In this essay Kant outlines the liberal dialectic between the savagery of human nature on the one hand, and the goodness of the law, protecting the rights of individuals, on the other. He states that “the depravity of human nature shows itself without disguise in the unrestrained relations of nations to each other, while in the law-governed civil state much of this is hidden by the check of government” (Kant 1915: 131). He advanced the Hobbesian argument that ungoverned society in the state of nature is anarchic and violent, and that this also characterises the contemporary international system. He argues that “a state of peace among men who live side by side is not the natural state, which is rather to be described as a state of war … Thus the state of peace must be *established*” (Kant 1915: 117-118). This notion is the basis of liberal thought on the social contract, which is said to establish the legitimacy of the state and the rule of law. In *Perpetual Peace* Kant outlines the idea of a covenant of peace between republics, to ensure against the constant possibility of war that threatens the liberty of free subjects. He argues that the nations that enter this covenant must be republican in constitution, which he argues is the “only constitution which has its origin in the idea of the original contract, upon which the lawful legislation of every nation must be based” (Kant 1915: 120). The republican constitution, Kant states, enshrines the idea of individual rights, and can therefore achieve universal peace. This is because free liberal subjects, whose rights are guaranteed under a republican constitution, will never consent to war since it is not in the best interests of individuals or humanity (Kant 1915: 122). However, Kant (1915: 122) believes that “in a government where the subject is not a citizen holding a vote … the plunging into war is the least serious thing in the world.”

Kant advanced a notion of international human rights law which was prescient in the extent it prefigured the twentieth century international legal framework. His vision of a perpetual peace is grounded in the notion of the free sovereign subject as the bearer of certain inalienable rights. The constitution of the republican nation is based upon and enshrines this natural right. The right to freedom guaranteed by the law is “the right through which I require not to obey any external laws except those to which I could have given my consent” (Kant 1915: 120). This is the principle of lawful independence, which is grounded in the transcendent unity of the subject and consciousness. He states that:

> [t]he validity of this hereditary and inalienable right, which belongs of necessity to mankind, is affirmed and ennobled by the principle of a lawful relation
between man himself and higher beings … This is so, because he thinks of himself, in accordance with these very principles, as a citizen of the transcendental world as well as of the world of sense (Kant 1915: 121).

This right to legal independence is universally applicable in theory, yet in practice is threatened by the selfishness of human nature. A legal order is needed in order to liberate humans from the anarchy of the state of nature. Kant (1915: 130) states that:

[the] attachment of savages to their lawless liberty, the fact that they would rather be at hopeless variance with one another than submit themselves to a legal authority constituted by themselves, that they prefer their senseless freedom to a reason-governed liberty, is regarded by us with the profound contempt as barbarism and uncivilisation and the brutal degradation of humanity.

The true potential of transcendent human reason and freedom can only be realised when people form a social contract and government, and submit their ‘lawless liberty’ to the higher freedom of legal equality. In the same way, Kant argued that in the international realm we are all once again in a state of nature, committing endless wars for the sake of petty interests which claim a huge stake in our lives and liberty. The fact that European rulers even submit to the notion, in theory, of human rights and liberty, indicates the potential for the perpetual peace to be realised. He states that:

[this] homage which every state renders – in words at least – to the idea of right, proves that, although it may be slumbering, there is, notwithstanding, to be found in man a still higher natural moral capacity by the aid of which he will in time gain mastery over evil principle in his nature, the existence of which he is unable to deny (Kant 1915: 132).

This sentence expresses the notion of perfectibility at the centre of the liberal Enlightenment; the idea which leads to the belief that man’s degraded human nature can be transcended by the creation of liberal institutions. Kant’s thought contains this intellectual struggle between an ideal notion of human goodness and the evil of violence and exploitation exhibited in the world around him.

Kant believed that reason would lead men to create a covenant of peace between nations. He stated that “reason, from her throne of the supreme law-giving moral power, absolutely condemns war as a morally lawful proceeding, and makes a state of peace, on the other hand, an immediate duty” (Kant 1915: 133-134). The logic of reason will lead men to realise that their liberation depends upon the creation of peace in the world. Once created, a pacific union will attract others when they are shown the benefits of living without the
threat of war, for as Kant (1915: 135) states “if Fortune ordains that a powerful and enlightened people should form a republic … this would serve as a centre of federal union for other states wishing to join, and thus secure conditions of freedom among states in accordance with the idea of the law of nations.” In this way individuals will enjoy a greater level of freedom within their own nations, and be at liberty to move between nations without the presumption of hostility. Kant advanced not only a liberal right to equality under the law, but a universal cosmopolitan ethic which transcends the law. He attests to the right of ‘universal hospitality’ when in other countries, which is the right “of a stranger entering foreign territory to be treated by its owner without hostility” (Kant 1915: 137). Here Kant pressed at the limits of liberal rights, stating that there must be some rights, by virtue of the equality of individuals, that go beyond what legal authority can guarantee. He urged for peaceful relations and coexistence despite local or cultural differences. This cosmopolitan ethic of responsibility to humanity rather than one’s own nationals is necessitated by the increasing interaction of people across the world. He stated that:

> [t]he intercourse, more or less close, which has been everywhere steadily increasing between the nations of the earth, has now extended so enormously that a violation of right in one part of the world is now felt all over it. Hence the idea of a cosmopolitan right is no fantastical, high-flown notion of right, but a complement of the unwritten code of law – constitutional as well as international law – necessary for the public rights of mankind in general and thus for the realisation of perpetual peace (Kant 1915: 140, emphasis added).

Kant insisted that his ideal of perpetual peace was no utopian dream but a necessary reform of the present system required by increasingly globalised relations between nations.

### The subject of human rights and human security

*Human rights*

The Kantian transcendent subject is at the basis of claims for a right, or duty, of humanitarian intervention. The issue of human rights became particularly prominent in the post-Cold War era, when it was viewed that the balance between the rights of states to inviolate sovereignty and the rights of humans to protection under international law was tipping in favour of the latter. Supporters of intervention call upon the normative and legal framework of international human rights law to claim that states have a duty of intervention to protect citizens in other states faced with massive human rights abuses. At the basis of this claim are three main texts of international law – the UN Charter (1945), the Universal
Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the Geneva Conventions (1949) and their Additional Protocols (1977). The UN Charter (1945: preamble) declares its commitment to “reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.” The UN Charter advances a liberal notion of the rights-bearing individual with transcendent value. It states, that all humans are equal in value, an equality which transcends the material conditions of their environment. The Universal Declaration (1948: preamble) reaffirms this belief in the fundamental rights of individuals, stating that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” It states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” (UN 1948: 1). Echoing Kant’s notion of the equality of lawful independence, it contains the pledge that “everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law” (UN 1948: 6). The Geneva Conventions codify the protection of human rights during conflict, both for civilians and combatants. These texts of international law advance the cause of universal and inalienable human rights regardless of the particularity of one’s identity. Accordingly, human rights are viewed as inalienable, fundamental, and universal. The texts of the UN Charter, Universal Declaration and Geneva Conventions codified at an international level for the first time the liberal tradition of rights advanced in the work of Kant, Rousseau, Paine and Montesquieu among others, and expressed through the American and French revolutions.

Supporters of intervention often point out that the UN Charter creates a contradiction in international law between the rights of the individual and the rights of states. It is in this space of legal ambiguity that the case for a right to humanitarian intervention is made. First, the Charter affirms a belief in the “sovereign equality of all its members” (UN 1945: I, 2). It also states that “nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state” (UN 1945: I, 2). Yet it also states that the UN and its members may “take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security” (UN 1945: VII, 42). This presents an ambiguity, where the UN supports universal and equal human rights as well as the right to state sovereignty and non-intervention, yet also contains a clause allowing for intervention to restore peace and security. According to supporters of intervention, this ambiguity in the UN Charter allows for military interventions without the consent of the state in question, in the defence of universal
human rights. It is held by many liberals that the rights of individuals, codified and protected in the above texts, deserve more protection in international law than states. The burden of proof should fall with the perceived aggressor to show that human rights are being respected, not with the intervening state. Shue (2004) states that the ‘basic rights’ of individuals require there to be certain limits on sovereignty. The right to basic physical security, which he states is a “relatively uncontroversial feature of individual rights”, provides the specific limit to state sovereignty not to be permitted to allow genocide (Shue 2004: 11). Shue argues that if this right is not protected by the international community, then we are denying the basic universality and indivisibility of human rights. He states that:

[i]f we do not believe that anyone beyond their own state can reasonably be asked to bear the responsibility of protecting these people against the single most serious threat to their lives – their own state – we do not believe in any practically meaningful way that they have a basic right not be killed (Shue 2004: 21).

Ignoring massive human rights abuses or genocide in another country is tantamount to promoting the differential value of rights, favouring the rights of one’s fellow citizens over those abroad. Affirming support for universal human rights must involve supporting at least a limited framework for ensuring the protection of those rights. Shue (2004: 26) states that “those who do believe in universal rights believe in social arrangements that include the provision of a reasonable level of protection against certain dangers, including the danger – highlighted in theory, at least, since Hobbes – of sudden death at the hands of hostile others.” This encapsulates the liberal dialectic between perfectible human value and the corruption of human nature. The solution for Shue is to allow a right of intervention to protect abuses of human rights. This requires, he states, “an acknowledgement of even a limited and carefully specified duty to contribute to the protection of a basic right, like the right not to be killed” (Shue 2004: 27). This protection of “non-compatriots would constitute one important piece of a sense that, besides national societies, there is also an international society with some minimal general duties attached to the most basic rights” (Shue 2004: 27).

Liberals like Shue believe that an intervention should take place in cases of (actual or threatened) large-scale human rights abuses or genocide. The Universal Declaration (1948: preamble) notes that “disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind.” Support for intervention arises from a dissatisfaction that not enough is done to ensure that human rights are respected. It
recognises the fallibility of human nature and the failure of humanity to protect human rights. Evans (2002) states that “few things have done more harm to our shared ideal that we are all equal in worth and dignity, and that the earth is our common home than the inability of the community of states to prevent genocide, massacre and ethnic cleansing.” He argues that the just cause of intervention includes only two scenarios. The first is “large scale loss of life, actual or apprehended, with genocidal intent or not, which is the product either of deliberate state action, or state neglect or inability to act, or a failed state situation” (Evans 2002). The second is “large scale ‘ethnic cleansing,’ actual or apprehended, whether carried out by killing, forced expulsion, acts of terror, or rape” (Evans 2002). Most supporters of intervention set the bar deliberately high for practical reasons. Weiss (2007: 12) refers to “the threat or actual occurrence of large-scale loss of life, massive forced migrations, and widespread abuses of human rights – in brief – acts that shock the conscience.” Annan (1999) pressed for intervention in cases to halt “the gravest crimes against humanity.” Walzer (2006: 107), who advocates only a ‘thin’ or negative conception of cosmopolitan duty, claims that “humanitarian intervention is justified when it is a response (with reasonable expectations of success) to acts ‘that shock the moral conscience of mankind.’” Massive abuses of human rights are advanced in this way as the just cause of a military intervention.

**Human security**

Liberal interventionists in the 1990s and beyond struggled with a perceived contradiction between the transcendent perfectibility of humans, and the imperfect and violent actions of armed groups. It was observed that a breakdown of order in some states was resulting in ethnic conflict, lawlessness and human rights abuses constituting a threat to international peace and stability and warranting external intervention. The UN’s Human Development Report (1994) advocated a progressive notion of human security, to temper the statist security doctrines of the Cold War era. The report states that “the concept of security has for too long been interpreted too narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy … It has been related more to nation-states than to people” (UN 1994: 22). The report reaffirmed the UN’s belief in fundamental and universal human rights, stating that “human security is a universal concern. It is relevant to people everywhere, in rich nations and poor” (UN 1994: 22). Humans are essentially perfectible, but are prevented from developing by their degraded or insecure environment. The report states that “human beings are born with certain potential
capabilities ... the real foundation of human development is universalism in acknowledging the life claims of everyone” (UN 1994: 13). Universalism was at the basis of the new notion of human security. The Human Development Report states that universalism “implies the empowerment of people. It protects all basic human rights – economic and social as well as civil and political – and it holds that the right to food is as sacrosanct as the right to vote” (UN 1994: 12-13). The idea was to prioritise the rights of humans over the rights of states to abuse their power of sovereignty. In this sense, universalism “focuses directly on human beings – respecting national sovereignty but only as long as nation-states respect the human rights of their own people” (UN 1994: 14). The report argued that the innate potential of all humans was being held back by underdeveloped, insecure and violent environments, and that tackling this by ensuring basic security needs were met would promote sustainable development for all.

Kaldor is one of the prominent supporters of human security. She views human security as combining “minimum core aspects of both human development and human rights” (2007: 184). The rights element requires the primacy of human rights over respect for state sovereignty. This has become the central problematic, according to Kaldor, of analysts and practitioners of foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. Kaldor (2007: 191) attests to a link between material insecurity and physical insecurity. Ethnic conflict and massive human rights abuses are more likely to take place in areas which are economically underdeveloped and where there is high youth unemployment. Measures to tackle these new wars should include development strategies as well as traditional military efforts. Kaldor (2007: 191) states that “a human security approach would aim both to stabilise conflicts and to address the sources of insecurity.” This means it would combine a traditional security focus on the rule of law with development activities such as the creation of public works programmes, institution-building, education and social services provision, and healthcare (Kaldor 2007: 193-195). Development activities have been combined with defence or military activities in this security-development nexus, an institutional network to tackle violence and underdevelopment. 15 Human security has become prominent in mainstream security studies, representing a liberal and cosmopolitan intervention into a discipline traditionally dominated by structural realism. Furthermore, it has become integrated into the security strategies of liberal states. The UK government’s Strategic Defence and Security Review (2010) advocated the integration of security, defence and development capacities of

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government. It called for a “coordinated cross-government effort overseas to build the capacity of priority national security and fragile states to take increasing responsibility for their own stability” (HMG 2010: 11). This would require “combining defence, development, diplomatic, intelligence and other capabilities” (HMG 2010: 11). Part of this combined cross-departmental strategy would involve “an effective international development programme making the optimal contribution to national security within its overall objective of poverty reduction” (HMG 2010: 11). The report advocated closer cooperation and coordination between Department for International Development (DfID) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD), who have since released a joint security strategy named the ‘Building Stability Overseas Strategy.’ Suffice to say, human security has become integrated into the mainstream of security policies in Western states, which have sought to combine security and development strategies in line with the UN Human Development Report of 1994.

According to some this changing security environment necessitated an alteration in the notion of sovereignty. This view was advanced by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, and later the International Committee on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS). Annan believed that human rights had become incontrovertible norms of the post-Cold War era. He claims that:

individual sovereignty – by which I mean the fundamental freedom of each individual, enshrined in the charter of the UN and subsequent international treaties – has been enhanced by a renewed and spreading consciousness of individual rights. When we read the charter today, we are more than ever conscious that its aim is to protect individual human beings, not to protect those who abuse them (Annan 1999).

The normative atmosphere in the international community was seen as more conducive to the acceptance of human rights norms after the Cold War. Annan’s position is that the ambiguity of the UN Charter between human rights and state sovereignty has been settled by history in favour of the former, articulated in his claim that “states are now widely understood to be instruments at the service of their peoples, and not vice versa” (Annan 1999). Few would attest to an inviolable right of sovereignty in the contemporary world, he argues. This changed normative environment reflects the changing security environment after the end of the Cold War. In this new context, threats to human security often come from citizens’ own states rather than foreign nations. This requires the establishment of a norm of intervention and the imposition of limits on the right to sovereignty. Annan (1999) argues that “[i]f states bent on criminal behaviour know that frontiers are not an absolute
defence – that the council will take action to halt the gravest crimes against humanity – then they will not embark on such a course assuming they can get away with it.” The norm of intervention would be preventive, as states will not assume they have impunity. To this end, Annan (1999) insists that:

it is essential that the international community reach consensus – not only on the principle that massive and systematic violations of human rights must be checked, wherever they take place, but also on ways of deciding what action is necessary, and when, and by whom.

Sovereignty has been redefined, according to Annan, by the twin forces of economic globalisation on the one hand, and an increasing normative consensus in favour of human rights on the other. The right to sovereignty must no longer be used as a cover for the commission of massive human rights abuses. Annan recommends an end to unchecked sovereignty, and the creation of a normative and legal framework to ensure intervention in extreme cases.

Annan’s call for a revised right to sovereignty was crystallised in the report of the ICISS in December 2001. The Commission was convened by then Canadian Prime Minister Jean Cretien, and members were chosen by the Canadian government to represent a broad cross-section of the world. The purpose of the report was to address the role of sovereignty in cases of humanitarian crisis. The ICISS’s work was commissioned shortly after the Kosovo intervention, which controversially proceeded without UN authorisation. Annan did not support or oppose the intervention, but argued that it must awaken the international community to the tension between human security and state sovereignty. The legacy of Kosovo can also be seen in the ICISS report, which cautiously attempted to tread a line between sanctioning an expanded right of intervention and protecting against great power abuse of this right. The report sought to reconfigure humanitarian intervention from its image as just another weapon of the strong against the weak. It altered the language of the debate from one of a ‘right of intervention’ to a ‘responsibility to protect’, noting that this responsibility falls first with the sovereign state in which rights are being abused. The report states that “the language of past debates arguing for or against a ‘right to intervene’ by one state on the territory of another state is outdated and unhelpful. We prefer to talk not of a ‘right to intervene;’ but of a ‘responsibility to protect’” (ICISS 2001: 12). If the state abdicates this responsibility, by failing to protect its own citizens or committing violence against them, then it falls to the international community to take on the burden of protecting that state’s population. It was hoped that the furthering of this protection norm
would soften the right of state sovereignty, eroding states’ capacity to commit violence against their own populations. Noting the increased prominence of human rights and human security discourse after the end of the Cold War, the ICISS participants hoped to build upon what they perceived to be an emergent regime of humanitarian concern. The responsibilities codified in the ICISS report were threefold: to prevent, to react and to rebuild. Essentially, the report solidified existing notions of conflict prevention, humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding under a unified normative rubric. It hoped to chip away at the perceived rigidity of sovereignty by altering the terms of the debate about intervention and supporting an emerging normative regime based upon universal human rights and the protection of the individual. Although suffering from inconvenient timing as the commission reported to the UN in December 2001, when world attention was on the recent terrorist attacks in the US, and the subsequent war in Afghanistan, the ICISS has succeeded in gaining traction in international crisis response. The report’s findings were formally supported by the United Nations Security Council in 2006 in a resolution which reaffirms the international community’s responsibility to protect civilians in conflict (UN 2006: 3). The R2P norm has placed itself firmly on the international agenda of crisis response, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has gone as far as to say that now “our debates are about how, not whether to implement the Responsibility to Protect” (Evans 2012).

In sum, this section has outlined the theoretical lineage from the Kantian subject of human rights and international law to the contemporary humanitarian intervention debate. Kant set out a theory on the transcendent, autonomous subject at the basis of liberal thought. This subject is capable of reason, which enables her to transcend her material surroundings and achieve abstract reflection on matters of universal validity. The subject is perfectible, in that she is potentially good and capable of progressive improvement. The creation of institutions of government reflects the essentially perfectible nature of humans, as they sacrifice short term selfish gains for long term peace in escaping the state of nature. Human nature is by contrast also potentially evil, and the insecurity of the state of nature shows the corrupt and base influences of unchecked human desires. This tension between progressive human ideas and institutions and the depraved nature of the environment is reflected in contemporary liberal thought on security and intervention. Post-Cold War human security discourse expresses this tension through the claim that individuals’ potential has been corrupted by their underdeveloped surroundings. Humanitarian intervention discourse reproduces this dialectical tension between the essential goodness of human nature and the
degradation of corrupt institutions and elites in underdeveloped regions. It is posited that underdevelopment, backwardness and moral degradation requires the international community to transcend the currently existing legal framework if necessary to protect the interests of civilians in conflict zones, or being threatened with massacre at the hands of their own government. To this end the right of sovereignty underwent considerable rethinking at the end of the 1990s, prompted by the interventions, and failed interventions of that decade. The aim of this section has been to highlight the conception of human nature and the liberal subject at the heart of the discourse of humanitarian intervention. This liberal conception of the subject frames intervention and makes it intelligible. The section below explores challenges to this notion of subjectivity at the basis of calls for interventions to protect human rights, in order to begin to destabilise the terms in which intervention is produced.

**Critique of the liberal subject**

This section outlines a critique of the Kantian subject that is based upon three main points. First, I outline the way in which subjectivity should not be understood as existing in a transcendent realm outside of material or discursive existence. Instead, we need to contextualise subjectivity as embedded in language and discourse. The first section of this critique uses the work of Butler to emphasise the importance of discourse in our understanding of subjectivity. I argue that subjects are not transcendent of material reality but are firmly embedded in it through the ubiquity of discourse. By this I mean that all material reality is mediated through language, including our conceptions of ourselves and others. The subject is discursively produced rather than independent of language and materiality. The second point of critique of the Kantian image of the subject focuses on its invisible exclusions and hierarchies. The attempt to create a universal foundation of identity concealed a profoundly differentiating philosophical project that was allied with the crude violence of colonial conquest in the mission to establish the grounds of legitimate subjectivity and humanity. This part of the chapter uses Butler’s concepts of grievability and framing to outline the ways in which liberal subjectivity is fraught with invisible distinctions and divisions between legitimate lives and those who do not count. Framing emphasises the importance of the ways in which we come to see subjects as legitimate or
The third point of critique I outline here focuses on the importance of historical context in the production of subjects, in particular the colonial and postcolonial contexts. Kant’s liberal philosophy should be located in its historical context of expanding European conquest of other nations, and the growth of a body of work during the Enlightenment that complemented this process through a narcissistic conception of superior European identity. Postcolonial critique situates and historicises Enlightenment liberal thought on the subject by taking it to task for its complicity with a massive project of imperial violence, colonialism and economic exploitation. This final part of the chapter’s critique of the Kantian liberal subject outlines the contributions of postcolonialism to our understanding of subjectivity. In order to do so I focus on the concepts of splitting and mimicry in the creation of colonised and postcolonial subjectivities, and the ways in which they point to the role of binary hierarchies. This part of the chapter builds upon Butler’s notion of grievability, to help understand the differential basis of contemporary identities in international politics, and the ways in which they underpin practices of violence.

Performativity and the liberal subject

In the first part of the chapter I outlined the Kantian image of the subject, which is universal, transcendent, and the foundational basis of liberal institutions of law and state. The argument presented here is that subjects do not exist prior to experience or language, but are produced through discourse. This means that we cannot distinguish between an *a priori* subject of knowledge and its production through particular discourses of knowledge. This idea was advanced by Foucault, who inverts the Kantian question ‘How do I know?’ to ask instead ‘How has knowledge produced the subject?’ Foucault’s (1978: 12) later work was directed towards this question of how subjects have been discursively produced as an object and target of disciplinary and normalising power. What does it mean to say that subjects are discursively produced? Foucault (1978: 139) argues that the modern era has been characterised by a shift in political power which has taken human life as its object. This focus on human life has two poles, the first of which concentrates on the disciplinary power over the “body as machine,” and the second on the regulatory control over the “species body” or general population (Foucault 1978: 139). This emergence of what Foucault terms ‘biopower’ is accompanied and enabled by the epistemological delineation

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16 I build on this aspect of critique in the following chapter, in which I argue that the narrative of universal and progressive teleological time in the work of Kant and Fukuyama creates the basis for differentiation between hierarchical subjectivities.
of the human subject as an object of thought. This time marks the emergence of the human subject as a discursive production. Foucault (1970: 336) states that “before the end of the eighteenth century, man did not exist … but he has grown old so quickly that it has been only too easy to imagine that he had been waiting for thousands of years in the darkness for that moment of illumination in which he would finally be known.” Thus, Foucault argues that the subject should be considered not only as discursively produced, but as constituted in the context of specific power relations. Biopolitics describes a form of power that individualises and separates, in the discursive context of modern notions of subjectivity. Foucault (1982: 781) states that:

this form of power applies itself to everyday life which categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise and which others have to recognise in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects.

The implications of Foucault's contributions are twofold. First, they point to the importance of the way in which subjectivity is discursively constituted through disciplinary and biopolitical power. This directs empirical research towards the discursive constitution of norms, rather than the discovery of objective knowledge. Secondly, they draw attention to the context of power relations in which subjectivity is produced. This leads to questions such as: what institutional setting frames the production of subjects in a particular discourse? This question is addressed in Chapter 5, which looks at the context of an institutional network of violence surrounding humanitarian intervention.

Through what processes can we conceptualise the production of subjectivity in discourse? The conception of performativity is used to frame the process of subject formation analysed in this thesis. Performativity questions the singular notion of human identity in liberal thought. Instead, it outlines a fluid and dynamic constitution of subjectivity in which identity is performed against a backdrop of discursive norms. Butler refuses to accept the liberal notion of autonomous and stable subjects, and instead problematizes the production of identity. She states that “there is no power that acts, but only a reiterated acting that is power in its persistence and instability” (Butler 1993: 9). Butler posits a dynamic process of production and reproduction through citation of pre-existing discourse. She states that “performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate ‘act,’ but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (Butler 1993: 1). According to Butler, this escapes the metaphysical prioritisation of a master signifier, whether the Kantian subject, or discourse, or power. Rather, performativity
is understood as “that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains” (Butler 1993: 2). There is no *a priori* subject with the power to construct, but rather human subjects are always involved in the reproduction of discourse, which also produces the conditions of their own possibility. For example, gender is performed by subjects who cite gendered discourses existing around them. This process of citationality escapes the idea of a unified sovereign subject. Butler (1993: 7) states that if gender is constructed “it is not necessarily constructed by an ‘I’ or a ‘we’ who stands before that construction in any spatial or temporal sense of ‘before.’” Instead, gender and other social norms and identities are performed through the act of being. A major contribution of the notion of performativity is to do away with the idea of a universal and transcendent subject. The notion of this liberal subject has been performed through dominant discourses to the extent that it constitutes a *normalising* discourse on subjectivity. Butler points to the impossibility of transcendence and universality, calling instead for a radically contextualised notion of the subject which is thoroughly located in the normalising operations of power.

In contextualising subjects in particular power relations, Butler does not claim that subjects are *determined* by their contexts in such a way that erases agency. Rather, it is to state that subjects cannot escape or transcend the particular power relations which produce normalising discourses on what constitutes a legitimate subject. In relation to gender, Butler (1993: 7) argues that “to claim that the subject is itself produced in and as a gendered matrix of relations is not to do away with the subject, but only to ask after the conditions of its emergence and operation.” The aim is to draw attention to the power relations which frame the discursive constitution of subjectivity. In the context of gender, Butler argues that all subjects come into being in the discursive context of a binary system of gender relations. To name these power relations is to begin to question their presumed universal validity, and call attention to the ways in which they produce hierarchical presuppositions. Like Foucault, Butler argues that we cannot escape the range of discursive possibilities set by the conditions of our present. This does not mean submitting to the conditions set by hegemonic discourse, but that we should accept that there are limits to the discursive possibilities we are able to imagine. However, Butler does not imbue discourse with a determining capability. She denies the claim that there is “a singular matrix that acts in a singular and deterministic way to produce a subject as its effect” (Butler 1993: 8). To do so would be to remain trapped in a metaphysics of creation and determination, whose grammar she is attempting to disturb. Performativity involves the citation of a normative discourse rather than the *a priori* creation of one’s own identity. Butler draws on Derrida,
who uses the concept of citationality to emphasise the derivative nature of all discourse and speech acts within it. She states that “Derrida makes clear that [performative] power is not the function of an originating will, but is always derivative” (Butler 1993: 13). Perfomativity, in relation to subjectivity, consists of “a set of actions mobilised by the law, the citational accumulation and dissimilation of the law that produces material effects, the lived necessity of those effects as well as the lived contestation of that necessity” (Butler 1993: 12).

Butler’s notion of performativity has important implications for the critique of humanitarian intervention presented in this thesis. Identity is viewed as performed, allowing us to reject the notion of stable sovereign identity advanced by mainstream normative or structuralist accounts of international politics. This performance takes place against a backdrop of the discursive constitution of particular norms. In this sense, the idea of performativity allows for an examination of the subtle distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate subjectivities, and the ways in which they are violently reinforced in international practices. Performativity pays particular attention to the context of power relations that shape the production of subjectivity. This is the theoretical implication of the notion of performativity that provides an effective challenge to the transcendent and universal account of liberal subjectivity. Butler points to the importance of power relations in producing normalising discourses. This means that dominant discourses produce norms of legitimate subjectivity, which is to say that they divide and produce boundaries. In the context of my research, this thesis asks how the discourse of universal cosmopolitan identity advanced through intervention and R2P produces particular subtle distinctions between who is legitimate and who is illegitimate. These distinctions form the context of R2P in practice in Libya, where not all subjects were deemed to be worthy of saving, despite the universal pretentions of its normative discourse. The ways in which these distinctions played out in the Libyan context are examined in Chapters 4 and 5. The section below examines this process of normalisation and outlines the implications for its application to my research.

Normalisation and differentiation in the production of subjectivity

How can we critique the operation of power in the context of the production of subjectivity? First, we can pay attention to the institutional context in which discourses are produced. In his later work, Foucault focused on the institutional settings through which subjectivity was produced and normalised. An important implication of Foucault’s critique
of liberal societies is that the production of subjectivity is far too often exclusionary and violent. Echoing Benjamin’s ‘Critique of Violence’, Foucault (1984b: 85) counters liberal narratives of progress and humanisation, arguing that “[h]umanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination.” These rules are codified in the institutional settings of the prison, army barracks, school and hospital. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault describes the emergence of disciplinary power, acting upon individuals in the system of punishment evolving in Europe from the late eighteenth century. Liberal narratives posit the modern penal system as a more progressive and improved version of punishment when compared with the more spectacular bodily violences of medieval justice. Foucault points out that the development of modern penal systems reflected the embedding of disciplinary power throughout societies, and was violent in a different way to the system that preceded it. One effect of the extension of disciplinary power through various institutions is the production of legitimate subjects. As in his later work on biopower, *Discipline and Punish* describes how the body becomes the “object and target of power” (Foucault 1977: 136). Through detailing the production of the body as a site of punishment and control in the modern age, Foucault traces the emergence of individualisation. This process of individualisation enables the hierarchisation of and differentiation between individuals (Foucault 1977: 182-183). The new regime of disciplinary power “compares, differentiates, hierarchises, homogenises, excludes. In short, it normalises” (Foucault 1977: 183). Disciplinary power determines the norm, and so too exceptions to the norm.

For Foucault, an important task of critical theory is to interrogate the lines of differentiation in the creation of modern subjects. He describes a critical ethos or “limit-attitude” as one which is concerned with the limits in knowledge which normalise and hierarchise while claiming to be universal (Foucault 1984a: 46). Butler argues that the normalising process of subject formation in liberal discourse is necessarily unstable. She states that it is “by virtue of this reiteration that gaps and fissures are opened up in the constitutive instabilities in such construction, as that which escapes or exceeds the norm, as that which cannot be wholly defined or fixed by the repetitive labour of that norm” (Butler 1993: 10). The delimitation of ‘the material’ in discourse is “enacted as an untheorised presupposition in any act of description, [and] marks a boundary that includes and excludes, that decides, as it were, what will and will not be the stuff of the object to which we then refer” (Butler 1993:
This boundary is the realm of the transgressive intervention of the critical theorist, the purpose of which is to highlight and question the limits that include and exclude. The materialisation of norms involves the epistemological violence of determining the boundaries of legitimate and intelligible subjectivity, which Foucault and Butler argue should be called into question by critical theory. Butler argues that subject formation remains haunted by the concurrent process of determining who falls beyond the boundaries of legitimate subjectivity. The “exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet ‘subjects’, but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject” (Butler 1993: 2). Creating the boundaries of intelligible subjectivity means that some excess falls over these boundaries.

The exclusionary processes of subject formation are relevant to the practice of humanitarian intervention where the lines of legitimate and illegitimate subjectivity are drawn sharply and from a great height through the violence of aerial bombing. Der Derian argues that war has shifted from the virtual to the virtuous plane after the end of the Cold War. He states that the rise of virtuous war is marked not only by the moralising tone of humanitarian interventions, but by the massive differentiation of risk in the deployment of violence. Der Derian (2009: 244) notes that “at the heart of virtuous war is the technical capability and ethical imperative to threaten and, if necessary, actualise violence from a distance – with no or minimal casualties.” In virtuous wars the massive inequalities of life chances already existing in the world are amplified and violently policed through the (one-sided) deployment of advanced destructive technology, albeit in operations which are represented as “bloodless, humanitarian [and] hygienic.” To examine these lines of differentiation in subject formation in contemporary wars, Butler uses the concepts of precarity and grievability. She argues that recent Western wars have been marked by huge inequalities of vulnerability to violence. With reference to the ‘war on terror’, Butler (2004: xiv-xv) argues that:

some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and which kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human: what counts as a liveable life and a grievable death?

Butler contends that grievability is inextricably linked with to the willingness to commit violence against particular populations. She states that “[t]here are ways of distributing
vulnerability, differential forms of allocation that make some populations more subject to arbitrary violence than others” (Butler 2004: xii). In this context, the question of which lives are grievable and which are not appears shot through with questions of complicity with and responsibility for state violence. As a result, Butler (2004: 20) is seized by questions of what counts as a legitimate human, and whose lives are grievable. Butler’s work on grievability and vulnerability draws our attention to the differential processes in subject formation and their enabling role in the violence of foreign policy. The representational practices of subject formation come into view as not only implicated in the material violence of state foreign policy, but as a constitutive part of it.17

Butler’s work on the designation of legitimate and illegitimate subjectivity informs my critique of the intervention in Libya in 2011 by providing conceptual tools to uncover the exclusionary practices of subject formation underpinning the deployment of violence in Libya. Grievability informs humanitarian intervention by designating lives as legitimate targets for the massive violence from a distance of virtuous war. Beneath the claims that humanitarian intervention saves lives, there are distinctions between whose lives are worthy of saving, and whose can be legitimately sacrificed in the process. These distinctions are informed by the lines of legitimacy underlying the universal liberal subject. Butler (2004: 33) states that “[i]f violence is done against those who are unreal, then, from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated in the first place.” One cannot kill if the life being taken was not a liveable life to begin with. To illustrate this, Butler draws attention the politics of mourning and remembrance. The victims of US wars are rarely remembered with obituaries, remembrance, or even body counts. This is because, as Butler (2004: 34) argues, “[i]f there were to be an obituary, there would have to have been a life, a life worth noting, a life worth valuing and preserving, a life that qualifies for recognition.” Butler posits ungrievable lives as the necessary excess of nation building and legitimate subject formation. The designation of legitimate sovereign subjects will always result in an excess of illegitimate non-life. The questions to be asked in my case study of Libya then include: what lives were considered ungrievable in the course

17 On this relationship, Butler (2004: 36) argues that “dehumanisation’s relation to discourse is complex. It would be too simple to claim that violence simply implements what is already happening in discourse, such that a discourse on dehumanisation produces treatment, including torture and murder, structured by the discourse. Here the dehumanisation emerges at the limits of discursive life, limits established through prohibition and foreclosure. There is less a dehumanising discourse at work here than a refusal of discourse that produces dehumanisation as a result. Violence against those who are already not quite living, that is, living in a state of suspension between life and death, leaves a mark that is no mark.”
of the intervention? Which subjects are left outside of the legitimate designation of ‘liberated’ or ‘saved’ subjectivities? What kinds of subject are produced as legitimate and illegitimate through the discourse of R2P?

These questions of the violent implications of subject formation in foreign policy lead to reflection on the ways in which subjects are framed. Butler’s *Frames of War* (2010) challenges the received narrative framings through which we understand war as intelligible or legitimate in cultural discourse. Here Butler urges for sensitivity to the ways in which legitimate subjectivity is produced in particular frames, and the implications of these frames in practices of violence. She states that frames mark the operation of power in producing grievable life. Butler (2010: 3-4) argues that “the ‘frames’ that work to differentiate the lives we can apprehend from those we cannot … not only organise visual experience but also generate specific ontologies of the subject. Subjects are constituted through norms which, in their reiteration, produce and shift the terms through which subjects are recognised.” She highlights the importance of the frame to draw attention to the ways in which we come to see subjects as legitimate or otherwise. The framing of illegitimate subjectivity is intimately implicated in the deployment of violence. As Butler (2010: 7) notes, “there is no life or death without a relation to some frame.” Shock and outrage accompany the victimhood of particular subjects, such as those who died in the twin towers, fallen coalition soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, and those who were kidnapped and killed by extremists in Afghanistan. To draw attention to the inequality in grievability of those lives lost to war is not to denigrate or underplay the losses that these deaths present. Rather, it is to draw attention to a vastly unequal moral economy of suffering which privileges the already privileged. Those who fall outside the dominant frames of legitimate suffering include detained immigrants in the Western world, the victims of US torture in Guantanamo Bay and elsewhere, and the victims of drone strikes in Pakistan and beyond. Butler’s ethical call is to challenge the perceived acceptability of this moral order by destabilising the perceptual field which is implicated in its production.

Butler aims to show not just the inequality, but the inherent instability of subject formation. Similarly, her work on frames is directed at destabilising the purported stability of hegemonic frames of legitimate subjectivity. She aims to traverse the limits of the designation of grievability and its implications in the production of state violence. Although frames may appear neatly sewn up and coherently unified, she points out that the stability of representations of violence in war is never assured. Butler (2010: xviii) argues that “[i]n
the destructiveness of war, there is no way to restrict the trajectory of destruction to a single visualised aim. Invariably, the fantasy of controlled destruction undoes itself, but the frame is still there, as the controlling fantasy of the state, albeit marking its limit as well.” The task of the critical theorist is to reveal these limits, to highlight the ways in which the apparently benign discourse of newspapers, films and other texts are implicated in the production of violence against the nameless citizens of faraway countries. This is Butler’s critical intervention into the perceived moral stabilities of Western foreign policy. The breaking open of hegemonic frames provides a moment at which resistance to war can be opened and non-violent alternatives can be advanced. Butler (2010: 12) states that “[w]hat happens when a frame breaks with itself is that a taken-for-granted reality is called into question, exposing the orchestrated designs of the authority who sought to control the frame.” For Butler, this critical moment can be pursued not only by challenging hegemonic framing practices but by bringing alternative frames into view. One example cited by Butler (2010: 11) is the dissemination of images of abuse in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, which she states facilitated a “widespread visceral turn against the war.” Butler (2010: 12) states that “as frames break from themselves in order to install themselves, other possibilities for apprehension emerge… the norm functions precisely by way of managing the prospect of its undoing, an undoing that inheres in its doings.” Such moments where the illegitimacy of state violence becomes sharply into view can mark critical points of resistance to otherwise unchallenged wars. They also provide a space for the articulation of non-violent identities and practices of resistance. One such articulation of non-violent resistance in Libya is outlined in Chapter 5, which explores the role of the Free Generation Movement in Tripoli.

The postcolonial context and the production of otherness

Foucault’s and Butler’s work on the violent exclusions of hegemonic subject formation in liberal discourse can be usefully supplemented by postcolonial critique of the liberal subject. Postcolonial critique draws attention to the importance of colonial and imperial contexts in the formation of modern liberal subjectivities, as well as pointing to the continuing relevance of such contexts in the present world order. Postcolonialism takes as its starting point the problematic of colonialism, not only as a historical interaction between the European imperial nations and the ‘rest’ but as a continually embedded cultural discourse on difference and sameness existing in the present. Bhabha (1994: 245) argues that “postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the conquest for political and social authority within the modern
world order.” Postcolonial scholarship informs my critique of liberal subjectivity by highlighting the constitutive role of the colonial past and present in producing the varying distribution of vulnerability in the world that Butler points to. By failing to adequately deal with the legacy of colonial domination and its role in the formation of universal cosmopolitan identity, liberal accounts of the modern subject remain complicit in the continuing reproduction of inequality in the world. This is the critical ethos of postcolonialism that is adopted in my methodological approach to subjectivity. Building upon the section above on the processes of differentiation in hegemonic subject formation, this section outlines a postcolonial critique of liberal subjectivity. This consists of two main elements. The first is a sensitivity to the ontological importance of colonialism in interpreting both historical subject formation and the present inequalities of the world order. The second is the focus on differentiation in subject formation. In order to illustrate this I will use two concepts from postcolonial scholarship. First is the concept of ‘splitting,’ used by Inayatullah and Blaney (2004) and others to delineate the formation of self and other identities which arose in imperial and colonial contexts. This concept forms a basis to postcolonial theorising on contemporary subject formations predicated on the control of difference. Secondly, I outline the notion of mimicry used by Bhabha (1994) to illustrate the process through which subtle distinctions in subject formation reinforce (or resist) hierarchies and exclusions.

Bhabha emphasises the constitutive role played by the colonial relationship in the creation of the modern, Western subject. He argues that the permanent colonial ‘state of emergency’ in the colonies is a fundamental condition of emergence of the subject in Western discourse. Bhabha (1994: 59) writes that “the struggle against colonial oppression not only changes the direction of Western history, but challenges its historicist idea of time as a progressive, ordered whole.” Colonialism disturbs the notion of liberal history as a linear and progressive development towards greater freedom. It suggests that the notion of liberal freedom which developed from the late eighteenth century may be troubled by its inverse of enslavement in the colonies. Not only does the colonial relationship trouble received notions of history, but in terms of epistemology, it “challenges the transparency of social reality, as a pre-given image of human knowledge” (Bhabha 1994: 59). On an ontological level, taking seriously the notion of ‘colonial depersonalisation’ requires rethinking the origins of the subject of Western knowledge. Bhabha (1994: 59) states that “if the order of

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18 The postcolonial challenge to hegemonic accounts of time in liberal discourse is further explored in Chapter 2.
Western historicism is disturbed in the colonial state of emergency, even more deeply disturbed is the social and psychic representation of the human subject.” Following Fanon, Bhabha (1994: 60-61) urges an ‘enigmatic questioning’ of the colonial relationship and the production of colonial subjects, not simply in terms of disturbing a pregiven binary of master/slave but of interrogating the constitution of desire and political agency therein. Bhabha (1994: 61) argues that in Fanon’s book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986), there “is no master narrative or realist perspective that provides a background of social and historical facts against which emerge the problems of the individual or collective psyche.” Fanon (1986: 116) rejects a historicisation of the emergence of the colonial subject, who has always been “overdetermined from without.” Instead, Bhabha (1994: 61) writes that in Fanon’s work “it is through image and fantasy – those orders that figure transgressively on the borders of history and the unconscious – that Fanon most profoundly evokes the colonial condition.” In other words, subject formation is an imaginative process powerfully influenced by the ever shifting relations of power in the present moment.

Similarly, Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 9) note the importance of the ‘contact zone’ in the co-constitution of modern subjectivities of coloniser and colonised. This contact zone is the meeting point between self and other, most commonly during the course of imperialist expansion in the early modern period. This encounter with difference could have led to various outcomes, yet formed the basis for the discourses of inferiority, backwardness and exploitation which emerged in the course of colonisation. Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 10-11) argue that:

[k]nowledge of and action toward the other in the contact zone mostly reflects and expresses this framing of possibilities, constructing archetypal colonial relationships … knowledge of the other, inflected by the equation of difference and inferiority, becomes a means for the physical destruction, enslavement, or cruel exploitation of the other.

For the authors, difference is not a problem to be erased by universal cosmopolitan subjectivities, but a potential for radical alternatives based on tolerance. They state that “the contact zone contains alternative possibilities – of critical self-reflection and of an alliance of social criticisms” (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 15). Their critique historicises the violence of European colonial encounters as rendering them contingent, advancing the idea that it may not always be so. In this vein, Bhabha argues that Foucault’s account of the emergence of the modern subject in *The Order of Things* should be supplemented with an
emphasis on the importance of the colonial relationship. He states that although Foucault does not delve into European imperial history, the colonised other is always present in the necessary exclusions and abjection of hegemonic discourses on the self in anthropology and psychoanalysis. Bhabha (1994: 282) states that “the invisible power that is invested in this dehistoricised figure of Man is gained at the cost of those ‘others’ – women, natives, the colonised, the indentured and enslaved – who, at the same time but in other spaces, were becoming the peoples without a history.” Postcolonialism attempts to bring to the surface the hidden enslavements contained in the production of legitimate subjects through discourse.

In addition to considering the importance of the historical constitution of colonial subjectivities, postcolonialism urges us to remain sensitive to the continuing relationships of colonisation and imperialism in the present world order. As Young (2012: 22) points out, “the postcolonial remains: it lives on, ceaselessly transformed in the present into new social and political configurations.” He states simply the ethical imperative in postcolonial critique, which has “always been concerned with interrogating the interrelated histories of violence, domination, inequality, and injustice, with addressing the fact that, and the reasons why, millions of people in this world still live without things that most of those in the West take for granted” (Young 2012: 20). Until this situation changes, postcolonialism remains a relevant and important perspective on contemporary inequality in world politics, whether that inequality lies in economic opportunity, freedom of movement, value of life, or vulnerability to violence. Spivak (1988: 287) notes that “the contemporary international division of labour is a displacement of the divided field of nineteenth-century territorial imperialism.” To deny this fact is to be complicit in the continuing injustices wrought by the historical division of the world into colonised and colonisers. As Spivak (1988: 291) argues, “to buy a self-contained version of the West is to ignore its production by the imperial project.” Rather than providing an alternative account of subjectivity to rival hegemonic liberal cosmopolitan accounts, postcolonialism disrupts dominant accounts, emphasising multiplicity and fluidity over fixity and universalism. Most importantly, Young states (2012: 21), is the aim to “locate the hidden rhizomes of colonialism’s historical reach, of what remains invisible, unseen, silent, or unspoken.” The lingering remains of colonialism in the present are brought into view by postcolonial critics opposing accounts of the subject that emphasise universalism, unity and sovereign stability.
How can an awareness of the continuing relevance of colonial contexts inform the critical approach to subjectivity advanced in this chapter? I now examine two concepts that are important elements in the methodology of subjectivity adopted in this thesis. The first is that of ‘splitting’, which refers to the process of dividing identity between a clearly delineated ‘self’ and ‘other’ which characterised the colonial ‘contact zone’ noted by Inayatullah and Blaney (2004). The notion of splitting is important for understanding the production of fear and danger in contemporary encounters with difference. Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 11) argue that “‘splitting’ occurs when there is a breakdown in the mutuality of interaction between self and other.” In the encounter with the other, difference can produce anxieties and tensions which resulted, in the colonial context, in a desire for mastery and control. As Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 11) argue, “when the uncertainty of one’s position vis-à-vis the other is difficult, even impossible, to bear, the self may be driven by the desire to move from a relationship of mutuality and interdependence to one of autonomy and dominance on one side and dependence and servility on the other.” The process of splitting occurs when fear and anxiety lead to a desire for the control of difference. Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 11) argue that “[i]nstead of recognising the possibility of the overlap between self and other, boundaries are rigidly drawn, carefully policed, and mapped onto the difference between good and evil.” This process forms the basis of colonialism, exploitation and slavery. It would be simplistic to claim that this process only took place in the contexts of early European imperialism. The modern European self had its others at home as well as abroad in the form of the poor, women, and other marginalised or peripheral groups. The process of splitting involves the creation of hierarchical identities which inform discourses which justify hegemonic rule, whether by fathers/husbands, a male elite, or foreign white settlers.

The concept of splitting goes beyond the crude violence of early colonialism and brutality of slavery, to the more subtle binary hierarchies at work in more recent contexts of domination and control. Doty (1996: 134) notes the process of splitting at work in foreign aid, democracy and human rights discourse. Rather than a simple division between legitimate rulers and illegitimate subjects, recent foreign aid discourse divides along a binary parent-child hierarchy. She states that the term ‘emerging peoples’ conceals a belief in the childlike qualities of formerly colonised peoples (Doty 1996: 134). In US discourse on foreign aid, people in aid receiving countries are represented, according to Doty (1996: 134), as children who are “not yet fully developed, unreconciled, they are always subject to the dangers stemming from their own immaturity.” The parent-child binary echoes that of
reason and passion, which Doty argues was a feature of US justifications for colonising the Philippines. Lacking the distinctly European heritage of reason and rationality, Filipinos were represented as “precocious children who had assimilated the superficial aspects of US culture but had failed to grasp its more fundamental implications” (Doty 1996: 89). Similarly, Patil (2009: 205) shows how emerging states were imagined as children in decolonisation debates in the UN, with binaries such as maturity/immaturity and responsibility/irresponsibility used to discuss eligibility for political independence. This places former colonies in a hierarchical relationship with their colonisers, as they impart knowledge in a process of linear progression towards political maturity (Patil 2009: 205). Underlying many binary hierarchies, Doty notes, is the production of absence. She argues that democracy and foreign aid discourse signified “never the presence of a clear and unambiguous signified, but rather the absence of certain characteristics in ‘third world’ subjects, characteristics that were deemed essential prerequisites for full-fledged, mature membership in the international community” (Doty 1996: 136). In Orientalism, Said (2003: 40) describes how colonial discourse creates a dichotomous relationship between the Western self and the Oriental other in which “the Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ‘different’; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal.’” This process of splitting between binary hierarchies continues to play a role in contemporary contexts of world politics despite nominal decolonisation. The task for the postcolonial critic is to point towards this process taking place in various contexts. For example, in the context of Libya in 2011, how were self and other constructions implicated in the violence of intervention? What desirable and acceptable ‘others’ were constituted at the expense of undesirable and exhaustible subjectivities of irreconcilable danger? These questions are addressed in Chapters 3 and 5 on the constitution of Libyan subjectivities during the intervention.

Linked to the concept of splitting is the notion of ‘mimicry’, which Bhabha (1994: 122) introduces to interrogate the colonial relationship. He states that colonial identities are not simply a production of binary hierarchies of self and other, or presence and absence, although no doubt these play an important role. Rather, the inculcation of colonial mimicry “is the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha 1994: 122, emphasis in original). Colonial subjectivity is reconfigured as the appropriation and reproduction of signs from hegemonic cultural discourses which remains necessarily marked by difference. The other is cast as a potential self, or a mimic of the self, yet never arriving at the fully formed self. This enables the
colonial imperative of reform and the ‘civilising mission,’ as the colonial subject is a potential but never quite achieved legitimate subjectivity. This sanctions an attitude of almost permanent intervention and ‘normalisation.’ Said (2003: 72) noted that mimicry and imitation were central to Orientalist discourse on Islam, characterised by “the vacillation between the familiar and the alien; Mohammed is always the imposter (familiar, because he pretends to be like the Jesus we know) and always the Oriental (alien, because although he is in some ways ‘like’ Jesus, he is after all not like him).” Bhabha (1994: 123) states that all instances of the civilising mission of colonialism share “a discursive by which the excess or slippage produced by the ambivalence of mimicry (almost the same, but not quite) does not merely ‘rupture’ the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a ‘partial’ presence.” The appropriation of images from hegemonic discourse is set up to fail, as the colonised subject can never become like the white settler. The process of mimicry produces an ‘incomplete’ or ‘virtual’ presence (Bhabha 1994: 123). Bhabha sets out a notion of identity that is more complex than the simple binaries of self/other, master/slave present in colonial discourse. These are overlaid with assumptions of identification and ambivalence and of desire and fear. The failure of identification is written into this colonial script, and according to Bhabha (1994: 131) it is in this failure that menace arises from the process of mimicry. As the colonial subject appropriates the signs of the hegemonic discourse, this appropriated similarity becomes a threat to the stability of the coloniser’s identity, and “the ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from mimicry – a difference that is almost nothing but not quite – to menace – a difference that is almost total but not quite” (Bhabha 1994: 131).

Bhabha’s conception of mimicry has important implications for postcolonial approaches to security studies. The notion of security depends upon the prior construction of a danger which must be secured against. Bhabha points to the idea that the construction of danger may result less from the fear of absolute difference than from the narcissism of minor difference. Bhabha (1994: 64) states that “the question of identification if never the affirmation of a pregiven identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy – it is always the production of an image of identity in assuming that image.” In being called to identify ourselves, we are always necessarily presenting an image of ourselves as someone’s other. Danger lies in the mirrored doubling which results from identification with the other. Bhabha (1994: 126) states that “the menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority.” It is a double vision in that it encloses both recognition and representation as well as desire and fear. The
colonised subject becomes, through mimicry, an object “of colonial desire which alienates the modality and normality of those dominant discourses in which they emerge as ‘inappropriate’ colonial subjects” (Bhabha 1994: 126). The recognition of resemblance to oneself is, Bhabha (1994: 131) writes, the “most terrifying thing to behold” for the colonial self. The ‘reformed’ other represents a profound threat to the ontological security of the self. Bhabha observes in this the basis for the intense fear of the other. He states that “in that other scene of colonial power, where history turns to farce and presence to ‘a part’ can be seen the twin figures of narcissism and paranoia that repeat furiously, uncontrollably” (Bhabha 1994: 131). The narcissism of European colonisers lead them to desire to remake others into the images of themselves, in turn prompting ontological fear of the eclipsing of the self through this civilising mission. The purpose of Bhabha’s outline of the role of mimicry in colonial identities is to highlight the liminal and ambivalent spaces that exist between self and other. His call is for us to consider this contradictory space of colonial subjectivities which can never be totally closed. He states that “it is a space of being that is wrought from the interruptive, interrogative, tragic experience of blackness, of discrimination, of despair” (Bhabha 1994: 341). One of the contributions of Bhabha’s work is to allow us to think about the ongoing colonial presence in contemporary subjectivities that present themselves as either universal and rational, or traditional, cultural and particular. He urges us to pay attention to the ambivalences, inconsistencies and contradictions in subjectivities, allowing us to view the space for violence in relations with the postcolonial other. Furthermore, he presents a novel way of approaching the constitution of danger in security discourse, pointing more towards identification and sameness than to the fear of radical difference. The key question his concept of mimicry prompts for my research on Libya is: how are fear and danger imagined in Libya with reference to subjectivities of sameness and difference? This is explored in depth in the analysis presented in Chapter 3.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a critique of the Kantian conception of the human subject at the heart of claims of human rights and human security in global politics. The chapter began by outlining the role of Kant in establishing the subject of liberal thought. Kant posited this liberal subject as occupying a transcendent realm of abstract consciousness and the embodiment of universal reason. Kant’s conception of the subject remains at the foundation to liberal regimes of rights, codified at the international level in the post-World
War Two framework of human rights law. This chapter has sought to problematize this conception of the subject on several grounds. First, I argued that subjectivity can be understood not as existing in a transcendent realm outside of material or discursive existence, but as a product of particular historical and social contexts. I drew on Foucault and Butler to demonstrate an alternative conception to the Kantian subject as historically embedded in a particular context, and performed through discourse rather than existing outside of it. This alternative conception provides the conceptual tools to oppose and critique the universalism and dualism of the Kantian model. Kant’s dualism posits a material/transcendent division to reality that can be countered through an insistence on the ubiquity of discourse. The universalism of Kant’s model should be opposed on the basis that it conceals many exclusions, hierarchies and differentiations. This forms the second point of critique explored above. The attempt to create a universal foundation of identity concealed a profoundly differentiating philosophical project that was allied with the crude violence of colonial conquest in the mission to establish the grounds of legitimate subjectivity and humanity. This part of the chapter briefly outlined Foucault and Butler’s work on normalisation before establishing the importance of Butler’s conceptions of grievability and framing in the critique of virtuous war which unfolds in Chapters 4 and 5. These concepts outline the ways in which liberal subjectivity is fraught with invisible distinctions and divisions between legitimate lives and those who, as a violent effect, do not count.

The final section built upon the contributions of Foucault and Butler on discourse, normalisation and grievability by emphasising the radically unequal basis of modern European subject formation and the ongoing violences this process engendered. Postcolonial critique situates and historicises Enlightenment-era liberal philosophy on the subject by challenging its complicity with a massive project of imperial violence, colonialism and economic exploitation. In this final section of the chapter I focused on the historical context of colonialism as well as on the concepts of splitting and mimicry in postcolonial work on subjectivity. These concepts help identify the creation of binary subjectivities that underlie the creation of colonial and postcolonial subjectivities. This part of the chapter provided a conceptual basis for understanding the differential basis of contemporary identities in international politics, and the ways in which they underpin practices of violence. Humanitarian intervention discourse tends towards the aspiration for a cosmopolitan utopia borne out of extreme violence, and postcolonial critique reminds us
that the legacies of colonisation and imperialism in the present ensure that this dream is never realised.

The primary purpose of the critique outlined above is to challenge the universalism and dualism of the Kantian subject. My aim is to highlight the exclusions and differentiations which the Kantian subject conceals. In positing a universal individual, liberalism reproduces colonial identity formations which rely on binary categories such as saviour and saved, and successful and failed. These are not timeless or inevitable categories, but are produced and reproduced discursively. This chapter suggests that any conception of subjectivity that posits universal or essentialised categories of identity is complicit in the world order that continually reproduces radical economic and social inequalities. Postcolonial conceptions of subjectivity establish as a starting point the conditions of inequality wrought by centuries of colonial domination, and which remain embedded in the current neoliberal global economic system, as well as the military balance of power that enables former imperial powers to assert their military superiority as a means of upholding moral order. The aim of this chapter has been to challenge the image of a transcendent subject for whom interventions are mobilised and which rests upon Kantian suppositions. Challenging this as fictional is a first step towards destabilising the truth claims upon which humanitarian intervention rests. The positive element of any critique is to open up alternative possibilities by revealing such foreclosures. This critique points towards a conception of the subject that emphasises multiplicity over unity, and diversity and difference over universalism. In this way it may be possible to highlight non-violent resistances to hegemonic narratives of violent liberation and salvation through virtuous war.
2. A critical spatio-temporal methodology

Introduction

The previous chapter outlined a conception of subjectivity that is not a transcendent and fixed category of consciousness but is discursively produced through particular frames, and in situations of unequal power relations. The rest of the thesis proceeds on the basis of this critical conception of subjectivity that emphasises the importance of discursive representation and the context of ongoing practices of violence and colonialism. This conception allows us to see subjectivity as marked by fluidity, multiplicity and hybridity, countering the claims of humanitarian intervention to be protecting the rights and life of the liberal individual. Humanitarian intervention rests not only on a particular liberal conception of subjectivity but a hegemonic image of space and time, which this chapter outlines and critiques. This chapter takes the next step in challenging the truth claims of humanitarian intervention by destabilising the temporal and spatial assumptions upon which it rests. In this chapter I advance the critical spatio-temporal methodology used in the analysis of my empirical case study of the Libya intervention outlined in Chapters 3 and 4. In hegemonic discourse on liberal intervention, spaces of crisis are clearly delineated in that they are seen as distant, and separate from, the intervening subject. Spaces of intervention are objectified in that they are constituted as fixed, discrete and static. In this way they can be clearly identified as the location and target of a series of interventionary practices. Humanitarian intervention is produced through a temporality that is posited as linear, progressive and universal. In brief, this is the liberal and modernist conception of space/time that frames humanitarian intervention.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the theoretical assumptions about space and time which frame the practice of intervention, in order to advance a critical methodology which can assist in their destabilisation. I examine two dominant conceptions of progressive teleology in liberal thought presented in the work of Kant and Fukuyama. Their ideas of progressive teleology are echoed in the contemporary practice of humanitarian intervention. This hegemonic conception is one of time as progressive, universal and linear. This means that all progression, across a number of spaces and places, can be measured according to one fixed and stable image of time. Notions of deviancy in international politics, such as in ‘failed states,’ depend upon this hegemonic conception of progressive time. The aim of this chapter is to disturb this hegemonic reading of time and space.
framing the policy of humanitarian intervention in order to destabilise the presumed certainties upon which it rests. In the second part of the chapter I outline an alternative, critical reading of space and time. The purpose of this reading is to break open the certainties and false stabilisations of humanitarian intervention in which violence is produced as synonymous with progress. This narrative depends upon a particular reading of time as progressive, linear and universal. The critical spatio-temporal methodology presented here reveals the contingencies and historical specificities in a policy of intervention that produces itself not only as humanitarian, but as a marker of progression and stability. This allows for the certainties of liberal intervention as something which happens ‘over there,’ in a separate and distant space, and which can be clearly delineated in time as ‘successful’ as well as ethically progressive, to be questioned.

**Progressive teleology in liberal thought**

This section looks at two images of progressive-teleological time in liberal thought. First, it examines Kant’s ‘Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View’, a text which advances Kant’s conception of unidirectional time, marked by mechanical direction towards a historical endpoint. The liberation of the human subject is the endpoint against which the progression of humanity can be measured. Secondly, it examines Francis Fukuyama’s ‘End of History’ thesis, which was prominent in the resurgence of liberal international relations theory in the post-Cold War period. Fukuyama advances a conception of time that is linear, progressive and unified, using the Hegelian concept of recognition in his case for liberal democracy. He also argues that the mechanical direction of history is determined by the advancement of technology and the natural sciences. In this way he presents a conception of historical progression which, he argues, bridges the materialist-idealist gap and so strengthens the idealism of Kant’s cosmopolitan history. The aims of the section are twofold. The first is to outline two liberal images of time framing contemporary humanitarian intervention. These images present a hegemonic reading of time which is linear, progressive and universal. The second is to point to the implications of this reading of time in the context of my research question, which asks about the reproduction of violent norms in liberal foreign policy. The function of the hegemonic view of time advanced by Kant and Fukuyama is that it enables the measurement of different societies against one another. In this way, progressive liberal time is complicit in the hierarchical ordering of different peoples that, as I demonstrate in the subsequent chapters, frames interventionary practices. The question to be asked of such narratives on
progress is not how they serve to unify through the presentation of a universal hegemonic
time, but how they differentiate according to the degree of fulfilment of the requirements
of this time. What different subjectivities are produced through this hegemonic image of
liberal time and how are they ordered hierarchically according to measurements of ‘success’
and ‘failure’ on a universal scale? Furthermore, how is this hierarchy implicated in the
deployment of violence against those deemed to be ‘under-developed’?

*Kant’s ‘Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View’*

In his essay on cosmopolitan history, Kant argues that human actions accord to universal
laws, which give both a direction and a purpose to history. The aim of history is to distil
the course of human actions by rendering the seemingly “confused and irregular” array of
events into a discernible narrative (Kant 2006: 3). In this way the apparently contingent
becomes intelligible through the identification of the laws of nature underlying human
progress. Kant was concerned to outline the underlying natural law which was greater than
the sum of humanity’s individual parts. He stated that “the only option for the philosopher
here, since he cannot presuppose that human beings pursue any rational end of their own
in their endeavours, is that he attempt to discover an end of nature behind this absurd
course of human activity” (Kant 2006: 4). Individuals are not aware, Kant believed, of the
natural laws of history as they undertake their personal endeavours, yet as a whole,
humanity proceeds according to such predetermined and universal causes. The belief in
universal laws of history is underpinned by Kant’s teleological theory of nature. This states
that the natural capacities of a creature “are destined eventually to develop fully and in
accordance with their purpose” (Kant 2006: 4). There is a “guiding principle of reason” in
the course of nature in which the constitution of creatures is designed to serve a particular
purpose (Kant 2006: 5). Nature and its designs are not completely random or unconnected,
but imbued with a sense of destiny and purpose. Kant argued that man’s natural reason
allows for the improvement and progression of the human race. Despite the implication
that nature has predestined the course of human history, Kant states that man is a self-
determining creature to a great extent. Subjectivity exists independently of a unified and
universal time due to transcendent free will. He argues that man’s destiny was not to be
determined by reason alone, but that all humans have the potential for reason. The
progression of the species depends upon the continual deployment of reason and is to be
reached by humans independently of nature, or providence.
Kant suggests that humans have the greatest potential when they come together to form political communities. He states that humans, “as a class of rational beings, each of which dies, but whose species is immortal, ought nonetheless attain the full development of its predispositions” (Kant 2006: 6). This is linked to the liberal notion of perfectibility, that humans have the capacity to use reason to improve their flawed nature. In liberal thought, perfectibility arises from social antagonism, the resistance of men to the rule of others. Kant states that antagonism within society is the origin of the liberal order. He termed this antagonism the “unsocial sociability” of men, which is the natural conflict which arises between individuals living together in society (Kant 2006: 6). This contradiction underpins liberal thought on the social contract, viewed as the basis of legitimate political authority. The recognition of man's lust for power and opposition to the leadership of others leads individuals to join together and form law and government. In this social contract “the first true steps are taken from brutishness to culture” (Kant 2006: 7). The rule of law and government marks man’s reason as a collective, and distinguishes civilisation from barbarity in liberal thought. The formation of government allows for the pursuit of progress in individuals and as a collective as it removes danger and insecurity from society. Kant (2006: 7) states that “through continued enlightenment, the beginning of a foundation is laid for a manner of thinking which is able, over time, to transform the primitive natural disposition for moral discernment into definite practical principles.” This allows for society to develop from a group of coerced individuals “into a moral whole” (Kant 2006: 7). The potential of humans to develop and form progressive unions is, according to Kant, also natural, but dormant. It must be brought out through the collective deployment of reason. It is, paradoxically, the ‘unsociability’ of human nature that allows for the potential moral worth of humans to develop. Without the selfish and corrupt aspects of human nature bringing men into conflict, “all the excellent natural human dispositions would lie in eternal slumber, undeveloped” (Kant 2006: 7).

This contradiction or antagonism between the instinctual aggression of humans and their capacity for reason and moral virtue continues to provide the basis for liberal thought. The telos of human society, to which reason should be put to use above all other endeavours, is the creation of a universal civil society among all men (Kant 2006: 8). This will ensure the greatest potential for human freedom, which is the aim and desired endpoint of civil progress. The development of man’s potential is only possible in societies which accord the greatest freedoms to their citizens. These societies are marked by the social contract and rule of law outlined above. This type of society enables the development of potential
through the pursuit of rational individual ends rather than the ‘boundless freedom’ of the state of nature. Kant uses an analogy of trees living together in a forest. He states that the human tendency towards individual competition leads to a more progressive collective outcome. This is because humans are “just as trees in a forest, precisely by seeking to take air and light from above themselves and thus grow up straight and beautiful, while those that live apart from others and sprout their branches freely grow stunted, crooked and bent” (Kant 2006: 8). Men can achieve enlightenment in liberal society, avoiding the barbarity of underdeveloped societies that remain in thrall of the selfish pursuits of nature. Thus, freedom under the law is the final endpoint of rational human societies.

Kant (2006: 8) reiterates that the problem of creating civic societies is the “most difficult and also the last to be solved by the human species.” This is a necessity brought upon men by their own nature. Kant (2006: 9) writes that “the human being is an animal which, when he lives among others of his own species, needs a master.” The paradox of society is that it contains both the best potential for peace and also the risk of conflict between men living side by side. Kant (2006: 9) argues that man “needs a master who will break his individual will and compel him to obey a will that is universally valid.” Kant also noted that the creation of peaceful liberal societies was dependent to some extent on peaceful relations with neighbouring societies. As noted in Chapter 1, Kant believes that peace can be achieved through the voluntary union of republican societies. He was concerned that war between developed societies was an anachronism preventing the realisation of man’s natural capacity for freedom. Kant (2006: 12) argued that “through the use of all the commonwealth’s resources to arm for war against others, through the ravages of war, but more still through the need to remain constantly prepared for war, progress towards the full development of our natural predispositions is hindered.” Kant saw that war was preventing liberal societies from reaching their potential of allowing for the greatest degree of human advancement. He argued that “as long as states use all their resources to realise their vain and violent goals of expansion and thereby continue to hinder the slow efforts to cultivate their citizens’ minds,” (Kant 2006: 12) the development of a true cosmopolitan order would be thwarted. Until such an order was created, our societies would be “nothing but pure outward show and shimmering misery” (Kant 2006: 12). Kant’s true telos stretches beyond the creation of liberal societies. His aim is nothing less than the realisation of a civic union of liberal societies across the world. This is the purpose of history and the telos towards which, he believed, nature is pushing the development of mankind.
Kant outlines a view of time that is universal, linear and progressive as well as self-consciously normative. He calls for a particular reading of history that brings us towards a desired endpoint of cosmopolitan union that will ensure full human flourishing and liberation. He is wary that the power of leaders and governments pulls history away from this natural freedom by going to war and making no effort to leave the state of nature that is world affairs. Human society will remain unfree as long as this is the case, until it can create a cosmopolitan order based upon a free association of republican states. The task for historians is to assess our progress towards this desired endpoint. Kant saw this as a rational and progressive task as it helps us to see the natural path of greater freedom which has been obscured by petty conflicts and disagreements. For Kant, time was universal if not uniform. The underlying universality of time allows for the measurement of society’s progression towards the predestined endpoint of history. Kant argued that the universal cosmopolitan order is not simply a utopian ideal, but a rational endpoint of nature. This endpoint represents the fulfilment of the natural capacities of humans, and as such we must strive to achieve it above all short term gains. Nature has preordained the cosmopolitan condition “as its highest aim,” which “will come into being, as the womb in which all the original predispositions of the human species are developed” (Kant 2006: 14).

In progressive-teleological liberal time, we are not judging societies against their realisation of liberal ideals, but against the natural endpoint of the human species. This means that the Kantian image of time is also hierarchical, as our achievement of cosmopolitan ideals of human liberation is an indicator of our place in the natural historical queue. Realisation of the cosmopolitan telos is a marker of the extent to which a society has succeeded in achieving liberation. The reframing of intervention presented in this thesis rests on this understanding of the way in which Kantian teleological time enables the measurement and reification of structured inequality according to a universal temporal sequence. The section below examines a contemporary expression of liberal teleological time in Fukuyama’s ‘end of history’ thesis.

**Fukuyama and the ‘End of History’ thesis**

Fukuyama argues that the endpoint of history had been found in the ideal form of liberal democracy. He believes that the philosophical struggles of history had reached a natural endpoint in the creation of advanced capitalist liberal democracies, and that “the ideal of liberal democracy could not be improved upon” (Fukuyama 1992: xi). By this he did not mean that the liberal democracies of Britain and the US, for example, could not be
improved upon. Instead, the blueprint of liberal democracy itself could not be improved. Fukuyama argued that human history had determined the best way to organise societies. His argument was that the dialectic of history had been resolved in favour of individualist, capitalist and democratic political systems over collectivist socialism. This meant that “there could be no further progress in the development of underlying principles and institutions, because all of the really big questions had been settled” (Fukuyama 1992: xii). The teleological path of mankind has been determined by the resolution of this dialectic between Marxist and Hegelian readings of directional history. He believes that this path will “eventually lead the greater part of humanity to liberal democracy” (Fukuyama 1992: xii).

Fukuyama sought to prove the enduring truth of a directional history by bridging the materialist-idealist divide. He supplements the idealism of Hegel by anchoring his argument in the technological and scientific advancement of human societies. He insists that while dictatorships are collapsing, “liberal democracy remains the only coherent political aspiration that spans different regions and cultures around the globe” (Fukuyama 1992: xiii). Free market capitalism has, according to this argument, succeeded in raising living standards around the world, bringing unprecedented levels of material prosperity for many.

Fukuyama’s argument asserts the liberal notion of a directional and universal history underlying human development. He argues that authoritarianism has been historically rejected as an irrational way of organising society, because it drags society backwards rather than letting it flourish. According to Fukuyama (1992: 12) “authoritarians of all stripes have been undergoing a severe crisis in virtually every part of the globe.” This shows that the world is progressing rationally toward greater freedom. Fukuyama (1992: 12) argues that “as we reach the 1990s, the world as a whole has not reached new evils, but has gotten better in certain distinct ways.” Fukuyama makes an empirical argument that there have never been more liberal democracies than in the early 1990s. From this empirical statement, Fukuyama makes a normative argument about the course of history and mankind. He argues that:

> [t]he success of democracy in a wide variety of places and among many different peoples would suggest that the principles of liberty and equality on which they are based are not accidents or the results of ethnocentric prejudice, but are in fact discoveries about the nature of man as man, whose truth does not diminish but grows more evident as one’s point of view becomes more cosmopolitan (Fukuyama 1992: 51).

The historical success of a certain form of political organisation is posited here as a result of natural progression, suggesting a universal underlying principle to which human
development is directed. The progression of history is ensured by the development of modern natural science, which drives humans forward with ever increasing enlightenment (Fukuyama 1992: 88). This enables the labelling of societies as regressive. Naming the ideal in progressive human history creates the possibility that the other is backward and barbarian.

Fukuyama (1992: 97) argues that developments in science and technology in modern economies create “strong incentives for developed countries to accept the basic terms of the universal capitalist economic culture,” because competitive markets have been proven to be the most efficient. History has vindicated free market capitalism through the failure of alternative socialist models to compete with capitalist economies. Fukuyama (1992: 108) states that “the logic of a progressive modern natural science predisposes human societies toward capitalism only to the extent that men can see their own economic self-interest clearly.” Fukuyama calls this the ‘victory of the VCR’, as all societies come to view the rationality in moving to a liberal free market economy from a socialist, centrally-planned one. No other system, he argues, can allow the unimpeded development of advanced technology and the pursuit of modern science. Fukuyama (1992: 120-125) notes that the embrace of a market economy does not necessary lead to the development of a liberal democracy, and that authoritarian dictatorships can adopt free market capitalism. Fukuyama (1992: 125) states that “the Mechanism underlying our directional history leads equally well to a bureaucratic-authoritarian future as to a liberal one.” According to Fukuyama, the link between capitalist economic systems and liberal political ones was more than a cultural specificity of European civilisation, and was driven also by directional history. It is the logic of human desire, specifically the ‘desire for recognition’, which drives the development of liberal societies (Fukuyama 1992: xvii). Here Fukuyama ties the Hegelian notion of idealist history with Marxist historical materialism in an argument about the formation of liberal societies. The mechanism driving history is both economic, in terms of the pursuit of natural science and technology in a free market, and idealist in the recognition of the human desire for improvement (Fukuyama 1992: 131).

Fukuyama’s image of human nature is dualistic, in that it is split between the hierarchy of a short-term and base pursuit of immediate needs, and a higher level of infinite potential which is enabled in a liberal society of free individuals under the rule of law. This is the dualistic distinction in liberal thought between the material and the ideal realms. Any “fuller Universal History” must understand this “desire that lay behind the desire of Economic
Man” (Fukuyama 1992: 135). This is the desire for greater freedom and development beyond one’s own immediate surroundings. This non-economic drive is the Hegelian ‘struggle for recognition.’ According to Fukuyama, this is a fuller account of human nature that allows an appreciation of “the discontinuities, the wars and sudden eruptions of irrationality out of the calm of economic development, that have characterised actual human history” (Fukuyama 1992: 135). The struggle for recognition, which embodies man’s pursuit of freedom as well as desire for power and domination, leads the mechanism of history astray and retards human development at the same time as it contains the potential for liberation. The first act of human freedom, for Fukuyama (1992: 152), is marked at the point “man is able to transcend his natural, animal existence, and to create a new self for himself.” This is the emergence of the ‘first man’ of human history. This is the moment of transcendence in which humans transcend their material surroundings in order to move towards a higher, ideal realm of potential freedom. Human pride and dignity lead to a natural opposition to slavery. The social contract emerges from this desire for recognition, to refuse to be a slave to another. According to Fukuyama, it was “the slave’s continuing desire for recognition that was the motor which propelled history forward, not the idle complacency and unchanging self-identity of the master” (Fukuyama 1992: 198).

Liberal societies emerge not from economic drives, but from the natural desire of humans to remain free from the domination of others. This points to a paradox in liberalism, in which the desire to ‘leave slavery’ contains within it the potential to enslave others, justified through dualistic thought.

Fukuyama (1992: 200) subscribes to the Hegelian view that the creation of liberal societies represents the rational recognition of the other, contrary to the Lockean tradition that the social contract is formed to protect private property and individual freedom. Hegelian liberalism, he argues, involves the “recognition on a universal basis in which the dignity of each person as a free and autonomous human being is recognised by all” (Fukuyama 1992: 200). According to Fukuyama, liberal democracies allow for the pursuit of wealth and material gain, but more importantly, they provide us with the “recognition of our dignity” (Fukuyama 1992: 200). The liberal democratic state “values us at our own sense of self-worth” (Fukuyama 1992: 200). It provides for the full pursuit of rational ends, both material and non-material. The desire for recognition, Fukuyama notes, is a universal one which seeks to avoid slavery. The desire for recognition based upon nationalism or ethnicity or race is, he argues, not rational. National and racial divisions are “arbitrary and accidental by-product[s] of human history” (Fukuyama 1992: 201). The liberal state
recognises the equal worth of individuals, and does not differentiate according to race or nationality, according to Fukuyama (1992: 201), as it embodies human rationality. The liberal state is universal, he argues, because it recognises the equal worth of all individuals. It is also homogenous because it creates what Fukuyama (1992: 201) terms a classless society, based on the equal worth of individuals under the law. Fukuyama has set out the rational and universal end of human history in the modern liberal democratic state. This universal course of history is driven by two forces, both material, in the pursuit of economic development, and ideal, in the human desire for recognition.

The three key features of Fukuyama’s thought, in keeping with the liberal tradition, are universalism, dualism and transcendence. Liberal democracy is viewed as universally valid if not universally adopted. It is an ideal-type, or blueprint of a perfect society. Yet humans remain in thrall to more irrational concerns of culture, religion and national identity. These are forces of irrationality, according to Fukuyama, that should be transcended in order to achieve the rational ends of freedom under liberal democracy. History has ended in the sense that the dialectical struggle has been resolved. The task of the liberal historian and analyst, following Kant, is to identify the forces of irrationality preventing societies from developing into free market liberal democracies. The negative forces that humans must transcend in order to become truly free are contained in their nature. Liberal democracy may be universally valid, but it has been not accepted by all. Nationalism and chauvinism are examples of the irrational drive for power and conflict that prevent societies from becoming liberated. The Kantian paradox which Fukuyama (1992: 207) accepts is that the rationality of humans requires also irrationality. Kant struggled with this apparent contradiction within human nature, of virtuous potential coexisting with irrational aggression. Similarly, Fukuyama (1992: 214) argued that states and peoples are potentially incompatible. Peoples are natural communities with their own culture and morality. States are artificial political creations. The success of liberal democracy requires congruence between community and state, like in the Anglo-Saxon world (Fukuyama 1992: 212). The culture of communities, Fukuyama (1992: 215) argues, can “constitute an obstacle to democratisation.” These obstacles include nationalism and religion. For democracy to develop, individuals must transcend the irrational confines of culture if it is marked by radical racial or ethnic consciousness, nationalism or religion, notably Islam (Fukuyama 1992: 211-214). In these cases, people must embrace democratic culture, allying their recognition of their state with their sense of self (Fukuyama 1992: 215). This will not happen if they remain dogged by backwards economic systems and resentment, as has
happened in the Muslim world (Fukuyama 1992: 235). These people remain, according to Fukuyama (1989: IV), ‘mired in history.’ Here lies one of the violent epistemological distinctions in Fukuyama’s work between legitimate and illegitimate ways of life that frame violent practices of intervention examined in the rest of the thesis.

**Outlining a critical spatio-temporal methodology**

This section outlines the critical methodology of space and time that provides the basis for the analysis of Libya presented in the following chapters. I outline three main points of critique of the liberal model. First, the liberal image of space/time outlined above presents a fiction of the separation of bounded sovereign units. The methodology I outline here uses the work of critical and postcolonial scholars to undermine these claims of spatial stability and separation. The second point of critique of the liberal view of space/time is of its progressive teleology. Here I flesh out the criticisms of Kant and Fukuyama noted in the first part of the chapter, that the narrative of universal and progressive teleological time creates the basis for differentiating between hierarchical subjectivities. The third point of critique focuses on the conflation of speed and progress in liberal narratives. Fukuyama’s work presents a technologically-driven narrative of development in which the achievement of more efficient advancements is equated with progressive change. This image underpins the subjectivity of intervening actors as their increasingly efficient military technology is presented as a marker of progression, contrasting with the backwardness of recipients of intervention. The purposes of the critical spatio-temporal methodology set out in this section are as follows. The primary purpose is to disturb the certainties of the progressive narrative of humanitarian intervention by revealing its spatial and temporal assumptions and their closures. In this way it aims to render contingent, and unstable, that which is presented as a reasonable, progressive solution to crisis. The second purpose is to open up possibilities for an alternative imaginary. Resting on this methodology, the thesis examines how humanitarian intervention has produced its truth claims, and proceeds to destabilise those claims. Using the methodology outlined here, the subsequent chapters open up questions of responsibility and complicity which challenge the liberal narratives of rescue and progressive change in humanitarian intervention.

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19 Fukuyama (1992: 235-236) repeats Bernard Lewis’s (1990) argument that Islamic extremism has taken hold as a “response to the failure of Muslim societies generally to maintain their dignity vis-à-vis the non-Muslim West.” This representation of Muslim communities is examined in more depth in relation to Libya in Chapter 3.
Challenging the logic of separation

Humanitarian intervention rests upon a hegemonic image of space and time in which political space is delineated by clear boundaries. The notions of ‘intervention’ or ‘non-intervention,’ sovereignty and territorial integrity which constitute its discursive plane attest to this. Mainstream theories of international politics have operated in this realm of separate, sovereign territories, for even as liberal theories contest those boundaries, by doing so they also reaffirm them. The challenge for a critical spatio-temporal methodology is to destabilise this account of the political and show how the realm of ‘there’ and ‘here’ collapse into one another, threatening the stated intelligibility of the practice of humanitarian intervention. It is a methodology which “confounds the topography of political action” in global politics (Shapiro 2013: 157) by undermining the claims of spatial separation which the designation of crisis amenable to violent intervention presents. How can a critical reading of space and time oppose the state-centrism of the hegemonic liberal imaginary? The first way in which we can oppose the neat delineation of the liberal imaginary of space and time is to examine the logic of contemporary security practices of surveillance and border control. These practices point to the ways in which a territorial logic of sovereign border control has been superseded by one of the deterritorialised management of security risks. This section draws on the later work of Foucault as well as contemporary critical security studies. This work contributes to the destabilisation of the claim that liberal intervention is neutral ameliorative action in a clearly delineated space of crisis. I build upon this vision of a system of deterritorialised liberal security with the postcolonial concept of imaginative geography, drawing attention to the ways in which identity is performed through mappings of cultural difference, pointing to its enabling role in violent security practices. In the new security terrain of the post-Cold War and post-9/11 era, risk is not random, but is constituted with particular faces and in particular spaces. This particularity is performed through imaginative cultural mappings which I will explore with reference to the postcolonial critique of Orientalism presented by Said and Gregory.

- The spaces of new security regimes: extraterritoriality

Foucault (1978: 93-94) argued for a relational rather than a structural or institutional conception of power, in which we see that power “is exercised from innumerable points, in
the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations.” He suggested a conception of power that is productive rather than simply destructive or creative, stating that “power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations” (Foucault 1978: 94). Foucault’s conception of power contributed to the understanding of the security practices of liberal states by opening up the field of vision from a territorial view of sovereignty to a deterritorialised view of security. Rather than search for an origin or basis of power, Foucault suggests broadening our view of the operation of state power. This enables us to view the practices of security in a number of spaces not bounded by the territorial borders of the state. In doing so, Foucault highlights the importance of the temporal realm in security, as distinct from the discrete spatial realm of sovereignty. Sovereignty points to a “territory, raising the major problem of the seat of government” which can control that territory by exerting control over borders (Foucault 2009: 20). Security is exercised over a whole population that is by nature mobile and so must operate in a multiplicity of spaces (Foucault 2009: 11). It also deals with the realm of the possible, and therefore must be oriented towards planning for future risks and events. Foucault (2009: 20) stated that security “refers to the temporal and the uncertain, which have to be inserted within a given space.” Sovereignty operates over individual subjects, whereas security operates in a milieu in which individuals are conceived as “a multiplicity of organisms, of bodies capable of performances” (Foucault 2009: 21).

Drawing on Foucault’s conceptualisation of security we can view the state boundaries which delimit political identity as contingent, and as only one site in which power is violently reinscribed among many. Moreover, his understanding of security operating over a mobile population destabilises the idea of static sovereign borders that mark the limits of state power. Similarly, Bigo (2006) attests to an increase in the internal and external dimensions of security that troubles traditional conceptions of political space, and poses questions about the legitimacy of state security institutions. He argues that “we live in a world in which the web of institutions dealing with security has spectacularly expanded” (Bigo 2006: 392). The merging of internal and external aspects of security to which he refers is the extra-territorialisation of this web of institutions. This consists of “the expansion of the internal security dimension beyond state boundaries and the extension of the ‘internal’ border to larger areas, such as the European Union, or the West” (Bigo 2006: 395). The strengthening of security and policing institutions has accompanied a blurring of the lines between war and crime and the institutions charged with their pursuit. This raises questions of ethics and legitimacy, as there has been a “tightening of the ‘embrace’ of
society by the state and now of other forms of governance linked with the freedom of movement” (Bigo 2006: 395). Moreover, the certainty of a fixed territorial border can be destabilised by tracing the new geographies of border control. For example, Andreas (2003) argues that new border regimes in Europe and the US resemble an expansion of policing logics rather than a hardening of a militarised and territorial one. He argues that there is a widening gap between realist conceptions of state borders and the practices of states in policing borders (Andreas 2003: 82). This has implications for the way in which we imagine political space. Traditional approaches to international politics tend towards two competing conceptions of ethico-political space – the cosmopolitan realm of humanity in liberalism or the communitarian spaces of state-centric realism (Pin-Fat 2009). The actions of states in policing their borders suggest that neither of these conceptions of political space captures the complexities of contemporary security practices. As Bigo and Andreas show, the logics of border control are present in many spaces within states at the same time as pushing beyond traditional borders to the territories of neighbouring states. Nevertheless, these two images of ethico-political space continue to discursively frame the moral and political debate over intervention, distracting from a critical examination of spatial and temporal dislocations of contemporary security practices.

This Foucauldian and post-Foucauldian research on new border and security practices helps trouble the assumption of spatial separation upon which humanitarian intervention depends. This is an important step towards the questioning of an imaginary of insecurity that frames intervention as a discrete activity in which one actor ‘over here’ intervenes in a crisis-torn space ‘over there’ in order to reach a progressive outcome through violent means. Foucault (1978: 93) provocatively asked whether we should “turn the expression around, then, and say that politics is war pursued by other means?” This question draws

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20 To which can be added the massive spying and surveillance programmes of internet use revealed by NSA whistle-blower Edward Snowdon. See Ackerman and Ball (2014) on details of GCHQ surveillance of Yahoo webcam images.

21 Andreas (2003: 94-95) shows how Canada and Mexico have been increasingly pushed towards internal border control practices as part of the enforcement of counterterror controls for the USA: “Following the terrorist attacks [of 11 September 2001] the Mexican government detained hundreds of people of Middle Eastern origin, curbed the entry of citizens from a number of Central Asian and Middle Eastern countries, provided the US authorities with intelligence information on possible suspects based in Mexico, and targeted bank accounts of suspected terrorists … Canada has also tightened its visa regime, imposing visa requirements on Saudi Arabian and Malaysian visitors.” This example points not only to the processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation at work in counter-terror and other security practices, but also to the lines of race, religion and national identity with which they are drawn. These themes run through the analysis of the Libyan case in the subsequent chapters. See also the externalisation of EU border control to North Africa outlined in Chapter 4.
attention to the continual reinscription of the violence of state security practices at a number of different levels and in multiple spaces. The delineation of state boundaries marks neither the end of the violence of state creation nor the edge beyond which violence is deferred to an outside realm. In order to destabilise the separation of a (external) war and an (internal) peace, Shapiro (2013) draws attention to aesthetic texts that highlight the way in which this distinction often collapses into itself. He argues that the idea of war as a distant activity can be questioned through the tracing of ‘aesthetic subjects’ who “map and often alter experiential, politically relevant terrain” (Shapiro 2013: xiii). The purpose of Shapiro’s reading of aesthetic representations of war is to draw attention to the “spatio-temporality of the presence of war” (Shapiro 2013: 172). He points to the violence of the ‘homefront’ as a way of challenging the “boundary between war and domesticity” as well as “the authoritative community of sense that shapes the familiar world” (Shapiro 2013: 173). This ‘authoritative community of sense’ is one in which war is framed as an action occurring ‘elsewhere’ beyond the state’s borders as well as one in which borders are seen as clearly delineated and spatially fixed lines of demarcation. The moral debate over intervention is one which is predicated on the idea of a spatial limit to the political community which can either be transgressed or reinforced. This brief overview of research into the spatial boundaries (or lack of) in new security practices illustrates that this moral debate is operating on largely fictitious premises.

○ Imaginative geography

I argued above that the conception of political space as bounded and separate should be viewed as fictional given the new security practices that regulate domestic populations using a logic of risk management and pursue policing functions beyond state borders. The management and policing of security risks imagines difference not only as that which is outside of state boundaries but as both an internal and an external risk. A possible problem with the Foucauldian or Paris School approaches alone is that they may fail to adequately capture the enabling role of geographical representations of the other in security practices like humanitarian intervention. They each present an analysis that focuses on the temporal dimensions of security as an orientation of constant war against risk. This is surely relevant, however, it results in only a partial picture. The ‘battlespaces’ of this unending war are clearly differentiated and ordered according to certain principles of hierarchy in terms of delineating crisis, danger and degeneracy in the global security landscape (Gregory 2011: 239). This section examines the concept of imaginative geography, used here to
complement a Foucauldian analysis of security practices in constructing a critical spatio-temporal methodology. The role of imaginative geography in my methodology is to help understand the ways in which spaces of crisis are imagined. This brings our attention to the way in which spaces in global politics are imagined not as an undifferentiated mass to be policed for random risk occurrence, but with differing, and hierarchical, identities of peace and stability on the one hand, and danger and fear on the other. Imaginative geography goes some way towards revealing the limitations of the spatial representations through which humanitarian intervention is made intelligible. I will outline imaginative geography and its uses below with reference to the work of Said and Gregory.

Said’s (2003) work *Orientalism* interrogated Western knowledge of the ‘Orient’ and pointed to its constitutive role in violent colonialism. The concept of Orientalism brought attention to the link between knowledge and the hierarchical identities of imperialism and colonisation. Said (2003: 71) used the term ‘imaginative geography’ to refer to Orientalist discourses on the spaces of the other. It consists of the construction of imaginative boundaries between ‘our’ space and ‘theirs,’ and the qualities which give each its particular identity (Said 2003: 54). Said points out that this process is common to all cultures and traditions. The important methodological move of postcolonial critique is to historicise Orientalist constructions of space. Said locates perception of space and time not the transcendent consciousness of the Kantian subject, but, drawing on Foucauldian methods of genealogy and critical psychoanalysis, with the subjectively produced cultural imagination. Said (2003: 55) insists that “there is no use pretending that all we know about time and space, or rather history and geography, is more than anything else imaginative.” Said suggests that the mapping of space in Orientalist knowledge is often based not on objective qualities or empirical research, but is conditioned by fears, superstitions and doubts. He writes that “often the sense in which someone feels himself to be not-foreign is based on a very unrigorous idea of what is ‘out there’, beyond one’s own territory. All kinds of suppositions, associations, and fictions appear to crowd the unfamiliar space outside one’s own” (Said 2003: 54). The process of creating geographical distinctions is “entirely arbitrary … because imaginative geography of the ‘our land-barbarian land’ variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction” (Said 2003: 54). This suggests that representations of the spaces of the other reflect the fears, desires and anxieties of the self rather than knowledge produced by the other.
Said emphasises the imagined aspect of Orientalist geography and history. He argues that the differentiation of spaces between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is a universal process (Said 2003: 54). An imperative of Orientalist spatial discourse, or imaginative geographies of the Orient, is rendering the unfamiliar familiar in order to tame the threat it poses to the self (Said 2003: 58-59). Said’s argument about the function of imaginative geography has two elements. First, he states that imaginative geographies are performed knowledge rather than uncovered, positive knowledge (Said 2003: 60). They are historically contingent and constitutive of identities of self and other, and owe more to the anxieties of the self than a genuine interest in understanding the other. This raises a key methodological point about the closed nature of Orientalist discourses. Said (2003: 65) writes that as Orientalism recreates its own tropes without considering texts produced by the other, it tends to continually reconfirm its own assumptions. He argues that “what the Orientalist does is to confirm the Orient in his readers’ eyes; he neither tries nor wants to unsettle already firm convictions” (Said 2003: 65). In this way, Western knowledge of the Orient, and Islam, has produced itself through unexamined disciplinary certainties, as concrete and positive. The purpose of postcolonial critique is to disturb these certainties and reveal the contingent and performed nature of geographical knowledge of the other. Secondly, and as a result of this, Orientalist knowledge is limited, partial and unstable (Said 2003: 60). The fears of the Orient are so intense that Oriental others are seen as highly threatening to the self. As a result, Said (2003: 60) argues that the European representation of the other is “always a way of controlling the redoubtable Orient” in order to represent an Eastern other as “therefore less fearsome, to the Western reading public.” Yet this desire to tame and control arises from a fear of the unpredictable difference of the Oriental other. Imaginative geographies can contain an often contradictory mix of fear and desire, anxiety and interest, but they remain structured around hierarchical binary identities. This differentiation enables discourse on the need to save or rescue through violent intervention, because the Eastern or Oriental other is represented as childlike, weak, or failing.

The moral import of postcolonial critique is a destabilisation of the false certainties of imaginative geographies that emphasises the link between knowledge and violence. Gregory (2004) uses imaginative geography as part of his critique of what he terms the ‘colonial present’ of Western foreign policy in Iraq, Afghanistan and Israel/Palestine. Gregory is concerned with outlining the colonial script of identities of self and other reproduced in contemporary wars across the Middle East and Central Asia. These identities are not produced extraterritorially, in the abstract, but are cognitively embedded in
particular spaces and temporalities. Drawing on Said, Gregory points to the ways in which identities are not produced in a vacuum, but are intertwined and co-constitutive with cultural mappings of space and time. He argues that imaginative geographies produce ‘architectures of enmity’ in which the other is marked as almost irredeemably different. According to Gregory (2004: 17), “‘their’ space is often seen as the inverse of ‘our’ space: a sort of negative, in the photographic sense that ‘they’ might ‘develop’ into something like ‘us’, but also as the site of an absence, because ‘they’ are seen somehow to lack the positive tonalities that supposedly distinguish ‘us.’” In architectures of enmity such as those constructed in the ‘war on terror’ in Afghanistan and Iraq, the other and the space and time they occupy is coloured with difference, and is seen as barren, empty or desolate and regressive.

The purpose of imaginative geography is to reveal these hidden assumptions in the representation of others’ spaces. In this way it suggests that representations are a key part of the production of violence. As Der Derian (2003: 47) argues, “people go to war not only out of rational calculation but also because of how they see, perceive, picture, imagine, and speak of each other: that is how they construct the difference of other groups as well as the sameness of their own.” Similarly, Gregory (2004: 28) argues that in the war on terror, Iraq and Afghanistan were constituted through an imaginative geography that presented them as “occupying a space beyond the pale of the modern,” rendering them as easily amenable to interventions. Imagining the spaces of others as blank, desolate or premodern territories strips them of the capability of making active futures, helping to legitimise not only a violent intervention in the interests of national security but one that is in the interests of others in order to modernise and develop other spaces. Said argues in the 2003 preface to Orientalism that the lessons of his book are as relevant today as ever. He states that “[w]hat our leaders and their intellectual lackeys seem incapable of understanding is that history cannot be swept clean like a blackboard, clean so that ‘we’ might inscribe our own future there and impose our own forms of life for these lesser people to follow” (Said 2003: xii). Drawing on Said’s notion of imaginative geography, Gregory argues that the ways in which we imagine space and time are not neutral, or incidental, but are centrally implicated in cultures of war and development in which the other is constantly imagined and reimagined as a blank space or negative subjectivity waiting to be liberated through violent interventions. The examination of the imaginative geographies of the Libya intervention presented in this thesis delineates this link between the representation of the other and their spaces, and the mobilisation of violence to save the other.
As hegemonic imaginative geographies frame the differences between self and other, the progressive universalism of liberal accounts of time can be challenged for the way in which they enable differentiation between the ‘backwards’ and the ‘advanced’. As I argued in Section 2.1, the teleological time of Kant and Fukuyama conceals a radical differentiation beneath a veil of universality. This section fleshes out these criticisms by examining hegemonic images of time in context. The challenge for a critical spatio-temporal methodology is to destabilise this account of the time as progressive and teleological. As Hutchings (2008: 8) argues, *kairotic* accounts of time “enable the disassociation between space and time in the world, by raising the possibility that different places in effect inhabit different times, suggesting an a-chronotic world in which the contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous holds true.” Hegemonic accounts of *kairos* allow for the hubristic determination of the value of different societies as their progression is presented as distinct and measurable on a universal scale of historical development. The critical reading of space and time presented here is one which opposes the hegemonic grand narrative of progress in liberal thought. The first part of this critique stems from an account of the risk management orientation in new security regimes. I argue that the optimism of liberal accounts of progressive change presented in the first part of the chapter can be opposed by a counter-narrative of the controlling imperative in liberal security practices. These are practices intended to manage the future by controlling the possibilities of risk. I build on these Foucauldian and post-Foucauldian accounts of contemporary security practices with a postcolonial critique of progressive liberal time. Both elements of the critique of liberal time emphasise that the hegemonic progressivism of liberal time can be opposed on the basis that it obfuscates vision of its own exclusion, hierarchy and differentiation.

○ *The temporality of new security regimes: risk management* 

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22 Hutchings distinguishes between two images of time in modernist thought: *chronos* and *kairos*. The former refers to the Newtonian clock time of Western modernity which is by nature indivisible, universal and linear (Hutchings 2008: 6). The time of *kairos* presents a tension in modern conceptions of time though the desire for meaning and the differentiation of stages in history. *Kairos* refers to the divisibility of time into stages of revolution or stasis (Hutchings 2008: 8). This section examines and opposes the *kairotic* element of liberal time, which posits teleological progression as the default interpretation of history.
Foucauldian and post-Foucauldian work on security outlines the temporal controlling imperative in modern liberal states. Foucault (2009: 61-62) argues that the development of security from the eighteenth century onwards consists of the calculation of risk, danger and crisis, which he argues are distinctly modern notions. This informs the control and regulation of movement and circulation, and the desire to manage populations as well as controlling territory. Foucault (2009: 65) argues that with security “we see the emergence of a completely different problem … of allowing circulations to take place, of controlling them, sifting the good and the bad, ensuring that things are always in movement … but in such a way that the inherent dangers of this circulation are cancelled out.” In this logic of the management of movement we can see the importance of the temporal dimension of security. Foucault (2009: 20) argued that “the specific space of security refers then to a series of possible events; it refers to the temporal and the uncertain, which have to be inserted within a given space.” He presents this given space as the ‘milieu’, or the site at which security, discipline and sovereignty intersect (Foucault 2009: 21). One of the key orientations of security as distinct from sovereignty is that in the former “one works on the future” (Foucault 2009: 20). The problem of ensuring the security of populations arises because the milieu:

will open into a future that is not exactly controllable, not precisely measured or measurable … In short, I think we can speak here of a technique that is basically organised by reference to the problem of security, that is to say, at bottom, to the problem of the series. An indefinite number of mobile elements … An indefinite series of events that will occur … And equally an indefinite series of accumulating units … I think the management of these series that, because they are open series can only be controlled by an estimate of probabilities, is pretty much the essential characteristic of the mechanism of security (Foucault 2009: 20).

The need to manage the potential dangers wrought by the movement of populations leads to an orientation of the calculation and management of risk. As a result security is concerned with the management of probabilities, the calculation of risk and the control over future possibilities (Foucault 2009: 20).

There has been a rise in the risk management orientation of security since the end of the Cold War, a trend which has accelerated after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. Globalisation and the accompanying mobility of goods and populations have been viewed as bringing new dangers and risks as well as benefits. Giddens (2002: 3-18) argues that “nations face risks and dangers rather than enemies,” and that “we face risk situations that no one in previous history has had to confront.” Beck (1992, 2005) has also attested to the
rise of the ‘risk society,’ arguing that the management of future risk has become the key ordering principle of Western liberal states. Bigo (2006: 389) notes the increased salience of the ‘globalisation of insecurity’ thesis, fuelling the expansion of security regimes and their accompanying deterritorialisation. The literature on new security regimes outlined above points to the way in which traditional boundaries between war-fighting and crime-fighting, and between sovereign states, have been broken down (Bigo 2006: 389). This suggests a need to rethink the way in which we imagine political space in world politics. It also points towards the importance of the temporal dimension of security. Daase and Kessler (2007: 423) state that “the kinds of dangers the global community faces are increasingly of a different kind [than traditional military ‘threats’]. They often lack an identifiable actor, a hostile intention or the prominence of military capability.” As a result, post-Cold War security has been oriented towards the management of uncertain risks rather than known military threats. The authors state that in this context “both knowledge and non-knowledge are constitutive for the formulation of security policy” (Daase and Kessler 2007: 430). Uncertainty has become a constitutive part of security discourse aimed at the stabilisation of systemic risk rather than protection of territory. This risk management orientation brings in all citizens as they are invited to partake in the practices of a decentralised state surveillance network. In an atmosphere of heightened fear of terrorism, individuals are also transformed into watchers of their neighbours for ‘suspicious activity.’ Amoore (2009: 55) points to the appearance of Home Office poster campaigns in urging the public “if you suspect it, report it,” and the use of ‘terror hotline’ call centres to receive notification of suspicious activity. Everyone becomes a potential node of surveillance in the new geographies of globalised security.

There are two important implications of these new security practices for the interrogation of progressive narratives of liberal time. First, risk management logics highlight an apocalyptic underbelly of the progressive narratives of liberal time presented by Kant and Fukuyama. The flipside to increased optimism over the expansion of freedom and prosperity with capitalist development can be seen in the extension of an apparatus of control and surveillance of peoples’ movements and interactions as well as the future risk they may pose to Western societies, from within or without. The second is the subjectivities of fear and danger which feed into risk management calculations. Amoore (2009) points to the need for threatening subjectivities in the network of decentralised state surveillance, which she argues entails a constant risk-assessment approach towards an ‘other’, constructed through patterns of deviant behaviour. Amoore (2009: 56) argues that
“in the name of homeland security (the end of violence), algorithmic war reinscribes the imaginative geography of the deviant, atypical, abnormal ‘other’ inside the spaces of daily life.” In this way, suspicion and risk is brought inside the sovereign spaces of the state, and focused on the body of particular risk-rated individuals, for example:

the migrant worker (differentially normal in the space of the economy and abnormal in the spaces of immigration), the young Muslim student (permitted to study but observed in the college’s Islamic society), the refugee (afforded the hospitality of the state but biometrically identified and risk-rated), and British Asian traveller (granted visa waiver but ascribed an automated risk score) (Amoore 2009: 56).

Counter-terror policing is only operationally feasible because of this differentiation of identities and their concomitant risks. This suggests that far from levelling differences and auguring a global cosmopolitan identity, the intersection between globalisation and security where risk and vulnerability is heightened, exaggerates the differential impact of security practices on people of different cultural, national, religious or geographical backgrounds. Risk management differentiates and hierarchises by rigorously and violently policing the aberrations to patterns of dominant behaviour. I expand on this process of differentiation in the following outline of postcolonial critiques of progressive narratives of time in European and modernist thought.

○ Postcolonial critiques of progressive liberal time

One of the imperatives of postcolonial critique is to highlight the continuities in the present of colonial, imperial or neo-colonial practices (Young 2012: 20). Liberal intervention is underpinned by a hegemonic conception of time as progressive, linear and universal. This forms part of what Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 50) term a two-part strategy in colonialism, as in mainstream IR theory, of managing difference. The first part refers to the spatial demarcation of boundaries to physically separate the other. The second is a “temporal strategy, deploying ideas of development or modernisation” (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 50). They critique what they term the trend of ‘neomodernisation’ in IR theory represented by liberal interventionists and theorists of human security and global governance (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 95-96). The advancement of progressive modernising narratives posits a universal temporal sequence from tradition to modernity (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 97). The effect of this is to universalise the experience of the European self and designate the path of others as backwards and therefore inferior. Jabri (2013) argues that this temporalisation of difference marks the postcolonial other more
than his or her designation in space. She states that “it is the temporal that is the more powerful element in the framing of the postcolonial self even as this self shifts and moves spatially across the global terrain, for it is the traces of the past that somehow shape the present and its understanding” (Jabri 2013: 22). Jabri states, with Bauman and Harvey, that distance itself has been suppressed by globalisation. However, she goes on to argue that the same “temporal distanciation, one that holds history apart from contemporary articulations of cosmopolitan interventionism remains a powerful influence in the anamnesis that informs contemporary practices” (Jabri 2013: 23). The temporal sequencing of progressive narratives of modernisation, liberalisation, liberation or development have a powerful effect in terms of designating essentialised differences.

The strategy of postcolonial theorists in response to progressive temporal narratives is one of reconvening the difference of others into an imagined history of the self. The reduction of others to an imagined space in our past limits the space for considering the legitimacy of other trajectories and other subjectivities. Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 56) argue that “[w]ith the conversion of space into time, the constructed temporal backwardness of the savages is equated with the imagined temporal origins of the European self in antiquity and the spatially distinct other is thereby converted into a temporally prior self.” They state that this move has three linked elements. First, it denies the coevality, and by implication equality, of others (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 56). Secondly, this is sustained by the representation of others as ahistorical or timeless. The history of others is not countenanced (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 56). Thirdly, the effect of this temporal discourse is to hierarchise by transforming the other into a temporally prior, and thus less advanced, form of the self (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 56). The authors contend that in these three interlinked moves, the difference of the other is transformed into degeneracy. The functional effect of this is to differentiate by reducing others to markers of inferiority and backwardness. According to Massey (2005: 5), the effect of progressive developmental narratives is that non-Western countries are conceived of as “behind”; that eventually they will follow the path along which the capitalist West has led.” The effect of this, she argues, is that “we are not to imagine them as having their own trajectories, their own particular histories, and the potential for their own, perhaps different, futures. They are not recognised as coeval others. They are merely at an earlier stage in the one and only narrative it is possible to tell” (Massey 2005: 5). Other paths are therefore delimited and
Difference is constituted as a problem to be challenged and tamed through the imposition of interventionist and developmental strategies. Massey (2005: 82) argues that “[b]ecause space has been marshalled under the sign of time, these countries have no space – precisely – to tell different stories, to follow another path.” Difference is reconfigured as backwardness and regression which, crucially, can be corrected through a series of interventionist practices. Others are reimagined as potential selves.

Liberal narratives of timeless and standard progressive time have been powerfully presented as the global universal. Postcolonialism reveals the historically contingent nature of this supposed universality. The critical intervention of Chakrabarty (1992: 20) is to provincialise Europe by rendering particular its claimed universality in history, politics and philosophy. He argues that the “idea is to write into the history of modernity the ambivalences, contradictions, the use of force, and the tragedies and the ironies that attend it” (Chakrabarty 1992: 21). The task of provincialising Europe has the ethical imperative of opposing the universalising narratives of European discourses and their violent effects. The project is intended to remind us of the violence of Europeans against its others, and the enabling role played by narratives of universal progress and development in colonial or imperial violence. The aim is not to replace European history with “nativist, nationalist or atavistic” projects, but to destabilise universalism and emphasise the radical contingency and heterogeneity of history (Chakrabarty 1992: 21). Chakrabarty (1992: 21) states that the quest to provincialise Europe “does not call for a simplistic, out-of-hand rejection of modernity, liberal values, universals, science, reason, grand narratives, totalising explanations.” The opposition to totalities arises instead from a view of history as “contradictory, plural, heterogeneous struggles whose outcomes are never predictable, even retrospectively, in accordance with schema that seek to naturalise and domesticate this heterogeneity” (Chakrabarty 1992: 21). The positive postcolonial reply to hegemonic universal narratives is one which emphasises what Shapiro (2013: xv) terms a “plurality of temporal presences.” A problem with the hegemonic view of temporality is, according to Massey (2005: 5), that it “obliterates the multiplicities, the contemporaneous heterogeneities of space.” The critical project of Chakrabarty is to historicise and

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23 The price of choosing ‘alternative’ paths of development, modernisation or security is often high. For example, in 2013 President Karzai of Afghanistan rejected the security pact with the US that proposed to keep US troops stationed in the country. Karzai claims that his key concern is Afghan sovereignty, but the US will not continue to fund the Afghan army, which is currently wholly paid for by the US, as is half the national budget, if the deal on the security pact is not reached (BBC News 2013c and Graham-Harrison 2013)
particularise the universal and hegemonic in order to bring our attention to the multiplicitous and the hybrid in postcolonial subjectivities. The ethical import of the project is to reveal and oppose violent practices against others configured as almost irreconcilably different through their degenerate backwardness.

*The conflation of speed and progress*

This section examines the hegemonic narratives of progress underlying liberal intervention. Progressive teleological time has been allied with a particular image of capitalist development that entails scientific and technological accumulation. In this section I make three arguments about the fusion of progress, speed and technology that marks images of progressive liberal time. The first is that in the measurement of the success of an intervention, the line between the ethical and the technological has become blurred. Indeed the two have fused together, leaving interventions judged according to a humanitarian-technological register which fetishises advanced military technologies. The second, and related, effect is that this technological register makes violence more palatable for Western consumer-citizens as well as its participants, who are increasingly removed from its material impact. The third argument is that the image of progress as speed reinforces inequities between the technologically advanced, and thus swift, and the technologically backward, who are consigned to a terrestrial slowness. These critical questions are framed in this section with reference to the two contrasting images of time presented by Fukuyama and Virilio.

In Fukuyama’s teleological image of progressive time, technology and modern science are seen as mechanisms of progress. Technological advancement provides the key to the development of modern man, and marks the rate of progression in history. Fukuyama rejects what he terms backward looking projects such as Islamic fundamentalism as unable to satiate humankind’s ever-increasing desires. Fukuyama (1992: 83) argues that “these wants, created by man himself in historical time, are infinitely elastic and incapable of being fundamentally satisfied.” This expansive appetite propels scientific progress and technological advancement. Fukuyama views this drive for technological progress as the underlying mechanism pushing history forward. He counters apocalyptic or cyclical views of time as irrational, given what he terms the empirical evidence for teleological progress. The first reason he gives is the expectation created by economic growth. People become accustomed to technology and consumerism, and will rarely want to return to subsistence
The sight of other countries that remain industrialised will remain a constant standard against which people will judge their own diminished standard of living (Fukuyama 1992: 85). Any effort to freeze technology at a certain level of development is equally unrealistic, as “it would offer neither the glitter of a dynamic and growing economy, nor a genuine return to nature” (Fukuyama 1992: 85). Furthermore, freezing technological development would have the effect of bringing unacceptable politicisation into science. According to Fukuyama (1992: 86) “selective innovation raises difficult questions as to what authority decides which technologies are acceptable.” In Fukuyama’s (1992: 86) vision, technological development is at present determined by the free market, and any “politicisation of innovation” would have a negative impact on economic growth.

According to Fukuyama, technological development is seen as a fundamental mechanism driving progressive time. Fukuyama (1992: 88) argues that it is not possible to turn back technological progress, because “there is no part of mankind that is not aware of the scientific method and its potential, even if that part is currently incapable of generating technology or applying it successfully.” Globalisation has transformed our consciousness such that no-one is untouched by at least the sight of advanced technology. According to Fukuyama (1992: 88), there are no “barbarians at the gates, unaware of the power of modern natural science”. History has brought us this far, and now there is no turning back. Even if war has taught us that technology has become pointlessly destructive, this will not lead to the rejection of technology itself. Fukuyama (1992: 88) argues that people will seek to develop more rational technologies, “which men can convince themselves will give them decisive advantages.” Modern natural science, he states “is so powerful, both for good and for evil, that it is very doubtful whether it can ever be forgotten or ‘un-invented’ under conditions other than the physical annihilation of the human race” (Fukuyama 1992: 88).

Since the technological advancement of modern science is the driving force of history, Fukuyama concludes that the directional development of social and economic history is also irreversible. He argues that the history of mankind is undeniably progressive. We cannot reverse its course in any permanent way, even if reactionary groups may try to deny the universality of modern science. This image of technologically-driven universal time equates progress with speed and efficiency. Increased technological advancement means greater efficiency, reducing the time taken to travel, communicate and achieve solutions to technical problems. This greater efficiency is seen as the mechanism driving globalisation, as time and space are reduced through ever-improving technology. The inverse to this image is one in which religion and culture are associated with regression, Luddism and
backwardness. They are viewed as barriers to progress which, according to Fukuyama, should be transcended to ensure development.

In contrast, Virilio argues that war drives human development and in turn increasingly advanced technologies. Whereas for Fukuyama war is an unfortunate and irrational byproduct of human technological development, for Virilio it is central to the organisation of societies. He argues that “in the final account the West’s so-called revolutions have never been made by the people, but by the military institution” (Virilio 2006: 136). Though history, the changing nature of war drove societies into cities, enabling politics to take place within the clearly defined limits of the city walls. Virilio argued that after the world wars of the twentieth century that were driven by mechanical technology, a shift took place during the Cold War involving the acceleration of digital information technology. According to Virilio (2006: 118), the advent of nuclear weapons has radically changed the nature of social and political relations of Western society. Virilio argued that the Cold War period was characterised by a radical shift in the primary dimension of warfare, from the spatial to the temporal. Accordingly, this period saw the emergence of the “state of emergency of the war of time” (Virilio 2006: 156). This means that the fundamental concern for security became the occurrence of systemic, deterritorialised risk. Control of the probabilities in time, rather than the possession of territory in space, became the primary political and strategic priority of liberal societies.

Accompanying this shift to the temporal concern of controlling future risks was the expansion of the state security apparatus. Virilio’s concerns about the extension of the state security apparatus echo those of Foucault and the Paris School. Virilio foresaw an expansion of the logic of security characterised by intense control of movements and future possibilities, with important implications for the freedom of liberal societies. He observed what he termed “the industrialisation of prevention, or prediction” (Virilio 1994b: 66), characterised by the expansion of monitoring and surveillance. This expansion of preventive security in domestic societies was mirrored in the rise of pre-emption in military strategy. Unlike deterrence, which relies on visibility, pre-emption is characterised by an increasingly closed and secretive network of security institutions. Virilio (1994b: 66) argues that the logic of pre-emption requires “the greatest possible dissimulation. The power of the countermeasure thereby resides in its apparent non-existence.” This meant that the technological advances of militarism during the Cold War had dislocated the plane upon which we can view security, from the visible and material to the virtual. He argued that
“this is the deception of the war of mass extermination whose means, deployed and endlessly perfected, have been throwing the political economy out of kilter and dragging our societies into the mire of a general loss of a sense of reality that permeates all aspects of normal life” (Virilio 1994b: 67). Advances in military violence had exaggerated a process of alienation and dislocation of humans from each other and from their collective goals.

Virilio believed that war had created a space for politics by driving the organisation of human societies into cities, but that it may lead to the destruction of politics. This is because the development of advanced weapons technology has annihilated distance, and thus space. Speed has become the new dividing line of politics. Virilio (2012: 41) argues that “[i]n the light speed of electromagnetic waves that create this instant interactivity, speed has taken power.” We are living in the totalitarian era of instantaneous connectivity and reaction, or what Virilio termed ‘globalitarianism’. This has profoundly altered the way in which humans interact politically as well as socially, heightening the dislocation between humans and community. Virilio (2006: 156-157) argues that the “contraction in time, the disappearance of the territorial space, after that of the fortified city and armour, leads to a situation in which notions of ‘before’ and ‘after’ designate only the future and the past in a form of war that causes the ‘present’ to disappear in the instantaneousness of decision.” This annihilation of space has had important political effects. The technological shift that occurred after the Second World War has caused “the extermination of space as the field of freedom of political action” (Virilio 2006: 158). Der Derian (1999: 224) stated that for Virilio, “the interconnectivity of virtual systems is not ushering in a new day for democracy but a new order of telepresence; high-paced interconnectivity is becoming, technically and literally, a substitute for the slower-paced intersubjectivity of traditional political systems.” The instantaneousness of decisions in security and military technologies had, Virilio argued, led to the shrinking of the sphere of political debate and contestation. Virilio saw the acceleration of technological development and its spatio-temporal implications as regressive rather than progressive. This was because of the deleterious effects on political freedom of violent technologies of the security and military institutions, and the eventual destruction of mankind that they would bring about.

There are two main implications of Virilio’s argument about war and speed. The first is representational, concerning the destructive effects of the ‘propaganda of progress’ (Virilio 2012: 42) which masks the violent effects of military technologies. Virilio (2012: 42) argued that “what we are living through now has taken the shape of a religion; it is not unlike a
return to sun worship where speed has replaced light. We are experiencing the return of a major myth supported by the propaganda of progress.” This entails the assumption that liberal societies will enjoy seemingly endless economic growth and scientific development. Virilio’s work points not only to the apocalyptic potential of humanity’s progress, but also to its violent and controlling effects in the present. He argues that “in the propaganda of progress as I defined it, the question of speed and its violence (unsanctioned violence) has been purely and simply suppressed” (Virilio 2012: 42). In other words, the liberal image of progressive and universal time driven by technological mechanism obfuscates and distracts from the violent and destructive basis of many advanced technologies. This leads to critical questions such as: in what ways are the technologies of violence fetishised and celebrated? What narratives are deployed in order to transform the violent and destructive into the creative, progressive and successful? These questions frame the analysis of ‘virtuous war’ in Libya presented in Chapter 4.

The second concern raised by Virilio about the discourse of speed is a humanistic and ethical one about the removal of human agency from an apparatus of surveillance and killing. Virilio raised anxieties about the processes of alienation and dehumanisation at the heart of military technologies. Virilio argued that the development of increasingly efficient means of violence in warfare would alienate participants and observers of war from its destructive effects. Virilio (1988: 4-7) stated that “when you couple a video camera with a computer on a robot or on a missile like a cruise missile, the gaze, even if for the moment a poor gaze, is a self-sufficient gaze, a blind gaze, the machine looking for itself and no longer for some spectator or telespectator.” The concern of increasing automation in violent technology was, for Virilio, (2006: 164) that it “necessarily leads to the war machine becoming the very decision for war.” He outlines a self-reproducing violent system that is irrational rather than rational at its core. The logics within this system become self-reinforcing, perpetuating violence and war for its own sake rather than for the rational interests posited by realists. These logics of what Virilio terms the ‘war machine’ are examined in depth in Chapter 5, which explores privatisation of security functions such as border control, and suggests the implications for thinking about the geographies of intervention. The critical function of liberal discourse is to provide this morally empty and irrationally violent system with a false sense of moral purpose. Importantly, it is also a system in which the ethical decision over committing violence was being abdicated through the increasing distance between the moment of decision and the material impact of
violence. This alienation would lead, according to Virilio, to the increasing self-sufficiency of a system of surveillance and violent control.

Critically, Virilio argued that the logic of dehumanisation of violent technology would lead to the destruction of humanity. Virilio’s (1994a: 6) vision of apocalypse was one resulting from humanity’s “will to reduce the world to the point where one could possess it. All military technologies reduce the world to nothing.” The monstrosity of advancing, military-led technology lies with the desire to possess, and destroy the world. This logic of control and destruction was being hidden, according to Virilio, by the narratives of progress and economic success. Advanced capitalist societies had created their own exterminators, and were feeding themselves marketed lies about the success of this failure. For Virilio, (2005: 79) the exterminator figure was:

Not so much the butcher of a terrorism that has turned suicidal, the looming shadow of the lost soldier of the wars of the days gone by; more the kind of butcher who ingeniously offers the means of putting an end to the world and to its embedded humanity – every possible means, including economic, technical and scientific – all the while being intimately persuaded of bringing Progress, as superior civilisation.

Virilio argued that this dark side of technology should concern us greatly. Not only had we contributed to the elimination of the sphere of politics, but we have created the means of our destruction, first of the human body, and then of humanity in its entirety.

Virilio’s reading of military technologies presents a bleak vision of the future as well as the present. Its use in analysing the present is providing a way of seeing the potentially alienating effects of military technology, as well as providing a powerful metaphor warning about the effects of technological progress. The key question is the extent to which this affects how we commit violence. Does advanced technology make violence easier to commit? The problem with Virilio’s image is that it creates a sense of false equality of terror. In it, we are all living in the administration of fear, susceptible to control, surveillance and violence. Virilio’s work can risk reading as if differential identities do not matter in the present. He argues, for example, that “geographic localisation seems to have

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24 Echoing this, Jamison (1995: 114-115) points to the tendency in psychiatry to label suicides ‘successful’. She states that “within psychiatric circles, if you kill yourself, you earn the right to be considered a ‘successful’ suicide. This is a success one can live without … Suicide, however, is almost always an irrational act and seldom is it accompanied by the kind of rigorous intellect that goes with one’s better days.” In a representational trick, the irrational and violent is subtly transformed into an almost rational success.
definitively lost its strategic value … All that counts is the speed of the moving body and the undetectability of its path” (Virilio 2006: 151). Distance, and space, have been conquered, and as a result “speed is war, the last war” (Virilio 2006: 155). Virilio overstates the extent to which space is no longer important, or at least underestimates the differential impact of military and security technologies. In this context, Gregory’s (2011b) work is useful in reading the ethical questions raised by the alienating technologies of warfare, using the example of US drone strikes. The uses of aerial bombings and the final frontier of virtuous war, the UAV, can be seen to represent the zenith of the globalisation of the technologies of security. Gregory (2011b: 192) notes that “the death of distance enables death from a distance, and these remotely piloted missions not only project power without vulnerability … but also seemingly without compunction.” Gregory expresses the concerns about the ethicality of these violent technologies that trump even aerial bombing in their insistence on huge asymmetry of risk. He also argues that the drone pilots indeed feel a sense of “raw intimacy with the killing space” on the ground in Pakistan, Yemen or Afghanistan (Gregory 2011b: 206) rather than the coldly alienating detachment from the spaces of violence predicted by Virilio. The real-time nature of the surveillance technology in UAVs reduces the ‘kill-chain’, or the time taken to engage enemy targets, to minutes (Gregory 2011b: 196).

Furthermore, the pilots can see the space of the ‘enemy’ at close range, rather than simply as dots on a radar screen 15,000 feet above the target. Gregory (2011b: 196) argues that “the time-space compression that this entails has brought all those in the network much closer to the killing space.” He quotes UAV pilots emphasising that “you’re further away physically but you see more … [at only] eighteen inches from the battlefield” (Gregory 2011b: 197). Gregory (2011b: 197) argues that rather than being desensitised to the violent impact of their technology, UAV pilots are being “drawn into and captured by the visual field itself.” Rather than alienating, the effect of the technology is to bring the pilots closer to their victims and the materiality of their violence. However, this new intimacy of the battlefield is, Gregory points out, highly selective and differentiated.25 Rather than creating an ethical hesitancy over the deployment of spectacular violence against civilians, the

25 As Der Derian (2009: 248) points out, the power of technology in virtual war “lies in its ability to collapse distance, between here and there, near and far, fact and fiction. And so far, it has only widened the distance between those who have and those who have not.” Patterns of mobility in migration are mirrored in patterns of mobility in military technology. In other words, as the poorest and most marginalised find themselves highly embedded in their particular spaces despite mobility at high speeds for the global elite, the ability to traverse spaces with military technologies follows a similar pattern.
intimate visual space created by UAVs is reinforcing the bond between the drone operators and the US soldiers on the ground (Gregory 2011b: 200). Gregory (2011b: 201) notes that “high-resolution imagery is not a uniquely technical capacity but part of a techno-cultural system that renders ‘our’ space familiar even in ‘their’ space – which remains obdurately Other.” This adds another layer of interpretation of the deployment of technology in contemporary warfare, pointing to the lingering importance of space, and the enabling effects of ‘self’ and ‘other’ identities. As with the development of an apparatus of surveillance and control outlined in the preceding sections, the deployment of violent technologies of warfare is not random. The images of a security matrix or web of almost totalitarian proportions in Virilio’s work can have the effect of assuming its indiscriminate impact. Virilio himself is sensitive to inequalities and differential impacts of technologies of control, but his work tends to understate their importance. The questions of subjectivity and the colonial ‘remains’ (Young 2012) of global politics are therefore important ones to address in relation to the issues raised in this discussion of technology and violence.

In this section I have outlined a critique of the liberal imaginary of space and time in terms of its conflation of speed and progress. In the work of Fukuyama there is a technologically-driven narrative of development in which the achievement of more efficient advancements is seen as indicative of progressive change. This image underpins the creation of the progressive subjectivity of intervening actors as their efficient military technology is presented as a marker of advancement, contrasting with the backwardness of those they are intending to save. This conflation of progress and speed leads to a narrow measure of ethico-political success in which violent interventions are continually reinscribed and normalised as long as they are presented as increasingly efficient. In this section I argued that the conflation of speed and progress in technologically advanced societies has two potential effects. First, it leads to a confused measure of ethico-political success in which violent interventions are continually reinscribed and normalised as long as they are marked as increasingly efficient. The humanitarian and the technological logics of warfare become increasingly fused as we celebrate the development of increasingly efficient means of committing violence altogether. The second implication refers to dehumanisation and alienation in warfare. The use of automated technology makes violence easier to commit, leading Virilio to predict the removal of the human decision from the act of violence.

As Der Derian (2003: 41) notes “virtuous war has taken on the properties of a game, with high production values, mythic narratives, easy victories and few bodies.” Although
participation in warfare may have become increasingly like a game for its Western
participants, its impact on the ground remains as ever destructive, dislocating and messy.
The concern is that the materiality of violence becomes subsumed in a representation of
war that tends not to dwell on these corporeal effects. The instantaneousness with which
some can now make decisions to kill, bomb and maim contrasts tragically with the
slowness it takes their victims to rebuild and heal. In sum, there are two key implications of
this critique of technology and violence in the context of my case study of the intervention
in Libya. The first relates to representation. The questions to be asked after my case
include: how was the intervention in Libya seen as a ‘success’? To what extent is this
success measured on a register of advancing technology? Does advanced technology enable
the representation of war as progressive? How is violence normalised and framed through
narratives of progress? The second relates to the alienation of humans from the material
impact of their violent technologies. As such, I address questions including: does a
particular narrative of technologically enhanced progress blind us from the material effects
of warfare? Is war made easier by the accession of advanced military technologies? Are
participants and spectators in virtuous war increasingly alienated and disconnected from
the material impact of violent asymmetrical warfare? What does this mean for us, as
spectators of virtuous war? How are the lines of resistance to such practices of violence
being redrawn? Using the methodology outlined here, Chapters 4 and 5 address these
questions of responsibility and complicity that challenge the liberal narratives of rescue and
progressive change in humanitarian intervention.

Conclusion

Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 116) argue that “the landscape of world politics can be
understood … in terms of a binary that recycles the content of modernisation theory into a
new, international form: between a zone of peace, democracy and wealth and a separate
zone of anarchy, turmoil, authoritarianism and (optimistically) development.” This quote
helps draw together the various strands of spatial and temporal critique being presented in
this chapter. Imaginative geographies of difference as danger and threat intersect with
temporal narratives of progress which conceive of others as backward and degenerate. In
this way, danger and threat are seen to emanate not only from the contemporaneous
difference but from aberrations to progressive liberal time. Risk management is seen to
protect against the threats posed by those who are hostile to liberal progress. This logic
underpins security discourses on state failure and underdevelopment as posing the greatest
risk to Western security. These ‘failures’ are constituted as aberrations from universal and linear temporal development, and configured as problems amenable to violent corrective interventions. Liberal violence is in this way continually justified through its opposition to difference seen not only as outside of proscribed state boundaries but as resistance to a hegemonic image of time. The chapter presented a critique of narratives of progressive time in liberal thought in two important ways. The first reveals the contingent and historically produced nature of such narratives. This is particularly important when such temporal narratives are positioned as universal and self-evident, a powerful strategy which conceals their position and specificity under a hegemonic universality. The second emphasises the constitutive role progressive temporal narratives may play in practices of violence. Drawing from this, my case study of the Libya intervention traces stories that challenge the linear liberal narrative of crisis-intervention-resolution. In Chapter 5 I explore stories which challenge and disturb this narrative and reveal instabilities in this familiar narrative of violent liberation.

In this chapter I argued against the logic of spatial separation in international politics that sets up false distinctions between war ‘over there’ and peace ‘over here’. As a way of breaking down these stable topologies of ‘here’ and ‘there’ upon which humanitarian intervention rests, I first looked at contemporary security practices of surveillance and border control. These practices are not constrained by territorial spaces, and trouble the boundaries between foreign and domestic politics as well as between war and peace. The role of networked security practices in the case of Libya is outlined in Chapters 4 and 5, where I examine the extent to which moral discourses of humanitarian war are made inconsistent by the logics of risk management and counter-terror in security policy. This goes part of the way towards revealing how a hegemonic conception of space can normalise violence. However, it can be supplemented by the postcolonial concept of imaginative geography, which points towards the importance of hierarchical identities in the representation of the spaces of others. The chapter used this concept to further challenge the stable spatial distinctions that constitute the topology of humanitarian intervention. The concept of imaginative geography highlights the way in which certain cultures have been positioned as constitutive of difference. This notion of difference, which frames further imaginations of danger, threat and degeneracy, underpins violent interventionist practices in global politics. Said and Gregory suggest that we must take seriously performances of space and time in understanding continuing hostility and violence between, for instance, the US and Middle East. This is because of the crucial
constitutive role they play in the creation of difference. This leads to a methodology that resists the separation of war ‘there’ and peace ‘here’, and also resists linear and universalising narratives. Postcolonial imaginative geography builds upon the challenge to the logic of separation that clearly delineates the boundaries of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in global politics. Drawing from this critical methodology, the questions to be addressed next in the thesis are: what imaginative geographies were constituted in the Libya intervention, and to what extent were they implicated in the production of violence in that context? It is to these questions that the following chapter now turns.
3. Othering and the production of violence: imaginative geographies of enmity, danger and transition in the Libyan uprising

Introduction

This chapter examines the imaginative geographies of the Libyan uprising in 2011, identifying processes of othering underpinning representations of Libyan political spaces. As argued in the previous two chapters, liberal images of the subject are marked by universalism, dualism and transcendence. There is a dualism between the perfectible and universal transcendent consciousness and the crude and corrupt material surroundings in which many people find themselves. Narratives of intervention and democratisation rely upon the notion of transcendence through optimism with the redeemable potential of the liberal individual to transcend his or her material surroundings. Similar themes framed dominant representation of the Libyan uprising, as the degradation of war and authoritarianism of contemporary Libya was contrasted with the transcendent potential of the Libyan subject through future democratisation. In this way, delineating the lines of legitimate subjectivity plays a crucial role in determining the terms of success and failure in intervention. As established in the introduction to this thesis, the Libya intervention was represented as a success for the norm of R2P. In the context of the Arab Spring uprisings across the MENA region, support for democratisation was a powerful narrative in which Western elites framed the intervention. This chapter and the next are intended to unsettle this narrative that the intervention in Libya was a limited and ethical war that saved lives and protected civilians. The first part of this process is the delineation of imaginative geographies of the uprising in Libya, that rest upon often silent distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate subjects, and their corresponding legitimate and illegitimate violence.

Mutua (2001) argues that human rights discourse is often rendered intelligible through a simplistic typology of savage-victim-saviour. This chapter focuses on the constitution of the Libyan rebel as a contradictory subjectivity that falls somewhere between this tripartite typology. The Libyan rebels were caught between victim, freedom fighter and enemy, not able to fulfil the role of saviour reserved for intervening Western forces. In many ways their subjectivity rested upon Orientalist assumptions about Arab and Muslim communities and their political spaces. As a result, the rebels were represented in Western media and elite texts as part courageous activist, part chaotic and disorderly rabble, and part...
potentially dangerous Islamist. The argument is that the subjectivities created here rest upon a background of Orientalist representation of the other in foreign policy, and in particular on recent images of Arab and Muslim men as innately violent and traditional. Media representation of the Libyan rebel veered between admiration of the Libyan Opposition’s courage and determination to fight Gaddafi at all costs, and anxiety at their apparent lack of control, with an underlying fear of the potential threat they may pose to the West. The second part of the chapter looks at elite representation of the newly formed Libyan government, the NTC. The narrative presented here is one of a clearly delineated hierarchical, parental relationship in the international system between those who intervene and those who are recipients of intervention.

The chapter analyses the production of imaginative geographies of the Libyan conflict in a range of texts, including elite speeches and comments from the foreign offices of the US and UK, as well as international media reporting on the conflict. These texts were selected not in order to represent a holistic ‘Western perspective’ on the Libya conflict or as authentic expressions of foreign policy ‘interests’, but as particular texts in which subjectivities are produced amongst many others. The source material dates from February to October 2011, covering the beginning of the uprising and the period of international intervention in Libya. The chapter begins by briefly outlining the context of historical enmity with Muammar Gaddafi. I go on to identify a broader construction of imaginative geographies complementing the mythical geography of enmity with Gaddafi, marked by the representation of spaces of the Libyan uprising as chaotic and dangerous. I go on to examine the constitution of the subjectivity of the Libyan rebel across the texts under analysis. The dominant representation of the Opposition was a contradictory mix of admiration at their courage in the fight against Gaddafi, and fear at the perceived lack of control over their volunteer soldiers. As noted in Chapter 1, subject formation is a process that cannot expunge these contradictory and confused elements, as the creation of such identities is necessarily exclusionary and limiting. In order to create an image of coherence, representation of the rebel Opposition focused on several themes of difference, including juvenility, disorder and essentialised violence. The chapter concludes by suggesting that dominant representations of the Libyan Opposition present a limited and limiting image of subjectivity in Libya. The resulting discourse represents a West struggling to come to terms

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26 While recognising the potential to reproduce the silences that exclude non-Western people from conversations about themselves, this approach is appropriate in the context of my research question, which addresses the production of violence in dominant normative discourse.
with the events of the Arab Spring in Libya and beyond, as people rose to challenge the received way of doing things in the MENA region, including historical Western complicity with authoritarian regimes there. As noted in the introduction to the thesis, Burgess and Constantinou (2013) argue that the ways in which we conceptualise the MENA region should be updated to deal with new ‘emerging political complexes’ (Dillon and Reid 2000: 117-121). Part of getting to grips with the new political landscape of the region is challenging the received Orientalist assumptions about identities of its people, and the way in which they have served particular policies, from tolerance of dictatorships, to the complications of counter-terror to military intervention. It is this imperative that informs the analysis of subjectivities of the Libyan uprising presented here.

**Imaginative geographies of the Libya conflict**

*Gaddafi and the geography of enmity*

Prior to the 2011 intervention, Libyan political space had already been coloured by its associations with terrorism, and Gaddafi’s image as an eccentric and repressive despot. Libya was seen as pariah state in the 1990s, vilified by Britain, France and the US for its alleged involvement in the bombings of Pan-Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie in 1988, and a French passenger plane over the Sahara desert the following year. Gaddafi was allegedly culpable for a bomb in West Berlin in 1986 in which US troops were killed, and for which the US bombed targets in Tripoli in retaliation. Relations with Britain were already strained following the death of PC Yvonne Fletcher outside the Libyan embassy in London in 1984. As a result of these incidents, Gaddafi occupied a position in the Western imagination as the dangerous, brutal and corrupt Arab leader, reinforcing Orientalist representations of Arab people and their political spaces. His identity was that of caricatured Arab dictator, inspiring intrigue and fear in equal measures by a western media in thrall at his eccentric practices. Filmmaker Shane Smith (2011) states that “like most journalists I’d been fascinated by Libya for a long time. While Gaddafi was in power it was much like North Korea, a hermit-like, cult of personality, Stalinist state with an absolute dictator at its head.” Reporting on the uprising in February 2011, the New York Times wrote that “internationally, he is regarded as an erratic and quixotic figure who travels with an escort of female
bodyguards and likes to live in a large tent of the kind used by desert nomads” (Cowell 2011). While eccentric and particular, Gaddafi is also seen as symbolic of Arab despotism and corruption in general: “he has built his rule on a cult of personality and a network of family and tribal alliances supported by largess from Libya’s oil revenues” (Cowell 2011). As Lindsey Hilsum (2012: 40) neatly puts it, “Colonel Gaddafi was a man out of time. By 2011 he seemed like a character from an old movie that no one wanted to see again.”

While framing the intervention to electorates, elites in the US and UK emphasised the historical narrative of Libyan isolation and violence against Western targets. This process of framing the intervention as a moral crusade to right past wrongs involved recalling images of Gaddafi as a violent and dangerous dictator. In a speech in Scotland announcing UK support for the UN no-fly zone, Cameron stated that “we must remember that Gaddafi is a dictator who has a track record of violence and support for terrorism against our country and against Scotland specifically” (Black 2011). He reminded the Scottish audience of the Lockerbie bombing in 1988 which killed 11 people on the ground as well as the 243 passengers, stating that “the people of Lockerbie, 100 miles away from here [Perth], know what he is capable of” (Black 2011). In a statement to the House of Commons on the day NATO action commenced, Cameron (2011a) repeated the call to the British people to remember Lockerbie, saying that “in this country we know what Colonel Gaddafi is capable of. We should not forget his support for the biggest terrorist atrocity on British soil.” Obama also emphasised the historic threat that Gaddafi represented to US interests. Obama insisted in March 2011 that Gaddafi “has denied his people freedom, exploited their wealth, murdered opponents at home and abroad, and terrorized innocent people around the world – including Americans who were killed by Libyan agents” (Obama 2011a). In early March, shortly before the NATO intervention began, Hillary Clinton called for Gaddafi to face trial for the Lockerbie bombing (Dombey 2011). She suggested that the Lockerbie attack should be added to the list of crimes for which Gaddafi had recently been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), stating that “because there have been statements made in the last days by what are now former members of the Libyan government fingerling Gaddafi, making it clear that the order came from the very top, I

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27 Gaddafi’s female bodyguards were of particular fascination to the western press. This excerpt from the New York Times emphasises the Gaddafi regime’s “strangeness, its exotic sensuousness” (Said 2003: 185): “[y]ou might have seen the guards; the eye-catching, gun-toting women in paramilitary uniforms. Some are knockouts. And they will knock you out, too, if you mess with their supreme leader. Some wear lipstick, jewellery, polished nails, even high heels. Last month, the Western world got a few glimpses of them as they backed up Colonel Qaddafii when he visited European Union officials in Brussels” (Richardson 2004).
think we do need to move expeditiously” (Dombey 2011). This broke with US policy of focusing on those previously convicted of the Lockerbie bombing.

That the US and UK emphasised Gaddafi’s past crimes and associations with terrorism is striking considering the recent warm relations enjoyed between the West and Gaddafi. In 2004, then British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that Gaddafi wanted to make “common cause with us against al-Qaeda, extremists and terrorism” (BBC News 2004). The next chapter explores the complex history of both complicity and disengagement between the West and Libya. The dominant trope of representation of Gaddafi in the lead-up to intervention in February and March 2011 was one of historical enmity, glossing over this history of mutual engagements with his regime. Gaddafi’s otherness is constituted through these imaginative geographies, through which “‘they’ become ‘they’ … and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from ‘ours’” (Said 2003: 54). For example, protagonists of the intervention emphasised the exceptionality of Gaddafi’s violence, representing it as an almost unique evil. Clinton warned in March that “we have every reason to fear that left unchecked, Gaddafi will commit unspeakable atrocities” (Lee 2011, emphasis added). Echoing this comment, Obama (2011a) stated that “if we waited one more day, Benghazi … could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world.” In answering a question on civilian casualties at the start of the NATO operation, then Secretary of Defense Robert Gates gave the following statement:

> [t]he truth of the matter is, we have trouble coming up with proof of any civilian casualties we have been responsible for. But we do have a lot of intelligence reporting about Gaddafi taking the bodies of people he’s killed, and putting them at the sites where we’ve attacked. We have been extremely careful in this military effort, and not just our pilots, but the pilots of the other coalition air forces have really done an extraordinary job (Clinton 2011c).^{28}

This powerful imagery of the devious nature of Gaddafi’s tactics echoes Said’s arguments about contemporary Orientalism. Said (2003: 286-287) argues that in popular discourse “the Arab is associated either with lechery or bloodthirsty dishonesty. He appears as an oversexed degenerate, capable, it is true, of cleverly devious intrigues, but essentially sadistic, treacherous, low.” Fascination with Gaddafi’s eccentric lifestyle gives way during

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^{28} Interestingly, this has echoes with Geoff Hoon’s claim during the bombing of Baghdad in 2003 that representatives of Saddam Hussein’s regime had moved fragments of coalition missiles to a residential area of Baghdad in order to discredit the coalitions’ claims to be minimizing civilian casualties (Gregory 2004: 211).
the early stages of the uprising to fear of his exceptional capacities to commit violence. 
This is drawn out through emphasising the nature of the threat posed by Gaddafi to 
civilians in Benghazi, as well as the above accusation of his devious and underhand tactics. 
It also rigidly separates boundaries between self and other in the process of splitting 
outlined in my methodology. As Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 11) argue about the 
confrontation with difference, “[i]nstead of recognising the possibility of the overlap 
between self and other, boundaries are rigidly drawn, carefully policed, and mapped onto 
the difference between good and evil.”

'It's like the Wild East out here': chaotic spaces of the Libyan conflict

Benghazi and other Libyan cities have symbolised the violence, destruction and the chaotic 
breakdown of order during the uprising in 2011. The reaction of state forces to the protests 
of February 2011 prompted some to declare that Gaddafi’s response turned the Arab 
Spring to a Libyan winter (Prashad 2012). The mappings of Libyan cities in general 
emphasised notions of Arab difference and danger. In some ways the Libyan city 
represents during the conflict what Baudrillard (1994: 71) terms an “anticity … the 
negativity internal or external to the city,” with fear, danger and destruction standing as a 
negative inversion of the imagined space of the Western observer in Europe or North 
America. This section outlines dominant representation of Libyan cities during the uprising 
in 2011 to illustrate prevalent themes in imaginative geographies of the Libyan conflict. The 
themes outlined below are not intended to be exhaustive, but illustrative of wider resonant 
elements of a dominant discourse on Libya that reflects the fears and anxieties of the 
observing (and implicitly Western) self. These themes are fraught with tension and 
contradiction, as are all attempts to constitute coherent subjectivity. I argue that reporting 
on the Libyan uprising was informed by themes of the apocalyptic breakdown of the socio-
political order, the difficulty of navigating spaces in Arab cities, and of essentialised 
violence. This can be located alongside dominant representation of the Libyan rebels 
examined below as exemplary of a particular image of Arab masculinity as violent and 
aggressive, yet crudely emotional and irrational. This section attempts to represent the 
incoherency of the othering of Libyan political spaces in the uprising, reflecting as it does a 
series of fears, doubts and anxieties in political imaginations of unrest and disorder.

Libyan cities appear in many news media texts as a cinematic backdrop or vision of the almost apocalyptic breakdown of order. Der Speigel reports after the rebel liberation of Benghazi at the end of March that the city “is descending into mistrust and fear. More stores have closed and most people no longer dare to give out their phone numbers … No one dares to go out at night, as rounds of machine gun fire thunder through the empty streets” (von Mittelstaed and Windfuhr 2011). Sky News reporter Alex Crawford uses cinematic references to anchor the sheer chaos of Libyan cities during the uprising to something culturally familiar. Crawford (2012: 194) describes how the rebel Misrata brigade in Zawiya had fashioned cars into armoured vehicles:

[t]heir vehicles look like they have been lifted from the set of the film Mad Max, like they are survivors from some sort of post-apocalyptic world. I'm not using the analogy lightly. They actually do look like the Mad Max characters.

Crawford mines a recent cultural discourse of war and disaster films in order to anchor the chaos in visually recognisable signs. Similarly, the liberation of Tripoli in August 2011 is likened to a scene from a famous war film:

[a]n Opposition pick-up has driven past ours with a young fighter on the back with his gun around his shoulders, dressed in a dirty white sleeveless T-shirt… I think, God, it looks just like a scene from Apocalypse Now. We are actually living through a real-life movie (Crawford 2012: 209).

Perhaps recalling the imagery of a war film is more real to Crawford than being confronted with a real-life war. Perhaps this description is intended to make the scene more easily comprehensible to an assumed reader not au fait with war-zones. Either way, these sections of Crawford’s memoir on her experience reporting on Libya are striking. They resonate with the Baudrillardian notion of hyperreality in which the representation of images or scenes from lived experience draws from a cultural discourse of fictional imagery in order to render itself intelligible. Baudrillard describes the postmodern collapse of the distinction between representation and reality. He states that “[in the past] the imaginary was the alibi of the real, in a world dominated by the reality principle. Today, it is the real that has become the alibi of the model, in a world controlled by the principle of simulation” (Baudrillard 1994: 124). Crawford’s representation of Libya itself draws upon a pre-existing cultural mapping of violent spaces represented through cinema, and in turn reinforces this discourse of the unreality of violent spaces. These spaces are rendered intelligible to us by their representation as a spatially distinct backdrop to the normality and calm of western cultural spaces, and they are filtered through to the consumer of the international media as scenes from a film.
Images of generic ‘apocalyptic’ chaos are complemented in reporting on Libya by imagery of the specific Byzantine spaces of Arab cities. Writing in *The Daily Telegraph*, Rob Crilly (2011) details residents fleeing the city in March, emphasising that “escape was difficult for the families that fled.” He describes the city in labyrinthine terms, likening the city to a maze of hazards and dangers:

roads through the old city – the port and its elegant Italianate architecture – were blocked with cars, forcing traffic to zigzag through the streets before they could reach the outskirts … The road out was clogged with people desperately seeking safety, even as a Hind attack helicopter swooped low in the opposite direction to join the fight (Crilly 2011).

The difficulty of navigating through the densely populated city is highlighted in Crilly’s report, which portrays the terror and panic amongst the city’s residents. Crawford describes the chaos of Misrata in April in similar terms:

there’s a labyrinth of makeshift checkpoints which the citizens of the city have erected … There are piles of sand and chunks of concrete, trees, branches and steel piping strewn across roads. A working man’s blockade. It’s a chicane of obstacles which all the vehicles have to go through (Crawford 2012: 127).

The chaos, disorder and disarray of the city are drawn out as the space is transformed into a series of hazards. This echoes a trend in Hollywood cinema highlighted by Khatib (2004), who looks at the differences between representations of American and Arab cities. She describes how Arab cities are often portrayed as a negative version of vibrant and green American cities, with a “condensed hustle and bustle of seemingly overlapping houses, narrow alleys, and graffiti covered walls” (Khatib 2004: 73). This difference in structure is conveyed as “claustrophobia and chaos which can be projected upon the Arab political scene” (Khatib 2004: 73). These features of the Libyan city are drawn out in these news media texts, read through fear and danger. Yet it is a strangely recognisable difference – easily interpretable as Arab and Middle Eastern due to its reiteration of themes in a popular cultural discourse on Middle Eastern cities as spaces of danger and threat to foreigners.

Another prevalent theme in dominant representation of spaces of the Libyan uprising is that of essentialised violence. Alex Crawford’s crew was the first Western team to report from besieged Zawiya in March as it was coming under direct attack from Gaddafi’s forces, giving her the first exclusive of the conflict. In this first report, Zawiya is depicted as a generic zone of chaos and destruction. She writes of her entry into the city on the 6 March,
as most Western journalists are under close guard from the Gaddafi regime in the Rixos hotel in Tripoli, giving the following account:

>[a]s we get closer there are signs of battle everywhere, smouldering ashes, broken barricades, burnt-out cars, debris littering the street. There are holes punched into the walls from shells and rockets and the buildings are peppered with machine-gun pock-marks. We are all stunned. What a battle. What destruction (Crawford 2012: 64).

The Zawiya of Gaddafi’s bombardment in this early part of the conflict is an object of fear and pity in Crawford’s account. Later in the conflict, Crawford writes of her return to Zawiya after its full liberation by Opposition forces. She states:

[n]ow there are dozens of Opposition fighters underneath [the flyover entering the city], some cleaning their weapons, others just stopping and checking cars as they enter the roundabout underneath. Wow. This is a very different Zawiya. This is a Zawiya with teeth, one that is not prepared to be pushed around any more. This is a Zawiya which is now armed (Crawford 2012: 167).

Zawiya becomes a city marked by violence, whether as a victim or as triumphant aggressor. This image of essentialised violence leaves the non-violent struggle of many Libyans against the Gaddafi regime remains silently unaccounted for.

A dominant theme in the Sky News and other Western reporting is one of essentialised violence. This is a representation that is superficial, without exploring the stories and accounts of Libyans themselves during the uprising. Said (2003: 287) argues that representation of Arabs as an undifferentiated mass is a common feature of Orientalist discourse. He notes that “in newsreels or newsphotos, the Arab is always shown in large numbers. No individuality, no personal characteristics or experiences. Most of the pictures represent mass rage and misery, or irrational (hence hopelessly eccentric) gestures” (Said 2003: 287). This echoes the representation in Crawford’s text, which draws out essentialised stereotypes of Arab failure and violence, while at the same time refusing to engage with individuals to hear their stories. As a result, the image of Libyans emerging from Crawford’s text is one of a mass of either hopelessly vulnerable civilians prey to Gaddafi’s evil, or crudely violent and incompetent rebel fighters. As I argued in Chapter 2, neo-Orientalist discourse is imaginative, in that it does not represent any essence of reality in Libya or elsewhere, but reflects the fears, desires and anxieties of the observing self. As Said (2003: 287) argues, “lurking behind all of these images is the menace of jihad.” Beneath Orientalist imaginative geographies is a fear of the uncontrolled violence of the Arab, and the challenge he (for this is a gendered discourse of vulnerable oppressed Arab women,
and irrational, emotional men) poses to the European or Western self. As a result, the spaces of the Libyan uprising are coloured with assumptions of essentialised violence, forcing out the possibility of non-violent resistance.

‘Rag-tag rebels’: Juvenility, militarisation and threat

Representation of the Libyan uprising largely focused on the Opposition rebel army who had risen up to fight Gaddafi’s forces following the violent repression of protesters in February and March 2011. Many journalists reported from either rebel-held Benghazi or regime-held Tripoli, with the latter heavily controlled by Gaddafi’s guides. The themes which arose in discourse on the uprising echoed Orientalist images of the Arab or Muslim subject (Khatib 2004; Shaheen 2001), in a recent context of the securitisation of Islam in Europe and the US (Mavelli 2013). The rebels were portrayed as youthful and emotional, chiming with representations of colonial subjects as childlike and irrational, but also violent and dangerous. In the militarised crucible of war-torn Libya (Dabashi 2012), notions of youthful exuberance contained an undercurrent of threat, as the violence of the rebel was seen as veering between incompetence and emotional excess. Lying silently beneath dominant representations of the rebels is the idealised image of the professional Western soldier. The professional soldier is reserved, rational and disciplined as the Libyan imitator is emotional, irrational and insubordinate. The militarisation of the rebels provides a path towards this ideal subject, yet the process is represented as incomplete. This incompleteness provides the basis for legitimating Western intervention, which depends upon this underlying assumption of unequal and hierarchical subjectivities. This section of the chapter details the key themes in reporting on the rebels during the uprising. The Orientalism of the dominant representations of the rebels arose in the context of a violent Western intervention into Libya. The aim of this section of the chapter is to highlight the ways in which dominant representations of the rebels were implicated in the production of a Western intervention as reasonable, rational and desirable in the face of the irrational chaos of Libyan political space during the revolution.

Juvenility

An interesting and yet contradictory theme that expresses the difference of the rebels is their juvenility. Reuters reporter Nick Carey (2011) writes in July that “many [rebels] are still teenagers dressed in T-shirts and jeans and wearing baseball caps.” Crawford (2012: 168)
recalls her time reporting from Zawiya during the summer of 2011: “[i]t’s like the Wild East out here. As usual, the fighters we’re with are all young lads. They seem to have little coordination and little sense of what they’re doing but they’re united by one aim: to kill Gaddafi soldiers.” Reporting from Benghazi and Misrata in the midst of the fighting, Vice filmmaker Shane Smith (2011) states that “the thing that struck me the most as we got close to the front line, was just how incredibly young some of these rebels were. It was pretty surreal to watch these kids, barely out of puberty, fighting and dying for this abstract concept of freedom.” He states that he “was shocked by how young many of them were” (Smith 2011). In Misrata he interviews one 15 year old on the beach launching Grad missiles against Gaddafi’s troops, which prompts his musing on the rebels’ ‘shocking’ youth. Yet in the film Smith interviews many Libyan men in the rebel army, their ages ranging from around 20 to 50. The Wall Street Journal reports that the rebel fighting units “number in size from three or four teenagers in a beat-up Toyota to dozens of fellow villagers under a single commander” (Levinson 2011). Nick Meo, writing for The Daily Telegraph, recalls the rebels he met in Benghazi in the early days of the uprising. He states that “the revolutionaries were dominated above all by the young, those without jobs or hope in Gaddafi’s Libya. They started their leaderless revolt because they wanted a future” (Meo 2011). The rebels’ youth is a point of emphasis of journalists and filmmakers reporting from Libya during the uprising in 2011. It furthers a particular image of the rebel army as childlike and irrational, while portraying a David and Goliath narrative on the struggle against Gaddafi.

One of the major concerns in the early days of the war is that the rebels are too young to fight professionally, and that untrained youths are proving to be a liability on the battlefield. Military spokesman for the rebels, Khaled al-Sayeh, stated in March 2011 that “the officers and commanders have no control over the youth who are pushing the front line … They don’t take orders from anyone” (Ghosh and Hauslohner 2011). A report on the rebel army in the New York Times in early April by C. J. Chivers (2011) is accompanied by a picture of a teenage boy participating in ad hoc military training, with the caption: “[i]n Benghazi, Libyan rebels, including a boy, trained recently, but lack firepower and knowledge of how to fight a war.” The tone of the article, written by a former marine, is one of concern that the rebel army is overly young and lacking the resources and emotional control to win the war. Chivers opens the article with a story of an older man instructing a younger rebel to hold fire on his rocket-propelled-grenade to save ammunition. He recounts that “the younger rebel almost spat with disgust. ‘I have been fighting for 37 days!’ he shouted.
‘Nobody can tell me what to do!’” (Chivers 2011). The difference in age of the rebel foot soldiers and their commanders, and the inter-generational conflict this generates, is often emphasised. CNN reports that “wide-eyed youth watch as their commanders give step-by-step instruction on how to handle weapons – most of the arms are twice as old as the young men who will use them” (Sidner 2011). The danger of the rebels’ youth is outlined by Levinson (2011) in The Wall Street Journal, alleging that a friendly fire incident was caused by “having large numbers of ill-trained overenthusiastic youth on the front lines.” He states that General al-Ghatrani “said the errant airstrike was a result of jubilant youth firing rifles into the air in celebration while a coalition fighter jet was overhead. The jet mistook the rebels’ celebratory fire for anti-aircraft rounds from pro-Gadhafi forces” (Levinson 2011). The Washington Post (2011) quotes Mustafa Gheriani, an opposition spokesman, saying that “[i]n a revolution, it’s very hard to control patriotic, excited young men” (Bahrampour 2011). The youthful nature of the rebel army is being presented here as a hindrance, lacking mature control over their newly acquired firepower.

The fact of the rebels’ youth should not be a key marker of difference as such, since teenagers fight in the professional militaries of the US and UK.30 Said (2003: 40) describes how colonial discourse creates a dichotomous relationship between the Western self and the Oriental other in which “the Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ‘different’; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal’”. In the Libyan case, the overt appearance of youth, expressed through the lack of uniform and absence of authority appears to be the more notable point being drawn out. As the colonial gaze is as ever directed outwards, toward the non-Western world, the European or North American observer fails to scrutinise the parallels with its own identity. Perceived points of difference, upon examination, appear to be more ambiguous than it is presumed. For example, assuming the professional superiority of Western armies, the idea of sending our own teenagers into battle in Iraq and Afghanistan requiring considerable improvisation and adaptation is forgotten. The Libyan situation is in many ways presented as a unique space in which ordinary people are suddenly thrust into a war. The more tragic point being missed is that unfortunately their youth is not so unique. Gregory (2004: 4) writes that the stories of self-production that the West tells about itself tend to “induce blindness,” in that the Westerner fails to see himself in any other terms than rational, civilised and mature.

30 Finkel (2009: 12) reports that the average age of the US 2-16 battalion deployed in Iraq in 2007 was 19. The British Army recruits and trains soldiers from the age of 16, and deploys into combat at 18.
Haraway (1991: 188) also points to the situated nature of all knowledge, and the way in which power produces sites of vision and opacity.\textsuperscript{31} Thus, dominant discourse on the Libyan conflict fails to observe the ambiguities and fragilities in Western militarised subjectivity.\textsuperscript{32} Meanwhile, the Libyan rebels are recognised as an absent, or potential subjectivity. As Chivers (2011) writes, “the rebel military, as it sometimes called, is not really a military at all.” Their lack of training, organisation, and maturity, mean that they are not a military as we know it. They become in Western eyes a mimicking subject, playing at being a professional army but falling short of high Western standards. This lack, of maturity, control and leadership marks the potential menace and danger of the Libyan rebels.

\textit{Militarisation}

Echoing the portrayal of the rebels as dangerously young, news reporting from Libya during 2011 is cut through with fear of the undisciplined nature of the uprising against Gaddafi. The fighting is shown by various journalists to be emotionally charged, standing in opposition to an ideal professional militarised subjectivity of emotional reserve and discipline.\textsuperscript{33} Chesterman (2011: 284) states that “the potential tragedy of Benghazi soon devolved into farce as the Libyan rebels were revealed as a disorganised rabble.” The \textit{Daily Telegraph} reporter Colin Freeman (2011) depicts a scene of hedonistic celebratory violence in Benghazi on the first day of NATO airstrikes. He narrates a scene as residents celebrate a victory over Gaddafi’s forces, by parading two captured regime soldiers through a square on the seafront. Freeman describes how even though many in the town were staying at home:

\begin{quote}
there was still a large turn-out of several hundred cheering townsfolk, most clad in the standard rebel get-up of combat jacket, hoodie and keffiyah scarf. An excitable crowd at the best of times - some admit to using prescription
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{31} Haraway (1991: 188) writes: “I would like to insist on the embodied nature of all vision … This is the gaze that mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, that makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation.”

\textsuperscript{32} See Duncanson (2009); Masters (2005); Welland (2013); Whitworth (2004); and Woodward and Winter (2007). Reminding us of the material effects of discursive instabilities, Welland (2013: 2) notes, of militarised subjectivities in British military training, that “while a stable and coherent militarised masculinity is exposed as a fiction, the violent effects of this fragile subjectivity remain violently ‘real.’”

\textsuperscript{33} On the instability of militarised subjectivities in British military training Welland (2013: 2) notes that “while a stable and coherent militarised masculinity is exposed as a fiction, the violent effects of this fragile subjectivity remain violently ‘real.’”
amphetamines to steady their combat nerves – they danced furiously beneath a tannoy blasting out a newly popular rebel rap-song: ‘Bring another tank, bring another warplane, we don’t care’ (Freeman 2011).

Reports of intoxicated Libyan rebels revelling in violence and listening to hip-hop reinforce an image of the anarchic subversion of globalised consumer culture in chaotic and violent insecure spaces. A report at the end of March in *The Washington Post* describes the “rebels’ ragtag army, which has plenty of heart but not much organisation, training or chain of command” (Bahrampour 2011). Reporting from Benghazi in March, McGreal (2011) writes how “hundreds of young men, some still in their teens, have grabbed guns and made for the frontline against Gaddafi’s forces. Many are ill-trained and poorly disciplined, wont to shoot randomly into the sky in frustration at bombing raids.” The image of the Libyan rebels being performed here is one of an ad hoc army, made up of young men with potential military subjectivity. At present, the men fighting Libya’s civil war are shown to be out of control, with only a propensity to commit violence, yet lacking the correct training to bring this into line with what are perceived to be professional military standards.

The lack of a consistent uniform and irregular weaponry of the rebel forces is repeatedly highlighted in media reports of the fighting in Libya. This contributes to an overall picture, particularly during the early stages of the conflict in March and April, of disorganisation and lack of control. Crilly’s (2011) report in *The Daily Telegraph* describes how the rebels of Benghazi were “armed with anything they could find – old World War Two Sten guns, machetes, baseball bats, shotguns, Molotov cocktails.” The report creates a sense of innate violence in the Libyan city, and amongst the population of civilian-soldiers, as well as drawing out the improvised and ad hoc nature of the rebel forces holding the city. Freeman (2011) also emphasises the irregularity of rebel forces patrolling Benghazi’s “corners and alleyways.” He describes the city being defended by “teenagers as young as 12 clutching petrol bombs and machetes, youths with belt-machine guns that they had been taught to use the week before, and older men with hunting rifles, shotguns, and sticks of dynamite normally used for hunting fish” (Freeman 2011). The *Los Angeles Times* describes the get-up of the ad hoc rebel army: “[f]rom pimply faced teens to silver-bearded retirees, the rebels dress in mismatched military uniforms looted from army barracks. Others wear sports shirts and jeans, with military cap or combat boots as an accessory” (Zucchino 2011). The haphazard and disorganised nature of the rebel forces is clearly being drawn out here, the lack of uniformity in the ‘soldiers’ standing in opposition to what we traditionally

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34 See Kaldor (2000) on globalised subcultures in what she terms new wars.
understand to be an organised, disciplined military. A report in *Time* magazine in March describes the rebel forces as “amateur warriors,” and focuses more on their lack of training. A columnist in the *Toronto Star* describes “the erratic nature of the fight and the often haywire approach of raw gun-wielders as they race to the front, then retreat in helter-skelter panic whenever subjected to a sustained attack” (DiManno 2011). Writing at the start of April, shortly after the NATO campaign had begun, she writes that the “slapdash citizen militia” have “become a hindrance” (DiManno 2011).

There is a powerful idea discernible in reporting from Libya that the rebels are finding legitimacy as subjects through military training. Lacking training and discipline, the rebels are portrayed as dangerously incompetent. Anthony Cordesman, a military analyst at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, gave the following assessment of the rebels’ capability, stating that “what we have, basically, are rebels that have a great deal of enthusiasm and who are willing to risk their lives but don’t have discipline or structure” (Ghosh and Hauslohner 2011). *The Washington Post* reports on improvements in the rebels’ military efforts: “[e]xperienced soldiers are also taking more of a lead in battle, pushing novices toward the back. And fighters are getting a little more training” (Bahrampour 2011). The report quotes former Gaddafi colonel turned rebel commander Mohammed Nuri emphasising the importance “[j]ust to train them to learn how to use this gun and to go on” (Bahrampour 2011). *The Wall Street Journal* cites rebel commander Major General Ahmed al-Ghatrani announcing the increasing professionalization of the rebels: “The army has stepped up to the front in coordination with the rebel volunteers … Organized trained army units have begun advancing. Untrained rebels will be given new responsibilities in the rear” (Levinson 2011). The army will find legitimacy, it is being presented here, through professional military command and training. There are also individual narratives being highlighted by the media in which men are being transformed into brave fighters through the military training process. Carey’s report emphasises the difficulty faced by many rebel fighters who came to fight without training, painting a fairly sympathetic picture of courageous young men struggling in combat against professionally trained soldiers:

> [t]he young men in the rebel line laugh and smoke in the shade while the bombardment continues and say they have adapted quickly to war. “The most important thing I have learned since I got here was how to be brave,” said Khalifa, 20, whose first shift on the line was two weeks ago. “I am not frightened anymore” (Carey 2011).
Carey notes that in comparison to the early days of fighting where men arrived with no training whatsoever, front line rebels now received four days of training. The article tells a story of the transformational path of the rebel fighter finding courage and, importantly, legitimacy through military training and combat. Militarisation is one of the themes through which the lines of legitimacy and illegitimacy are being redrawn in the Libyan context.

If the rebels are cast as potential subjects, their transition towards fully formed legitimacy will be helped with close engagement with Western assistance. Chivers (2011) writes that the Libyan rebel army “would need time, training, equipment and leadership to develop into even a reasonably competent force.” A crucial element enabling this assistance is determining the subjectivity of the rebels, which includes knowing about their intentions, and whether they are threatening to the West. Debate raged in March and April 2011 over whether to give lethal aid to the Libyan rebels, with Washington scrambling to determine whether the rebels contained ‘extremist’ elements with potential risk of blowback against the US. Clinton (2011d) argued in March that “we have not made any decision about arming the rebels or providing any arms transfers … We do not have any specific information about specific individuals from any organisation who are part of this, but of course, we’re still getting to know those who are leading the Transitional National Council [TNC].” She admits that “we don’t know as much as we would like to know and as much as we expect we will know” (Clinton 2011d). In a televised interview days earlier, Clinton’s interviewer Bob Schieffer states that “I don’t think anybody really believes that this rag-tag group of resistance fighters, as brave as they are, could actually topple this man [Gaddafi], who has these tanks and artillery and that.” Clinton (2011c) concedes that “this is not a well-organised fighting force that the opposition force has.” Anthony Cordesman, a military analyst at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, gave the following assessment of the rebels’ capability: “what we have, basically, are rebels that have a great deal of enthusiasm and who are willing to risk their lives but don’t have discipline or structure” (Ghosh and Hauslohner 2011). The skills of the rebels are portrayed as raw and unrefined, in need of training and guidance by a coherent and fully formed subject. The subjectivity of the rebels was fundamental to Western engagement with the emerging crisis in Libya in 2011, as analysts, commentators and politicians produced a discourse on ‘who are the rebels?’ As former senior CIA Middle East expert

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35 The terms NTC (National Transitional Council) and TNC (Transitional National Council) are used interchangeably to describe the interim government of Libya, formed by rebel leaders in Benghazi in February 2011. I use NTC here, although in some US texts, TNC is favoured.
Bruce Riedel pointed out, “the whole issue on (providing rebels with) training and equipment requires knowing who the rebels are” (Hosenball 2011, emphasis added).

The danger posed by non-state actors in the Middle East informs this debate, as the spectre of terrorism looms large in the background. James Stavridis, NATO’s supreme allied commander for Europe, stated that “we are examining very closely the content, composition, the personalities, who are the leaders of these opposition forces” (Landler, Bumiller and Myers 2011). He also acknowledges that “we have seen flickers in the intelligence of potential al-Qaida” (The Washington Post 2011). Yet he goes on to say that the intelligence “makes me feel like the leadership that I’m seeing are responsible men and women who are struggling against Colonel Gadhafi” (Landler, Bumiller and Myers 2011). Gene A. Cretz, then US ambassador to Libya, was quoted as saying there was no way to know if the Libyan Opposition was “100 percent kosher, so to speak” (Landler, Bumiller and Myers 2011). Testifying to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, James Steinberg noted the importance of US involvement with the rebels. He testified that “[t]he more we are able to be involved” with the opposition, the less likely is the risk of the rebels becoming radicalised (Gienger and Capaccio 2011). The lack of coherence in the US about the rebel army’s legitimacy resulted in a refusal to share military intelligence with the rebels on the frontline (Aid 2012: 8). The agonising over the rebels’ legitimacy appears to revolve around the extent to which they are deserving of Western assistance. The emergence of a legitimate military subjectivity is of crucial importance to the situation in Libya, as Levinson (2011) points out, “a trained and professional military force on the front lines should … help deflect some concerns among Western officials considering rebel appeals to be supplied with more-advanced weapons.” The desire underlying this discourse on the rebel’s subjectivity is one of control as well as identification. There is a need not only to recognise the rebels as embodying a coherent military subjectivity, but also one which is open to a paternalistic relationship with US or Western diplomats, politicians, military trainers and intelligence analysts, all of whom will be operating with the newly emergent Libyan state in 2011.

This reading combines the chaos of the Arab political spaces in Libya with the narcissism of a West searching for a reflected image of professional soldiers in the rebel army. Bhabha (1994: 122) uses the concept of mimicry to describe the colonial “desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.” Mimicry describes a subjectivity which is at once similar but different, which blends aspects of
familiarity and identification with a final incompleteness. The colonised subject may imitate the coloniser, but it is destined to be an incomplete process as he will never achieve full identification. Mimicry is an important concept because it captures the contradictory process at the heart of colonial subject formation, predicated on an ambivalence of fear and desire. The critical result of mimicry is that the similarity of the other stands out as the basis of his menace, and the danger he poses to potentially annihilate the self. For example, Crawford frames the rebel fighters in Libya as almost credible imitations of a real military, yet still not quite. In one of her first encounters with the rebels in March 2011, she describes meeting Tareg, who is of mixed Irish and Libyan heritage. She states that he “is a big lad who talks with a slight American accent but who is half Irish. He is only 19 but seems to be well connected with the rebel ‘leadership’” (Crawford 2012: 30). Shortly afterwards, she describes meeting rebel soldiers who appear to her as more legitimate. She states that “[i]n the hospital car part, for the first time, we see regulation soldiers. They are wearing uniforms – filthy dirty uniforms admittedly – and they’re carrying weapons. There are about three or four of them. OK, I’m thinking, now this looks like the rebel ‘army’ we’ve been hearing about” (Crawford 2012: 31). These men have the external markers of soldiers – uniforms and weapons – but still fall short in Crawford’s eyes, necessitating the quotation marks around army that indicate the act of imitation of a ‘real’ army. The rebels’ subjectivity remains tainted by the ‘almost, but not quite’ of colonised mimicry. In this gap between the mimic and the subject lie the origins of threat, as the greater violent capacity of the rebel army risks impacting upon its Western mentors. From this sense of threat and menace arises the desire to control and tame the mimicking Arab subject.

Parental hierarchies and the newly formed Libyan state

As argued above, the debate about whether to arm the Libyan Opposition was underpinned by a hierarchical binary placing the Western intervener as superior to the chaotic Arabs on the ground. This binary rests upon the image of the Libyan rebels detailed above as dangerously juvenile, incompetent soldiers and potential extremists. The rebels were examined through Orientalist eyes and found lacking. As Soguk (2011: 597) writes, “[i]n the chaotic milieu, an ideological coherence of a familiar kind about Arabs and their ‘unruly streets’ echoes again ‘Arabs are incapable of democracy’. Arabs are once again those signs into which the West reads its ‘core ideals’ and finds them missing.” This section examines elite texts on the rebels and NTC interim government. I argue that relations between the US, UK and NTC were represented as didactic and parental, with the Libyans
portrayed as an ‘emerging subjectivity’ typical of colonial discourse. A transitional narrative of closely guided democratisation is overlaid on the images of the rebel army as a potentially legitimate subject, yet also potentially threatening. I argue here that this narrative, and the binary hierarchical subjectivities underpinning it form part of the process of delineating the contours of legitimate violence in Libya, in which the rebels are deemed only potentially legitimate on the condition of their cooperation with Western intervening forces.

Patil (2009: 205) argues that emerging states were imagined as children in decolonisation debates in the UN, with binaries such as maturity/immaturity and responsibility/irresponsibility used to discuss eligibility for political independence. This places former colonies in a hierarchical relationship with their colonisers, as they impart knowledge in a process of linear progression towards political maturity (Patil 2009: 205). This process can be observed in texts on the political transition of the NTC. The tone of US and UK texts on the NTC in the course of the conflict combines praise for good behaviour and subtle threat of the high expectations placed on the performance of responsible statecraft. After meeting Chairman of the NTC Abdul Jalil in May, Hague (2011b) states that:

> the situation in Libya is one of deep concern but today’s meetings have fuelled our faith in the British Government that Libya will embrace a better future for its people. The NTC has already pulled together an interim administration, it has already begun to provide service in liberated areas and it has started to plan for democratic transition after Gaddafi has gone.

Following the recognition of the NTC as the legitimate government of Libya by the Libya Contact Group in July 2011, Hague (2011d) announced that the meeting reflected “the NTC’s increasing legitimacy, competence and success in reaching out to all Libyans.” After that same meeting, Clinton (2011e) announced that the “United States is impressed by the progress the TNC has made in laying the groundwork for a successful transition to a unified democratic Libya which protects the rights of all its citizens.” The text congratulates the step towards legitimate sovereign statehood, marked by conditional US recognition. Clinton (2011e) states that “[t]he assurances the TNC offered today reinforce our confidence that it is the appropriate interlocutor for the United States in dealing with

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36 The Libyan Contact Group was established at the London Conference on 29 March. Representatives of 32 countries and 7 international organizations, including the United Nations, European Union, NATO, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the African Union.
Libya’s present and addressing Libya’s future.” The US and UK appear as concerned parents, listening to the aspirations and hopes of a child on the cusp of adulthood. Clinton (2011e) states that “[w]e did take time to analyse the situation, to watch developments, to both hear form and see evidence of actions taken by the TNC that accord with both their statements and their stated aspirations as well as our values.” The NTC is represented as having performed well in the eyes of the responsible actors watching form the sidelines. The prevailing narrative that emerges in elite texts during the course of the conflict is one of supervised transition. The effect of this is to place the US and the NTC in a clear hierarchical relationship.

In this parental hierarchy, the subordinate subjectivity is painted as one in transition towards legitimacy. Doty (1996: 134), argues that the recipients of foreign aid are represented in US aid discourse as children who are “not yet fully developed, unreconciled, they are always subject to the dangers stemming from their own immaturity.” Patil (2009: 205) details the imagery used in decolonisation debates at the UN, which, she argues, is striking in its parental symbolism:

Lack of sovereignty was especially figured as a state of irresponsibility. Against this, the state of independence was characterized as the ability to have ‘full responsibility for the self.’ In contrast, administering authorities were ‘parents’ given the ‘duty,’ ‘the sacred duty,’ and ‘the sacred trust’ of ‘guiding dependent people,’ providing ‘wise guidance,’ ‘tutelage,’ ‘political education,’ and ‘teaching responsibility for self’ (Patil 2009: 205).

Recognition of the legitimacy of the NTC is represented as the starting point in an ongoing path to responsible sovereignty and the fulfilment of their international responsibilities. The future of Libya is laid out as a transitional path full of potential obstacles to freedom. Clinton (2011e) states at the July meeting that “we heard from the TNC about its plans for setting Libya on a path toward security and progress in the post-Gaddafi era.” Clinton’s post-Istanbul speech is an exercise in diplomatic reassurance that the US is closely overseeing the effective transition of the NTC into a fully formed sovereign subject. She notes that the NTC are “continuing reassurance and recommitment to the kind of political process that we think will lead to a democracy” (Clinton 2011e).

Importantly, the emergent Libyan state represents shadows of a democracy, but remains just short of its full formation. Clinton (2011e) notes how “difficult and challenging the road ahead of them is. We are a long way toward the kind of implementation that we all seek” (Clinton 2011e). She states later that “the international community will be watching
and supporting Libya’s leaders as they keep their commitments to conduct an inclusive transition, act under the rule of law, and protect vulnerable populations” (Clinton 2011g). Hague (2011e) states in September that “the task, of course, is to get on with creating an open, democratic, inclusive Libya. We urge them to do that and we’ll continue to give them strong support in doing so. They’ve done a very good job so far as everyone has seen on their television screens.” In May 2011, during a visit to London by Abdul Jalil, William Hague (2011b) stated that “[o]ver the last few months the NTC have made great progress, today we have welcomed their clear commitments to build a better future for Libya based on principles of openness and tolerance.” The NTC is cast as a (potentially) legitimate international actor. The NTC may express “legitimate aspirations for a better future,” (Hague 2011b) but they still have some way to go. Hague reiterates the need for the NTC to remain closely engaged with British humanitarian and military assistance. Clinton draws similarities between the revolution in Libya and that of the United States to liberate itself from British colonial rule. Clinton (2011h) stated in Tripoli in October that:

[The United States knows something about revolution and liberty. That is how our nation was born more than 230 years ago. And we know that democracy takes time, it will not be easy or quick. But we are filled with admiration for what you have already accomplished and confident in your ability to move forward.]

She emphasises also the difficulties the two countries share of recovering from a civil war, stating that “we fought a civil war, and it was horrible. It was the war in which more Americans died at each other’s hands than any other, and we lived with the consequences for decades afterwards. In today’s world, in the 21st century, that will just throw a people further behind history” (Clinton 2011h).

Libya is similar to the US in its anti-imperial struggle for freedom, yet crucially fails at the final hurdle, as democracy has not been achieved. Clinton (2011h) reminds the Tripoli audience that “we are still at the point where liberation has not been claimed because of the ongoing conflicts that persist … So the Transitional National Council has to put security first.” Clinton retains the hierarchical superiority over the Libyan people which is essential for the narrative of benign assistance to work. The subjectivity of the Libyans is once again transitional and potential rather than fully formed. As is common in Orientalist and neo-
Orientalist discourse, the subjectivity of the other is cast as weak, failing or failed. Said (2003: 297) quotes one Orientalist scholar who writes the following:

[Arab or Islamic nationalism] lacks, in spite of its occasional use as a catchword, the concept of the divine right of a nation, it lacks a formative ethic, it also lacks, it would seem, the later nineteenth century belief in mechanistic progress; above all it lacks the intellectual vigour of a primary phenomenon.

The failure or lack of the Arab subject is cast in terms of irresponsibility and risk. However, similar underlying assumptions frame the conception of subjectivity of the Libyan state outlined here. Libya is seen as lacking a legitimate democratic identity, but is understood as potentially democratic and responsible.

Where do these perceived failures lie in contemporary neo-Orientalist discourse? In late summer 2011, as the rebels turn the tide in the war against Gaddafi, Western elites are anxious to lay down a series of standards to which the NTC will be held. Clinton (2011f) states that “Libya’s future will be peaceful only if the leaders and people reach out to each other in a spirit of peace. There can be no place in the new Libya for revenge attacks and reprisals.” Clinton (2011f) reminds her audience in August that “we look to the Transitional National Council to fulfil its international responsibilities and the commitments it has made to build a tolerant, unified democratic state – one that protects the universal human rights of all its citizens.” She states that “[t]he Libyan people made this revolution and they will lead the way forward, but they deserve our help. Libya’s future is not guaranteed. Considerable work lies ahead” (Clinton 2011f). That future, she states, must be “a path to peaceful, inclusive democracy – one that banishes violence as a political tool and promotes tolerance and pluralism” (Clinton 2011g). For Britain, legitimate statehood in Libya is represented by cooperation with the UK over past crimes such as the killing of Yvonne Fletcher, and the Lockerbie bombing. Hague (2011f) notes in November that the formation of a new government in Libya “represents a real opportunity to achieve justice for some of the wrongs committed by the Gaddafi regime.” The achievement of one point of the NTC’s roadmap for Libya indicates that the country “is moving towards being an open, democratic State based on the rule of law” (Hague 2011f). The subjectivity of Libya is held out as a potential democracy and legitimate actor in the international

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37 Grunebaum (1964).
38 Despite these words against revenge attacks and reprisals, there was little public condemnation of the reprisals in Libya by rebels against Gaddafi supporters. This is explored in more depth in Chapter 5.
community. The standards to which Libya and the NTC are being held are clear: human rights, democracy and the rule of law on the ‘right side of history’, and terrorism and authoritarianism on the other. Encapsulating this binary vision of Libya’s future potential, Hague states that:

[i]f the Arab Spring does lead to more open and democratic societies across the Arab world over a number of years, it will be the greatest advance for human rights and freedom since the end of the Cold War. If it does not lead to these things, we could see collapse back into more authoritarian regimes, conflict and increased terrorism in North Africa on Europe’s very doorstep (Burt 2011).

This hints towards the way in which European interest was framed in the Libya intervention beyond universal human rights concerns. I examine this in greater depth in the following chapter. Furthermore, it gives a warning to the emergent state in Libya that the NTC’s allies in the war against Gaddafi now expect a high standard of behaviour. Cameron and Obama echo this transitional narrative on the newly formed Libyan state. Obama states that “going forward, the United States will continue to stay in close coordination with the TNC. We will continue to insist that the basic rights of the Libyan people are respected” (Obama 2011b). He reiterates that “we will call for an inclusive transition that leads to a democratic Libya” (Obama 2011b). Cameron (2011b) states that he will be in close contact with Chairman Jalil, leader of the NTC, “to agree with him the importance of respecting human rights, avoiding reprisals, and making sure all parts of Libya can share in the country’s future.” These statements perform the accepted facets of sovereign subjectivity, which include a democratic identity, adherence to standards of international law and territorial unity. The message is unequivocally paternalistic: the US and NATO countries are watching, and expect a certain standard of behaviour to be upheld.

Conclusion

The texts under study in this chapter should be treated not as isolated and unconnected narratives on the Libyan conflict, but rather as key points in the constitution of a wider neo-Orientalist discourse on disorder and intervention in the MENA region. Subjectivities within the Libyan conflict rescued the wretched space surrounding them as the intervention was mobilised to respond to a typology of essentialised characters. As noted in the introduction, Mutua (2001) argues that a three-part typology as savage-victim-saviour underpins international human rights discourse. Gaddafi can be seen as playing the role of evil villain in the Libyan context. Elite speeches legitimating the intervention focused on his
past crimes, creating a geography of enmity in which Gaddafi was raised to the level of
dangerous threat to the existence of the Western self. This narrative is troubled by the
recent history of cooperation and complicity between Western governments and Gaddafi
since 2004. This is examined in more depth in the next chapter. Needless to say, the
subjectivity of ‘villain’ produced through intervention discourse is an ideal metaphor,
erasing the complexities of history that point to more nuanced lines of guilt and
responsibility between liberal democracies and authoritarian dictatorships. The chapter has
focused on the subjectivity of the Libyan rebel, which lies somewhere between the three-
part typology outlined by Mutua. Their representation in global media reporting and elite
texts was fraught with tension and contradiction. On the one hand, their violence was seen
as threatening and dangerous, resonating with a resonant discourse in the West of Arab
people as violent and fiery. Yet they were also reconfigured as contemporary freedom
fighters, attempting to tackle the dark forces of dictatorship and yearning for western-style
democracy. I used the postcolonial concept of mimicry to outline a subjectivity that was
seen as a potentially dangerous imitation of fully-formed military identity. The Libyan rebel
was a one-dimensional ‘character in a play’ about chaos in the Middle East, the effect of
which was “to characterize the Orient as alien and to incorporate it schematically on a
theatrical stage whose audience, manager, and actors are for Europe” (Said 2003: 71-72).

I argued that a desire to know who the rebels ‘really are’ was a central concern in the debate
over providing lethal aid to help in the war against Gaddafi. This imperative was guided by
a determination on the part of Western interveners to delineate lines of legitimacy and
illegitimacy in Libya. These were the lines which were to be policed sharply from the skies
with overwhelming airpower. As the next chapter argues, these lines were far more blurred
in practice than appears in dominant discourse. The question of ‘who the rebels were’ is
informed by an anxiety about whether they were ‘good guys’ and not only deserving of
Western assistance, but not likely to become threatening. The discourse on the Libyan rebel
is fraught with tension and inconsistency because in the rebels’ imitation of coherent
militarised subjectivity lies its profound threat to the Western intervening self. As a result,
representation of the rebels is caught between admiration, fear and cautious optimism. I
outlined a process of hierarchical splitting which placed the NTC in a parent-child
relationship with the US and UK. The representation of the Libyan state is dominated by
the hierarchical delineation of roles, with US/international community the benign superior
and the NTC/Libyan state the errant child. While this hierarchical binary may appear to
trouble the cosmopolitan equality of R2P and liberal intervention discourse, it is in fact
entirely consistent with the universalism of liberal thought. As I argued in Chapter 1, liberal universalism relies upon often silent distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate subjects, resulting in an incoherent discourse on universal subjectivity. The purpose of the chapter has been to point to the implications of this neo-Orientalist othering at play in the Libya intervention. As Said (2003: xvi) notes concerning Orientalist discourse: “the worst aspect of this essentializing stuff is that human suffering in all its density and pain is spirited away.”

In the creation of ideal types of subjectivity through which the observer purports to understand the Libyan conflict, the complexity of a society, its struggles, and the violence and horror of the war are ignored. While a full account of the horrors of the Libyan war is beyond the scope of the thesis, the next chapter details the ways in which violence has been represented in the intervention in Libya, and argues that this has often obscured its material impact on Libyan people.
4. This is what winning looks like: Libya and the production of success in humanitarian intervention

Introduction

This chapter looks at the production of success in the Libya intervention. In the previous chapter there was an implied presence of selfhood through the othering of the Libyan rebels during the conflict. The prevalent themes in the representations of Libyans during the conflict have already pointed to the assumptions, fears and desires of the Euro-American powers intervening there in 2011. As Said (2003: 6) argues, “Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is a veridic discourse about the Orient.” This chapter now turns to the production of this Euro-American self through the normative and technological discourses underpinning the idea of humanitarian intervention. As noted in Chapter 1, identity is not coherent or fixed, but is fraught with inconsistency and tension. The purpose of this chapter, then, is not to delineate the contours of a stable, intervening liberal subject, but to reject that possibility by pointing to the ways in which this subject is always inherently unstable. Butler (2010: xviii) argues that “the fantasy of controlled destruction undoes itself, but the frame is still there, as the controlling fantasy of the state, albeit marking its limit as well.” The chapter highlights the margins of the frame of humanitarian intervention in the production of Libya as a ‘successful’ intervention. My argument is that success of liberal intervention is bound to be fraught with failure to live up to the principles of protection of the universal individual. Yet this failure is paradoxically written into the notion of the universal transcendent individual, which as I argued in Chapter 1, leads to the hierarchical distinction between legitimate and illegitimate subjects. The chapter outlines the specific ways in which this distinction plays out in the Libyan context through the production of intervention in contemporary security discourse.

The first section of this chapter explores the way in which the violence of intervention was produced as ethical. The argument of the chapter is that the violence of intervention is

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39 “This is What Winning Looks Like’ is the name of a 2013 documentary film by Ben Anderson about the war in Afghanistan and the handover of security functions from US to Afghan troops. The phrase is taken from a speech by General John Allen, former Commander of ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) in 2012, in which he said “Afghan forces defending Afghan people, and enabling the government of this country to serve its citizens. This is victory. This is what winning looks like.”
both produced and concealed through the normative and technical discourses detailed here. My aim is to bring attention to the two markers of a successful humanitarian intervention, which must be first, from a great height, and second, conducted with speed. As such, the notion of success in humanitarian intervention has become merged with a register of technological advancement to the extent that we are increasingly blind to its material impact. I ask the following questions in order to interrogate this measurement of success through asymmetry of risk, and advanced speed: first, has this made the propagation of war easier? Secondly, has this affected the moral assessment of the results of military conflict? For example, has it altered the frames through which we judge military intervention as moral and good? I suggest in this first section that the action of humanitarian intervention, in which bombs are dropped on a country from considerable height with ‘precision’ technology, may not fulfil the ethical claims of its protagonists. The second section of the chapter further destabilises the moral certitude of interveners by examining the relationship between the UK and Gaddafi’s Libya. I argue that the British government’s claim of moral superiority to Gaddafi is considerably undermined by its prior engagement, complicity and collusion with the Libyan authoritarian regime. I explore British involvement in the rendition and torture of Libyan nationals, and Britain’s role in arming Gaddafi as examples of the moral flexibility of intervening countries, undermining the moral certitude of humanitarian intervention to be able to deliver universal good. In the second part of the chapter I examine the treatment of refugees from the Libyan conflict by the UK. This example suggests that the cosmopolitan notion of ‘responsibility to protect’ is fraught with underlying distinctions between those who are legitimate and deserve to be saved and protected, and those who are illegitimate and can be left to die, even while an intervention is taking place to save the ‘universal’ rights of liberal subjects.

**Their history, our speed: Aerial bombing and the production of progressive violence**

Der Derian (2009: 244) argues that “[a]lthough virtuous war is the technical capability and ethical imperative to threaten and, if necessary, actualise violence from a distance – *with no or minimal casualties.*” This ensures against the outcry over body bags materialising on home shores, or the spectacle of dead soldiers paraded by foreign insurgents, as happened in Somalia and Iraq. The aim of virtuous war is the minimisation of risk and vulnerability, such that it is almost impossible to see casualties in intervening forces. As senior NATO officials Daadler and Stavridis (2012) put it:
By any measure, NATO succeeded in Libya. It saved tens of thousands of lives from almost certain destruction. It conducted an air campaign of unparalleled precision, which, although not perfect, greatly minimized collateral damage. It enabled the Libyan opposition to overthrow one of the world's longest-ruling dictators. And it accomplished all of this without a single allied casualty and at a cost – $1.1 billion for the United States and several billion dollars overall – that was a fraction of that spent on previous interventions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Here was the perfect virtuous war in Libya: technologically advanced, with the latest in precision weaponry, quick and cheap, and with no allied casualties. A clean and bloodless war if this is to be believed. This section takes these claims and subjects them to further scrutiny. First, it examines the possibility of precision technology to achieve a cleaner and less violent war. Does the idea of ‘precision warfare’ make war more rather than less likely? What does the reality of ‘precision warfare’ look like on the ground? Does it mean that fewer people die? The second part of this section looks at the measurement of success in humanitarian intervention in terms of speed of response. This aspect of virtuous war looks too at the technological rather than the moral in assessing the success of warfare. I examine the extent to which this has led to a blurring of the humanitarian, the ethical and the technical in virtuous war, and suggest some implications for how we think about intervention.

**Humanitarianism from a great height: grey battle lines in the virtuous war**

This section examines the claim that NATO “conducted an air campaign of unparalleled precision, which, although not perfect, greatly minimized collateral damage” (Daadler and Stavridis 2012). The use of precision weaponry was emphasised as particularly important to avoid civilian deaths in a war against an enemy resorting to unconventional tactics. Deputy Commander of NATO’s Operation Unified Protector Rear Admiral Russell Harding claimed in April that the Gaddafi regime was shifting to ‘non-conventional tactics’ of “blending in with road traffic and using civilian life as a shield for their advance” (Ministry of Defence 2011b). The British Chief of Defence staff’s Communications Officer Major General Nick Pope stated in July that “the regime is increasingly attempting to conceal troops, equipment and headquarters, often in populated areas” (Ministry of Defence 2011c). Thus, the intervening forces’ superior precision weapons technology was celebrated as fundamental to the protection of civilians in the Libyan conflict. General Nick Pope claimed that “the precision, accuracy and weight of NATO’s air strikes have caused significant damage to Gaddafi’s regime forces attacking Libyan people” (Ministry of
Defence 2011c). NATO announced at the end of Operation Unified Protector that it had conducted over 9,000 strike sorties in Libya, hitting over 5,900 military targets (NATO 2011c). It claims that “targeting is done with extreme care and precision, using the weapon with the smallest yield possible, to avoid harm to the Libyan people and their infrastructure” (NATO 2011c). The initial combat mission of the intervention was to enforce a no-fly zone over Libyan airspace, and to prevent the massacre of civilians by striking Libyan state forces. In the early, US-led phase of the mission, between 18 and 31 March 2011, up to 75% of sorties were being undertaken by the US’s coalition partners, mainly the UK and France but also including Spain, Denmark, Canada, Italy and Belgium (Taylor 2011). The UK was using precision guided missiles in its combat missions to attack Libyan armoured vehicles, including the Brimstone, which it describes as “high precision, low collateral damage weapon, optimised against demanding and mobile targets” (Ministry of Defence 2011a).

What was the ‘collateral’ damage of the Libya intervention? In order to address this question I look at several incidents in which civilians were killed as a direct result of NATO’s precision bombing campaign. The largest single incident of civilian deaths by NATO air strikes was in Majer on 8 August 2011, when 500-pound laser-guided bombs hit houses in the village (Chivers and Schmitt 2011). One of the bombs hit the family compound of Ali Hamed Gafez, who was sheltering his displaced relatives. There were 82 people in the house that night (Human Rights Watch 2012a: 27). The bomb killed fourteen of Gafez’s relatives, including five women and seven children (Chivers and Schmitt 2011, Human Rights Watch 2012a: 27). More bombs hit as the survivors were retrieving the casualties, killing 18 men. NATO (2011b) reports successful strikes on one ‘military facility’ and one ‘communications system’ on the night of the 8 August. It later said that the strikes on Majer were deliberate targets of a “troop staging area” and that “on the basis of observation and other intelligence, it was assessed that no civilians were in the area” (NATO 2012: 8). Human Rights Watch found no evidence of military activity at the houses that were struck. It raises particular concern about the second bomb on Gafez’s compound, which killed 18 men as they searched in the rubble for their relatives and neighbours. It found remnants of GBU-12 laser-guided bombs, with which the pilot sees the target through the infrared system to direct the bomb (Human Rights Watch 2012a: 12). This was unfortunately not the only incident of its kind during the intervention. On 4 August, NATO struck the home of Mustafa al-Morabit in Zliten, killing his wife and two of their three children, and injuring his mother (Chivers and Schmitt 2011, Human Rights
The bomb was not an explosive device, in an apparent attempt to minimise unnecessary casualties (Chivers and Schmitt 2011). However, a system of precision bombing relies on having correct intelligence in the first place. The attack on Mr. Morabit’s home was both off-target and late. Mr. Morabit said that pro-Gaddafi forces had been using a house nearby but had recently vacated (Chivers and Schmitt 2011; Human Rights Watch 2012a: 13). NATO reported hitting two “command and control nodes” in the vicinity of Zliten.

Throughout August and September NATO and the NTC stepped up the attack on Sirte, where it was believed that Gaddafi was hiding. Human Rights Watch interviewed 28 families fleeing Sirte at the end of the war, who reported heavy bombing from NTC and NATO forces. The families described “fierce fighting, a lack of electricity since late August, and dangerously low supplies of food and medicine” (Human Rights Watch 2011b). One family stated that its home was hit by a NATO bomb in late August although these claims were not verified by Human Rights Watch, who did not have access to the town at the time. Several families also reported that NATO bombing had caused civilian casualties. Human Rights Watch details a report that on 22 September NATO struck the Imartameen building on Dubai Street, killing and wounding a large number of residents. This report came from a resident who was part of the clean-up process, which took two days to remove the bodies. He said that among the dead was Sadik Abuazoum, 43, a secondary school teacher, and Sadik’s wife (Human Rights Watch 2011b). Days later, on 25 September a NATO bomb was dropped on the house of Salem Diyab, in Sirte (Amnesty International 2011: 15). The Amnesty report states that “it killed four children and three women: one-year-old Diyab Amrane and his 27-year-old mother Hanan Abdel Majid Amrane, two-year-old Ghurfran and her 75-year-old grandmother Marjuha Salem Zarruq, nine-year-old Ahmed Ali Diyab, 12-year-old Heba Mosbah Diyab, and 32 year-old Intissar Ahmed Diyab” (Amnesty International 2011: 15). The bomb was targeting a General in Gaddafi’s army, Mosbah Ahmed Diyab, who was also killed in the strike (Chivers and Schmitt 2011).

The precision weapons of the intervening forces successfully destroyed ‘military targets’ when they bombed the houses of Diyab, Gafez and Morabit in Libya. In each incident civilian women, men and children were killed. Their deaths do not, therefore, count as ‘collateral damage’ but as legitimate combatant deaths. The incidents described above point to the flexibility of the emotive phrases ‘collateral damage’ and ‘combatant’ that denote the
legitimacy of deaths in war. They signal the moral poverty of these phrases and their use, framing the deaths of one-year old Diyab Amrane and 75-year-old Marjuha Salem Zarruq as military combatants. In virtuous war, it seems, virtue is a rare quality on the ‘enemy side’, even, or perhaps because of the justification to save civilians. Guilt by association frees the intervening forces of the blame for the death of innocents, which if the charges stuck would undermine their claims of moral certitude. In the US's ongoing war against terrorism, all men ‘of military age’ (18-60) killed in drone strikes are named as militants unless proven otherwise (Becker and Shane 2012). For NATO, that the technology was sound enough to strike targets with precision was enough on the ‘collateral damage’ question. Secretary General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen (2011b) stated in November 2011 that “we have no confirmed civilian casualties caused by NATO … Our strikes have been precision strikes … And for that reason I don’t see any need for further investigation.” He argued that “we have carried out this operation very carefully, without confirmed civilian casualties” (Chivers and Schmitt 2011). Upon further pressing, a NATO spokesman stated that “no complex campaign can exclude that civilians suffer harm during its course” (Human Rights Watch 2012a: 24). Relating to the above allegations, NATO will not be investigating the deaths of civilians in Libya because it has no mandate to be present on Libyan territory. Human Rights Watch (2012a: 25-26) reports that:

NATO’s lessons learned process has apparently not included a review of civilian casualties. An internal NATO report on the Libya campaign completed on February 28, 2012 by NATO’s Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre reportedly failed to mention civilian deaths.

Given that the mandate of the NATO operation in Libya was to protect civilians, not fight a war of aggression against an opposing army, one would assume that the organisation may be interested in civilian deaths caused by the intervention. However, it appears that such is the confidence in its precision weaponry that NATO does not take it upon itself to research the impact of its airstrikes on civilians. All that matters, according to NATO, is that it acted upon sound intelligence with high-tech weaponry.

Only on one occasion did NATO admit an error resulting in civilian deaths. In June 2011 it struck a house in Tripoli killing nine civilians, including two children (Hopkins 2011). NATO issued a statement saying that it was targeting a military missile site, but that “it appears that one weapon did not strike the intended target; there may have been a weapons system failure which may have caused a number of civilian casualties” (Hopkins 2011). It is unclear what distinguishes the error of the June strike in Tripoli from the many other errors
in Sirte, Bani Walid, Zliten and Majer in which civilians were killed. Note that on this occasion NATO conceded that the failure was one of a technical ‘systems failure’ and not of intelligence or information. Admitting the still quite significant room for human error in precision weaponry introduces vulnerability into a system purported to rest upon technological certainty. There is no room for human mistakes in the precision hardware of the most advanced militaries in the world. However, as Zehfuss (2011: 549) points out, most of the spectacular ‘mistakes’ of recent wars have been due to intelligence rather than technical failure. The banal fact that we can never know exactly what is happening elsewhere, despite surveillance, or night-vision, or infrared precision-guided weapons systems, means that error can never be eliminated. As Amoore (2006: 343-345, 2009: 548) argues with regard security and border technologies, the more automated the system is, the more room for error as human discretion is reduced. She points to the “contingencies of the relationship of the algorithmic calculation to the actual everyday geographies they seek to model and simulate. These are the unknowns, the indeterminacies of algorithmic war” (Amoore 2009: 548). Digital technologies rely on sound inputs, and if these are faulty, then mistakes will only be repeated, despite the level of advancement in precision technology. The target we were sure was a ‘military communications centre’ may just be a house full of sleeping men, women and children.

The above incidents suggest that the battle lines of intervention may not be as black and white as is insisted by the protagonists of virtuous war. Not only did NATO’s air strikes result in civilian deaths on several occasions, but the institution does not seem overly concerned about investigating these mistakes. Were they even mistakes? As Zehfuss (2011: 550) argues, deaths such as those detailed above may be incidental and not accidental, and therefore not posing a legal or moral challenge to intervening forces. It is the intention and not the outcome of virtuous war that is central. The key question for NATO was whether targets were successfully destroyed, not whether there were unintended casualties (Zehfuss 2011: 552). This raises the question of whose lives can be acceptably taken through air strikes as a legitimate byproduct of humanitarian war from the skies. In several incidents, NATO bombs killed Libyan rebel opposition fighters. On 2 April Al-Jazeera (2011a) reported allegations that NATO air strikes hit rebels, killing 10, near the town of Brega. Less than a week later four rebels were killed by NATO bombs in a strike on a convoy outside Ajdabiyah. The deputy commander of the air campaign, Rear Admiral Russell Harding, said in a news conference on the incident “I’m not apologizing. The situation on the ground … was extremely fluid” (NATO 2011a). The incident emphasises further the
human fallibility in the most advanced of weapons technologies. It also highlights the extreme asymmetry of risk in this humanitarian war. NATO leaders boasted minimal collateral damage, and “no allied casualties” in the Libyan conflict. Despite fighting on the same side as the Libyan rebels, they are apparently not included in this count of ‘allied casualties’, for many deaths were sustained on the rebel side, including from these incidents of ‘friendly fire’. A great deal of (other people’s) blood was spilt beneath NATO’s claims of a clean and bloodless war. In this context, the claim that there were “no allied casualties” appears shot through with a crass distinction between legitimate (Western/NATO/allied) and illegitimate (Libyan/African) lives. Yet the problem is not simply that precision technologies are not as perfect as they say, or that there are these distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate lives. It is that both these facts are erased through a discourse in which technological weaponry is seen as producing ethical war. Zehfuss (2011: 560) argues “that the danger of ‘precision’ bombing is therefore not least that it produces a particular kind of warfare as ethical and thereby legitimates and arguably even encourages war.” That this violence continues to reproduce binary positions on legitimate and illegitimate lives is erased from our view in the fetishisation of superior or advanced weapons technology.

**Speed and the propaganda of progress in humanitarian intervention**

The analysis has so far offered some indication about the way in which NATO’s intervention in Libya was judged to be successful. The intervention was a success because there were no Western casualties, and because it was conducted using advanced precision technologies. The assumption being that these technologies ensured that only ‘bad people’ died. The section above chipped away at that claim, showing that many of those NATO presents as ‘bad people’ were guilty of little except being in the wrong place at the wrong time. This begins to indicate that the certainties with which success is judged in virtuous war are far more unstable than first appears. The intervention in Libya was also judged a success in terms of its speed of response. Protests in Libya began on 15 February 2011, with a national ‘day of rage’ with unrest in various cities two days later. The UN authorisation came about a month later, and the US-led Operation Odyssey Dawn began on 18 March. Daalder and Stavridis (2012: 2–7) emphasise that a fundamental part of NATO’s ‘victory’ in Libya was its rapid response. They argue that “the international community responded swiftly” to the situation in Libya, and that “the United States facilitated this rapid international reaction.” This response included a freeze on assets and travel ban, consistent with UN Resolution 1970, and the referral of Gaddafi to the ICC.
They claim that the US “led the charge for the UN resolution that authorized the intervention, justifying the action as consistent with ‘the responsibility to protect’” (Daalder and Stavridis 2012: 4). A quick response to the situation unfolding in Libya was purportedly of critical importance. In this context, Western and Goldstein (2011: 52) declare that “the interventions that respond the most quickly to unfolding events protect the most lives.” They state that the international community has become “increasingly adept at using military force to stop or prevent mass atrocities,” citing Libya and the Cote d’Ivoire as recent successful examples (Western and Goldstein 2011: 50). Part of this adeptness means going in at speed to save lives.

For Clinton and Obama, the success of the US’s action in Libya depended upon its speed of response. Clinton (2011a) argued that Libya represented:

> a watershed moment in international decision making. We learned a lot in the 1990s. We saw what happened in Rwanda. It took a long time in the Balkans, in Kosovo to deal with a tyrant. But I think – and what has happened since March 1 – and we’re not even done a month – demonstrates really remarkable leadership.

Obama (2011a) also reflects this in the speech framing the start of the intervention in late March 2011. He states that “[t]o lend some perspective on how rapidly this military and diplomatic response came together, when people were being brutalised in Bosnia in the 1990s, it took the international community more than a year to intervene with air power to protect civilians. It took us 31 days.” The spectre of Bosnia, where UN forces waded in a quagmire of massacres and bloodshed for three years, watching as Bosnian Serb troops slaughtered over 8,000 Muslims in Srebrenica⁴⁰, looms large in the mythos of humanitarian intervention. The ghosts of Vietnam and lately of Iraq may also haunt the US political elite, who yearn for wars of no body bags and completed with haste. To risk stating a truism, time and speed are measured relatively rather than universally. To illustrate, Obama (2011a) reiterates the moral claims of ‘just war’ in Libya, reminding his audience that “for over four decades, the Libyan people have lived under the rule of a tyrant who denied them their most basic human rights.” Perhaps for the people of Libya, then, the intervention in March 2011 was not all that quick. This is not to suggest that the US should have intervened sooner, but that the claim that the response was rapid or remarkable is to insist upon a

⁴⁰ In summer 2014 the Dutch government was found to be culpable for the deaths of 300 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica, who were in the care of Dutch UN peacekeepers (Bilefsky and Simons 2014).
certain arbitrary measurement of time, beginning whenever interveners deem it so. As is examined in the second section of the chapter, this erases consideration of a complex history of relations between intervening governments and Gaddafi’s Libya that reflects poorly upon the moral judgement of those self-styled moral crusaders.

Speed is a popular measurement of success because it is easily quantified. The narrative is an easy one: the US took three years to intervene in Bosnia, but in Libya only a month. Like precision weaponry, speed is represented as a clearly measurable and quantifiable marker of improvement. Intervention is faster, with bombs falling from higher, and with greater precision. The messier and more complex moral questions I outlined above (how many civilians were killed? How many rebel soldiers? What or who constitutes ‘collateral damage’ in a humanitarian war?) are obscured in this technologically driven discourse of measurable improvement. Furthermore, speed constitutes a new frontline of inequality in warfare. Not only do the methods of humanitarian intervention ensure that risk is transferred from intervening forces to their ‘allies’ on the ground, but the speed at which advanced militaries can mobilise sharply exaggerates these lines of asymmetric vulnerability.

Celebrating the successful completion of the Libya intervention, the UK government report ‘National Security through Technology’ claimed that:

The speed and agility with which we are able to meet unforeseen challenges during operations often requires our suppliers to understand our needs and to work closely with the MOD and the Armed Forces at speed to provide the requisite support ... Software for the Typhoon aircraft’s radar and defensive aids systems was updated at speed to ensure the protection of aircraft and aircrew. Industry also ensured that the digital mapping set required for Apache and Tornado aircraft to fly over Libya were provided in less than 24 hours (HMG 2012: 25).

The UK’s ability to reach, watch and bomb Libya in less than a day is assumed to be legitimate. When the same ability is directed back at the UK, this is conceived as a security threat warranting military strikes, as evidenced by the infamous ‘45 minute claim’ during the build up to the Iraq war in 2003.41 The ability to deploy military technologies at speed to traverse great distances is clearly the preserve of the powerful few and will not be willingly shared. Gregory (2011b: 204) calls this the ‘God-trick’ of aerial warfare, whose

41 The ‘September Dossier’ (HMG 2003: 4) reported that Saddam Hussein’s “military planning allows for some of the WMD [Weapons of Mass Destruction] to be ready within 45 minutes of an order to use them,” and that Iraq had weapons capable of reaching the UK military base in Cyprus (HMG 2003: 6). See also Reiss’s (2003) article in the Evening Standard entitled ‘Just 45 minutes from attack.’
“vengeance depends on making its objects visible and its subjects invisible.” He argues that, the technical capabilities of intervening forces form a “techno-cultural system that renders ‘our’ space familiar even in ‘their’ space – which remains obdurately Other” (Gregory 2011b: 201). Aerial bombing performs the distinctions of virtuous warfare with increasing speed and ‘accuracy’, separating the worlds of the God-like interveners and their earthly victims. Chow (2006: 35) argues that in aerial interventions, “up above in the sky, war was a matter of maneuvers across the video screen by US soldiers who had been accustomed as teenagers to playing video games at home; down below, war remained tied to the body, to manual labor, to the random disasters falling from the heavens.” These inequalities played out in incidents like those detailed above in which rebels were bombed by their NATO ‘allies’. As NATO’s forces traversed the skies with minimal risk and maximum fire power, the rebels moved with terrestrial speed with whatever weapons they could find at home or on the black market. The speed of the powerful highlights the aching slowness of the less advanced.

When asked about the effect on Iraqi children of the disturbing sound of low-flying US military helicopters at a press conference in Baghdad in 2004, General Mark Kimmitt replied “tell the children of Iraq the noise they hear is the sound of freedom” (Blomfield 2004). This reply neatly encapsulates a discourse on virtuous war in which violence, technology and morality have become fused to the extent that they are logically inseparable. War is celebrated in a broader narrative of success rooted in technological advancement of military capabilities. As Benjamin (1977: 244) noted on the aesthetics of contemporary war: “if the natural utilisation of productive forces is impeded by the property system, the increase in technical devices, in speed, and in the sources of energy will press for an unnatural utilisation, and this is found in war.” The vast irrationality of warfare is paradoxically an expression of the creative capacities of capitalism. The final irrationality of capitalism, he suggests, is to celebrate this distortion of human capabilities as morally progressive. Aerial warfare is the apogee of progressive war, effectively performing the God delusion of modern capitalist societies of complete control over their material environment. As Virilio pointed out, the final frontiers of this progressive war are speed and vision. Modern war, he stated, was a “war of images and sounds, rather than objects and things, in which winning is simply a matter of not losing sight of the opposition. The will to see all, to know all, at every moment, everywhere, the will to universalised illumination” (Virilio 1994b: 70). In this quest to play God in virtuous war, speed is key because it enables absolute sight. In other words, the faster one can mobilise technologies
of surveillance and traverse distances, the more all-encompassing is one’s vision of the world. Virilio (1994b: 71) argues that “from now on, speed is less useful in terms of getting around easily than in terms of seeing and conceiving more or less quickly.” The UK’s bomber aircraft are mobilised at speed to traverse the length and breadth of Libya. The idea of the Libyan rebels being able to perform the same reconnaissance of the British Isles is comparably very unlikely. The moral universe of cosmopolitan civilian protection and humanitarian war relies upon these distinctions between legitimate battlegrounds. As Gregory (2011: 239) notes, the imaginative geography of humanitarian war “folds in and out of the rhetorical distinction between ‘our’ wars – wars conducted by advanced militaries that are supposed to be surgical, sensitive and scrupulous – and ‘their’ wars. In reality, however, the boundaries are blurred and each bleeds into its other.”

There are two issues at play here. The first is the conflation of speed and ethicality. This celebration of speed forms part of a wider discourse on the ability of technology to deliver ethical war. I challenged this assumption in in the first part of the chapter. The belief in success through speed also reinforces what Virilio calls the ‘propaganda of progress’, in which we view our societies as improving through technological advancement. This propaganda of progress is at the heart of liberals like Fukuyama’s world image, serving to admonish those who fail to join in the inevitable march of history and embrace capitalist consumerism. For Virilio, this desire for mastery was something to be feared, not celebrated. He claimed that “the problem is that progress has been contaminated by its own propaganda” (Virilio 2005: 38). In this propaganda of progress, Virilio (2005: 42) argued “the question of speed and its violence (unsanctioned violence) has been purely and simply suppressed.” So blinded is NATO by the cult of its own propagandised virtuous war that the question of who lives and dies in its wars is dismissed as irrelevant. Former Defence Secretary Philip Hammond celebrated the use of UAVs (Unmanned Aviation Vehicles) in Afghanistan, stating not just that they save lives, but that they are better than the previous technology. He argued that the UAVs’ “battle-winning technology supplies better intelligence, delivers greater precision and ensures better situational awareness, all things that are vital to mission success in Afghanistan and essential to our efforts to safeguard the local population” (Hammond 2013). Benjamin pointed to the irrational destructiveness of this image of progress. In discussing Paul Klee’s painting ‘The Angel of History’, Benjamin reflects upon the interaction between violence and progress. The angel is facing the past, which is not a linear sequence of events, but “one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet” (Benjamin
1977: 259). While viewing this destruction, the angel is propelled forward by a storm blowing from Paradise. Benjamin (1977: 260) states that “this storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.” Benjamin challenges a narrow conception of historical progress that fails to see the tragedy in developing increasingly sophisticated technology which serve not only as means of prolonging life but of wreaking destruction. When NATO’s intervention in Libya is judged a success, this celebrates the development of sophisticated and efficient means of committing violence. Humanitarian intervention should be seen not as a triumph of human rights discourse in combating the selfish impulses of statesmen, nor as a victory in the development of an ethical foreign policy. The absurdity in the practice of humanitarian intervention lies not only in the deployment of violence to address violence, but the celebration of that fact as the achievement of moral progress.

The second issue is that of the inequities that are produced and reproduced by virtuous war at speed. As noted above, the speed of intervening forces to traverse vast distances with a God-like vision of the spaces of other contrasts with the earth-bound slowness of the Libyan rebels. These lines of inequality are drawn sharply and from a great height in virtuous war. For Virilio, the shift to the final frontier of speed derives more from the instantaneity of vision it enables than from any race to traverse distance itself. As Chow argues, this reflects the inequities of knowledge production of the colonial relationship on a new frontier. She argues that “war and knowledge enable and foster each other primarily through the collective fantasising of some foreign or alien body that poses danger to the ‘self’ and the ‘eye’ that is the nation” (Chow 2006: 36). The production of knowledge in war creates self and other with violent consequences. Chow (2006: 36) claims that “the ‘moral element’, insofar as it produces knowledge about the ‘self’ and ‘other’ – and hence the ‘eye’ and its ‘target’ – as such, justifies war by its very dichotomising logic. Conversely, the violence of war, once begun, fixes the other in its attributed monstrosity and affirms the idealised images of the self.” The above section has outlined the way in which this continual reproduction of self and other, and the moral corollaries involved, manifested itself in the intervention in Libya. The speed of intervening forces became a marker of moral superiority, in essence creating two battlegrounds along the lines of temporality. Gregory notes the distinctions between the battlespaces of ‘our’ and ‘their’ wars, however, the lines are not only spatial but temporal. The intervening forces, operating their advanced precision technologies from the skies, were in a distinct temporal plane to the Libyans on
the ground. This measure of temporality serves as indicator of moral legitimacy in the eyes of the interveners. As the postmodern and the pre-modern clash in Libya, the material experiences of warfare for the protagonists and victims of virtuous war are sharply divergent. As the most violent acts of intervention are adorned “with a benign, rational story” (Chow 2006: 39) of responsibility, speed and precision, those others who are its target are stuck with the slowness of everyday experience of aerial bombing and its mundane but horrific imprecisions.

Selectivity and silence in civilian protection

This section examines the performance of civilian protection in the Libya intervention. It focuses on the role of the UK in its historical relations with Libya, to examine the claim that the UK, along with the other participants, was protecting civilians by intervening. As I showed in the introduction, Libya was held up as a test case for R2P, and a success for the notion of humanitarian intervention. This first section examines and destabilises that claim. In order to do so it looks first at the relations between Libya and the UK beyond the immediate context of the intervention in summer 2011. In a speech in the Middle East in February 2011, prior to the Libya intervention, David Cameron stated that “[o]ur interests lie in upholding our values – in insisting on the right to peaceful protest, in freedom of speech and the internet, in freedom of assembly and the rule of law” (quoted in Wright 2011). He argued that the days of the UK supporting “highly controlling regimes” were over. He also responded to criticism that British arms companies were present on the mission, stating that “[t]he fact that there are British defence companies on this visit – BAE [British Aerospace], Thales and others – is perfectly right in this regard” (Wright 2011).

This speech highlights some of the tensions identified and examined in this section. The purpose is to emphasise that the UK’s attempts to perform a cosmopolitan liberal identity through intervening in Libya is set up to fail by other imperatives such as counter-terror, immigration management and the maintenance of competitive arms and security industries. In this wider context, the UK’s claim to be protecting civilian populations in Libya through a humanitarian intervention begins to unravel. The second part of the section further examines the notion of civilian protection by revealing the subtle distinctions underlying the notion of universal protection. As argued in Chapter 1, liberal rights claims raise the notion of the universal and transcendent rights-bearing subject. Yet the idea of transcendence central to this notion of the liberal subject contains within it the grounds for hierarchies and distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate subjects. In this chapter I
examine the ways in which these distinctions played out in the Libyan conflict, revealing the instability of claims to universal civilian protection.

*Human rights and counter-terror: a history of complicity*

In the last chapter, I pointed out that there were concerns, particularly in the US political elite, over the aims and aspirations of the Libyan rebels. James Stavridis raised concerns about “flickers in the intelligence of potential al-Qaida” (Landler, Bumiller and Myers 2011) in the Libyan opposition, provoking questions on lethal aid and military assistance. Gene A. Cretz, then US ambassador to Libya, expressed doubts over whether the rebels were “100 percent kosher, so to speak” (Landler, Bumiller and Myers 2011). The intervening powers appeared certain that Gaddafi must go, but not quite optimistic about the men who were to bring about his fall. As I argued in the last chapter, delineating a manageable identity for the Libyan opposition was central the legitimating discourse on intervention as an intelligible response to the crisis. The pronouncements noted above over whether the rebels were ‘legitimate’ or ‘kosher’ or ‘potential terrorists’ implies a detached and disconnected observation of the emerging firestorm in Libya, as if the US or UK had no prior engagement with the country. This section disrupts that myth by detailing one example of the UK’s historic entanglement with Gaddafi’s Libya. This is an illustrative rather than exhaustive example, for this topic alone could fill a further research dissertation. The aim is to demonstrate the involvement of the UK in the creation of political crisis in 2011, in terms of complicity with the Gaddafi regime and its many injustices. In this sense, the Libyan opposition is as much a product of international relationships and their reproduction in particular spaces in the Middle East as they are of Gaddafi’s oppressive regime. To dismiss them as potential terrorists depoliticises the history of silence, cooperation and complicity with Gaddafi’s eccentric and violent authoritarianism which made them possible (Opondo 2011).

Between 2004 and 2006 Human Rights Watch (2006) researched and reported on the Abu Salim prison massacre, which took place in 1996 and in which more than 1,200 prisoners were killed on one day. The report was released at an inconvenient time for Britain, two years after the rapprochement with Libya that welcomed Gaddafi back to the international community. As noted in the previous chapter, Tony Blair declared in 2004 that Gaddafi wanted to make “common cause with us against al-Qaeda, extremists and terrorism” (*BBC News* 2004). The rapprochement opened up a profitable business relationship between
Britain and Libya, the former being the world’s fifth largest arms exporter. Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT 2014) reports that the UK government’s arms promotion agency – the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) – identified Libya as a key market in 2005. It states that DESO held a seminar on the ‘emerging markets’ of Iraq and Libya, the latter of which was seen as having “a relatively sophisticated customer and a political will to procure equipment from the UK” (CAAT 2014). A year after, the UK government set up an office in Tripoli to promote arms exports to the Gaddafi regime (Dombey and Boxell 2007). The Daily Mail reported a leaked defence cooperation agreement signed by Blair and Gaddafi in Sirte on 29 May 2007. The report included “the conduct of joint exercises’, ‘training in operational planning processes, staff training, and command and control’, and the ‘acquisition of equipment and defence systems’” (Shipman 2011). The report was intended to “to contribute to the strengthening of security and stability in their two countries and the enhancement of peace and security in the Mediterranean region” (Shipman 2011). In a sign of the slipperiness of this phrase, four years later Britain was participating in an armed intervention to restore ‘peace and security’ to the region. The relationship between Britain and Gaddafi’s Libya points to the tragic repetitiveness of ‘great power’ entanglements with ‘rogue states’; a cycle of equal measures arm, turn a blind eye, condemn, bomb and depose. CAAT (2014) reports that in 2010 the UK issued over £19 million of arms export licenses for sales to the Libyan government. In 2009 the total figure was over £22 million, including tear gas and military vehicles (Amnesty International 2011b: 46). Amnesty reports that the British company NMS International sold armed crowd control vehicles to Libya at the August 2010 ‘LibDex’ Arms Fair in Tripoli. Six months later, the same armoured vehicles were used against protesters on Libyan streets (Amnesty International 2011b: 47).

As well as supplying arms that were later used against the civilian population, there are strong indications that the UK government was actively participating in the Gaddafi regime’s systematic torture. In 2012 the UK government paid compensation for MI6 involvement in the rendition of Libyan dissident Sami al-Saadi to Libya in 2004 where he was imprisioned and tortured by the Gaddafi regime (Casciani 2012). The UK has not admitted liability for the torture of al-Saadi in 2004, but has awarded him a £2.2 million payoff after he tired of legal proceedings in late 2012 (Casciani 2012). The UK government is also facing legal action by Libyan politician and former rebel leader Abdel Hakim Belhaj and his wife Fatima Boudchar for MI6’s alleged role in their rendition and torture (The Daily Telegraph 2013). Belhaj was previously head of the dissident Libyan Islamic Fighting
Group (LIFG), and al-Saadi was a LIFG activist. Both fled Gaddafi’s Libya in the 1980s and sought shelter in Afghanistan. Al-Saadi spent some time in the UK in the 1990s, before returning to Afghanistan in 1997. After the uprising began in February 2011, documents were found in former Gaddafi spy chief Moussa Koussa’s office indicating British state collusion in the rendering of both al-Saadi and Belhaj (Rotheroe and Ruhfus 2013). The documents include a fax from MI6 to the Libyan intelligence services stating that Belhaj and his wife could be found in Malaysia where they were to seek asylum in 2004 (Rotheroe and Ruhfus 2013). The couple were then granted permission from the UK government to fly from Malaysia to the UK. A fax from the CIA on 8 March 2004 states that the US agency planned to intervene at the flight’s stopover in Bangkok and seize Belhaj and his wife. The fax has the subject line ‘planning for the capture and rendition of Abdullah al-Sadiq [Belhaj’s alias]’ (Rotheroe and Ruhfus 2013). In an interview with Al-Jazeera filmmakers, Belhaj stated that “these documents that have been published show that wrong was done by those claiming that they’re a just institution and have standards that protect human rights. And that’s what is important for us to reveal” (Rotheroe and Ruhfus 2013). Belhaj is seeking an admission of guilt and apology from the UK government, not a monetary settlement (Cobain 2013).

When captured by the CIA in Bangkok, Belhaj reports being blindfolded, hooded, and hung from hooks in his cell wall. He also says he was severely beaten (Cobain 2012). Boudchar gave the following account of her ordeal in Thailand:

They took me into a cell, and they chained my left wrist to the wall and both my ankles to the floor. I could sit down but I couldn’t move. There was a camera in the room, and every time I tried to move they rushed in. But there was no real communication. I wasn’t questioned … They knew I was pregnant … It was obvious [Boudchar was four and a half months pregnant] (Cobain 2012).

The fax tipping off the Libyan government about the whereabouts of Belhaj and Boudchar shortly before their capture states that Boudchar was pregnant (The Guardian 2012b). Boudchar said she was given water while chained up, but no food. She was chained to the wall for five days (Cobain 2012). The couple were then transferred to Libya, where they remained in detention. Boudchar was released shortly before giving birth to a son. Two weeks after the pair landed in Tripoli, Tony Blair met with Gaddafi in the deal that signalled the two countries’ “common cause” against terrorism. This common cause included the detention and torture of a pregnant woman along with many thousands of men. These acts of torture and abuse against Belhaj and Boudchar were made possible by
the collusion of three governmental regimes, in Libya, the UK and US, and their networks of security institutions operating abroad. Paradoxically, these acts of torture were sustained by the same sense of moral certitude underlying the proclamations that the uprising of 2011 was to lead to peace and democracy in Libya. Fatima Boudchar was one of the many caught in the crossfire of what was seen to be a wider good fight against terrorism. In the faxes found in Moussa Koussa’s office, former MI6 officer Sir Mark Allen wrote “the intelligence on [Mr. Belhaj] was British … this was the least we could do for you and for Libya to demonstrate the remarkable relationship we have built over the years” (Ryan 2013). The LIFG was never on a list of groups banned by the UK authorities, was found to have no links with al-Qaida, and Belhaj went on to become a leader of the rebel opposition during the war with Gaddafi. Even if this were not the case, the treatment of Belhaj and Boudchar raises questions about the UK government’s willingness to collude with torture and unlawful detention at the same time as proclaiming determination to protect civilians against authoritarian regimes.

Under the 2013 Justice and Security Act it was determined that the Belhaj case would be tried in a secret court to protect national security (Cobain 2013). The leaders responsible at the time for Britain’s involvement in overseas rendition of terror suspects are conspicuously distancing themselves from their country’s actions. Tony Blair has stated that he has “no recollection” of the Belhaj case (Norton-Taylor 2012). He claimed that the UK government policy was opposed to renditions, and that “as far as I know, [the government] kept to that position” (Norton-Taylor 2012). He also reminded the public, however, that it should be remembered that “people in the Middle East were also trying to fight terrorism and extremism” (Norton-Taylor 2012). Blair also stated that “our security services do a very difficult job in very difficult circumstances. I’m sure the matter will be investigated as it should be” (Norton-Taylor 2012). The case has not been thoroughly investigated, however, with the Gibson judicial inquiry into rendition being abandoned in January 2012 in the face of conclusive evidence of MI6 involvement in the Belhaj and al-Saadi cases (Norton-Taylor and Cobain 2013). The judge investigating the Belhaj case rejected the claim because of ‘national security’ in December 2013 (BBC News 2013a). He admitted that there was a “potentially well-founded claim that the UK authorities were directly implicated in the extraordinary rendition of the claimants [Belhaj and Boudchar]”, but stated that the case was ‘non-justiciable’ in the UK because they related to officials in Libya, Malaysia, China and Thailand (BBC News 2013a). This conclusion points to the enduring rhetorical allure of the term ‘national security’, packing a powerful punch at the
same time as being elusively mystical in its definition (Der Derian 1995: 24-25; Pin-Fat 2005: 218). Furthermore, it suggests that the UK government clings to a territorially delineated notion of legal responsibility at the same time as pursuing extraterritorial practices of ‘national’ security. While on the one hand it commits itself to the ‘responsibility to protect’ civilians on the streets of Libya with lethal force, on the other it holds the UK border as the absolute limit of its responsibility to ensure human rights standards to the men, women and children caught in the crossfire of the international ‘war against terrorism’. The standards it holds the Gaddafi government to in Libya are cosmopolitan, universal and extraterritorial, whereas those to which it holds itself are particular to UK territory.

**Responsibility to protect whom? Refugees, migration management and building stability**

The intervention in Libya was mobilised to protect civilians from what was perceived to be an imminent massacre. The grounds for protection were based upon the universal human rights of Libyans, held up as the foundation for R2P and humanitarian intervention. Obama (2011a) claimed that the intervention was to protect innocent civilians from a massacre in Benghazi, and to uphold the US’s belief in a “universal set of rights.” Cameron (2011a) insisted that the “central purpose” of the intervention was to “end the violence, protect civilians, and allow the people of Libya to determine their own future.” He emphasised that “we are not talking about an invasion force or an occupying force, we’re talking about an action to protect civilian life” (Mulholland 2011). He states that the decision to intervene was taken “to protect the people of Libya from the murderous brutality of Gaddafi’s regime” (Cameron 2011a). Civilian protection has become a key facet of UK foreign policy, and the intervention in Libya was a critical part of this. Hague (2011a) claimed that they “intervened in Libya to save lives, prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and to give the Libyan people a chance to determine their own future.” The 2011 report on the policy of civilian protection reaffirms the UK’s commitment to play a role in international humanitarian operations, including the enforcement of R2P. It states that “the UK will continue to promote a shared understanding of R2P and is committed to helping States build capacity to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2011: 5). It goes on to state that “the UK will consider R2P concerns in our work across conflict, human rights and development, and will support the EU and UN to implement a cohesive approach” (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2011: 5). Civilian protection is a facet of
the UK’s ethical foreign policy identity, which includes a commitment to universal human rights. In March 2011, UK Foreign Secretary William Hague (2011a) stated that “there will be no downgrading of human rights under this Government,” insisting on the centrality of human rights to UK foreign policy. The Coalition government, he stated, “promised from the outset a foreign policy that will always have support for human rights and poverty reduction at its irreducible core” (Hague 2011a).

In the first part of the chapter I questioned whether the action of aerial bombing lives up to its claims to be ethical, humanitarian and protective. Outside of the immediate actions of intervention through bombing, the UK can be seen to be guided by a policy of specific distinctions between those who should be protected and those who can be ignored. These distinctions play out in the rhetoric of British interventionists when examined closely. Cameron argues that although universal human rights are important, “taking action in Libya is in our national interest and that’s why Britain, with our allies like America and France, and alongside the Arab world, must play our part in responding to this crisis” (Black 2011). As noted in Chapter 3, he raises the imaginative danger posed by Gaddafi as a historic supporter of terrorism and threat to the British people. Cameron also outlines a more tangible ‘threat’ posed by continued conflict in Libya. He claims that “[i]f Gaddafi’s attacks on his own people succeed, Libya will once again become a pariah state, festering on Europe’s border, a source of instability, exporting strife beyond her borders. A state from which literally hundreds of thousands of citizens could seek to escape, putting huge pressure on us in Europe” (Black 2011). The threat to the British national interest is located in the migration of refugees from the conflict, which may have a potentially destabilising effect on the EU or the UK. Hague (2011c) also locates the Libya intervention as part of the UK’s ‘neighbourhood policy’ within the EU, which seeks to stabilise those countries on the edge of the EU, in order to prevent instability reaching Europe’s borders. He states that:

it’s not the answer for vast numbers of people to move into European countries. That will create additional tensions. We’re already seeing that Italy and Malta are very, very anxious about the position they’re in. It just underlines the importance of making it possible for people to prosper in their own countries. … If we’d allowed Colonel Gaddafi to reconquer Libya, that would have destabilised the region to an even greater extent and led to uncontrolled migration out of North Africa (Hague 2011c).

Hillary Clinton claimed that Libya was significant due to its systemic location. She gave the following response to a question on the lack of US national interests in Libya:
I mean, did Libya attack us? No, they did not attack us. Do they have a very critical role in this region and do they neighbour two countries? You just mentioned one, Egypt, and the other Tunisia, that are going through these extraordinary transformations and cannot afford to be destabilised by conflict on their borders. Yes. Do they have a major influence on what goes on in Europe because of everything from oil to immigration? … When it comes to Libya, we started hearing from the UK, France, Italy, other of our NATO allies. This was in their vital national interests (Clinton 2011b).

The reasons behind an intervention ostensibly to protect civilians appears to have a more complex motivation. The national interest in Libya is reconfigured as preventing the movement of refugee and migrant populations into Europe. Here the first distinction in Britain’s commitment to protect civilians in Libya becomes apparent, that between European/British and non-European lives. A primary motivation appears to be, for those intervening, the maintenance of a strict buffer zone in North Africa of uncontrolled migration from the rest of the African continent. The cosmopolitan universalism of civilian protection breaks away in favour of a more clearly delineated imaginative geography of stability and instability. Beneath the rhetoric of universal human rights, as Gregory points out, ‘our’ spaces and ‘theirs’ begin to bleed into one another, prompting anxious elites to attempt to maintain a hermetically sealed zone of stability in Europe.

The anxiety of European elites at the start of the civil war in Libya rested upon a wider fear of the country’s role as ‘gateway to Europe’ for many migrants from Africa and the Middle East. There have been moves over the past decade to ‘externalise’ EU border control functions, by transferring responsibility on its regional neighbours such as Libya and Morocco (Hamood 2008: 20). In 2005 the Council of Europe announced a programme of ‘ad hoc’ dialogue and cooperation with Libya on migration and asylum, despite concerns over the human rights commitments of Gaddafi’s regime (Hamood 2008: 20). At around the same time, Italy increased its level of cooperation with Libya over migration, providing patrol boats funded by the Italian state at a cost of over €6 million (Paoletti 2011: 274). Italy provided further assistance to Libya in the fight against ‘illegal immigration’, including the funding of detention camps (later abandoned), paying for repatriation flights, assistance with marine interception missions and police cooperation (Paoletti 2011: 275-276). Libya did not have its own national asylum system, and did not grant the UNHCR access to refugee detention centres (Hamood 2008: 25). There was a limited system of protection for refugees in Libya, despite increasing cooperation with the EU and Italy. The image of

42 See also Bialasiewicz (2012).
Libya as a gateway of migration into Europe was already powerful at the time of the uprising in 2011, and the fear of thousands of migrant workers and refugees washing up on Europe’s shores was palpable. In April there was a perceived crisis in the EU as Italy granted residence permits to 25,000 Tunisian refugees (Waterfield 2011). Many of these French-speaking refugees travelled to France, which responded by closing its rail border with Italy (Waterfield 2011). The French government demanded a renegotiation of the Schengen treaty, and insisted that EU aid be directed to North Africa, according to The Daily Telegraph, to “stem the influx of migrants by helping with regional transition to democracy” (Waterfield 2011). France was at the forefront of the intervention to protect civilians in Libya, and was the first country to supply the rebels with arms (BBC News 2011). It also was very clear that migrants from the conflict there, or in the rest of North Africa, were unwelcome in France.

In May 2011 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) called on European countries to share the burden of migrants from the Libyan conflict, most of whom were arriving in Italy and Malta. It noted that the numbers arriving in Malta were exceeding the capacity of the small island, and undertook a programme to relocate these migrants (UNHCR 2011). In response to this call, 11 countries, including Australia and the US, agreed to offer minimal places for resettlement. Most of these places fell within the countries’ existing quotas, with only Belgium, Norway and Ireland offering places beyond their quotas (UNHCR 2011). The UNHCR called for higher numbers in their proposed resettlement programmes, noting that richer northern European countries could shoulder the ‘burden’ of migration to a far greater extent than Malta, Egypt and Tunisia, where many had fled to from Libya. Britain and France refused to take part in the UNHCR resettlement scheme. A spokesman for British Foreign Secretary Theresa May stated that the UK would offer Italy “practical assistance to help maintain their border controls and asylum processes” in receiving refugees, but that it would not take part in this proposed relaxation of EU rules on migration and asylum in the wake of many fleeing fighting in Libya in 2011 (Morris 2011). He also stated that “a common asylum system or new laws will not resolve the unprecedented influx of migrants at Europe’s Mediterranean border” (Morris 2011). In the context of disagreements within the EU over border control, David Cameron stated that “the situation vindicates our long-standing position that we will not take part in Schengen” (Morris 2011). Nick Clegg defended Britain’s refusal to take part in the resettlement scheme, calling it “some sort of version of pass the parcel. We want to make sure that every effort is made that the conflict comes to an end in the first place” (Travis
The tragic irony of this position was pointed out by Nicolas Beger, Director of Amnesty International’s European Institutions Office, who argued that the failure to accept refugees from the conflict “is particularly glaring given that some European countries, by participating in NATO operations in Libya, have been party to the very conflict that has been one of the main causes of the involuntary movement of people” (Amnesty International 2011a). Clegg also stated that “obviously working with the Italians to provide practical support to those who have fled to their towns and cities is another way” (Travis 2011). Passing the buck on the refugee crisis, Britain’s position was keeping migrants at an arm’s length so they have minimal chance of reaching the UK border.

Shortly before this abdication of responsibility to protect refugees and migrants from Libya, an incident in the Mediterranean served to illuminate the flawed centre of humanitarian concern. On 25 March a boat of refugees left Tripoli to cross the Mediterranean to Lampedusa. It ran into trouble on the crossing and sent out distress signals to the Italian coastguard and a nearby warship (Shenker 2011). Despite these distress calls being received, no attempt was made to rescue the migrants. The boat was adrift for 16 days, during which time most of its passengers died of thirst and hunger. After making contact with the Italian coastguard, a military helicopter appeared by the boat. Shenker (2011) reports that “the pilots, who were wearing military uniforms, lowered bottles of water and packets of biscuits and gestured to passengers that they should hold their position until a rescue boat came to help. The helicopter flew off, but no rescue boat arrived.” No country has claimed responsibility for this helicopter. A Council of Europe (CoE) report into the incident said that two NATO warships were in the vicinity and failed to rescue the migrants. It states that “NATO failed to react to the distress calls, even though there were military vessels under its control in the boat’s vicinity when the distress call was sent” (Strik 2011: 1). At one point the drifting boat was close to an aircraft carrier, from which two planes took off and flew low over the boat (Shenker 2011). The CoE rapporteur gave the following statement with regard the boat’s contact with this aircraft carrier:

Having established the credibility of the survivors’ story, I have no reason to doubt that at one point during their journey they did encounter a large military vessel and that this vessel did not provide them with any assistance. In the light of NATO’s statements regarding States’ commitments vis-à-vis their international obligations at sea, and a number of Search and Rescue (SAR)
activities which took place successfully involving NATO assets, it is difficult to understand why no assistance was offered to the boat, regardless of whether the naval vessel was under NATO command or not (Strik 2011: 16).

The boat, on which there were nine survivors, washed up on Libya’s shores 15 days later, most of its passengers having died of thirst and starvation (Shenker 2011). The responsibility to protect the passengers of the boat was not realised by NATO, or by the Italians, French, Spanish or any other country with ships in the Mediterranean at the time. Strik (2011: 5) also notes that despite intense surveillance and monitoring of the Mediterranean during 2011, that year was the deadliest on record for its boat people. The UNHCR (2012) estimates around 1500 people died making the crossing in 2011.

The incident of March 2011 was a legal and moral failure to protect civilians from the conflict in Libya. It highlights the incoherency of the cosmopolitan framework of ‘responsibility to protect’ in which the military intervention in Libya was located. Either this commitment extends only to ethnic Libyans, not the primarily sub-Saharan African migrant workers fleeing the country, or it extends to all but only on the condition that those affected by the conflict remain within Libya’s sovereign borders. When the victims of the violence in Libya threatened breaching EU borders, the solidity of those borders were hardened and reaffirmed. Strangely, the people being protected through violent intervention were also raised as such a threat that intervention was framed in terms of the interest of keeping them out of Europe. How can we reconcile this seemingly contradictory problem of commitment to protect (civilians), on the one hand, and determination to protect from (migrants), on the other? Aradau (2004: 254) asks this question with regard the competing humanitarian and security logics in the management of trafficked women. She argues that “the humanitarian and security articulations appear as practical interventions to particular ends, constituting subjects to be governed.” Different emotions govern the interventions in each discourse, the humanitarian and the security. As a result, “whereas a politics of pity attempts to exteriorise the threat and divorce it from the body of trafficked women … it is undercut by a politics of risk that interiorises danger, relocating it within trafficked women” (Aradau 2004: 254). Similarly, the case of migrants from the Libyan conflict illustrates the conflicting imaginative geographies governing the realms of humanitarianism and security. The construction of humanitarian crisis depends upon a logic of separation, in which crisis is seen to be distant, disconnected and external to the intervening self. However, contemporary security practices informing the response to
humanitarian crisis are governed by deterritorialised geographies of externalisation (Bigo 2014). At the intersection of these two logics lies the threat of the refugee from conflict, for whom humanitarian concern dries up when she tries to enter the stable zone of security (in this case, Europe).

**Conclusion**

The second section of the chapter ends with geographies of intervention coming full circle, with the Other for whom intervention is mobilised subverting the spaces upon which intervention depends by entering European territory. This action highlights the discrepancies between the geographies of humanitarianism, relying on distance, separation and disconnection, and the spaces of new security practices built upon deterritorialisation, networks and the instantaneous vision of digital surveillance technologies – Virilio’s ‘vision machine’. As a result of these discrepancies, the universal responsibility to protect frays at the edges, leading to the many deaths in the Mediterranean of civilians fleeing the conflict in Libya. R2P’s universalism is based upon the distinctions that played out so tragically in the course of the intervention. It relies on the strict territorialisation of the civilians to be saved, while retaining the right to engage in deterritorialised complicity in arming authoritarian regimes and colluding in torture. When the other who is to be saved practises similar de/reterritorialisation through migration, the responsibility to protect is nowhere to be seen. The intervening forces reserve the right, however, to remain engaged in ‘post-conflict’ profiteering. As Gaddafi fell, then Defence Secretary Philip Hammond called on British businessmen to be “packing their suitcases and looking to get out to Libya … I expect there will be opportunities for British and other companies to get involved in the reconstruction” (Adetunji 2011). The same cycle of duplicity, silence, containment and outrage highlights the many holes in the moral script of humanitarian intervention. This chapter has outlined this cycle and pointed to these holes or incoherencies in intervention discourse. The final part ended with the people who fall beneath these gaps and are stopped at Europe’s border, deported, subject to surveillance and monitoring, or, worse still, bombed or left to die adrift at sea.

In this chapter I interrogated the terms through which the Libya intervention was judged to be successful, suggesting that those terms stand on thin ground. The first term of success was the use of precision weaponry, which it was claimed led to no casualties on the ‘allied’ side, and ‘greatly minimised’ civilian casualties. In the first part of the chapter I
demonstrated that these claims rest upon a series of dubious assumptions about the legitimacy of deaths in war. It is assumed, first, that people killed at what is designated to be a ‘military target’ are legitimate deaths. Some of these people were young children and elderly women and men, and many others were not involved in any military activity. A failure to admit weaknesses in its precision weapons technology has resulted in these deaths not being investigated by NATO. The assumption is that the intervening forces have complete knowledge over the ‘battlefield’ of intervention. This fails to admit the many contingencies and unknowns in any conflict situation. The deaths of civilians in Libya is more concerning as it highlights the bluntness of aerial warfare to achieve humanitarian objectives. These deaths were seemingly not a concern for NATO, despite the operation’s justification being the protection of civilian life in Libya. Furthermore, the deaths of rebel soldiers were also considered legitimate by-products of a good war to save lives. My argument is not that zero deaths overall is a feasible aim for humanitarian intervention, rather it is precisely that people die in wars. This is an inevitable consequence of war. NATO’s claims that intervention in Libya was a great success because there were “no allied casualties” is a profoundly arrogant one that holds that European and American lives are worth a great deal more than African ones. Beneath the claims of bloodless, precise wars of humanitarian intervention it is worth reminding ourselves that plenty of blood is spilt in these wars, but that those intervening are not concerned so long as those dying do not have white skin.

If precision weaponry is one such fetishisation of the violent means of war, speed is the other examined here. Speed has become a key marker of progress, obscuring an examination of the ethicality of violent action. According to this story, Libya was a better intervention because it was quicker. This conflation is marked by a merging of the moral and the technological in which the latter is advanced to stand as a marker of the former. This conflation of speed with success precludes the critical questions examined in the rest of the chapter, namely, who dies in interventions, how have intervening forces been complicit with authoritarian regimes, and why does the moral call to protect civilians not extend to migrants? Until these questions are seriously addressed, intervention cannot be called successful because it is grounded in an incoherent moral discourse. As the intervening forces attempt to play God with swift interventions from the skies, vulnerability to violence becomes ever more asymmetrical. Those on the ground remain tied to a terrestrial slowness, illustrated in the rebels’ lack of firepower, uniforms and outdated equipment. European intervening forces refuse to accept any such vulnerability,
whether in the actions of war itself or from its side-effects in the forms of asylum seekers. This attempt at profound disconnection, in space and in time, begins to fall apart as inevitably the spaces of the ‘postmodern’ and the ‘pre-modern’ (Cooper 2003) worlds rub up against each other. The result of the discourse of success through speed is a confusion of the technological and the humanitarian. When it is said that the intervention in Libya was more successful than the last, often what is meant is that the response was faster, the weapons more precise. Progress is a limited aim if it comes down to the celebration of more efficient means of committing violence. Secondly, it reproduces the inequalities in the value of life that run through humanitarian intervention and which I have continually emphasised in this chapter. The aim of the chapter has been to outline limits of the technological narratives in which the violence of intervention was produced in Libya as legitimate. In doing so we can begin to disrupt the representational ‘tricks’ upon which the perceived moral legitimacy of intervention depends.
5. Disrupting the spatio-temporal framework of intervention

Introduction

The last chapter ended by calling into question the representational processes through which violence was produced in the Libya intervention. This chapter explores the wider geographies and temporalities of violence in which the Libyan intervention can be contextualised. The chapter destabilises the narrative of intervention along the following lines. First, I look at the broader imaginative geography of intervention in which danger and crisis are constructed across the postcolonial world, informing a narrative of rescue, improvement and reform. I argue that intervention as a policy response is ‘written in’ to the script in which the spaces of others are represented as disordered, failing or failed. This is an imaginative geography of failure, in which the postcolonial world is continually constituted as a lack, which can be amended through violent external intervention. If this is what failure looks like, the second part of the chapter builds an imaginative geography of success according to the dominant logics of humanitarian intervention. This section outlines the network or geography of violence that underpins and sustains intervention. I argue that supporters of intervention are directly complicit in the production of violence across this wider network, much of which is not in direct public view. This geography of private and state violence in the immigration and justice systems across Europe is conditioned by assumptions about the differential value of life between citizens of the EU and those from outside its borders. This analysis builds upon the last part of the previous chapter, which outlined the differentiation between migrants from the conflict in Libya, and the citizens of the UK to whom they present a destabilising risk.

The third section of the chapter troubles the liberal narrative on intervention by examining alternative subjectivities produced by the war. I argued in Chapter 3 that coverage of the conflict in 2011 produced a one-dimensional image of Libya as a space of desolation and chaos, inhabited by rowdy men who were poor imitations of a professional military. This subjectivity of the Libyan rebel was one which was seen as in transition towards legitimacy, both on an individual level as the rebels became well-trained soldiers, and at the level of the state, as the NTC developed into a responsible international actor. This transitional subjectivity of the Libyan rebel army and authority helped support and legitimate the NATO intervention to liberate the Libyan population. In this third section of the chapter I outline an alternative representation from the Libyan uprising in order to provide other
images of Libya, in contrast (and resistance) to the dominant subjectivity of the Libyan rebel outlined in Chapter 3. I also present these images to challenge and trouble the liberal discourse of liberation, transition and progressive change through violence. First I narrate the story of the Free Generation Movement, a group of non-violent civil resistance activists in Tripoli. I also tell the story of the town of Tawergha, which supported the Gaddafi regime and was subject to violent reprisals after the official end of fighting in Libya. The two stories are intended to destabilise the certainties of humanitarian intervention and inform a questioning of the utility, rationality and ethicality of the deployment of violence by NATO to resolve the crisis in Libya. I conclude with two arguments about the geographies and subjectivities of humanitarian intervention which trouble its claim about the possibility of limited and ethical war for civilian protection.

The imaginative geography of failure: Mapping spaces for intervention

This section outlines imaginative geographies of post-Cold War security discourse that normalise a perpetual policy outlook of intervention, reform and development in postcolonial spaces. In Chapter 2 I noted that imaginative geography is the process by which the spaces of others are imagined through themes of degeneration, fear or disorder. In this way, imaginative geographies play a key role in the constitutions of political subjectivities in security discourse. The dominant themes of imaginative geographies of insecurity in the post-Cold War context are those of uncertainty and chaos through the breakdown of institutional structures of government. I outline two primary narratives that have informed the practice of Western intervention in the Middle East and which give context to the intervention in Libya. The first is the idea of state failure, which has become a popular narrative in post-Cold War security thinking, and has informed the increasing normalisation of intervention in the past thirty years. The second is that of ‘Muslim Rage’. This is the idea, advanced by scholars such as Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington, that the Muslim world is resentful towards the West at its own perceived relative demise, and is looking to commit violent revenge. These two narratives intertwine to inform a powerful and influential imaginative geography of failure across the Middle East and wider postcolonial world. In this way, spaces are mapped with violence, danger and disorder, and are in this way rendered amenable to external intervention.

State failure
In what is often described as an increasingly interconnected world, dealing with the perceived existential threat of state failure is posited by security commentators as the primary foreign policy problem for Western governments. As Robert Cooper (2003: 6) puts it, the key question in contemporary European foreign policy is “how can [the EU] live in a world where conflicts, missiles and terrorists ignore borders, and where the familiar certainties of the Cold War and its alliances have gone.” In this popular narrative, the threat posed to the West in the post-Cold War era comes from the postcolonial world, but in contrast to the Cold War, it is not known exactly from where each risk will come. The sense of incomprehension and fear at the new world of chaos is exemplified in Cooper’s (2003: xi) insistence that “the most worrying thing about globalisation is that it brings us new, more foreign enemies whose motives we barely understand”. This echoes George W. Bush’s statement about the difficulties of post-Cold War foreign policy. He stated in March 2001 that “[w]hen I was coming up, it was a dangerous world and we knew exactly who they were. It was us versus them. And it was clear who them was. Today, we’re not so sure who they are, but we know they’re there” (BBC News 2001). This reflects a rethinking of the way in which political space is imagined in world politics, from a territorialised threat management logic to one of deterritorialised systemic risk management.

As I suggested in Chapter 2, contemporary security discourse has been framed by future-oriented logics of systemic risk management. Daase and Kessler (2007: 423) state that “the kinds of dangers the global community faces are increasingly of a different kind [than traditional military ‘threats’]. They often lack an identifiable actor, a hostile intention or the prominence of military capability.” As a result, post-Cold War security has been oriented towards the management of uncertain risks rather than known military and territorially-based threats. The authors state that as a result, “both knowledge and non-knowledge are constitutive for the formulation of security policy” (Daase and Kessler 2007: 430). Uncertainty has become a constitutive part of a security discourse that aims at stabilisation of systemic risk rather than protection of territory. In this context, the focus of security discourse shifted in the 1990s from the large powerful states to the weak and chaotic ones. Cooper (2003: 68) argued that “the lesson remains that chaos in critical parts of the world should not unwatched go. It was not the well-organised Persian Empire that brought about

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43 Robert Cooper is a former British diplomat. He was the UK’s special representative in Afghanistan prior to 2002, after which he worked for the EU in developing the Common Foreign and Security Policy.
the fall of Rome, but the barbarians.” Failing states emerged as the primary threat to Western interests, through the spread of transnational crime, terrorism and refugee flows. The *Economist* (2009) argues that “there is one thing on which doves and hawks invariably agree: much more needs to be done to shore up states that are failing”. Failure is reconfigured as threat to zones of stability such as Europe.

As I argued in Chapter 2, systemic risk is not viewed as random or depoliticised, but is constituted in a differential mapping of danger through the mobilisation of particular identities. State failure is mapped in the international geographical imagination through the evocative use of apocalyptic language and garish visual imagery. Fukuyama (1992: 276) argued that “for the foreseeable future, the world will be divided between a post-historical part, and a part that is still stuck in history.” The chief logic of interaction in the post-historical world, such as the EU, will be economic and rational. The historical world would, however, “still be riven with a variety of religious, national, and ideological conflicts depending on the stage of development of the particular countries concerned, in which the old rules of power politics continue to apply” (Fukuyama 1992: 276). He states that “[c]ountries like Iraq and Libya will continue to invade their neighbours and fight bloody battles” (Fukuyama 1992: 276-277). Fukuyama’s imaginative geography of distinctions between the rational world of post-history, and the irrational historical world helped underpin a policy framework of violent intervention in both of these countries. To handle these distinctions, Fukuyama emphasises transcendence as a route out of chaos, legitimating violence to ease this inevitable historical path. In this way, the distinctions of his imaginative geography have been implicated in violent pre-emptive foreign policy intervention.44 In the atmosphere of intervention in the 1990s and beyond, his imaginative geography of failure and degeneracy, and success through transcendence, found powerful resonance.

A similarly teleological vision of divergence between comfort in the free world and chaos in the rest was portrayed in Robert Kaplan’s essay ‘The Coming Anarchy.’ Kaplan argued that West Africa could be seen as a microcosm of the disorder which was spreading across Africa and the ‘underdeveloped’ world. This disorder involved “the withering away of central governments, the rise of tribal and regional domains, the unchecked spread of disease and the growing pervasiveness of war” (Kaplan, 2000: 9). As a result of this ‘nature

44 Fukuyama later renounced his support for neoconservatism following what he termed its failures in Iraq. See Fukuyama (2006).
unchecked’ he foresaw a “coming upheaval, in which foreign embassies are shut down, states collapse, and contact with the outside world takes place through dangerous, disease-ridden coastal trading posts” (Kaplan 2000: 18). Kaplan’s essay was one of the first examples of the post-Cold War ‘afro-pessimism’ which predicted that Africa would fall into irreparable degeneration and conflict. Kaplan’s and Fukuyama’s dire predictions gained currency after the 1990s, which was viewed by many as a decade of ethnic conflict, genocide, and the failure of the international community’s historical opportunity. McNamara and Blight (2001: 28) advance similarly apocalyptic visions of an imminent threat to humanity. They argue that people across the world “are already burning in Dantesque infernos” in the “countless post-Cold War conflicts that threaten anarchy, death and destruction” (McNamara and Blight 2001: 5). Underlying these texts is a bleak image of a divergent historical path chosen by those across the developing world. Threat and danger are seen as emanating from areas of state failure, wreaking new risks and dangers due to globalisation.

*Foreign Policy* (2009: 83) contends that “answering the question of which failed states demand attention might well come down to which are deemed to pose the biggest threat to the world at large.” Each year it produces the ‘failed state index’ with the NGO Fund for Peace. In 2013 Somalia was named the number one failed state by *Foreign Policy* for the sixth year running. The magazine states that “the distinction of being a ‘failed state’ is inarguably damning,” and it uses the following measures of state failure – wars, hunger, brutal dictatorships, child mortality, economic failure, mass epidemics, political infighting, and the devastating aftermath of natural disasters (*Foreign Policy* 2013). There is also a warning against optimism about the outcome of the Arab Spring, as “[f]rom the ashes of the U.S. mission in Benghazi to the killing fields of Aleppo, the forces of chaos have imposed their will on the fragile green shoots of democratic order, sending once-stable states higher on the list” (*Foreign Policy* 2013). Libya is number 54 in 2013’s list, and Egypt number 34, which place the countries in the ‘warning’ category. The imagery of the failed state index on *Foreign Policy*’s website is evocative, with an eye-catching red and black banner of the webpage which for the 2013 list features without the bullet holes of the previous years. An accompanying photography feature ‘postcards from hell’ shows viewers what life is like “living on the edge in the world’s worst places” (*Foreign Policy* 2013). A world map on the Fund for Peace website illustrates relative levels of state failure and success in shades from

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45 Robert McNamara was the US Secretary of Defense between 1961 and 1968.
deep red as ‘critical’ to the greens of ‘sustainable’ and ‘most sustainable.’ It is striking that on this map not much of the world is shaded green. Only Canada, Iceland, Ireland, Scandinavia and a small part of Central Europe, as well as Australia and New Zealand are deemed ‘sustainable.’ Within this developed portion of the world only two countries are termed ‘most sustainable’ – Sweden and Finland. A large portion of the rest of the world, including China, India, Russia, much of South East Asia, parts of Africa, Mexico, parts of South America and Eastern Europe are in the ‘warning’ category. Most of Africa is coloured deep red for ‘alert’ (Fund for Peace 2013).

That the failed state index dismisses much of the world as failing, weak or failed appears fairly ridiculous. However, this idea of much of the world as failed, degenerate and barbaric places is historically embedded in an imperial imaginative geography that views the disorder and barbarity of postcolonial spaces as a logical reason for continual intervention and reform. Fanon (1986: 2) argued that the Third World is in Western eyes “a zone of nonbeing, an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an utterly naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born.” In other words, the postcolonial world is (almost) written off as a destabilising potential catastrophe. That it is not written off entirely is significant, for it allows for the sanctioning of almost constant interventions in order to bring development, good governance, stabilisation and peace, with violence if necessary. Sontag (2003) suggests that this framing informs the way in which we view the world and subjectivities within it, arguing that representation of violence and suffering often reproduce particular cultural mappings of the non-Western world. She argues that:

the more remote or exotic the place, the more likely we are to have full frontal views of the dead and dying. Thus postcolonial Africa exists in the consciousness of the general public in the rich world … mainly as a succession of unforgettable photographs of large-eyed victims … These sights carry a double message. They show a suffering that is outrageous, unjust, and should be repaired. They confirm that this is the sort of thing which happens in that place. The ubiquity of those photographs, and those horrors, cannot help but nourish belief in the inevitability of tragedy in the benighted or backward – that is, poor – parts of the world (Sontag 2003: 63–64, emphasis added).

The key point here is that the imagery is imaginative, that is, it serves to confirm pre-existing fears and assumptions about the other. It reconfirms an imaginary geography of tragedy and failure, and reinforces a view that somehow the viewer is predestined to save the viewed. Sontag here links the imagery of despair and poverty with the evangelical belief that the viewer can fix the problems of the viewed. The images of ‘Third World Chaos’ and
‘failing states’ invest the viewer not only with the idea of the ‘inevitability of tragedy’ in the backward areas of the globe, but with the idea that this tragedy can be righted with intervention from the neutral observers. This belief that the troubles of the postcolonial world can be fixed with only the right kind of intervention from the rich world sustains the interventionary outlook framing practices of humanitarian intervention, post-conflict peacebuilding, development and other top-down policies of externally-led transformation.

The result of this imaginative geography underpinning interventionary practices is that the places where the US, UK or France will intervene are already deemed lacking legitimate subjectivity or agency. Their designation as ‘failed’ strips them of legitimate sovereignty and therefore the right to non-intervention. As Doty (1996: 44) argues, colonisation depends upon the delineation of the sovereign and the non-sovereign subject, the latter of which “could be possessed, dominated, controlled, and passed as an object among sovereign subjects.” Spaces of state failure and political upheaval are defined not as areas of a fully formed, if troubled identity, but in terms of their lack, or failure. They are seen as potential sovereign subjects, but ill-formed, transitional and incomplete. This failure can be corrected through external intervention and the creation of the institutional framework to guarantee individual liberation. The problem for liberal interventionists is how to get the task right, that is how best to intervene, to build capacity, to install good governance and ensure human rights are upheld. Paris (2004: 179-211) believes that the solution is to build liberal institutions before installing liberal democracies. The liberation of the individual is always deferred to the future, in order that the correct institutions can be built in the present. In this liberal framework, debate takes place over the correct design of these architectures of intervention, putting aside the notion that these are often set up to fail by being imposed from the outside. The logic that intervention can succeed leads to the liberal imperialist arguments of Boot (2001) or Ignatieff (2003), who argue that the solution to the problem of state failure is the resurrection of a benign, US-led imperialism which will install the institutions of liberal government by force if necessary. This problem of disorder will continue to be reproduced by the colonial script from which interveneres read, stating that their historical destiny is to continue to destroy, reconstruct and rebuild the rest of the world. The problem is constantly reproducing itself, discursively and materially. The challenge for critical theorists is to question the script itself, to destabilise the cognitive mapping that divides the world into zones of stability and those of degeneracy.
The imaginative geography under question here is one of differential risk of instability in which the postcolonial world is placed under close surveillance and supervision for the threat it may pose to the ‘postmodern’ (Cooper 2003) or ‘post-historical’ world (Fukuyama 1992). This imaginative geography arises from theorists and commentators who are often self-styled cosmopolitans, subscribing to an image of the equality of the universal individual. As I argued in Chapter 1, this universal and transcendent image of the individual contains the potential for radical and hierarchical differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate subjects. The overview presented here of the imagery of state failure illustrates the ways in which this differentiation is enacted in the imaginative geography of political instability. The liberal constitution of identity in intervention and state failure discourse creates a moral universe of potential subjects to be liberated by the fully formed intervening subject. Furthermore, the recognition of shared human vulnerability brings a sense of urgency into intervention, as the failure of others to liberate themselves becomes a threat to the free world. This prior cognitive mapping of differential instability in the world means it makes sense when Hillary Clinton expressed her fear that intervention was necessary in Libya to prevent it from “descending into chaos and becoming a giant Somalia” (Reuters 2011b). It also made sense when David Cameron framed intervention as preventing Libya from becoming “a pariah state, festering on Europe’s border, a source of instability, exporting strife beyond her borders” (Black 2011). 46 The intervention narrative is embedded in a colonial script which states that some states succeed where other states fail, some are ordered and others are disordered, and that postcolonial disorder is a threat to the intervening state. As Sontag points out, suffering and failure are already written on the face of the postcolonial subject, and our intervention is already written into this script, it is justified in binaries of postcolonial subjectivities before it has happened.

‘Muslim Rage’

The second narrative that constitutes the imaginative geography of failure and disorder in the postcolonial world is that of ‘Muslim Rage.’ In a recent speech, Tony Blair emphasised the need for West to be attentive to the threat posed by Islamic extremism. He argues that radical Islam is at the root of political crisis across the Middle East, and poses the biggest

46 Tony Blair (2011: 228) argued that intervention in Kosovo was for him “an act of enlightened national self-interest, for I believed that if we left the issue to fester or allowed ethnic cleansing to occur unchecked, it would eventually spill over into other parts of Europe.”
threat to political stability across the world. He outlined two images of the future that he argued lay at the heart of this crisis. Blair (2014) insists that conflict was arising:

between those with a modern view of the Middle East, one of pluralistic societies and open economies, where the attitudes and patterns of globalisation are embraced; and, on the other side, those who want to impose an ideology born out of a belief that there is one proper religion and one proper view of it, and that this view should, exclusively, determine the nature of society and the political economy.

Islamic extremism is seen as the fundamental cause of instability across the region and beyond, exporting the threat of terrorism to Russia, China and Europe. It is a truly globalised security threat, risking the destabilisation of the neighbouring area and beyond. Blair (2014) argues that:

[t]he important point for Western opinion is that this is a struggle with two sides. So when we look at the Middle East and beyond it to Pakistan or Iran and elsewhere, it isn’t just a vast unfathomable mess with no end in sight and no one worthy of our support. It is in fact a struggle in which our own strategic interests are intimately involved; where there are indeed people we should support.

In this way Blair simplifies the complexity of political instability in a region stretching from Algeria to Pakistan into a dichotomous battle between good and evil. Blair’s speech is a prominent articulation of the ‘problem’ of Islam and a reminder of the continuing salience of the fear of the Islamic other.47 The differential imaginative geography of Robert Cooper’s distinction between the ‘premodern’ and the ‘postmodern’ zones of the world is stark in its influence on Blair. Furthermore, his condemnation of Islamic extremism through simplistic divisions has intellectual roots in the work of Bernard Lewis, Samuel Huntington and Fukuyama.

Representations of Middle Eastern, Arab or Muslim communities has been powerfully affected by the idea of ‘Muslim Rage’, coined by British historian Lewis in his 1990 essay ‘The Roots of Muslim Rage’ (2004), but grounded in historical Orientalist scholarship. In The Arab Mind, cultural anthropologist Raphael Patai (1973: 296) noted “the violent hatred

47 This narrative on radicalisation has informed recent debates on the participation of British nationals in the war in Syria, and the acceptance of Syrian refugees into the UK. British counter-terrorism officers announced a plan in April to encourage Muslim women to persuade their male relatives not to travel to Syria to fight (BBC News, 2014).
that Arabs feel for the West.” Patai (1973: 162-163) locates this hatred in the particular personality of the Arab, who “readily and frequently throws off the restraints of discipline and, especially in mass situations, is likely to go on a rampage.” Following from Patai, Lewis asks ‘why do they hate us’, positing Western freedom and prosperity as likely roots of Middle Eastern resentment at their lost glory. Lewis argues that after the Second World War, “suddenly, or so it seemed, America had become the archenemy, the incarnation of evil, the diabolic opponent of all that is good, and specifically, for Muslims, of Islam. Why?” (Lewis 2004: 400). Lewis describes an increasing feeling of irrational hatred, jealousy and resentment of Western power in the last fifty years emanating from the Middle East and erupting in the form of fundamentalist outbursts and terrorist violence against Western interests (Lewis 2004: 409). This rage is one which may have had some rational origins in Western policies and actions in terms of its history of imperialist meddling, oil exploration and its support of Israel, although Lewis dismisses these as insufficient causes in and of themselves for the current depth of hatred levelled against the West. He believes that “we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilisations – the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage” (Lewis 2004: 411). Lewis’ thesis is echoed in the work of Huntington (1993: 22), who argues that “the fault lines between civilisations will be the battle lines of the future.” Huntington describes the increasing salience of cultural divisions between people superseding those of the nation state or class that were predominant in the twentieth century. He outlines the popular post-Cold War idea that economic modernisation and social change has prompted people to retreat to local and cultural identities. One example is the ‘revival’ of religion in some quarters of the globe, which Huntington (1993: 26) terms a “return to roots phenomenon” in non-Western regions. This is fuelling an increasing division between Islamic and Western civilisations, rooted in a millennial historical struggle that is likely to become “more virulent” with the rise of Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism (Huntington 1993: 31).

Huntington’s (1993: 32) clash of civilisations thesis claims broad explanatory power, posited as underlying numerous recent conflicts, from the “carnage of Bosnia and Sarajevo,” to the “unremitting slaughter of … Armenians and Azeris,” as well as tensions
between Muslims and Hindus in India. Its reach is so broad, however, that it risks explaining nothing and merely cementing distrust of those who are viewed as different to a perceived Western liberal identity. As Coll (2012) points out, “it was like arguing that authoritarian strains in Christianity could explain apartheid, Argentine juntas, and the rise of Vladimir Putin.” Echoing Lewis, Huntington (1993: 32) describes a Middle Eastern identity in the late twentieth century that is “humiliated and resentful” at Western military and economic dominance. Huntington (1993: 35) claims that civilisational clashes are likely to be more violent than economic around the fringes of the Muslim world, because “Islam has bloody borders.” Similarly, Lewis (2004: 410) describes the “aimless and formless resentment and anger of the Muslim masses,” which has now found focus through fundamentalist Islam. He notes moments of historical pressure, when “the deeper passions are stirred [leading to] an explosive mixture of rage and hatred” (Lewis 2004: 410). Fukuyama (1992: 235-236) claims that Islamic fundamentalism has resulted from the realisation of failure, and a sense of resentment towards the West. He claims that “[t]he current revival of Islamic fundamentalism … can be seen as a response to the failure of Muslim societies generally to maintain their dignity vis-à-vis the non-Muslim West.” The narrative shown here is that the Muslim world is characterised by decline and failure. Fukuyama (1992: 237) states that this decline “can only be understood if one understands how deeply the dignity of Islamic society had been wounded in its double failure to maintain the coherence of its traditional society and to successfully assimilate the techniques and values of the West.” As with state failure, the idea of ‘Muslim Rage’ is rooted in the assumption of lack, failure and absence in which problems in the Muslim world are read only as a response to Western success. This should be understood as an expression of profound narcissism. The narrative of ‘Muslim Rage’ reflects perceived Western superiority onto a vast region of the world that is transformed into a relative, and grossly oversimplified, failure.

The narrative of ‘Muslim Rage’ is persistently influential, as evidenced by the recent Blair speech on the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. Islamic extremism is seen to represent an existential threat to the West rather than a specific and particular political problem. Scholars who advanced this narrative were particularly influential in the shaping the foreign policies of the Bush administration. Lewis was invited to brief White House staff on Islam and the Middle East after 11 September 2001, and is alleged to have given advice on policy towards Iran (The Daily Telegraph 2004). There are clear resonances between Lewis’ depiction of an angry and resentful Muslim world, determined to bring down the West, and
the Bush doctrine’s division between those who yearn for Western freedoms and those who hate them. Lewis has a clear answer for the problem of the new civilisational clash, which he alleges underpinned the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, which is to bring democracy to the Middle East. The new threat posed by Al-Qaeda represents for Lewis only the latest in an ongoing historic rivalry between Islam and the West that will only cease if the Muslim world becomes more free and democratic and abandons fundamentalist Islam (Lewis 2006). He contends that the choice presented to the US in the wake of 11 September 2001 is “either we bring them freedom, or they destroy us” (Lewis 2006). Lewis’ ideas are important in producing a wider discourse on Islam and the Middle East that posits those communities as dangerously angry, violent, traditional and different. The theme of ‘Muslim Rage’ helps produce the Middle East in Western eyes that is reproduced at points of crisis, for example after the 11 September terrorist attacks, and during the protests against the US in September 2012. In this narrative the subjectivity of the Arab Muslim is posited as dangerous and violent, acting out due to their down-trodden historical circumstances. The narrative of ‘Muslim Rage’ forms part of a wider imaginative geography of failure which sustains, normalises and produces continual violent intervention. In this way the imaginative geography of failure underpins the normalisation of a network of violence of which intervention is a key part. It is this deterritorialised geography of violence to which I turn in the next section.

Neoliberal geographies of violence

In this section I contextualise humanitarian intervention in a wider network of violence. I provide an overview of private and state violence at the margins of humanitarian intervention, which I argue enable its production as a rational response to crisis. First, I examine the role of private security contractors. The Libyan government has been resistant to the importation of foreign security contractors. In Chapter 4 I quoted then British Defence Secretary Philip Hammond urging British companies to be “packing their suitcases” for Libya to profit from the reconstruction of the country (Adetunji 2011). This was one day after Gaddafi was killed on 31 October 2011. However, British companies were already following this advice before the official fall of the regime. The British oil and security company Heritage Oil had attempted to secure contracts for the provision of security at Libya’s oil installations in September 2011, and had been refused by the NTC.

See Hirsi Ali’s (2012) article in Newsweek, which begins “once again the streets of the Arab world are burning with false outrage. But we must hold our heads high.”
who were resistant to the presence of foreign contractors (Brower 2011). The company had reportedly lobbied Foreign Secretary William Hague to help expedite UK visas for four Libyans to assist in preparing the contract, and had provided Hague with advice about the security situation in Eastern Libya (Brower 2011). The NTC at first refused the advances of Heritage Oil at the end of August, stating that the pitch to provide security was ‘not acceptable’ (Brower 2011). Having failed in the attempt to broker a security deal, however, Heritage managed to get a profitable inroad in Libya in the form of an oil takeover, making itself one of the first foreign investors in post-Gaddafi Libya. The company was awarded a 51% stake in Benghazi-based Sahara Oil for $19.5m (Fletcher 2011, Bawden 2011).

The NTC also refused to grant a license for British private security firm G4S in May 2012, stating that the company is “not welcome in the country” (Libya Herald 2012b). There is some controversy over whether the EU had been too swift in granting the contract worth €10 million to guard its embassies in Libya to G4S without receiving prior permission from the Libyan government (Libya Herald 2012b, Rettman 2012). According to Rettman (2012), the G4S deal “ran counter to the EU’s own tender specifications,” which stated that the “winner must show ‘evidence’ that they have a Libyan permit ‘before signature of the specific contract.’” The implication is that there was pressure from the British officials in the team awarding the contract, the European External Action Service (EEAS), to award the contract to G4S prematurely. The NTC can be seen as resistant to an influx of foreign private security companies into Libya, preventing the debacle of post-2003 Iraq where private contractors were seen to have been even more aggressive and unaccountable than coalition armies. However, G4S has been recruiting a country manager and an operations manager for Libya (G4S 2013b), suggesting that it is still looking or have been awarded contracts to operate in the country. I will briefly trace the operations of G4S back through Europe to the UK to illustrate the vast geography of violence sustaining the largest private security firm in the world, suggesting that the involvement of companies like G4S in crisis-

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51 Heritage Oil has close links with Sandline International and Executive Outcomes, both British private security companies, the former of which folded in 2004 after being found to have breached a UN-imposed arms embargo to Sierra Leone (Buncome, Routledge and Abrams, 1998). Sandline International (2013) states that the reason was lack of government support for the use of private security companies in Africa where governments were reluctant to intervene, and “without such support the ability of Sandline to make a positive difference in countries where there is widespread brutality and genocidal behaviour is materially diminished”.

52 One example is the Nisour square killings in Iraq in 2007 when Blackwater guards shot 17 civilians. None of the guards involved has been convicted for the killings. 250 former Blackwater guards were ordered to leave Iraq in 2010 in protest against the dismissal of the manslaughter charges brought against the guards in the US (diLeonardo 2012; Gillan 2009).
torn countries may be problematic. G4S has operations in 125 countries and has been no stranger to controversy and scandal. Within the UK, the company has contracts to run five of the thirteen private prisons in the country (Department of Justice 2013). In 2012 it lost one contract in East Yorkshire due to it being poorly run (BBC News 2012). In July 2013 the company was placed under review after an audit showed that it had billed the government for tagging criminals who were either dead, in prison or untagged to begin with (Reuters 2013). A report into its management of HMP Oakwood indicated that prisoners were unable to access basic cleaning and toiletry items, and were receiving poor healthcare (Reuters 2013). In 2012 G4S was awarded two contracts for providing asylum seeker accommodation and transportation in the Midlands and North East. The contract began to fall apart as local authorities had to step in to help G4S fulfil its obligations (Rawlinson 2013). The company is now facing government fines of £4million for ‘poor performance’ in delivering these services (Dearden 2014).

Two ‘immigration removal centres’ at Gatwick airport are run by G4S on a contract from the UK Border Agency (UKBA). The company states that its role is to help the UKBA “deliver a firm but fair immigration system” (G4S 2013a). Its press material boasts that it helps remove “one [illegal immigrant] every eight minutes” from the UK (G4S 2013a). It states that these migrants are detained prior to removal in “safe and humane custody – at all times treated with dignity and respect” (G4S 2013a). The company has been accused of causing the death of Jimmy Mubenga who died while being restrained on a plane deporting him to Angola in 2010 (Taylor, Lewis and Grandjean 2013). An inquest found that his death was the result of ‘unlawful killing,’ yet no criminal charges have been brought against the guards involved (Taylor and Lewis 2013). There had been previous concerns raised by the Home Office about the use of restraining techniques by G4S guards that risked ‘positional asphyxia,’ the cause of Mubenga’s death (Casciani 2013; Lewis and Taylor 2011). In 2004 a 15-year old boy died being restrained by G4S guards in a Secure Training Centre for juveniles, leading to criticism over the use of the potentially fatal stress position (BBC News 2007; Sambrook 2012). G4S is now responsible for training UKBA staff in safeguarding children who come under their care in the course of immigration or asylum applications, having allegedly been offered the contract with no competition (Sambrook 2012). A report by charity Medical Justice gives details of allegations of abuse in the asylum system by private contractors such as G4S, including assault, excessive use of force during restraint, racist abuse and sexual assault (Medical Justice 2008). Forty-two of the allegations involve children (Medical Justice 2008). Half of the incidents took place at the airport
awaiting deportation and a quarter while on the plane prior to take-off (Medical Justice 2008). As a result, few of the victims can make a complaint against G4S or other private security companies contracted to carry out deportation, as they are soon to be leaving UK territory. As Medical Justice (2008: 3) points out, the system for the legal protection of asylum seekers within the UK is complex and cumbersome, and there are many barriers against the successful prosecution of such crimes in the immigration system.

The point of this section is not simply to outline the range of incompetent services offered by G4S. It is to argue that companies such as G4S form part of a vast network of violence underpinning the British government’s involvement in humanitarian crises, undermining the spatial and temporal frames within which humanitarian intervention is produced. Notably, ‘crisis’ is delineated as something that happens ‘over there’, which can be contained through intervention. It is seen as disconnected to prior relationships of complicity and cooperation that I examined in the previous chapter. Competing as it still is for contracts in post-Gaddafi Libya, G4S was one of several private interests with a direct stake in supporting the dominant discourse on rebel-led chaos in Libya outlined in Chapter 3 and more broadly in the geography of failure outlined above. Insecurity becomes not just a way of supporting a particular foreign policy based on exclusion and containment, or a means of reconfirming fear of the foreign other, but a way of supporting the British economy through the expansion of its largest private security firm into new markets. This insecurity discourse does not stay abroad, however, for the vast network of private security firms depends upon the sense of fear of the other being felt most strongly at home. If people fleeing violent conflicts abroad in which the British government or contractors may have actively participated reach the UK border, then there is profit to be made in their surveillance, detention, possible imprisonment, transportation, accommodation, and deportation. The profit to be made from this huge network of privatised violence is as written into government policy on humanitarian crisis response as it is to immigration and asylum policy. If insecurity is good for the British economy, why attempt to, for example, pursue the UN route of conflict resolution and peacekeeping? If a coercive and intolerant immigration policy which sanctions detention is similarly good for business, why relax UK immigration laws? Furthermore, this geography of violence undermines any claim of the UK government retaining a benign distance from the crisis in Libya. The UK response is already preconditioned by a network of privatised and state violence which extends far
beyond the UK border, and collapses the false topology\textsuperscript{33} of warfare as something that happens ‘over there’ in foreign spaces.

I have highlighted the role of G4S as an illustrative example of the network of private interests sustaining a militarised and privatised response to issues of humanitarian concern, from protection of civilians in conflict to the detention of immigrants, to the provision of public services. There are many more companies involved in the sustenance of a powerful network of militarised interests. The EU has recently hired French company S.A Bull N.V for €3.7 million to manage the databases on EU asylum, migration and border management (Nielsen 2013). The company’s subsidiary was hired by Colonel Gaddafi in 2006 to conduct surveillance of the Libyan population, and is currently being investigated by the French judiciary for complicity in the Gaddafi regime’s torture of its citizens (\textit{France24} 2012). The UK government announced this year that “British defence exports rose 62% in 2012 – the largest increase for five years” (HMG 2013\textsuperscript{a}). This is cause for celebration that the UK “maintains its position as the second most successful defence exporter after the United States” (HMG 2013\textsuperscript{a}). Philip Dunne, UK Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology, argues that “this is welcome news for the UK Defence Industry, and demonstrates that they remain world leaders in an increasingly competitive global market place” (HMG 2013\textsuperscript{a}), effectively celebrating UK complicity in the continual reproduction of a violent world by proudly praising the British arms manufacturing industry. This raises the crucial question of whether it is a coincidence that the world’s two top arms exporters are two of the most enthusiastic supporters of military intervention in humanitarian crises, or ‘failed states.’ The same geography of violence which underlies the UK’s cooperation with Libya’s dictatorial regime which bought our arms or used our companies to help repress their populations also supports the deployment of state armies and private contractors\textsuperscript{54} to go to war against that dictator and compete for contracts for security in reconstruction. That same geography of violence sustains a militarised immigration system at home that treats migrants and refugees like criminals rather than the same ‘innocent civilians’ for whom NATO countries are willing to mobilise armed force to save.

\textsuperscript{33} Shapiro (2013: 156) uses the term topology to refer to political space.
\textsuperscript{54} The issue of whether contractors were involved in the rebel war effort is difficult to determine. \textit{Al Jazeera} published footage of Westerners on the frontline with the rebels in May, and previously in March six SAS soldiers were captured by rebels travelling with a diplomatic mission in Benghazi (Borger and Chulov 2011). The British government denied having any operatives on the ground in Libya yet there are various reports of Qatar funding British and French security contractors to work with the rebels (Borger and Chulov 2011; Hosenball 2011).
In what sense can we understand war as a limited and ethical activity that occurs in territorially delineated ‘crisis regions’? Humanitarian intervention posits a separation of intervening forces and the zone of intervention in an outdated geopolitical imaginary which begins to fray with even the slightest scrutiny. Intervention itself is motivated by a fear of systemic vulnerability which posits migrants as security risks, necessitating violent stabilisation actions to manage population movements from weak or failing states. Yet the intention of intervention is to maintain huge differentiation in the vulnerability to risk, bolstering European capacity to manage immigration and reduce the effects of systemic shock by containing crisis in one strictly delineated territory. The impact of the vast network of security institutions controlling systemic stability, whether terrorism, crime or migration, on the most vulnerable is not countenanced due to the dehumanising effect of security discourses which transform people into carriers of risk. The rationality of this system itself is assumed to be self-evident, with aberrations from normal subjectivity victim to surveillance, detention or interdiction. In this context, normalising practices such as intervention, aid and reconstruction similarly do not come under critical question by dominant modes of thought. As such, humanitarian intervention is produced as a rational, reasonable and ethical response to crisis through the exclusion of questions of historical complicity in repression and contemporary responsibility for a whole series of everyday violences against particular others. The network of deterritorialised violence which underpins intervention is one which is differential and riven with distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate identities. These distinctions are a constitutive part of the cosmopolitan moral universe of R2P. The universalism of R2P rests upon the constant distinction between legitimate and illegitimate subjectivities, including the migrant from conflict who may be victim of violence and the carrier of risk at one and the same time. The result is the reproduction of an incoherently violent system which preys upon a transient underclass of migrants at the same time as mobilising a heroic intervention to save the lives of victims.  

There are many ‘ungrievable’ lives who are victims to violence in the context of humanitarian intervention. They include the victims of NATO bombs, examined in the previous chapter, and the soldiers of the Gaddafi regime, who included Libyans and hired mercenaries from Algeria, Chad, Niger and Sudan. Gaddafi’s soldiers were often not counted in body counts of the Libyan conflict, and many were victims of summary execution by the Opposition. The victims of rebel reprisal attacks were ‘ungrievable’ lives, subsumed under the imaginative geography of Gaddafi’s evil which tended to erase the broader complexities of class and race which underlay the recruitment of black African mercenaries to fight in the war. This is explored in the final part below on the case of Tawergha.
Resisting dominant narratives in Libya

This section points to alternative articulations of subjectivity and resistance during the Libyan uprising. It focuses on two such articulations, first the practice of non-violent civil disobedience in Tripoli while it was held by Gaddafi’s forces, and secondly the actions of the Misratan rebels in Tawergha. In the first case, I emphasise the non-violent in order to challenge the dominant representation of Libyan space as that of futile violence and rigid tradition. I highlight the origins of the Libyan uprisings in non-violent protest and civil resistance, not in the uncontrollable violence with which the Libyan conflict later became synonymous. As I argued in Chapter 3, the representation of the rebels in Libya marked a discursive meeting point between the securitisation of Muslim men, Orientalist stereotyping of Middle Eastern political spaces, and the simplistic identities of humanitarian intervention. This resulted in a complex mix of fear, admiration, pity and blame, as the hysterical fear of armed Muslim men was overlaid with a cosmopolitan narrative of civilian protection and the liberation of ‘a people’. The common feature of these three interlinked discourses is a hierarchical binary in which the intervened upon are inferior to the interveners. Libya remains in each a place in which truly progressive transformation can only take place through external agency. The Libyan rebels were a coarse bunch of rag-tag fighters, finding legitimacy only through contact with Western trainers and superior NATO firepower. Nowhere in these familiar discourses is there space for Libyans making their own history beyond this hierarchical colonial script.

As many have argued, however, the Arab Spring should serve to remind us that the familiar ways of understanding the world, rooted invariably in colonial geographies and geopolitical imaginaries of postcolonial chaos, are increasingly redundant. Dabashi (2012: xviii) argues that the Arab Spring revolutions were about transcending outdated Western imaginaries, “and are thus conceptually disturbing to the existing political order as the régime du savoir around the world.” For Dabashi, the events of 2011 across the MENA region signalled the impoverishment of grand narratives, from colonial modernism to Islamism and Arab nationalism. Equally redundant may be the narrative of liberal interventionism as a tool for achieving cosmopolitan liberation. Challenging this grand narrative requires interrogating the subjectivities which produce it, including that of the ‘rag-tag rebels’ outlined above. The chapter examines an alternative voice for change in Libya during the uprising in the Free Generation Movement of Tripoli. The proviso of this analysis is that the group were one
among many in the uprising in Libya in 2011, and in the ongoing contestation of subjectivity in ‘post-conflict’ Libya. They represent a small and predominantly middle-class urban section of the Libyan population. Their story is told here in order to point to the diversity of subjectivities in Libya as a reply to dominant discourse on the revolutionaries as predominantly chaotic and disordered violent young men. The second articulation I explore is that of the darker side of the uprising in Tawergha. The purpose of this is to draw attention once again to the violence at the margins of humanitarian intervention. The purpose is to trouble the assumptions about legitimate and illegitimate subjectivity at the heart of the cosmopolitan discourse of R2P.

The Free Generation Movement

Lindsay Hilsum’s (2012) account of the Libyan revolution tells the story of Niz Mhani, a Tripoli resident who joined a protest on the 25 February against the Gaddafi regime (Hilsum 2012: 35). Benghazi had fallen the previous week and went on to become the centre of the uprising, from where the newly-formed NTC coordinated the revolution. News of the brutal suppression of protesters in Benghazi and elsewhere on the 17 February had swiftly circulated on the internet. ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo later issued a warrant for the arrest of security chief Abdullah al-Senussi for the ‘pre-determined’ killing of protesters in Benghazi in February (Gray-Block 2011). Tawfik Othman al Shohibiy uploaded images of protests in Tobruk, a town east of Benghazi, before the Internet was cut by the Gaddafi regime (Hilsum 2012: 15). Hilsum (2012: 16-17) interviews Tawfik, and reports that his father was imprisoned for civil resistance at the time he was born. In the midst of the early uprisings against the Gaddafi regime in February 2011 Tawfik uploaded videos of protests in Tobruk, which showed people attacking statues of Gaddafi’s Green Book, to Al-Jazeera and Facebook in the hope that the world would take notice of the resistance in Libya. When the Internet was cut he and his brother set up a courier service to cross the border into Egypt and upload images of ongoing demonstrations in nearby towns (Hilsum 2012: 17). Tawfik added his phone number and name to the images he uploaded to his Facebook page, risking arrest and torture by the regime. Hilsum (2012: 16) reports that he thought it too late to continue to hide, stating “if you ride the camel, you can’t keep your head down.” Niz Mhani had flown back from Britain where he worked as a doctor when he saw Seif al Islam’s speech on television on 20 February dismissing the protests and announcing that the regime “will fight to the last man and woman and bullet” (Hilsum 2012: 31). While protesting in Tripoli on the 25 February, Niz saw soldiers fire upon the
unarmed protesters, killing dozens (Hilsum 2012: 34). In the following days, Niz and his family created the Free Generation Movement, a non-violent civil resistance group to oppose the regime without taking up arms. Together with his sister, Mervat, Niz and other activists in the Free Generation Movement undertook creative acts of civil disobedience in regime-controlled Tripoli during the revolution.

In a typical stunt, the activists launched a revolutionary flag over the skyline of Tripoli, using Chinese lanterns (Free Generation Movement 2011b). The pre-Gaddafi flag of the Kingdom of Libya had been outlawed following Gaddafi’s coup in 1969 and became a symbol of the revolution in 2011. The video was released on 15 June 2011 to mark four months of resistance to Gaddafi. The activists’ covered faces and the rough attempt to blur their faces is a reminder of the danger they put themselves in to show their support for the resistance. Another, entitled ‘Project Burn’, shows the construction and use of a remote system to set fire to a giant poster of Gaddafi in Tripoli (Free Generation Movement 2011c). The Free Generation Movement activists again risk their lives to capture the act on film and disseminate it worldwide. In May 2011 Niz placed sound systems in rubbish bins along a street in the Fashloum suburb in Tripoli and filmed the bins playing the revolutionary national anthem of pre-Gaddafi Libya, which was also banned by the Gaddafi regime (Hilsum 2012: 220-222). Mervat filmed the rubbish bins singing the anthem, timed to play after Niz had fled the area. The video shows a quiet city street with bewildered passers-by shown puzzled by the sudden sound of a song banned by Gaddafi for 42 years (Hilsum 2012: 221, Free Generation Movement 2011a). Hilsum (2012: 221) reports that “eventually, the soldiers figured out where the music was coming from, and picked up the bags of rubbish, but by then the point had been made: Tripoli was not all with Gaddafi as he proclaimed.” The Free Generation Movement managed to get their clips out to the international media, with Al-Jazeera, the BBC, CNN and The Washington Post providing some coverage. In an article on the group in The Washington Post, Niz stated “I didn’t have to do anything spectacular to get in trouble. In Gaddafi’s Libya, you just have to raise a flag, you just have to say no, just say you want to change” (Denyer 2011).

The group was featured by The Guardian to mark the one year anniversary of the start of the uprisings as one of a four-part series of short films on the ‘Tripoli Underground.’ The Guardian interviewed Mervat Mhani, who filmed many of the Free Generation Movement’s actions during the uprising. In one of the films she gives an impassioned defence of the group’s part in the uprising in a Guardian interview, and explains why they acted:
We had to do it. We had to do it. We had to make our voices heard. I was hoping to die and not be tortured. I think I was more scared of torture than of dying. We really didn't think about it. It was the adrenaline, you don't think. We acted. We were hoping for the best, we had trust and faith in God. We knew we were right, and right always succeeds (The Guardian 2012a).

After Tripoli was taken by rebel soldiers, the Free Generation Movement erected a memorial wall displaying the names and faces of those who had died during the conflict. In an interview with Al-Jazeera, Mervat explained that the public display of those who had lost their lives was “to say thank you for our freedom, thank you for our children’s freedom” (Al-Jazeera 2011b). Since the war ended, the Free Generation Movement has set up a women’s centre to support the families of missing persons in Tripoli. The Mafqood Centre is a drop-in space for women missing husbands, brothers or fathers to bring children and receive support in terms of the law and government assistance. The Centre provides advocacy and legal support and publicises the issues surrounding missing persons since the conflict (Libya Community Driven Grants Programme 2013). The Free Generation Movement has become a voice for wider socio-political change, for example, calling for a conversation on women’s rights in newly liberated Libya in an article in the Libya Herald. In this article Niz insisted that “it is clear, and we are all in agreement, that the harassment of women, whether sexual, verbal or otherwise, is neither Islamic nor is it lawful under any other code of ethics. But it happens on an almost daily basis in Libya. Why?” (Ben-Essa 2013).

The humanitarian intervention narrative has no space for progressive non-violent resistance, which troubles the simplistic typology of saviour, victim and freedom fighter as well as the troubled representation of the rebels explored in Chapter 3. The Free Generation Movement’s outspoken voice on human rights, gender equality and non-violence challenges the dominant representation of Libyans as unreconstructed Orientals: aggressive, traditional and emotional. The complexity of a country in political crisis with a number of different voices of resistance is lost in a one-dimensional representation of the Libyan rebels in the Western press. The humanitarian intervention narrative, while claiming a space for itself as a ‘progressive’ solution to authoritarianism, relies upon a continual othering of the postcolonial subject as incapable of writing his own future without Western assistance and superior moral script. Simplistic identities inform a narrowing of the solutions presented by Western governments to bombing and arming. Furthermore, the
case of the Free Generation Movement serves to remind us that the Libyan uprising was not only about violence. As Dabashi (2012: 20) points out:

In the Libyan crucible the US, NATO, Gaddafi and the rebels alike were burning to use and abuse their military power – at once contradicting and depleting each other’s logic. Vox populi – the voice and power of a people – remained triumphant, even (or particularly) when their voice was silenced by the roaring of jet fighters and machine guns.

The emphasis on non-violent resistance was nowhere in Western elite discourse during and after the conflict, despite vague calls for a ‘non-violent’ response to the Arab Spring across the Middle East by the UK government (Burt 2011). There is an unintentional irony in Burt’s call for a non-violent response to uprisings across the Middle East whilst at the same time launching a violent intervention of aerial bombing in Libya, launched to destroy weapons sold to Gaddafi by Britain.

Emphasising non-violent resistance troubles the received wisdom of humanitarian intervention that increasing violence can resolve crises. The Free Generation Movement activists challenge the simplistic narrative of humanitarian intervention by showing the ways in which Libyans used the space around them creatively in interactive expressions of their resistance to Gaddafi’s state violence. As Dabashi (2012:207) claims, the Arab Spring demonstrated the “systematic and expansive reclaiming, by one massive demonstration after another, of the public space that the postcolonial era had left vacant.” Sassen (2011) suggests that the events that became known as the Arab Spring point to new ways of conceiving political spaces, and in particular urban spaces, and the role in which they play in political transformations. She argues that the events in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and beyond in 2011 augured a new significance for what she terms the ‘Global Street’ as a locus for political revolution and contestation. Sassen (2011: 574) argues that “[t]he Street can, thus, be conceived as a space where new forms of the social and the political can be made, rather than a space for enacting ritualised routines.” The Tripoli of the Free Generation Movement’s struggle against the Gaddafi regime was one such site of radical contestation and the formation of new subjectivities of resistance and liberation challenging the dominant narrative of humanitarian intervention, that liberation is enabled by external military force. The case of the Free Generation Movement highlights the ironies and inconsistencies of humanitarian intervention outlined in Chapter 4. As Dabashi (2012: 206) argues, “the US and its NATO allies are not just destroying the military equipment that they sold to Libya in the first place; they are also challenging the very logic of military
intervention in a democratic uprising – by virtue of its being defined by non-violent acts of civil disobedience.” The Free Generation Movement, as did many other Libyans in the resistance movement, contested the ‘ritualised routines’ of Western diplomatic hypocrisies (Opondo 2011) complicit in Gaddafi’s repressive regime and which now sought to play a part in its demise.

_Tawergha_

If the Free Generation Movement epitomised the complex voices of resistance in the Libya uprising, there was also a far darker side to the war that fits uneasily with liberal narratives on progressive change. Tawergha is a town to the south of Misrata, which was a centre of the rebel uprising, and which was subject to a brutal siege by Gaddafi’s forces during the conflict. The population of Tawergha were said to be descendants of black African slaves, and had a darker pigmentation than Libya’s Arab population (Human Rights Watch 2011a). The town was pro-Gaddafi, and was used as a base from which Gaddafi’s soldiers launched its assault on Misrata during March and April 2011, killing 1,000 residents (Fahim 2011). A witness viscerally illustrates the assault: “Tawerghan men robbed homes, killed and stole livestock, vandalised properties and sometimes even set them on fire. But worst of all Tawerghans were involved in rapes that were filmed on mobile phones found on dead Tawerghan men” (Mahfud 2012). Hilsum (2012: 29) states that “there is no question that rape occurred – at least one British journalist saw mobile phone footage to prove it – but whether it was as widespread as Misrata men say, and whether the Tawergha rather than regular troops were the main culprits, is unconfirmed.” As the balance of power shifted towards the end of the conflict, Tawerghans fled, fearing reprisals from the Misratan militias. Since August 2011 the town has been subject to collective punishment for crimes committed in Misrata, with many men captured and beaten. Human Rights Watch reports that Tawerghans have been subject to indiscriminate shootings, arbitrary detention, assault and abuse in custody. In a report, it states that “[i]n one case armed men from Misrata killed a displaced Tawerghan in the camp where he was taking shelter. In two other cases, Misrata brigade members shot Tawerghans in their custody and left them by the side of a deserted road” (Human Rights Watch 2011a). At the time of the report, in October 2011, there were 1,300 Tawerghan detainees in Misrata. One man who was held at the Sikt detention facility in Misrata in August gave the following account:

They wanted me to say I had raped. They ask most people from Tawergha to say that they had raped. They beat me. They used an electric stick on my back
and my stomach … They told me to confess that I raped five people. I don’t know why five people … They whipped me on my feet, my legs, my hands … After I was beaten, I passed out for five minutes. When I woke up they were standing over me, spitting and cursing at me, and saying, “We will send you back to Africa” (Human Rights Watch 2011a).

The report details several accounts of Tawerghans being assaulted in custody and being forced to admit rape. Others attest to racist abuse at the hands of Misratan guards. According to Human Rights Watch (2011a) several witnesses claimed “they saw guards whip one dark-skinned Tawerghan detainee while forcing him to run around a courtyard and then telling him to climb a pole while shouting, ‘Monkey needs a banana.’”

Several Tawerghans died in custody in Misrata after the end of the war in 2011. Human Rights Watch reports that “Emhamid Muhammad Shtaywey, known as Faraj, a 42 year-old garbage truck driver from Tawergha, was killed at the Misrata security committee detention facility on Baladia Street at about 8 p.m. on August 20” (Human Rights Watch 2011a). The Human Rights Watch (2011a) report states that witnesses “said that guards beat him to death. One of the witnesses said that guards and visitors badly beat Faraj throughout most of the day in the Baladia Street facility.” He gave evidence of guards forcing him to admit to the rape of young girls. He said “they were cursing and swearing at him: ‘You rapist, you are with Gaddafi.’ He wasn’t answering, and he wasn’t moving. They said, ‘Wake up, wake up.’ I saw his chest; it wasn’t moving” (Human Rights Watch 2011a). The report provides an account of the death of Ashraf Salah Muhammad, who was beaten to death by Misratan guards at a detention facility in Misrata. According to witnesses, Muhammad, who was in his early thirties, was mentally ill (Human Rights Watch 2011a). Amnesty International detailed the death in detention in Misrata of 44-year-old father of two Barnous Bous’a, who was beaten to death by guards (Libya Herald 2012a). Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Deputy Director, said that “[t]his brutal death highlights the continuing dangers to detainees in the new Libya … How many more victims will die from torture until the authorities realise the gravity of the situation, and deliver on their promises of investigating, prosecuting and putting an end to such crimes?” (Libya Herald 2012a). Human Rights Watch (2013b) has since reported that “[m]any Tawerghans currently detained have been held for more than one year without charges, a judicial review, or access to a lawyer. The same is true of most of the roughly 8,000 detainees held by the Libyan government or militias.” The organisation claims to have evidence of 17 deaths of Tawerghans in custody since the end of the conflict (Human Rights Watch 2013b). The ICC prosecutor Fatsou Bensouda has called upon the Libyan
government to investigate crimes committed by rebel forces in Tawergha, as she announced to the UN that the ICC remains seized by accusations of war crimes by both sides in Libya (United Nations News Centre 2012). She stated that “[w]e continue to collect information on allegations of rapes and sexual violence, which targeted both men and women … and allegations of crimes committed by rebel or revolutionary forces, including against the residents of Tawergha, against individuals hors de combat and against detainees” (United Nations News Centre 2012).

Tawergha has remained unpopulated since the end of the conflict in August 2011. In October Human Rights Watch (2011a) reported that the town was empty and most of its buildings ransacked, and that the whole population of around 30,000 people was fleeing to other parts of Libya (Human Rights Watch 2011a). Over 100 civilians who remained were forcibly expelled by Misratan militias. The Tawerghans are in refugee camps across the country, the largest being the Hun camp in Jufra, 200 miles south of Sirte (Human Rights Watch 2011a). Journalists and witnesses state that Tawergha has become a ghost town. A BBC reporter wrote in December 2011 that:

[a]s you enter Tawergha from the main road, the name is erased from the road sign … Building after building is burnt and ransacked. The possessions of the people who lived here are scattered about, suggesting desperate flight. In places, the green flags of the former regime still flutter from some of the houses. Buildings show the scars of heavy bombardment, some are burnt out shells, some are just abandoned. The town is empty of humans, apart from a small number of Misratan militiamen preventing the return of the town’s residents (Kafala 2011).

In early 2013 Human Rights Watch released new satellite imagery which showed the extent of the destruction of Tawergha at the end of the war. Its report states that “[t]he analysis identified 1,690 damaged or destroyed structures after the cessation of hostilities, more than 90 percent of which appear damaged by fire” (Human Rights Watch 2013b, emphasis added). The analysis compares images taken between 2011 and 2012, showing the extent of the damage inflicted after the war officially ended in August 2011. According to Human Rights Watch (2013b) the analysis, as well as accounts from the town after August 2011 “strongly suggest that the widespread and systematic destruction was intended to prevent residents from returning.” Tawerghan residents of Misrata have reported harassment and persecution in the city following the end of the conflict. Human Rights Watch (2011a) reports that “[o]ne said he had been fired from his state job, another that a teller forbade him from withdrawing money at a bank, and another said nurses denied her medical care at
the hospital. In all cases the people were told this was because they were Tawerghans.” Human Rights Watch names the targeting of Tawerghans as collective punishment, a war crime in international law, and has called upon the UN to condemn their treatment at the hands of Misratan militias. Eric Goldstein, deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch argued that “[a]n entire community is being held hostage to crimes allegedly committed by a few … The onus is now on the government to end this collective punishment by ensuring that Tawerghans can exercise their right finally to return to their homes” (Human Rights Watch 2013a).

Where does the treatment of Tawerghans fit with liberal narratives of humanitarian intervention in Libya? During the uprising, the rebels of Misrata and Benghazi were represented as either an incompetent, youthful and disorganised rabble, or as freedom fighters courageously bringing about the liberation of a country. The notion that the rebels committed – and that the newly formed government continues to sanction – war crimes and massive human rights abuses does not easily fit into narratives of liberation and collective struggle. That those same people that NATO helped to liberate might also be brutally repressive and racist, capable of the collective punishment of an entire town appears to trouble the dominant narrative that the Libya intervention was a story of helping to liberate a repressed people. The reality may be much more complex. In a more subtle way, the case of Tawergha is also entirely consistent with humanitarian intervention, which relies on the notion that there are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ people, and that in war it is right and just to kills the ‘bad’ ones. The actions of the Misratan rebels were not a challenge to liberal norms, but a logical extension of the script of humanitarian intervention that states that it is entirely justified to kill outside of a legal framework as long as you know that those you are killing are already guilty. The actions of the Misratans in Tawergha shows up the hypocrisy in the universal moralising of R2P and humanitarian intervention, which allow for the justice of some to enable the killing of others.

Conclusion

The chapter has disrupted the dominant spatio-temporal assumptions through which humanitarian intervention is rendered intelligible. I began the chapter by showing that prominent representations of the postcolonial world are predicated on the notion of failure. This was explored through two narratives, on state failure and ‘Muslim Rage’. Both are produced as the cause of threat and risk to the developed world, normalising a response
of corrective interventions to create an institutional framework for liberation and stability. In this way, intervention can be seen to rest upon an imaginative geography of failure, in which the postcolonial world is continually constituted by a lack, which can be amended through violent external intervention, informed by a narrative of rescue, improvement and reform. In this context, the notion of violent intervention is easily intelligible as a purposeful and rational solution to crisis. As a policy response, intervention is ‘written in’ to the script in which the spaces of others are represented as disordered, failing or failed. The second part of the chapter builds an imaginative geography of success according to the dominant logics of humanitarian intervention. This section outlines the network or geography of violence which underpins and sustains intervention, including the militarisation of the immigration system and the privatisation of reconstruction. I argue that supporters of intervention are directly complicit in the production of violence across this wider network, much of which is not in direct public view. This violence is not subject to scrutiny to the extent that intervention is, as private and state violence in the immigration and justice systems across Europe is conditioned by assumptions about the differential value of life between citizens of the EU and those from outside its borders.

The chapter offers two arguments about the implications of this empirical work for the claims of humanitarian intervention in the Libyan context. The first argument concerns the geography of intervention, which I have located in a wider network of privatised security and violence extending throughout Europe and beyond. Here I demonstrated the instability and impossibility of claims that states can fight limited wars of humanitarian intervention that will save lives and protect civilians. This is the central moral and political claim of humanitarian intervention, and one which is taken for granted in much of the liberal literature on intervention and its possibilities. The chapter has built a critical geography of humanitarian intervention which places it in a wider context of institutionalised violences stretching far beyond ‘conflict zones’ like Libya. The idea of intervention as a separate, discrete and limited act of war is untenable considering the huge geography of militarisation of response to the illegitimate other upon which it rests. The idea of a responsible and limited use of violence in foreign policy is predicated on a wider norm of the privatisation and militarisation of response to humanitarian crisis, including the ‘war at home’ against migrants in the UK. I argued against the frame of war as something which happens ‘over there’ in crisis spots from which we are disconnected. In opposing war, we should also highlight and oppose the many hidden everyday violences committed by the neoliberal state and its subsidiary actors, both in the UK and abroad.
The second argument concerns the subjectivities of intervention. The chapter argued that intervention is produced in a context in which postcolonial subjectivities are constituted as failing, or failed. I outlined discourses on state failure and ‘Muslim Rage’ as framing the Libyan intervention. In these discourses, the postcolonial subject is constituted by a deficiency or failure, mirrored by the successful Western neoliberal subject. It is within this context that the subjectivity of the Libyan rebel emerged as fraught with an inconsistent tension between success and failure, or democratic liberator or Islamist threat. Orientalist discourses remain haunted with this ambivalence because they capture the fear-ridden imagination of the Western subject, not because they represent the complex essence of postcolonial subjects. Instead, the complexity of postcolonial subjectivity is erased with a dominant narrative of innate violence and externally-driven liberation. This Orientalist discourse on postcolonial subjectivities in the Libyan context speaks loudest in its silences. The violent geography of intervention is predicated on the militarisation of response to migrants from conflict. The network of violence in the European web of security institutions is based upon the assumption that the poor and the transient are security risks. This underclass includes victims of the militarised immigration system in the UK and beyond, as well as migrants from the conflict in Libya, and the mercenaries in Gaddafi’s army who were subject to torture and summary execution both during and after the conflict. I argue here that the supporters of intervention are complicit in the reproduction of this deterritorialised network of violence which impacts most heavily on already marginalised people. This is an argument which pulls apart the universalism of R2P and human security, for this is a universalism that functions upon a colonial hierarchy of identities riven with assumptions about nationality, race and class. At the peak of this hierarchy is the Western European subject, for whom intervention is mobilised not only to preserve security in the face of an ‘influx’ of migrants from Africa but to sustain an economy which favours huge privatised security and arms manufacturing industries. The ethical imperative of the chapter, as with the wider thesis, has been to highlight those who are silenced at the undersides of the neo-colonial hierarchy of subjectivities through which intervention is produced as a rational coherent practice.

With Soguk (2011: 598) I argue that “the critique of Orientalism … alone is not enough to arrest and unravel Orientalism’s hold … what is needed in order to move toward a more pluralistic civilizational horizon is the rise of Oriental subjects, asserting themselves in philosophical discourse.” This assertion of postcolonial subjectivities is always already
happening beyond the West’s simplistic representations of resistance movements, as the Arab Spring showed. As Soguk (2011: 598) writes, “the world, in its complexity, has already exceeded the West’s representational claims of it,” and will continue to do so. The chapter ended with the representation of the Free Generation Movement, to highlight the poverty of images of the uprising in Libya as a violent confluence of chaotic Arab men and their superior Western military assistants. The revolution in Libya was a multi-faceted struggle of people contesting political subjectivities against authoritarianism, repression and a colonial past. As the story of Tawergha shows, parts of it were as ugly as others were joyful, parts of it violent and others non-violent. This complexity is lost in an Orientalist discourse on Arab men and their irrational violence, or a grand narrative of cosmopolitan liberation borne out of Western violence. The Free Generation Movement was just one voice among many which trouble these simplistic discourses and their assumptions about the inevitability of some to fail and others to protect. The events in Libya and across the Arab world in 2011 indicated that, more than ever before, the old paradigms through which we view global politics are in need of change. These include an unquestioning acceptance of Western legitimacy to commit violence abroad with impunity, or to collude with authoritarian regimes, to undertake torture and arbitrary detention at will. What assumptions about identity condition this world view about the legitimacy of some to commit violence and others to be protected? These assumptions bear the colonial legacies of the West in the Middle East, and should be challenged and over-turned wherever possible. This is a first step towards opening a space for critical alternative voices that trouble the simplistic identity categories of Western interventionism and its role in the democratisation of others.
Conclusion: When a war is not a war and resisting humanitarian intervention

In March 2011, as NATO bombs were falling on Libya, White House Middle East strategist Dennis Ross told the press this was a “limited humanitarian intervention, not war” (Douthat 2011). In turn, in a letter from South America to the Speaker of Congress, Obama stated that “these strikes will be limited in their nature, duration, and scope” (White House 2011). He said that the US was engaged in “military efforts” which were “discrete.” This was not a war, this was a “limited and well-defined mission” (White House 2011). The word ‘limited’ appeared several times in the statement on the 21 March. The word ‘war’ did not appear once. The same discursive turn that produced the sound of military helicopters over Iraq as the ‘sound of freedom’\textsuperscript{56} transformed aerial assistance to anti-government rebels into a ‘limited humanitarian intervention’. The violence of the war was transformed through a discursive trick into the advancement of a cosmopolitan order of civilian protection. The trick of humanitarian intervention is that the phrase itself leaves little room for opposition. It colonises a representational space of resolute and determined assistance, a moral enterprise that is both cosmopolitan and technologically advanced. The war that occurred in Libya is rendered a cosmopolitan awakening and a technical humanitarian fix. The representational trick is, therefore, one which conceals the material and bodily impact of violence from public view, not only in the spaces of humanitarian intervention but at the margins of the wider network of violence that makes intervention possible. This insulation of publics from the impact of humanitarian wars effectively limits opposition and resistance. The trick of humanitarian intervention is to conceal a truth that is irredeemably violent both within and outside of its dominant frames. The thesis has pushed at the limits of these frames, arguing that precision aerial bombing is not as precise, limited or ethical as it holds itself to be. Beyond the immediate space of intervention, a wider network of violence stretches across vast areas, consistently oppressing a little seen minority at a profit. The aim of the thesis has been to destabilise the representational certitude with which humanitarian intervention is produced as a solution to the problem of political violence.

In unravelling the discursive certitudes of humanitarian intervention, the thesis has made three central arguments that constitute the original contribution of the work. The first concerns the political topography of intervention and R2P. I challenged claims of spatial separation in which political territories are clearly demarcated and separated, showing that

\textsuperscript{56} See Chapter 4.
the security practices of liberal states are now predicated on a deterritorialised network of surveillance, monitoring and border control in which borders are not obsolete but are highly differential in impact. The dominant geography of intervention is one predicated on separation and disconnection. This leads to a limited and limiting set of moral questions about the possibilities of intervention. There is an old joke about a tourist in Dublin who asks a local man for directions. The Irishman replies “well if I were you I wouldn’t start from here.” The joke challenges the logic in what we perceive to be true. We often presume a simple linear causality in a chain of events because our view is blinkered to the wider context in which those events are produced. In the context of intervention, liberal claims of spatial demarcation are premised on a mythical conception of territorially-based political community that is little more than a convenient fiction. As a result, to the question ‘should we intervene, or should we turn away?’ I would reply ‘well if I were you I wouldn’t start from here.’ What I mean by this is that our ethico-political engagement begins not at the moment at which military intervention is raised as a solution to mass-scale violence. Our ethico-political engagement with other people is an eternal and necessarily flawed relation of tolerance and acceptance of mutual vulnerability. In addressing humanitarian intervention differently, I suggest refusing the questions ‘can intervention be morally justified?’ or ‘under what circumstances should we undertake military intervention?’ These questions are complicit in the acceptance and reproduction of a wide network of systemic violence of which intervention is one part.

In this way, imaginative geographies and our ethico-political engagement with violence are inextricably linked. I demonstrated that the imaginative geography of crisis through which intervention is justified reproduces Orientalist assumptions about the postcolonial other, positing him or her as either depoliticised and vulnerable, or as irrationally immature and violent. This reflects not an authentic truth, but a projection of the fears, assumptions and impulses of a liberal self that has been unable to shake the colonial mindset that it must destroy and rebuild in order to help the other. The knowledge of Orientalism is a distorted mirror of the collective unconscious rather than a window into another culture. In this way, violence is reproduced as the logical, rational and even benevolent response to disorder or crisis in the postcolonial world. This thesis disrupts claims of spatial separation by challenging both the deterritorialised security practices of liberal state (and privatised) power, and the imaginations of difference and otherness on which these practices rest. The assumption of spatial separation underlying claims of fighting ‘limited wars’ is a convenient lie that attempts to conceal a network of violence in the form of private security and
increasingly militarised policing and immigration systems. This network relies upon and is sustained by its own imaginative geographies of the other as a threat that must be monitored, placed under surveillance, detained, and if necessary, deported. Any rational attempt to pinpoint this threat will result in failure, as the logic of the system is to reproduce itself with ever-increasing anxieties. The maintenance of the system itself becomes its central aim, and the ‘enemy’ within against which it is securing us disappears into the shadows with every attempt to find it. Instead of positing an alternative moral imaginary with which to frame our response to crisis, the thesis argued that the ways we commonly think about global politics and intervention are implicated in the reproduction of violence as a response to political unrest. The purpose of this argument is to reveal humanitarian intervention as a contingent instance in which violence is produced. To ask how it is produced is to highlight the fact that war is not an inevitable or enduring feature of international politics. If we accept that war is an ethico-political decision and not the duty of the powerful to uphold the normative order, then we can begin to think differently about our engagement with violence.

The second primary claim of the thesis concerns a displacement in the ethical measurement of humanitarian war to a temporal plane. In other words, the success of intervention is measured not in terms of lives saved, or the extent of rebuilding and reconstruction after conflict, or the humanitarian aid, but in the speed at which intervention is mobilised. A good war has become a quick war. The equation of speed with humanitarian or ethical success is a subtle shift but a profoundly worrying one. It is one enabled by what Virilio terms the ‘propaganda of progress’, in which increasingly swift and efficient technology has become the sole aim of capitalist societies. In this thirst for speed, wider reflection on the implications of technology is squeezed out of the discursive space for politics. Virilio argues that if this trend continues, the potential for politics itself will be annihilated.

There are two important implications about this conflation of speed and ethics in humanitarian war. First, it enables the production of violence as a rational and desirable response to crisis. The superiority of the military technologies of intervening forces forms a key part of the representational conceit of intervention in which might and right are fused. The technological frame in which intervention is justified is a subtle one, particularly as interventions shift from the spectacular ‘shock and awe’ of the Gulf and Iraq wars to the increasingly invisible and technical ‘precision’ strikes of drone warfare at the margins of the
ongoing ‘overseas contingency operation.’ In post-Cold War interventions the technological and the humanitarian frames through which war is produced have become increasingly fused. The production of humanitarian war takes place on an assumption that our technologies have become so precise that we can fight a ‘clean’ war in which only the bad people get hurt. The second, related implication is that the technological frame alienates us from the material impact of its results. As the technological frame produces warfare as better, cleaner and more precise, less attention is paid to the material and bodily impact of intervention’s violence. The danger is that we become so blinded by the advanced technologies of warfare that we forget that these technologies are still intended to result in destroyed buildings and strewn body parts. The declaration that the means of committing violence are increasingly precise and efficient makes violence more likely, as it is assumed that the messy impact of war can be avoided through advanced technology. The war in Libya, as every war, shows that the messy impact of war can never be avoided. In wars people will die, buildings will be destroyed and people will always be left to deal with the consequences of societal divisions, grieving families, and weakened infrastructure. These mundane tasks will usually fall to the world’s poorest, and rarely to those who drop the bombs from a huge height in humanitarian intervention.

The third central claim of the thesis is that humanitarian intervention depends upon, reproduces and perpetuates divisions and distinctions between people who are worthy of protection and those who may be killed. As reiterated above, the imaginative geography of intervention is one in which the postcolonial world is produced as failing or failed. The ‘propaganda of progress’ in which liberal war is celebrated as increasingly swift and efficient is also riven with a distinction between the technologically advanced and the marginalised targets of intervention who will either be killed or saved. The moral universe of intervention is one where people are divided according to legitimacy based upon a series of assumptions about race, gender, class, religion and nationality. Those deemed legitimate potential subjects are worthy of saving, and many others are seen as beyond the pale for liberalising interventions, and can be sacrificed without regret. This moral universe appears on first glance to run counter to a liberal cosmopolitanism that draws upon universalism and progressive teleology. However, these elements of liberalism create the foundation for distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate subjects. Liberalism creates a universal

57 Previously known as the ‘war on terror,’ the war which began with the Authorisation for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) signed on the 14 September 2001 was renamed in the first Obama administration (Burkeman 2009).
moral subject who is transcendent of his social context. This subject is a historical and theoretical artifice, borne out of a need to create the basis for law and rights in modern Europe. It has served as justification for innumerable injustices across the world in European imperialism and colonialism, driven by a desire to impose this legal system on other peoples against their will. This was a legal system in which it was lawful to enslave and oppress and in which hierarchical authority and clearly delineated class divisions were sacrosanct.

The thesis ties these three claims to liberal thought at the basis of human rights claims in human security and humanitarian intervention. The universalism of liberalism rests upon a dualism between the irrationality of nature and the rationality of society and law. This dualism is at the heart of the idea of transcendence, in which the liberal subject stands above the lower, material realm of nature and the body in a transcendent plane of universal rational consciousness. The divide upon which liberal theorists constructed the edifice of universalism contains within it the potential to divide people between the legitimate and lawful, and the irrational and illegitimate. Universalism underpins the liberal teleology of Kant and Fukuyama, measuring the relative development of societies by the perceived achievement of universal standards. The effect of this is to temporalise difference as not only spatially distinct, but as eternally and metaphysically inadequate. As I have shown in the case of Libya, this difference is violently policed through the various practices of security which include contemporary humanitarian intervention. Liberal thought, underpinned by universalism, dualism and progressive teleology, was allied to the pursuit of colonialism, with the wilful exploitation and enslavement of societies it entailed. This alliance between universal moral principles and the ruthless and violent policing of divisions between peoples appears to be a paradoxical interpretation of liberalism. Yet it represents not an aberration from liberal principles but their precise fulfilment, with humanitarian intervention following a line of practices from the spread of Christianity, to development and peacebuilding. My argument here is not that no good can come from these practices, but that their alliance with violence, division and exploitation should give pause to those who believe themselves to be saviours of the word. The tragedy of history is not only that particular elites took it upon themselves to enforce universal moral principles with extreme violence on the rest of the world, but that they continue to do so.

Iraq War Part III, and the intervention that wasn’t in Syria
That the US or Britain take it upon themselves to decide who to violently save, and who can be sacrificed, is evident in their recent entanglement with Iraq. At the time of writing both the UK and US has become embroiled with an emerging crisis in Iraq, in the wake of Islamic State’s (IS)\textsuperscript{58} territorial gains in Iraq and Syria. In July and August 2014 the situation in northern Iraq was deemed critical, as Christians and religious minorities fled from oncoming IS fighters, fearing violent retribution. The US responded in early August, launching an attack on IS targets in northern Iraq near the city of Irbil (\textit{Al-Jazeera} 2014\textit{b}). A statement released by the US Department of Defense read “[t]wo F/A-18 aircraft dropped 500-pound laser-guided bombs on a mobile artillery piece near Erbil. ISIL was using this artillery to shell Kurdish forces defending Erbil where U.S. personnel are located … the United States military will continue to take direct action against ISIL when they threaten our personnel and facilities” (Department of Defense 2014). President Obama stated that he had authorised two operations in Iraq that day. The first was “targeted airstrikes to protect our American personnel,” and the second a “humanitarian effort to help save thousands of Iraqi civilians who are trapped on a mountain without food and water, and facing almost certain death” (\textit{Reuters} 2014). Obama insisted that the US was acting “carefully and responsibly to prevent a potential act of genocide” (\textit{Reuters} 2014). Obama took care to remind the public that this was not a war. In his statement, Obama argued that “as Commander in Chief, I will not allow the United States to be dragged into fighting another war in Iraq” (\textit{Reuters} 2014). After initial airstrikes at dawn on the 8 August, the Pentagon press secretary John Kirby stated that a US unmanned aircraft attacked further IS positions, and four Navy fighter jets destroyed a seven-vehicle convoy outside of Irbil (\textit{Al-Jazeera} 2014\textit{b}). Echoing events in Libya three years earlier, in the words of the President of the US, this was not a war, this was “limited military action” (\textit{Reuters} 2014). Yet the bombing of enemy targets appears to be rather like a war.

A year earlier, in August 2013, there were calls for an intervention in Syria in response to the use of chemical weapons against civilians in Damascus. The British government proposed a motion to support US-led air strikes on targets in Damascus as punishment of the use of chemical weapons, banned under the Geneva Conventions. While intervention in Libya had been supported by two clear UN resolutions calling for an international response to the crisis, in Syria the US was suggesting that an intervention may go ahead without a UN resolution. Before the vote on military action in the House of Commons, the

\textsuperscript{58} Sometimes referred to as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).
UK government issued its legal position on strikes in Syria. It stated that although the UK would pursue UN authorisation, it would consider strikes on Syria legal even without a supporting Security Council resolution. The government argued that “if action in the Security Council is blocked, the UK would still be permitted under international law to take exceptional measures in order to alleviate the scale of the overwhelming humanitarian catastrophe in Syria” and that “such a legal basis is available, under the doctrine of humanitarian intervention” (HMG 2013b: 1). The motion was defeated in the House of Commons in a rebellion by Conservative backbenchers, who joined in opposition with Labour and the Liberal Democrats. British Chancellor George Osborne stated that “I hope this doesn’t become a moment when we turn our back on all of the world’s problems” (BBC News 2013b).

The government’s legal advice also states that the use of force must be “necessary and proportionate to the aim of the relief of humanitarian need” (HMG 2013b: 1), and that “military intervention to strike specific targets with the aim of deterring and disrupting further such attacks would be necessary and proportionate and therefore legally justifiable” (HMG 2013b: 2). However, the proposed military strikes on heavily populated urban areas in Damascus would invariably risk causing harm to civilians. British NGO Article 36 wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister on 29 August, the day on which the government issued its legal advice cited above. It stated that “the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects, bears a high risk of causing serious harm to civilians in Syria” (Article 36 2013). It cites research by Action on Armed Violence that had shown “that it is precisely the use of explosive weapons in populated areas that has been the primary cause of civilian suffering” (Article 36 2013). It outlined its concern that the US had suggested using Tomahawk cruise missiles, some of which carried cluster munitions, and which had been used in strikes on Yemen in 2009. The UK government stated that the sole aim of the intervention was “to relieve humanitarian suffering by deterring or disrupting the further use of chemical weapons” (HMG 2013b: 1). As Article 36 points out, however, the intervention risked causing further humanitarian suffering. The proposed response to chemical weapons attacks in Syria in August 2013 once again produced violence as a humanitarian response to save lives. This highlights the sustained appeal of the representational trick in which violence is produced as clean, precise and ethically unproblematic action. The UK government was pressing for a swift intervention in Syria to

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59 The use of cluster munitions is banned in international law in the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to which the UK was a signatory.
protect civilians, despite this action consisting of the possible use of banned weaponry that would have a devastating impact on its purported objects of rescue – the civilians of Syria.

At the time of the proposed intervention in August 2013, the UK was refusing to take in refugees from the conflict in Syria. In what was sold as a policy U-turn, in January 2014, the government announced a ‘Vulnerable Persons Relocation’ (VPR) scheme to accept certain refugees from Syria. Home Secretary Theresa May (2014) stated in the House of Commons that this programme would “provide emergency sanctuary in the UK for displaced Syrians who are particularly vulnerable.” The scheme would be provided for refugees deemed “at the greatest risk,” including victims of torture and sexual violence (May 2014). May (2014) asserted that “this House and our whole country can be proud of the role we are playing in supporting the Syrian people at a time of great crisis.” The total figure of refugees to be admitted to the UK under the VPR programme would number ‘several hundred’ over three years according to government sources (BBC News 2014a, 2014b). The numbers admitted in the first wave in March totalled around “10 to 20” refugees according to news sources (BBC News 2014a, 2014b). The programme was to be only for “vulnerable women and girls who had experienced or were at risk from sexual violence, the elderly, the disabled and survivors of torture” (Merrill 2014). This distinction, between ‘normal refugees’ and the extra-vulnerable, reinforces the idea that the UK is absolutely unwilling to grant hospitality to ordinary victims of violence in Syria. This is despite the UK government wanting to launch military strikes in order to save those ordinary victims. Furthermore, Brokenshire raised the possibility that the vulnerable people being resettled in the UK may be a risk to national security. He reassured the House of Commons that “[g]iven the absolute primacy of safeguarding the UK’s security, appropriate checks have also been conducted before bringing Syrians displaced by the conflict to the UK” (Brokenshire 2014). The number being resettled is insultingly small, and the differentiation between the ‘normal’ mass of refugees and the extra-vulnerable exceptions reinforces a distinction between the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ refugees underpinning the liberal response to crisis.

Meanwhile, in Libya

On 17 February 2014 Libyans marked the three year anniversary of the national uprising. Fireworks in Tripoli signalled a country celebrating moving on from the tyrannical rule of Muammar Gaddafi. However, democratic transition in Libya has not been straightforward,
with power struggles between militias significantly destabilising the country. In March 2014 protesters stormed the Libyan parliament, shooting and injuring two MPs (Al-Jazeera 2014a). There has been intermittent fighting in Benghazi in 2014, including a car bomb in March that killed 12 soldiers, and clashes between armed groups killing 24 in the city in May. While some US and UK embassy staff had been withdrawn amidst security concerns in 2013, both countries withdrew completely and closed their embassies in Tripoli in July and August 2014 (Al-Jazeera 2013; BBC News 2014c; Stephen 2014). The US embassy has been taken over by the Dawn of Libya/Libya Dawn militia group, seizing control from the Zintan militia (The Guardian 2014). Libyan Dawn fighters have at the time of writing seized overall control of Tripoli, including the airport. Describing the group’s victory in gaining the airport from the Zintan militia, one report stated: “[t]elevision images from the scene showed jubilant, bearded, militias dancing on wrecked airliners, firing machine guns in the air and chanting ‘Allah O Akbar’ (‘God is great’)” (Stephen and Penketh 2014). Little change here, then, with more imagery of ‘Muslim Rage’ from Libya. There are still no national security forces, with various militias receiving government funds and attempting to retain maximum power. In recent battles, 100 have died in Tripoli, and double that number in Benghazi (Mezran 2014). Human Rights Watch (2014) reports that militias remain in control of half of the 8,000 people detained during the 2011 uprising. The United Nations has shown that torture and mistreatment is prevalent, recording 27 deaths in custody as a result of torture (UNSMIL 2013: 1).

In the midst of a power struggle for control on the ground in Libya, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has launched airstrikes in Tripoli against militia targets (Al-Jazeera 2014c). In response, a joint statement signed by Washington, Paris, Berlin, Rome and London insisted that “outside interference in Libya exacerbates current divisions and undermines Libya’s democratic transition” (Al-Jazeera 2014c). It seems that intervention is justified for some but not for others. In the violent aftermath of Libya’s humanitarian intervention, the moral certitude of intervening forces to know who to save, who can be killed and whose violence serves the cause of justice is fraying. The violence of intervention in Libya appears to be begetting more violence, as the humanitarian logic of intervention continues to undermine itself. Perhaps, then, we can challenge the moral certitude itself of knowing what is best for another country and another people, and drawing those lines in the sand from a great height through violent intervention.
While denouncing the ‘outside interference’ of others, the US has been involved in various entanglements on Libyan territory itself since the 2011 intervention. In October 2011, Hillary Clinton (2011h) announced in Tripoli that the “United States was proud to stand with you, and we will continue to stand with you as you continue this journey, respecting your sovereignty and honouring our friendship.” However, in practice it has continued to violate its sovereignty in a number of covert operations to seize terror suspects. US Special Forces captured Anas al-Liby in a raid in Tripoli in October 2013. Al-Liby is a suspected al-Qaeda operative responsible for the bombing of the US embassy in Kenya in 1998. He is now facing terrorism charges in New York (Goldman 2014). In October 2012, the US consulate in Benghazi was stormed by armed men and set alight, killing the acting consul, J. Christopher Stevens and three other US citizens. Two years later, in June 2014, the US captured the man they say is responsible for the attack. The capture and arrest of Ahmed Abu Khatallah by US Special Forces in Libya has prompted condemnation by the Libyan government at yet another violation of its sovereignty (Laessing and Elumami 2014). Khatallah has been transferred to the US to face trial there. Conducting raids without permission in foreign territory on terrorist suspects does not amount to respecting sovereignty. Yet this behaviour is consistent with the ongoing US war against all authorised in the AUMF of 14 September, 2001. The law states:

> the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons (US Public Law 107-40 2001).

The law authorises an endless war against anyone deemed to be connected with terrorism, anywhere in the world. This provides the (domestic) legal basis for US drone strikes in Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as raids like that in Libya, and the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011. It makes the words of Hillary Clinton to promise to ‘respect Libyan sovereignty’ ring hollow, as bilateral relations remain subordinate to the wider quest to capture and kill terrorists. It is worth noting that al-Liby fought on the side of the rebels against Gaddafi in the Libyan war (Goldman 2014). Allegiances can be flexible in the ‘everywhere war’ of the United States (Gregory 2011a).

**Resistance to humanitarian violence**
Similar colonial logics continue to frame the production of intervention as humanitarianism, from Libya to Syria to Iraq. Yet these wars will not be called wars, because they are framed as clean and rational military exercises to kill evil-doers and save innocents. These are not wars, according to the colonial logics of Western liberal thinking. It is not a war in Iraq as bombs rain down upon the country, but a limited military exercise to kill terrorists. It is the reinforcement of a humanitarian mission that will save innocent civilians from death at the hands of Islamist extremists. In Syria, the line between the innocents and the terrorists is so blurred that it disappears the closer one tries to look at it. Civilians suffering ruthless sieges and massacres, and forced into the worst refugee crisis in recent years, were thought worthy of armed intervention by Britain and the US. However, as shown above in the UK case, they remain subject to differentiation and disaggregation reminiscent of the Victorian distinction between the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor, with the vast majority labelled security risks and not welcome in the UK. Liberal violence remains riven with such distinctions in the quest to normalise, divide and police. In Libya, the slaughter of innocents by Gaddafi was raised as cause for the mobilisation of a NATO intervention lasting 6 months. Similarly, as I pointed out in the opening of this conclusion, this was not a war but a limited military action. Wars, it can only be assumed, are against enemies of similar standing, who play by the rules and who occupy some form of legitimacy. This was an intervention in a democratic uprising, not a war. As enemy, Gaddafi was so discredited that his army was not considered a legitimate military force. The many, uncounted, soldiers of Gaddafi’s army who were killed deserved their fate, in the logic of humanitarian intervention, because they had lost, or had never gained, perceived legitimacy as subjects. If all you are doing is killing bad guys and saving the good, then it is not a war, it is legitimate humanitarian assistance.

The assumptions that enable this reframing of contemporary violent foreign policy from war to intervention are faulty, based upon the hierarchical divisions of colonialism, which has at its heart liberal philosophy. It is this link, from liberalism to colonialism to contemporary intervention, that this dissertation has delineated using the case of Libya. The problem that keeps getting repeated, in Libya and elsewhere, is not that interventions are not liberal enough. The problem is that liberalism enables the often subtle distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate subjects. When overlaid on a material base of advanced weapons technology in the hands of the most powerful, the liberal right to decide who is legitimate and who is not has a critical importance. What Libya shows is not that the UK, France, or US got it wrong, or that there were a few bad apples corrupting the rebels and
pulling the country down an unstable path after the intervention. It showed that it is impossible to get it ‘right’ because there are no legitimate or illegitimate subjects. That some of the men who were tortured by Gaddafi and organised an uprising went on themselves to torture, rape and racially abuse others chimes with a popular narrative of moral corruption, or ‘good guys gone bad’. However, what it shows overall is that there are no ‘good guys’ and ‘bad guys’, but that this is a simplistic moral universe of crusading and retribution that informs continued violence against those we deem illegitimate. There is no essential core to the subject, but people are complex beings involved in the remaking of ethical relationships at every moment. Accepting that may start to chip away at the certainty of interveners to know what is right and good, and how to go about achieving that with violence.

Butler describes how frames of war ‘break out’ of their original context and can potentially support subversive discourses against war. As examples, she refers to the way in which “the photos of Guantanamo prisoners kneeling and shackled were released to the public and outrage ensued; it happened again when the digital images from Abu Ghraib were circulated globally across the internet, facilitating a widespread visceral turn against the war” (Butler 2010: 11). Indeed, the images became symbolic of the outrages of the ‘war on terror’ and representative of something far wider than Iraq – something that was deeply wrong with contemporary US war-fighting. The way that the war was fought in Libya was represented as an improvement on Iraq, which has rightly come to be seen as something of a stain on the American conscience. In contrast to the bloody mire of Iraqi occupation, Libya was seen as a limited and responsible war. Yet this idea that Libya represents the right way of doing war shows how deeply warfare is embedded into our cultural understandings of international politics. Libya redeems the idea that war is legitimate response to crisis and a legitimate way of managing foreign populations. The fact that there were no scandals in Libya suggests that war alone is not outrageous, yet that in itself is an outrage. Despite the number of Libyan deaths and the abuses committed by the rebels, Westerners casually accepted the propagation of violence as a fundamental part of how we do things. Butler (2010: 11) asks of the torture images, “are they merely transient moments or are they, in fact, occasions when the frame as a forcible and plausible con is exposed?”

Resisting the normalisation of war requires us to see the wider blackmail in cultural and political discourse that legitimates and often celebrates warfare. The received geographies that frame humanitarian intervention tell us that there is a clearly delineated sphere in which war is acceptable and legitimate, and beyond which lie outrages such as Abu Ghraib.
Resistance must take the form of revealing and questioning these frames. Part of this is opposing the idea that NATO, state militaries or private security contractors can fight a ‘clean’ war that saves civilians through precision aerial bombing.

This thesis has highlighted the trick, or blackmail of humanitarian intervention, to borrow from Foucault’s (1984a) essay on the ‘blackmail of the Enlightenment’. This blackmail is first to posit military intervention as humanitarian, and secondly to state that the non-interventionist position is a rejection of human rights. Neither of these claims is true. Military intervention necessitates the material destruction of both human life and the infrastructures essential to continued human existence. The effect of the trick is to exclude alternative policy options that may not involve military force, and that may still have humanitarian intent and outcome, for example supporting international efforts to curtail the arms trade, or the participation in refugee resettlement programmes. Humanitarian intervention has occupied the discursive space of policy towards complex political crises involving violent state repression and civil unrest, as evidenced by Libya. The idea of humanitarian intervention has become a popular response to crisis that has succeeded in further restricting the development of non-violent alternatives in foreign policy. This is because it has been produced in a humanitarian, ethical and technical discourse that sanctions violence as a solution to complex political problems. Refusing the trick of humanitarian intervention involves refusing to call this violence humanitarian. We need to draw attention to the violence that is committed in the name of humanitarian protection, or responsibility, or human rights, when it is advanced by our governments. This is the first step towards opening alternative routes of solidarity with those who are suffering in war.
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