

literature that has not been combined before to illustrate the HECS framework's ability to account for the uprising and to demonstrate how political factors were more important than climate change in explaining the uprising. This book is a must read for anyone interested in environmental security, water security, the Syrian uprising, hydropolitics, and Syrian water politics. ✂

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NEGAR MOTTAAHEDEH. *Whisper Tapes: Kate Millett in Iran* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019). Pp. 224. \$14.00 (paper). ISBN 9781503609860.

**H**ow do you write about an archive of recordings of background sounds – overheard conversations, rebellious chants, and obscure voices carrying elusive messages – the seeming ephemera and residue of a research archive, one that has already produced at least one book, the American second-wave feminist and scholar Kate Millett's *Going to Iran?* And what might such an archive add to an already well-trod historical event? Negar Mottahedeh's book on the soundscapes of the Iranian revolution, *Whisper Tapes: Kate Millet in Iran* (2019), tackles just how one might write about such sounds or *soundscapes*, the auditory landscape of Millett's two weeks in Tehran.

The book begins with a revolutionary timeline, which serves as a useful schedule of the days that Millett was in Iran and highlights the events that transpired there during that time. Entertaining QR scans offer the opportunity to enrich the archive and enhance the reader's learning experience. The book is organized in the order of the letters of the Persian alphabet, with each chapter addressing a term or concept signified by a word starting with that letter. In all, there are thirty-two chapters (corresponding to the number of letters in the Persian alphabet), with a rich introduction and a coda with Mottahedeh finally delivering the message Millett presented to Iranian women on March 8, 1979. That missive, a greeting on behalf of international feminists, embraced the *tiers-mondisme* of the women's movements for equal rights and decried patriarchy, "the oldest and most fundamental of human institutions of un-freedom" everywhere (184).

Mottahedeh's work is informed by Slovenian critic and philosopher Mladen Dolar, who argued that voice can be studied – beyond its mere aesthetic qualities and as a vehicle of meaning – as a Lacanian psychoanalytic object, the unattainable object of desire or focus.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Mottahedeh moves her own auditory attention away from mere transcribing to tracing the “incorporal” or “bodilessness” of the sounds on the tapes, what she refers to, drawing on Dolar, as the “acousmatic” (4). Beyond an exploration of Millett's recorded voice and conversations, Mottahedeh examines the spaces in-between or in the background of these intended voices recorded on the tapes. Mottahedeh listens to those sounds that were untethered from the central voice, that is, untreated, untangled, and, most importantly, untranslated by Millett, an eyewitness to the events of March 1979, for whom the tapes form the basis of her book.

Although initially invited to give a talk on March 8th, International Women's Day, Millett went to Iran on March 5th and remained even after the event was cancelled to observe, record, and report on the events, until she was deported on March 19th. As Millett travelled throughout the city and attended various meetings, marches, and protests, she used a hand-held recorder to register her thoughts and conversations, and in doing so, she captured the perimeter of the activities around her, an “auditory unconscious” (5). These resulting tapes, *whisper tapes*, so dubbed by Millett herself because she uttered her thoughts into the device as she moved about the city, captured a wide range of voices and topics, as well as noises, frequencies, and, ultimately, the cacophony of revolutionary zeal. But when Mottahedeh goes back and listens to the ninety hours of tape some forty years later, she finds in these recordings much, much more than the raw notes that became Millett's authoritative account of the 1979 Women's Day marches in Iran.

*Whisper Tapes* reveals a soundscape of self-doubt, confusion, misrecognition, misunderstanding, and misperceiving that *Going to Iran* rarely expresses. Much like the revelations of Bronislaw Malinowski's posthumously published diaries, the ephemera captured on Millett's tapes offer a counter-narrative to the academic authority communicated in her book.<sup>2</sup> The latter is a text that, if not regarded as a historical archive of the women's protest marches in Iran, is an eyewitness account of the events. Mottahedeh's explorations include recorded conversations

<sup>1</sup> Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, [1967] 1989).

between Millett and her partner and filmmaker, Sophie Keir, her Iranian hosts, mostly feminists activists, including the formidable Kateh Vafadari, and other western activists, scholars, and journalists also in Iran to cover the events, such as Ralph Schoenman, Elaine Sciolino, and French feminists representing the *Comité International du Droit des Femmes* and those of the Marxist-founded *Mouvement de Libération des Femmes*.

In *Whisper Tapes*, Mottahedeh offers analysis and discussion of the context that Millett unwittingly captures on the tapes, but does not, for the most part, examine or unpack *Going to Iran*. Thus, what Mottahedeh provides is not only context for the recordings, but also insight into the “eyes” that were witnessing the events and translating them for other western eyes. Mottahedeh excavates the gap between what she hears on the tapes and what is actually happening – what apparently Millett missed. As she does, Mottahedeh mines in ways that more traditional forms of journalism, like Millett’s, cannot, because they are limited by space, time, and the need to draw conclusions. She finds, for example, a revolutionary solidarity in the background sounds of the *whisper tapes*, which reveal a collective engagement that is from the ground up, where people from diverse social strata were organizing themselves. They weren’t being organized by the intellectuals, as Millett would like to think. Instead, Mottahedeh laments, “they were organizing themselves” and had been doing so for many months before the events that Millett experiences during International Women’s Day (175–76).

Exploring the tapes alongside Millett’s written account allows Mottahedeh to get at a more complex journey; she unpacks complicated interests, shows the messiness of coordinating, and underscores the sometimes-harsh realities of the struggles for women’s rights during a collective revolutionary uprising. While *Whisper Tapes* is far from a hagiography of Millet, it is about her human experience, complete with her biases and limitations as a journalist, feminist, and scholar. These shortcomings upend or at least put into question some of the authority of Millett’s writing after the trip. In the tapes, we sense, and Mottahedeh hears, Millett’s misunderstandings, mistranslations, and, at times, distractions from the main task: her self-appointed mission to make a record of the women’s movement in Iran (9).

Liberal feminists, including Millett, de Beauvoir, and others who formed the newly established International Committee for Women’s Rights, went to Iran to witness the women’s movement there and largely saw it as an extension of *their* ways of hearing, seeing, and being. We learn that Millett’s preparation for this trip and for the work of accruing data is

rather weak. It's not that she doesn't even try to speak the language – many in her generation of scholars would not – but it is striking that she does not know the word for “woman” (*zan*) (82). According to Mottahedeh, Millett and the other western feminists saw the women's marches at this time as not only spontaneous, but also as the first independent women's movement in Iran (43). Mottahedeh offers the context that exposes just how little knowledge Millett and others had about Iranian women, whom Morgan Shuster, the American businessman and treasurer-general of Iran, half a century earlier referred to as “the most progressive, not to say radical, in the world.”<sup>3</sup>

The soundscapes reveal that Millett and other western feminists, especially French, envisioned their cosmos and relationships to others through an understanding of space and time (of the women's movement) as one characterized by extension, to draw from Foucault's exploration of heterotopias (1967).<sup>4</sup> Foucault's essay characterizes extension as a cosmological framing of the world during the middle ages. However, since the seventeenth century, the more informed manner to make sense of the world and its workings was to understand people and events in ever-shifting arrangements, networks, and trees. This shift from extension to arrangements offers some insight into Millett's view of the women's movement in Iran. She sought an extension of her own way of understanding women's rights – in the United States and France – rather than recognizing that the women's movement in Iran was taking shape through distinct, contingent factors. The unique historical circumstances surrounding Iran's women's movement at this time – revolutionary struggle, the ouster of a monarch, and the ushering in of Ayatollah Khomeini, who had already begun speaking of a referendum for a new form of government that would disengage western discursive ontologies (including feminism) for avowedly Shi'i Islamic ones – would necessitate an understanding of the new conditions of possibility, and the corresponding arrangements that would make possible a women's movement in Iran.

*Whisper Tapes* has interesting possibilities for students of women's movements, feminism, and the Iranian revolution. It is a great read for students new to the subject. The book engages readers on the historical events leading to the women's marches. It also teases out the complexities

<sup>3</sup> William Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia* (Los Angeles: Mage Publishers, [1912]2006), 191.

<sup>4</sup> Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (New York: Routledge, 1997), 330-36.

of the Iranian women's movement at a time of revolutionary fervor. Mottahedeh raises questions about women's participation in the revolution and their demands upon its successful overthrow of the monarchy. Yet, she nicely weaves in questions about liberal feminism and the protectionism and humane interventions that western actors seek to make on behalf of others despite their lack of appreciation for the politics, the stakes, and the conditions of possibility, not just of the events taking place, but of their own participation in such events and how they might affect, alter, or even damage the local movement. ✂

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**SAHER SELOD.** *Forever Suspect: Racialized Surveillance of Muslim Americans in the War of Terror* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018). Pp. 174, \$31.95 (paper). ISBN 978-0-8135-8834-6.

**A** particularly strong episode of *Ramy*, the Hulu television show created by comedian Ramy Youssef, a son of Egyptian immigrants who grew up in New Jersey, follows a young adolescent Ramy on the day of September 11, 2001. It poignantly demonstrates how Ramy and his family had to prove their “Americanness” to their friends, colleagues, and neighbors immediately following the attacks – such as his friends asking him if he’s a terrorist because he’s from the Middle East, his father erecting an American flag outside their house, or his classmates uninviting him to parties or checking to make sure he is actually saying the Pledge of Allegiance in class.

Experiences like this need to be shared, unpacked, and analyzed, and Selod’s *Forever Suspect* provides the much-needed model for how to do such an analysis. This is one of those books that you read and wonder why it had never been written before. Based on interviews with Arab and South Asian Muslim Americans in Chicago and Dallas-Fort Worth, Selod brilliantly examines how everyday Muslim Americans navigate being both Muslim and American in post 9/11 American society. Selod details how Muslim Americans similar to Ramy, and even her own father who started wearing an American flag lapel pin after 9/11, grapple with continued exclusion, racism, and religious discrimination. She builds upon and challenges Omi