In *Popular Fiction,* Selim presents a nuanced study not so much of a neglected literary genre, but of the ways in which genre itself can function both as a gatekeeper and as a refuge. Like "modernity," "genre" (particularly the genre of the novel) is a question that has dominated modern Arabic literary studies for at least the past two decades. Selim elucidates both concepts with force and perhaps even a certain finality, in a book that insistently gestures towards further avenues for exploration. Her epilogue begins to tease out the relationship between Arabic fiction and the post/colonial archive; other chapters touch on the many ways in which legal, literary, and economic discourses and practices inform one another, or nod to the connections between literatures within and across the Global South as well as between European and Arabic texts. *Popular Fiction*'s rich contribution to modern Arabic literary scholarship lies not only in its thorough investigation of the field's presiding problems, but its detection of some exciting new ones.

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Iran Reframed: Anxieties of Power in the Islamic Republic.
Narges Bajoghli (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019). Pp. 176. $22.00 paper. ISBN: 9781503610293

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Narges Bajoghli's *Iran Reframed* shifts our analytical gaze toward negotiations over representation and power within the core of what she calls "pro-regime" media producers, those who work to maintain the Islamic Republic, with differences over the kinds and degrees of reforms that need to be achieved within it. The question of "how" these men strategize and work to keep alive a revolutionary system that has become the status-quo is at the center of this book's discussion. Bajoghli rightly argues that the "pro-regime" category is fluid. And over the course of her five chapters she proceeds to demonstrate this fluidity via examinations of intergenerational fissures among pro-regime actors, cracks in the official narrative, demarcations of insider/outsider categories, varied strategies for reaching non-regime audiences, and the recasting of revolutionary ideology within nationalist as opposed to religious terms.

More than forty years into the Islamic Republic, *Iran Reframed* is the first book-length ethnographic study in English on pro-regime media producers, and the reason is obvious. One of this book's achievements is its access alone. In a captivating section, Bajoghli describes how she won sympathy with these men—and this book is about the *men* of this story—through a 4-year process that included her making a film about war veterans affected by chemical weapons, and ultimately, by letting down her guard and revealing to them her family's complicated political history, one that would naturally place her outside of their "insider" circle. On her mother's side there had been high-ranking members in the Shah's government, and it was her father's leftist activism that had led the family to emigrate from Iran. This tactic seems to have worked and over time she was "adopted" by Mr. Hosseini (not his real name), an older Revolutionary Guard member who is a leader in the regime media world, his friend Mr. Ahmadi, also a producer, and Mostafa, a *basiji* (paramilitary volunteer) and emerging pro-regime filmmaker. It is through the access that they offer and their views that most of the book's content—researched during President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's second term following the 2009 Green Uprising—is narrated. Indeed, it is the legitimacy crisis following 2009 that casts these pro-regime media makers into their challenging positions of creating content that upholds the state's revolutionary ideology under evolving political, social, ideational circumstances.

And these changing circumstances are most evident in the body of the *basij* and the Revolutionary Guards themselves, a topic that Bajoghli is able to reveal in its human dimensions in her discussion on generational changes in Chapter 1. Through ethnographic research, she demonstrates the lack of

regard the older generation of *basij* have for younger cadres, viewing them as opportunists milking the advantages that their membership in the force gives them, rather than as true patriots who would put their lives on the line for Iran and Iranians. Indeed, sacrificing their lives is something that the older generation of *basij* like Mr. Hosseini did in the Iran–Iraq war, and yet the newer generation, much better aligned with conservative forces who are not interested in the more reformist—one might even say, humanist—tendencies of the older generation considers them too soft and sidelines them in their projects. In a candid moment, Mr. Hosseini says the older generation is embarrassed by the new generation, adding, "Basijis used to stem from the people. […] But what they did this past summer [2009 Green Movement] was disgusting. They turned everyone against us" (p. 34). During the Green Movement, which was the largest protest movement since the revolution thirty years prior, *basijis* took to the streets with batons, chains and guns and beat up, and in some cases killed, demonstrators.

The reframing of who is cast as a regime insider is a theme that runs through the book. Some of the most interesting discussion happens in Chapter 3, which—not incidentally—has the richest ethnographic description. Mr. Hosseini invites Bajoghli to what is described as an unprecedented event, the screening of an independent, politically contentious film in the presence of pro-regime journalists as well as the filmmaker. The new feature is Mohsen Amir-Yousefi's *Ashghalha-ye Dust-dashtani* (Lovable Garbage) about the 2009 fallout. Mr. Hosseini engineered this meeting to create a bridge between two presumed irreconcilable sides, the regime insiders (*khodi*) and outsiders (*ghey-re khodi*), to see whether engaging pro-regime media early in a critical film's publicity could curb its oppositional cachet. What unfolds in the revealing post-screening discussion is the core of the pro-regime media makers' messaging dilemma: although they are in positions of formal power, they feel that it is their narrative that is ignored. They have political power but no cultural capital, because they are propped up by a government that many view as morally corrupt. As Bajoghli concludes, these producers ultimately fail to "expand the revolutionary collective they fear is shrinking" (p. 82). But why is it that these producers and regime politicians higher up are unable to do what it takes to widen the inner circle? Wouldn't such a widening in the end increase the chances of regime survival? What is it about the ideology, history, political trajectory, and leaders of the Islamic Republic that spins the inner circle into an ever smaller one, despite the recognition that this presents a crisis of legitimacy? These are questions that others have theorized about, but it would be revealing to consider them through Bajoghli's ethnographic material, something that she might choose to tend to in future publications.

State media producers' efforts to enlarge the circle of "*khodis*" (insiders) via manipulative media strategies are then explored in Chapters 4 and 5. In the latter, Bajoghli illustrates the fascinating process through which pro-regime media producers attempt to recast the Revolutionary Guard as defenders of Iran and Iranian nationalism, rather than Islam. Here she discusses the foregrounding of the Persian (as opposed to Arab) Gulf, a rare issue that unites Iranians of all political persuasions, and names the example of rapper Amir Tataloo's collaboration with the Guards toward the production of the 2015 track "Nuclear Energy." Unlike the other examples that Bajoghli cites, where pro-regime media makers are producing within their own circles, the star of this particular track is the quintessential *ghey-re khodi* (outsider), a tattooed rapper who up until that point had sung mostly about girls and parties. And this throws open some important questions, namely *how* pro-regime producers managed to co-opt a rapper like Tataloo, and what this tells us about both the coercive powers of the state as well as the compromised realities of "independent" artists, and the fluidity of positionalities. Tataloo has been an intriguing and important trickster figure in the cultural arena of the Islamic Republic, and the processes that Bajoghli narrates present fruitful grounds for further research.

At 119 pages, *Iran Reframed* packs a punch and is more revealing than some works twice the length. And the concision certainly feels intentional, perhaps a strategic—and laudable—choice to make this book more palatable to a general readership. However, this makes for some aborted discussions and certain lacunae. Aside from the questions already raised, the subject of women within pro-regime media circles receives almost no treatment. Considering that these producers actively try to create content that speaks to a large segment of Iranians—by employing the kinds of strategies that Bajoghli describes in Chapters 4 and 5, such as cooptation of underground stylistic elements or the projection of nationalist as opposed to religious messaging—how do they deal with the representation of women, if at all? And this query is likely linked to a central question asked above, namely what it is that hinders pro-regime actors from

widening the inner circle and enlarging the pro-regime collectivity they so desperately seek? In an instructive section at the end of Chapter 5, Bajoghli narrates the nationalizing regime discourse and publicity that transforms General Qasem Soleimani—before the United States assassinated him in January 2020—into a national hero admired by insiders and outsiders. In banners that the state has produced since the targeted killing to garner national support for the regime, we see an inclusive representation of women with various kinds of hijab, which is part and parcel of the nationalist discourse that Bajoghli describes. Given the important question of the representation of women, one wonders what kinds of discussions and decisions were underway in the very circles that Bajoghli studies that ultimately coalesced into the visuals that we see now, and what, if any, was the role of women producers in these processes?

These questions aside, *Iran Reframed* is an important book not just in the study of post-revolutionary Iranian culture and media, but post-revolutionary Iran at large. It is groundbreaking in identifying and presenting in a concise volume important processes that have taken place within the Islamic Republic's revolutionary project and its dynamic mediascape—especially since the 2009 protests. Most importantly perhaps, as the book's title suggests, it reframes the reader's understanding of Iran by shifting the focus away from a tired state–society analysis to the dynamic power struggles within the core of pro-regime actors as they define and redefine the revolutionary project and their own roles within it.

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Heritage and the Cultural Struggle for Palestine. Chiara De Cesari, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019). Pp. 269. $90.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781503600515

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Heritage is often used in policy and public discourse as a given: consider the frequent use of terms such as "heritage policy," "cultural heritage," and "heritage and preservation" by national and international NGOs and funding bodies. Yet, as many scholars have attested, heritage is a complex and contested terrain where history, memory, governmentality, and culture intertwine in multiple ways. Heritage can be as much about protection as about erasure; it can be as much about respect and intergenerational connectivity as about violence, disdain, or appropriation. The political complexity of "heritage," and at times, its practical impossibility, is particularly acute in contexts of conquest, domination, and control—as is the case of those living (surviving, resisting, striving) under settler colonialism. This is why Chiara De Cesari's *Heritage and the Cultural Struggle for Palestine* is an illuminating study, useful for both a better understanding of life and struggles in Palestine, and for a broader discussion of the politics of heritage. The book offers a detailed account of Palestinian "heritage," as a form of knowledge, as an inspiration for resistance, as a technology of state making, as a glue that can bind civil society, and as a form of governance.

Within the field of memory and preservation, one of the challenges in writing about heritage is that it is very easy to slip into a monolithic definition of "culture" to be documented, preserved, and passed on "as is"; often forgetting how the notions of culture or cultural legacy can be operationalized, adopted into political agendas, or dismissed. It is easy to forget that only some forms of material culture come to be valued (as are their bearers); and it is just as easy to forget that supporting heritage and preservation through donor funding, grants, and recognition is not enough, when political infrastructure is under constant attack, and when the materiality of culture is continuously destroyed. However, when the analysis of heritage is positioned within the scholarship and deep political understanding of settler colonialism, the scene becomes clear: politicide, we are reminded, takes many shapes and forms, and has many devastating consequences.