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Kaveh Askari, Anne Demy-Geroe, and Golbarg Rekabtalaei.[4] Happily, Shams's attention to the political economy of official poetry speaks to these works and proves the relevance of her scholarship beyond literary studies.

Of course, it is normal for any groundbreaking book to come with some limitations, and *A Revolution in Rhyme* is no exception. Shams's analysis of official poetry is exhaustive and thorough, but it tends to observe state-sanctioned poets in a vacuum, especially with respect to other movements in contemporary Persian poetry. Undoubtedly, word restrictions and other publishing concerns limited Shams's ability to put the official poets in more direct conversation with the so-called independent poets. Nevertheless, the tight focus on official poetry holds it peripheral to, or at least separate from, the broader landscape of contemporary Persian poetry. Establishing a rigid distinction between official poetry and other forms of poetry also does not account for those poets who operate in between these different modes, especially a figure like Saffarzadeh, who has earned acclaim among scholars and critics both inside and outside of Iran.

On a similar note, Shams's main mode of analysis is close reading of the poems of state-sanctioned authors. This approach yields insightful results, as we come to understand the major concerns and styles of official poets. However, such a topic also might be explored using a more diverse set of sources and methodologies. In some instances, Shams does include archival research and interviews to bolster her findings. More of these kinds of sources would expand the scope of her work and enrich our understanding of the book's topic. Ultimately I list these limitations not as criticisms but rather as opportunities for future generations of scholars to build off of Shams's remarkable scholarship—and they certainly will.

Although *A Revolution in Rhyme* is Shams's first monograph, it is a mature work. She has developed a fine-tuned vocabulary to discuss an important but also challenging tradition of poetry. I took great delight in reading this book; I am confident that scores of other scholars, students, translators, and poetry lovers will too.

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Iranian Music and Popular Entertainment: From Motrebi to Losanjelesi and Beyond

G. J. Breyley and Sasan Fatemi. London: Routledge, 2016. 202 pp., ISBN: 9780815358084 pbk, 9780415575126 hbk

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The very title of this book is refreshing: both *motrebi* and *losanjelesi* have pejorative connotations for the average Iranian music-lover, and so putting these terms in the title signals a most welcome reevaluation of conventional wisdom. Although classical Persian music has received, deservedly, much academic attention on the part of musicologists and cultural historians, popular music has been much less studied. Moreover, the studies we do have tend to concentrate on recent decades; Iranian hip-hop has proven to be far more attractive as an object of scholarly inquiry than the fondly remembered *bandari* songs of Nematollah Aghasi.

[4] Kaveh Askari, *Relaying Cinema in Midcentury Iran: Material Cultures in Transit* (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming); Anne Demy-Geroe, *Iranian National Cinema: The Interaction of Policy, Genre, Funding and Reception* (London: Routledge, 2020); Golbarg Rekabtalaei, *Iranian Cosmopolitanism: A Cinematic History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

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Fully half the book, four chapters out of eight, is devoted to the *motreb*s, the musical entertainers of traditional urban society. Using written sources as well as interviews with the last remaining *motreb*s, the authors piece together a narrative that covers the social background of both the musicians and their audiences. It turns out that within the *motreb* milieu hierarchies existed that determined who played what and for whom. The discussion of the musicians' repertoire contained in chapter 3, amply illustrated with musical examples, is of particular interest to musicologists. One insight to be drawn from the four chapters devoted to *motreb*s is that their lifeworld was not static. Musical styles evolved, attempts were made to engage with popular European music, the violin replaced the *kamāncheh*, and performance settings changed with time: from private parties the musicians moved to the cafés of Lālehzār Street in central Tehran.

A puzzling absence in this long discussion of *motreb*s is any reference to the fact that so many of them were Jewish. To be sure, it is impossible for a scholar based in Iran, and very difficult for one based in Australia, to travel to Israel to interview elderly Iranian *motreb*s who have moved there, but the information contained in the publications of Alain Chaoulli and Houman Sarshar might have been drawn upon to round out the picture.[1] There are enough indications in the book that the authors harbor no personal animus toward non-Muslim Iranians, and so one wonders, with sadness, whether this omission might reflect an extraterritorial reach of official Iranian sensitivities that begets prudent self-censorship.

Chapter 5 takes us to the realm of "popular music," which, we learn, is everywhere "intrinsically linked to the development of the middle classes and particularly to the market economy, mass production and mass media" (p. 82). Using Carlos Vega's suggestive term "mesomusic" ("a musical category straddling classical and folk categories" p. 83), the authors trace the evolution of first the *tasnif* and then the *tarāneh* from the nineteenth century to the 1950s. *Tasnif*s were composed by common people, aristocrats, *motreb*s, and court musicians, and this chapter provides fascinating examples of the lyrics set to music over the decades. Oddly enough, *tasnif*s of the Constitutional Revolution, such as those composed and sung by Aref Qazvini, are left out of the discussion. Although this reviewer's article on that topic is included in the bibliography, he is not so vain as to conclude that the authors consider it the last word on the subject!

Chapter 6 is devoted to the 1960s and 1970s, when different genres, ranging from the less to the more European-influenced, coexisted. Radio and television brought the music of Iran's pop stars to the homes of all those who wished to listen to it—but one might point out that many Iranians did not wish to partake of that pleasure; numerous were those who refused to have a radio or television set in their house. The post-1979 puritanism that drove most pop stars to Los Angeles and silenced those who stayed had its roots precisely in the 1960s and 1970s, when official policy promoted artistic activities that met with the hostility of the pious.

Chapter 7 takes us to Los Angeles, and chapter 8 back to Iran. These chapters discuss some of the artists who have made a name for themselves since the 1980s. The emphasis is on texts, and one wishes more attention had been given to the purely musical aspects of their productions. A number of key figures are not mentioned, nor is any attention paid to the recording industry and its impact on listening habits. On the whole, the first five chapters of the book are more satisfying than the last three. Perhaps the authors are simply less passionate about recent developments.

The book is on the whole well and carefully researched and presented. There are, however, two minor problems: often a colloquial term occurring in a song's lyrics is transliterated without the written form of the word being given. For example, a reader unfamiliar with the various registers of the Persian language might be hard-pressed to find the word

[1] Alain Chaoulli, *Les musiciens juifs en Iran aux XIXe et XXe siècles* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006); Alain Chaoulli, *Les Juifs d'Iran à travers leurs musiciens* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012); Houman Sarshar, "Judeo-Persian Communities ix: Music (1)," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, XV/2, 2012, 160–63, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/judeo-persian-xi-1-a-general-survey-of-persian-jewish-music.

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gulleh (p. 8, for *goluleh*, lit. bullet) in a dictionary. Also, for a coauthored book the authorial "I" occurs far too often. None of these flaws detract from the value of this erudite and well-written book, which I read in one sitting.

Finally, it is only fair to mention Anthony Shay's extraordinary sixteen-page foreword. Far more than a "foreword," this text is in fact a rich and encyclopedic introduction to the study of Iranian music. It is a reflection of Shay's generosity, also acknowledged by the book's authors, that he put so much effort into his exordial text.

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Television and the Afghan Culture Wars: Brought to You by Foreigners, Warlords, and Activists. Wazhmah Osman, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2020

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In the past few decades, scholars of Media Studies have de-provincialized perspectives from the Global South and expanded the scope of theoretical and methodological contributions to the field. Scholars of Afghanistan Studies also have contributed new insights that challenge colonial and neocolonial discourses of the country as tribal and isolated, and instead showcase Afghan engagements with global flows of knowledge and information exchange across space and time. Wazhmah Osman's pioneering scholarship places Afghanistan within the analytical framework of both fields. It reveals how a televisual cultural arena shaped by local and global forces serves as a significant ideational space for critical discussions surrounding issues of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and healing in the post-9/11 era. As an original ethnographic study of television in Afghanistan, this work challenges paternalistic narratives of development by redirecting the global dialogue about Afghanistan to Afghans themselves.

Osman's main argument is that Afghan media producers have provided a platform for local reform, activism, and indigenous modernities to flourish and thus have the potential "to underwrite democracy, national integration, and peace" (p. 3). Even though media producers face a broad range of national and international constraints intended to control their cultural production, they continue to meet the needs and expectations of a traumatized Afghan public interested in content that provides a counterbalance to the government, "warlords," and foreign interests. Amid these culture wars—broadly described as cultural contestations inspired by the media alongside the political economies that sustain them—Osman places questions of gender and sexuality at the center of her study. Moving beyond the well-critiqued depiction of Afghan women through the lens of Western media, Osman decisively examines *Afghan* representations of Afghan women in the media as producers, actors, and consumers. In her critical but sensitive portrait, her study offers an exploration of how Afghans assert their political claims through local cultural contestations that give way to collective action, social movements, and self-representation (pp. 5–6). The result is a crucial and engaging reflection of television's usage and power in a media world that is at once fragile and viable, fractured and vibrant.

The book's six chapters guide the reader through the cultural topography of Afghanistan via its mediascape, placing postcolonial critique, gender, and ethnicity as core tenants. A historical overview of twentieth-century reforms and nation-building projects initiated by the British, Russians, and Americans sets the tone for later discussions regarding international

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