

Rather than a simple trumping of religion over nationalism, contemporary national governance and nationalist ideological dynamics in Turkey represent the more complex and ambiguous interplay between religion and nationalism, and religious and nationalist attachments, that these studies emphasize. An engagement with this critical literature on the relationship of the nation state to religion, and the religious nationalism theoretical framework would have therefore enriched the book's analysis of the continuing transformations of Turkish nationalism under AKP rule—and thereby enabled a theoretically richer and more accurate account of the role of religion and religious attachments in contemporary Turkish politics.

REZA ZIA EBRAHIMI, *The Emergence of Iranian Nationalism: Race and the Politics of Dislocation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016). Pp. 312. \$60.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780231175760

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It is rare that an academic study centrally concerned with a 19th-century discourse is so urgently relevant to contemporary intellectual and political debates. Reza Zia Ebrahimi's first monograph is just such a work. Zia Ebrahimi uncovers the modern European roots of one of the most dogged and exasperating myths of Iranian nationalism: the racialist notion of an originary and uncontaminated Iranian Aryanness. While it may surprise those unfamiliar with popular Iranian nationalisms to learn that such an obvious vestige of 19th-century European race thinking still forms an essential foundation of so many Iranian self-identities, those familiar with Iranian intellectual currents will immediately recognize the object of Ebrahimi's ire: the persistent belief among millions of Iranians both inside and outside of that country that they are part of a discrete and identifiable racial category known as "Aryans," and that as such they share more essential attributes with Europeans than with their closest neighbors, Arabs (i.e., "Semites") or Turks.

Zia Ebrahimi argues that the Aryan myth is the core precept of what he terms Iranian "dislocative nationalism." This nationalism is dislocative because it imagines Iran's setting in Asia to be an "accident of geography"—an assertion once famously made by Mohammad Reza Pahlavi—believing instead that Iran is better understood as European in essence. Elevating the pre-Islamic past (coded as "Aryan") at the expense of the Islamic present (coded as "Semitic"), dislocative nationalism shares characteristics with other nationalisms insofar as it mines ancient myth-history and recasts it in service of a contemporary project. But, also like other nationalisms, dislocative nationalism and the geographic sleight of hand at its core are the work of a decidedly modern ideology "without any antecedent before the late nineteenth century" (p. 3).

Zia Ebrahimi argues that the Aryan myth is born of 19th-century European racial, historical, and linguistic theories, and that its acceptance in Iranian political debates is shaped by what he calls "the traumatic discovery of the European 'other'" by Iranian intellectuals (p. 19). Rather than being a revival of an ancient form of racialized belonging, dislocative nationalism is a discursive solution to a contemporary problem perceived by modern Iranian thinkers: Iran's weakness vis-à-vis the European powers. The trauma of European imperial ascendancy, Zia Ebrahimi argues, produced the conditions of possibility for European historicism's influence on Iranian thinkers at the expense of other modes of historical thinking, such as Islamic universalism and Persianate dynastic historiography. Through this racialist influence (in the form of texts such as John Malcolm's influential 1815 work *The History of Persia*), the Iranian Aryan emerged for certain Iranian intellectuals as the proper subject of Volkish national history. It is this protonationalist discourse, Zia Ebrahimi argues, that is the forerunner to the popular understanding of Iran as an Aryan nation.

At the heart of Zia Ebrahimi's study are close readings of two 19th-century nationalist intellectuals he credits with formulating dislocative nationalism, Fath'ali Akhundzadeh and Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani. These two names should be familiar to any student of modern Iranian thought, as both are widely championed as founding fathers of Iranian nationalism and modernist reformism. Zia Ebrahimi challenges this sanguine understanding of Akhundzadeh and Kermani, however, showing readers that their written work largely consists of diagnosing Iranian backwardness as a condition born of Arab/Islamic contagion. While other scholars have noted and sometimes criticized Akhundzadeh and Kermani's demonization of Arabs and Islam and the whitewashing of Iran's pre-Islamic past, Zia Ebrahimi's intervention goes further than to simply point out these 19th-century writers' dubious racist logic. Writing against a nationalist tendency in Iranian historiography that folds these thinkers into a singular story of Iranian modernism, Zia Ebrahimi argues that Akhundzadeh's and Kermani's works should be read as distinct from Qajar-era legal reformism and Mossadeghian civic nationalism. As several scholars of modern Iranian political history have noted, the concept of legality was exceedingly important to reformers in the late Qajar era (see, e.g., Hadi Enayat, *Hadi. Law, State, and Society in Modern Iran, 1906–1941* [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013]; and Cyrus Schayegh, *Who Is Knowledgeable Is Strong* [Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2009]). For instance, Zia Ebrahimi notes that Malkum Khan, a key 19th-century champion of legal reform in Qajar Iran didn't dwell on race as a political problem, and instead focused his project on state reform and the rule of law in terms and language that remained race neutral. This distinction is crucial for Zia Ebrahimi, because it wrests Akhundzadeh and Kermani out of the lineage of legal reformism and the politics of constitutionalism. In fact, Zia Ebrahimi argues, it is only in the aftermath of the failed constitutional era that dislocative nationalism finds itself ascendant in Iranian political discourses through its promotion as a central ideological tenet of the centralizing Pahlavi state.

In his discussion of Akhundzadeh and Kermani, Zia Ebrahimi credits historian Fereydon Adamiyat (1920–2008) with popularizing the reading of these two thinkers as reformist champions. Adamiyat, a giant among modern Iranian scholars, has long enjoyed far-reaching influence in Iranian intellectual circles, so much so that it would not be an exaggeration to say that virtually every scholar of modern Iran has read and referenced Adamiyat at some point in his or her career. Zia Ebrahimi notes that, tellingly, most of the secondary literature on Akhundzadeh and Kermani references only Adamiyat's well-known biographies of each man, rather than critically engaging with the original texts. While he concedes that this lack of close study is a failing of later scholars and cannot be blamed on Adamiyat, Zia Ebrahimi doesn't stop short of critiquing the old master. He notes that Adamiyat both underplays the racist foundation of Akhundzadeh's and Kermani's works—for instance, Adamiyat spends only a scant few pages on Kermani's obsession with the negative impact of Arabs and Islam—while occasionally revealing his own antipathy towards Turks and Arabs. Rather than contextualize Akhundzadeh's and Kermani's intellectual legacies and their relationship to romantic European nationalisms, Adamiyat's biographies serve to lionize the two men and to credit them with a foundational role in Iran's national awakening. Zia Ebrahimi's critique is a significant one. Adamiyat retains outsized influence among many Iranian intellectuals even today—particularly those working outside of the Western academy—despite innumerable scholarly critiques of the nationalist telos to which Adamiyat's work often succumbs.

The promotion of the Aryan myth reached its zenith during the Pahlavi era, during which state policies officially championed what Zia Ebrahimi terms an “archaistic frenzy” and an obsession with pre-Islamic Persianate tropes. Policies such as linguistic purification, Reza Shah's open flirtation with Nazism, and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's ill-fated 2,500 years of Persian Empire celebration are part of the same nationalist logic. While providing convincing evidence of the influence of the Aryan myth and the logic of dislocation to the above, Zia Ebrahimi misses an opportunity to consider the similarities or differences between the Iranian project of linguistic

(or cultural) purification and similar projects in Turkey and elsewhere; in contexts *without* a “dislocative” Aryan myth, what were the forces driving these reform programs?

Although the Aryan myth is largely associated with forms of popular politics that are opposed to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the central fiction of dislocative nationalism is today so steeped in Iranian political culture that it has enjoyed promotion by no less a figure than former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who once boasted about a shared Aryan lineage to European leaders. Incredibly, given the race-based obsessions of so many Iranian nationalist intellectuals, Zia Ebrahimi’s is the first major study on Iranian nationalism that has race and race thinking as a central object of critical inquiry. By bringing together so many disparate examples of the Aryan myth, and by charting the rise of the discourse of dislocation, Zia Ebrahimi has revealed the centrality of race thinking to Iranian intellectual discourses, issuing a much-needed challenge to a field that has largely ignored the question of race.

For his part, Zia Ebrahimi makes his political predilections clear in his appeals to the liberal ideals of Iranian legal reformers and civic nationalists. He is quite right to point out that the legacies of 19th-century liberalism and constitutionalism on the one hand and romantic nationalism and race thinking on the other hand have often been at odds, the latter leading to decidedly illiberal movements such as fascism and even Nazism. Still, it is essential to note that the history of liberalism is not without complicity in race thinking or the project of empire, as innumerable critical race scholars of European, American, and postcolonial contexts have long pointed out (see for just a few examples, Uday Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999]; Anupama Rao, *The Caste Question* [San Francisco, Calif.: University of California Press, 2009]; and Falguni A. Sheth, *Toward a Political Philosophy of Race* [New York: State University of New York Press, 2009]). In other words, while Zia Ebrahimi is right in taking dislocative nationalism to task in challenging its Enlightenment credentials, I would caution him from assuming that Enlightenment discourses offer a path out of Iran’s current predicament; after all, liberalism and race thinking have been historically enmeshed for as long as they have been historically antagonistic. Still, it is my hope that this vital and meticulously researched book will serve as a challenge to scholars in Iranian studies and to Iranian intellectuals in general to more meaningfully engage with transnational critical race theories, rather than letting racist Iranian discourses continue to circulate without remark.

AUDREY TRUSCHKE, *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016). Pp. 384. \$60.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780231173629

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In his *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), Marshall Hodgson remarks of that civilization that it failed to retain and cultivate the pre-Islamic “lettered traditions” of the region of its earliest emergence. Literacy in Aramaic, Syriac, and Pahlavi was entirely displaced by Arabic and Persian, and Muslims largely ceased to read pre-Islamic texts in their original languages. By contrast, major religiopolitical transformations in other civilizations did not lead to the demise of literacy in Greek, Sanskrit, and Chinese, respectively, but entailed their continued cultivation among elites. In a sense, Audrey Truschke’s *Culture of Encounters* complicates Hodgson’s thesis by arguing that, from around 1550 to 1650, Sanskrit texts were constitutive of imperial Mughal self-understanding and that such involvement with the central Mughal court led in turn to innovations in Sanskrit poetry and history by the Brahman and Jain