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how some names preserved Qajar titles or honorifics now forbidden by law. It also discusses state measures to enforce the law.

The chapters regarding traditional and modern naming practices provide, in a way, a guide to Iran's social stratification in the late Qajar and early Pahlavi period. Illustrating the significance and origins of titles and honorifics can assist the non-Iranian scholar in navigating the personalities, positions, and professions of the higher strata of Iranian society. These chapters also provide explanations for phenomena such as the inflation of honorary titles under the late Qajars; the incompatibility of many important *Olamas*' familiar names (most notably Khomeini) with their "official" family names; the existence of brothers with different family names; and the fact that women often preserved their maiden name rather than adopt their husbands' family name, as required by law.

This book is a valuable and interesting reading for scholars and students of modern Iran, those interested in state-building processes in semi-colonial settings, and readers interested in the meanings behind Iranian family names.

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Women Write Iran: Nostalgia and Human Rights from the Diaspora. Nima Naghibi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016). Pp. 211 (paperback). ISBN 978-0816683840

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Nostalgia is the foundational motif in Nima Naghibi's latest work, *Women Write Iran: Nostalgia and Human Rights from the Diaspora*. Nostalgic longing for a prerevolutionary Iran threads together autobiographical works of the author's study. Surveying various mediums and genres like social media posts, human rights testimonials, documentary films, prison memoirs, and graphic memoirs, Naghibi deftly explores diasporic works that examine the relationship between autobiographical protagonists and a changing postrevolutionary Iran. By focusing on the contemporary memoir boom, Naghibi evaluates texts that have thrived in the diaspora; she even recuperates texts previously ignored or neglected by the public and literary scholars alike. To highlight this nostalgic longing for home, Naghibi surveys Iranian works produced after the 1979 revolution that look back at prerevolutionary life, as opposed to works that focus on post–9/11 revived hostilities and geopolitics. Identifying Iranian diasporic writers consumed with nostalgia, she argues, "*the return . . .* is the fantasy, *not* the departure; for them there is little romance in being elsewhere" (9, Naghibi's emphasis). In that vein, she asserts that her mission is to expand notions of Iranian identity and longing for home that were first discussed in Zohreh T. Sullivan's well-known *Exiled Memories: Stories of Iranian Diaspora*, published in 2001 (14). Indeed, in this well-researched and well-written exploration of Iranian women diasporic writers, Naghibi engagingly explores Iranian diasporic writing, particularly as it relates to the power of nostalgia and how it can transform perceptions of both past and present.

To begin, Naghibi wastes no time wading into controversial waters. As a focal point of her explorations in chapter 1, "Claiming Neda," she examines the way in which the death of Neda Agha-Soltan during the 2009 Green Movement in Iran was documented and disseminated, particularly across social media platforms. Naghibi identifies how Iranians, particularly those abroad, adopted Agha-Soltan as a martyr for their own traumatic experiences resulting in loss of home and cause for relocation following the 1979 revolution. Using the Islamic

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Republic's own proclivity for employing martyrdom as a motif, Iranians (whether in Iran or abroad) quickly co-opted this methodology, and martyrized Agha-Soltan in collective memory. For Naghibi, it is not a case of who is justified in their grief, but rather the ways in which grief, particularly national grief, is claimed, felt, and disseminated among Iranians. Naghibi's discussion is insightful and clever as she explores affective responses from the Iranian diasporic community in relation to the disturbing recording of Agha-Soltan's tragic death-by-sniper. Naghibi also warns us that this type of affect can result in writing the life story that readers and observers project onto subjects-turned-objects, as opposed to authentically receiving a life story.

After such an explosive opening, it seems only fitting that Naghibi takes on a charged genre like prison memoirs in her next chapter, "Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Empathic Witnessing: Prison Memoirs." Despite the distressing subject of the chapter, this is one of the most absorbing explorations in *Women Write Iran*, due to Naghibi's complex discussion of Iranian prison memoirs and the way in which she incorporates Gillian Whitlock's notion of testimonial disclosure from *Postcolonial Life Narratives: Testimonial Transactions* (2015). Naghibi's meditations on prison narratives, such as Camelia Entekhabi-Fard's *Camelia, Save Yourself by Telling the Truth* (2007), Zarah Ghahramani's *My Life as a Traitor* (2008), Haleh Esfandiari's *My Prison, My Home: One Woman's Story of Captivity in Iran* (2010), Roxana Saberi's *Between Two Worlds: My Life and Captivity in Iran* (2010), and Shahla Talebi's *Ghosts of Revolution: Rekindled Memories of Imprisonment in Iran* (2011), provide an evaluation of Iranian women's prison narratives that balance personal distress with humanitarian narratological disclosure. In this chapter, Naghibi explores the difficulty of narrativizing trauma and the problematics of witnessing it from the reader's perspective. Naghibi poses a critical question, "How, then, do we engage with testimonial literatures, with stories of suffering, without reproducing inequities between compassionate readers and differently constituted subjects of suffering?" (64). As an answer, she presents Talebi's *Ghosts of Revolution* (2011), which offers a sobering yet moving account of pre- and postrevolutionary Iran and the political imprisonments and mass executions that followed 1979. Talebi's memoir, Naghibi concludes, creates affective reader response in true testimonial fashion, recalling political and physical suffering in responsible, ethical, and moving ways.

In her third chapter, "Feeling Nostalgic, Feeling Guilty: Remembering Iran in Documentary Film," Naghibi evaluates three documentaries as a source of nostalgia for Iranians abroad: Golkou Parhizgar's *Round-Trip* (2010), and Nahid Persson Sarvestani's *My Stolen Revolution* (2013) and *The Queen and I* (2008). Most notably, her review of the latter offers some closure for those who observed an unlikely friendship unfold on film between Sarvestani, a former communist revolutionary, and Farah Diba, the former queen of Iran. This pairing of an odd couple, or what Naghibi rightfully calls political "caricatures," shows the power of nostalgia, and how an intense desire to return home can bring the unlikeliest of political counterparts together (85). Grief and loss, two emotions deeply felt and communally expressed in Iranian culture, are the threads that bind together "the queen and someone who fought to remove her from her power" (87). This chapter intriguingly explores the way in which each documentary discusses themes of nostalgic longing for Iran, guilt for leaving one's homeland, and empathy for those who were left behind.

Continuing her focus on nostalgia and memory, Naghibi explores familial dynamics and storytelling in her penultimate chapter, "Repetitions of the Past: Marjane Satrapi and Intergenerational Memory." Exploring Satrapi's oeuvre, Naghibi focuses on the way in which multiple generations, in particular the women of Satrapi's family, discuss, exchange, and preserve stories expressing trauma and nostalgia in works like *Embroideries* (2005), *Chicken with Plums* (2006), and the more famous *Persepolis* series (2003 and 2004). Her chapter not only provides new arguments about Satrapi's beloved comics, but also provides literary scholars with their own nostalgic return to these beautifully complex works. Rather than create a chapter that exhaustively surveys Satrapi's work, however, Naghibi closely reads just a few frames that show the way in which characters from each work explore their relationship to the personal and collective traumas of the 1953 Mossadegh coup and the 1979 revolution.

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In her fifth and final chapter, "Revolution, Nostalgia, and Memory in Diasporic Iranian Memoirs," Naghibi focuses on Iranian contributions to North American diasporic writing via narratives exclusively about the 1979 Iranian Revolution, its aftermath, and "nostalgic longing" for home (9). Although she evaluates other texts throughout this chapter, Naghibi uses Gelareh Asayesh's *Saffron Sky: A Life Between Iran and America* (1999) and Tara Bahrampour's *To See and See Again: A Life in Iran and America* (1999) to delineate Iranian women's reflections on the 1979 revolution and the loss of home. In particular, she discusses the way in which these writers move through their memory and trauma via life writing practices. What will interest life writing scholars in this chapter is Naghibi's diligent incorporation of Gillian Whitlock's *Soft Weapons: Autobiographies in Transit* (2007) to discuss contrasting memoirs that serve as propaganda for neo-imperial interventions in the Middle East. Without specifying it directly, she seems to reference the noted critique of Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003) by Hamid Dabashi in his piece titled "Native Informers and the Making of Empire" (2006), in which he underscores her sociopolitical exaggerations about Iranian society in postrevolutionary Tehran.[1] Bearing these arguments in mind, Naghibi tactfully acknowledges Dabashi's point before offering an alternative perspective that recuperates such works: instead, they are examples of cultural artifacts displaying nostalgic longing for a prerevolutionary Iran (132). Throughout this chapter, Naghibi argues that a "painful longing" to return to Iran caused by the rupture of the revolution links Iranian diasporic writers, since they cannot help but look back at what once was and, finally, what may never be again.

What I appreciate about Naghibi's meditative study is its focus on nostalgia as a theme that ties together autobiographical works across diverse mediums. Naghibi's arguments are both tactful and clever, particularly in light of the complexity of the works she undertakes. Insightful and knowledgeable, but nevertheless accessible to nonacademic readers, Naghibi's text thoughtfully surveys many Iranian women's life works that previously have been ignored or cast aside. Ultimately, Naghibi concludes with three very pointed questions to her readers: "Which narratives do we choose to engage with? Which narratives do we allow to affect us and which ones do we choose to ignore?" (169). In *Women Write Iran*, Naghibi's analysis allows scholars, Iranians, immigrants, and others to reevaluate their own relationship to home, as they contemplate their positionality in their new host country.

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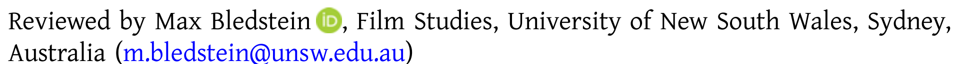
ReFocus: The Films of Rakhshan Banietemad. Maryam Ghorbankarimi (ed.) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021). ISBN 978-1474477635 (eBook), 265 pp.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Although scholarship on most if not all national film traditions has been auteurist in nature, research on Iranian cinema has been especially focused on the work of a few filmmakers. Unsurprisingly, this literature includes multiple monographs dedicated to Abbas

[1] Though Naghibi does not explicitly mention Dabashi's assessment of Nafisi here, she alludes to it when she mentions how scholars of Iranian studies have critiqued texts (like Nafisi's) that offer a "a Western imperial gaze, by offering readers a glimpse in the presumably" forbidden "world beneath the veil." (Naghibi 131; c.f. Nafisi, Azar. 2003. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. New York: Random House; Dabashi, Hamid. 2006. "Native Informers and the Making of the American Empire." *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 797, June 1. https://www.meforum.org/campus-watch/10542/native-informers-and-the-making-of-the-american).

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