

sovereign state requiring the expulsion of ethnic minorities who are not recognized as citizens. Are these examples of Orientalism or the universal unfolding of Hegelian logic in which the Orient had no history via Marx's concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production? Western academics have labored over 'Islamophobia' as a contemporary validation of Said's thesis, following its definition in 1997 by the Runnymede Trust as fear of Muslims, while remaining largely silent about the genocidal logic of state formation in contemporary Asia. The critique of modern knowledge has therefore to extend well beyond the confines of Western reason.

ARSHIN ADIB-MOGHADDAM, *Psycho-Nationalism: Global Thought, Iranian Imaginations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). Pp. 170. \$26.00 paper. ISBN: 9781108435703

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Arshin Adib-Moghaddam's *Psycho-Nationalism* is not based on primary research. Nor does it contain new empirical information. Rather, it is a synthesis of previous works about nationalism in general and Iranian history, culture, and identity in particular. In it, as befits a book series on "the global Middle East," the author seeks to explore the social inculcation of Iranian nationalism by the state since the early modern period by situating this process within a global context.

Most of the luminaries that have transformed our understanding of nationalism since the 1980s and have taught us that it is a modern construct rather than a perennial phenomenon—e.g., Ernest Gellner, Anthony Smith, Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm—appear in *Psycho-Nationalism*. Yet author Arshin Adib-Moghaddam seems to be particularly inspired by Hobsbawm's now classic *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, which first appeared in 1990 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). In fact, Adib-Moghaddam's main thesis, as I will elaborate below, is an expansion of one of Hobsbawm's main arguments—namely, that the (modern) state preceded and was indispensable to shaping nationalist consciousness, and not, as nationalist teleology would have us believe, the other way around. Only by taking over the organs and institutions of the state, as Hobsbawm explained, could political elites proceed to engage in the exercise of "social engineering" to nationalize the past in their own image and to manipulate the public to love and loyalty to the nation.

It is this kind of social engineering by the state in Iranian history, mostly (but not exclusively) during the Pahlavi and the Islamic republican eras, that Adib-Moghaddam explores in his book. Two comments are in order here. First, the author renders these state exercises in social engineering as "psycho-nationalism," to which I will return below; and second, Hobsbawm (like most other scholars of nationalism cited in the reviewed book) views nationalism as a European invention, an invention that eventually radiated to the rest of the world (albeit in deficient forms). Adib-Moghaddam, on the other hand, denies "the denial of coevalness" and considers nationalism a global phenomenon, which evolved simultaneously in many parts of the world since the early modern period. Consequently, his main goal is to demonstrate the extent to which pre- and

post-1979 Iranian nationalism “speaks to nationalism studies throughout the world” (p. 3).

The author should be highly commended for this intervention, for two main reasons. For one, with the exception of a very few cases (see below), scholarship rarely engages with nationalisms in “the East” (or the Global South) as yardsticks for gauging nationalism on a global scale. Secondly (and relatedly), despite the barrage of studies published since 1979 which demonstrated the compatibility of the post-revolutionary Iranian state with nationalist identity, “the country is [still] wrongly assumed to be quintessentially Islamic, Shi’a, Persian or other” (p.3). The author concedes that nationalism is not a benevolent project—it is hardly “a recipe for democracy, pluralism and social empowerment” (p. 23), he asserts. However, by situating Iran’s on an equal footing with xenophobic, exclusionary and divisive nationalisms now rampant, for example, in European countries, Israel, Turkey, Russia and the United States, Adib-Moghaddam paradoxically takes us one step closer to recovering Iran from its assumed radical alterity.

What then does the author mean exactly by the term “psycho-nationalism,” besides being “forms of political manipulation” by the state (p. 2)? According to the author, it:

fosters intolerance and hate towards those who do not belong to [the “imagined community”]. . . . [It] is about “othering.” It is about delineating the community . . . from the ones who are not thought to be part of it due to racial, linguistic, ethnic or other reasons . . . [And it is a form of] narcissism . . . . The followers of the community. . . are thought to be purer, greater, and superior to those who are outside of the group who become the objects of psycho-nationalist control (p. 14).

As elsewhere, in Iran, too, this form of manipulation involved a state-choreographed project of reading the “nation” anachronistically. Hence, for example, in late Qajar and Pahlavi Iran, Ferdowsi’s 10th-century *Shahnameh* was reinvented as a source of Iranian national identity. The last Pahlavi shah, in particular, hammered in on this literary work to link his legitimacy to the rulers of pre-Islamic Iran and to emphasize Iran’s Aryan (read European) identity and its utter difference to the “Semitic” Arabs. This manipulation has been so powerful that even the current clerical leaders of the Islamic Republic “repeatedly reignited the country’s pre-Islamic past as a source of identity” (p. 35).

According to Adib-Moghaddam, in addition to clinging to Iran’s pre-Islamic past, the Islamic Republic of Iran has formulated its own “psycho-nationalist hubris” (p. 89), by distorting, among other things, Jalal al-e Ahmad and Ali Shari’ati’s Islamic vision of “global justice and equality” (p. 59). In this scheme of things, Khomeini was “first and foremost interested in fortifying the sovereignty and legitimacy of the (nation)-state which would have the prerogative to be a pan-Islamic example for the Muslim world—[but] Iran came first” (p. 61). Compared to Khomeini’s revolutionary stamina, charismatic leadership, and religious credentials, the current Supreme Leader, Khamenei, “seems more like the technocratic CEO of a hyperactive multinational company” (p. 115). This has transformed Iran into an increasingly secularized space. Still, under Khamenei—“a pragmatist ‘prefect’ of Khomeini” (p. 89)—the psycho-nationalist imageries of Iranian politics have been cemented and even perfected.

Adib-Moghaddam is well aware that nationalism is a highly contested arena, and that state-produced psycho-nationalisms, wherever they operate, are invariably subject to counter-hegemonic narratives and discourses. The same goes for modern Iranian history—it is replete with instances of “‘psycho-therapeutic’ resistance” (p. 125), which

run against the grain of the state's psycho-nationalist partitions, enclosures, and exclusions. Sometimes, this resistance brings out Iran's cosmopolitanism, diversity, and multiculturalism, in defiance of the stringent ethno-centric and linguistic norms dictated by psycho-nationalist discourses. A case in point is the "Indo-Iranian dialectic" (p. 69), which shows the extent to which Indian and Iranian identities have been mutually constitutive (a fact that was continuously repressed by various internal and external forces since the 19th century). At other times, this resistance was centered on the question of freedom, "which has been at the heart of the Iranian quest for democracy, human rights and pluralism for over a century now" (p. 125). From Jamal al-Din al-Afghani in the 19th century, to Mehdi Bazargan, Mahmoud Taleqani, Abdolkarim Soroush, Mohsen Kadivar and Hasan Eshkevari in the 20th and 21st centuries—these and other Iranian thinkers visualized an "Islamic-democratic polity" (p. 137), "an authentic Iranian order that would be accountable to the people and independent of the dictates of external powers" (p. 130). Yet, to the author's mind, the ultimate "psycho-therapeutic' resistance" to the oppressive and restrictive forms of Iranian psycho-nationalism would be "sexing the nation." This entails the endeavor to excavate Iran's cultural treasures which contain a rich repertoire of anti-heteronormative patriarchal traditions. Hence, Adib-Moghaddam's vision for Iranian identity is trans-sexuality: "the nation in this interpretive tradition comes out as a powerful 'transvestite', rather than a weak subject" (p. 150).

I have two principal reservations with the book. First, although it is almost purely interpretive in nature, involving a claim to novel conceptualizations, the author would have made a clearer argument had he not been drawn to jargonizing. The social sciences provide a plethora of conceptualizations of nationalisms which the author could put to use, without the need to lean on terms such as "psycho-nationalism" and "psycho-therapeutic' resistance," which seem to me redundant. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, absent from the book are those post-1980s studies that have questioned modernist, Eurocentric understandings of nationalism and offered sophisticated analyses of colonial and postcolonial *non-Western* nationalisms. Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Peter van der Veer, and Talal Asad are just a few names that come to mind. Their analyses sometimes anticipate Adib-Moghaddam's interpretations of Iranian nationalism, and at other times these analyses complement them.

That said, *Psycho-Nationalism* is a long-overdue first-of-a-kind look at Iranian nationalism within the context of global thought. The work addresses and demonstrates the need for more critical analyses of modern non-Western nationalisms within the exciting field of global history.

NEGUIN YAVARI, *The Future of Iran's Past: Nizam al-Mulk Remembered* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). Pp. 275. \$50.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780190855109

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Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092), born Abu 'Ali Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Tusi, served as vizier in the court of the Seljuq Sultan Alp Arslan (r. 1063–72) first, and of his son Malik Shah