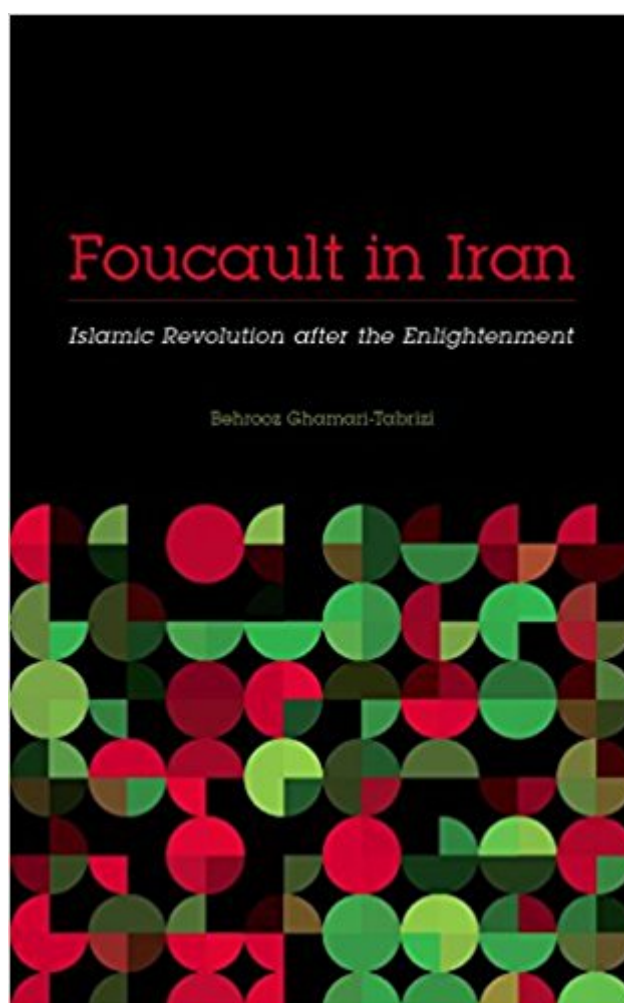


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Foucault In Iran: Islamic Revolution After The Enlightenment (Muslim International)



Synopsis

Were the thirteen essays Michel Foucault wrote in 1978–1979 endorsing the Iranian Revolution an aberration of his earlier work or an inevitable pitfall of his stance on Enlightenment rationality, as critics have long alleged? Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi argues that the critics are wrong. He declares that Foucault recognized that Iranians were at a threshold and were considering if it were possible to think of dignity, justice, and liberty outside the cognitive maps and principles of the European Enlightenment. Foucault in Iran centers not only on the significance of the great thinker's writings on the revolution but also on the profound mark the event left on his later lectures on ethics, spirituality, and fearless speech. Contemporary events since 9/11, the War on Terror, and the Arab Uprisings have made Foucault's essays on the Iranian Revolution more relevant than ever. Ghamari-Tabrizi illustrates how Foucault saw in the revolution an instance of his antiteleological philosophy: here was an event that did not fit into the normative progressive discourses of history. What attracted him to the Iranian Revolution was precisely its ambiguity. Theoretically sophisticated and empirically rich, this interdisciplinary work will spark a lively debate in its insistence that what informed Foucault's writing was not an effort to understand Islamism but, rather, his conviction that Enlightenment rationality has not closed the gate of unknown possibilities for human societies.

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"Foucault in Iran is a courageous and thought-provoking invitation to understand the Iranian revolution, and Foucault's reaction to it, in an original way. A splendid work that goes beyond simple binaries, it has no sympathy for the clichéd vocabulary used by Progressivists to describe these events or to criticize Foucault for his alleged romanticisation of the Iranian revolution." • Talal Asad, City University of New York "Foucault in Iran is absorbing and integral. Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi deftly situates his analysis within the currents of the protest movements that galvanized Iranians across wide ideological, economic, and class spectrums." • Nasrin Rahimieh, University of California, Irvine "Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi shows that the Iranian revolutionary movement was a socio-political source of creativity with historical significance. Foucault in Iran is a devastating critique of self-righteous Enlightenment rationality, and a must-read for anyone interested in Iranian political history, revolutionary action, and Foucault's later writings." • Babak Rahimi, University of California, San Diego "Through a meticulous presentation of events, reading, and engagement with Foucault's reportage, and the subsequent critiques of his writings on the topic, Foucault in Iran marvelously recaptures the unfolding unpredictability of the events and brings out vividly how this was a revolution without a known script, even to its participants." • Afsaneh Najmabadi, Harvard University "This book presents an intimate portrait of the events and conditions that led to the revolution, coupled with a fascinating account of Foucault's engagement with that moment. Historically rich and theoretically nuanced, Foucault in Iran advances a scathing critique of previous works on this subject that charged Foucault with having endorsed Islamist violence by supporting the revolution. This book offers a more complicated reading of Foucault's views on the revolution that disrupts binaries like secular/Islamist while also providing a riveting analysis on questions of time, history, and revolution." • New Books Network "Highly recommended, not only as a counter to Afary and Anderson (and many like-minded detractors of Foucault), but for all interested in Foucault's work in general." • CHOICE "Foucault in Iran is not simply a good work or even a brave one, it is a thoroughly necessary exemplar of contemporary academia. Every book should be this good." • Hong Kong Review of Books "An exemplary book for our time." • SCTIW Reviews

Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi is associate professor of history, sociology, and Director of Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of *Islam and Dissent in Postrevolutionary Iran*; *Remembering Akbar: Inside the Iranian Revolution*; and co-editor of *The Iranian Revolution Turns 30*.

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