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sequent relocation to New Julfa near Isfahan. The macroeconomic framework of Herzig's analysis seems convincing and points in several suggestive directions for future research on the economic roles of minorities in Safavid Iran. Herzig discusses this minority community in the context of the larger societies and regions in which it existed, offering a model of how to integrate the history of ethnic and religious minorities into the overall history of the era.

Willem Floor assesses the concrete dimensions of this silk trade from the European perspective through detailed analysis of Dutch East India Company records. He echoes Herzig in documenting the Iranian silk boom of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but also shows how Iran was in some ways only a temporary way station in a larger process of the expansion of the trade farther east to the even cheaper silk of Bengal and China. This migration of silk sources farther east is a trend noted by both Herzig and Floor that needs extensive further analysis, given the dire economic and political consequences for Iran of forfeiting a large part of its silk export market to India by the eighteenth century.

Taken as a whole, these papers offer significant new insights in diverse areas of Safavid studies. The main desire would be to see even more new work showcased here, particularly from seminal projects of Safavid literary criticism now being undertaken by various scholars. The task of examining Iran's Safavid past remains immense. However, a developing critical mass of fresh research will soon provide the basis for updated general accounts of the period. In this regard, the demand for new comprehensive histories of the era will only increase as scholarship progresses.

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Torture and Modernity: Self, Society and State in Modern Iran, Darius M. Rejali, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994, xviii + 289 pp.

In *Torture and Modernity*, political scientist Darius Rejali not only attempts to shed light on the problem of torture, methods of punishment, and social discipline in Iran, he also offers a theoretical discussion of the relationship between torture and modernity. The book takes into account one of the most important aspects of Iranian social life which has long been neglected by Iranian academics. In addition to the author's admirable precision, what adds to the importance of this book lies in his testing the weaknesses as well as the strengths of various theoretical approaches to torture. Rejali carefully scrutinizes the ideas of Nietzsche and Foucault, the philosophers whose writings provide him with theories and methodologies. This not only enables Rejali to utilize the ideas of these two outstanding critics of modernity within a useful and workable theory, it also provides him with an opportunity to refine these theories such that he can offer a general theoretical account for the study of torture. To this end, the author offers a comprehensive genealogy of torture and discipline in the last two centuries in Iran.

The author's approach to the problem of torture is reminiscent of Foucault's in his landmark *Discipline and Punish* in that he believes that torture needs to

be analysed within its context. Hence, Rejali makes a key distinction between “classical torture” and “modern torture” at the beginning of his discussion: having emerged in Iran by the end of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722), classical torture is distinguished by the confrontation of the society as a whole with the tortured in public places such as the town-square, bazaar, or in front of the city gates. This type of torture involves using traditional and religious methods of agonizing. According to Rejali, classical torture no longer exists; it is now replaced by modern torture, which takes place in isolation—in camps, prisons, and barracks. Even such methods of punishment as public flogging or execution in the Islamic Republic that resemble classical torture do not undermine this general rule, because, unlike classical torture, modern torture is “clinical,” not “ritual.” Modern torture is always associated with utilizing the latest findings in medicine, engineering, psychology, and physiology (p. 13). It is governed by a new principle of punishment that is not so much preoccupied with punishing the body as it is with the victim’s life (p. 2). The aim of modern torture is to inflict harm on the victim’s consciousness through the application of specific methods of corporeal tormenting. In other words, modern torture aims at the psyche of the condemned, although it is usually performed through bodily harm to its subject (p. 14).

Rejali identifies ritualism as the most important feature of torture under the Qajar dynasty (1790-1925): punishing the condemned in this period always took place in the eyes of the public. Nietzsche specified in *On the Genealogy of Morals* that humans were never gratified creating a memory of themselves without appealing to torture, sanguinary procedures, and sacrifices. “Pain is the most powerful aid to mnemonics,” he wrote. Rejali’s analysis of classical torture in the Qajar period verifies Nietzsche’s postulation. A significant aspect of Rejali’s work lies in his attention to some peculiar characteristics of Iranian culture such as *ta’āruf* (politeness, often verging on flattery) and *ṣafā-yi bāṭin* (interior purity) in his analysis of punishment in Iran. Presenting some historical accounts, the author illustrates how such culturally-specific concepts could either worsen or alleviate the process of torture. He then concludes that torture was ideally a semi-voluntary task (p. 22), since punishing the condemned symbolized a normalizing process through which power maintains homogeneity and purity of the dominant moral paradigm that was violated and endangered by the convict’s “criminal” act. Hence, the condemned should have, ideally speaking, realized the evil of his act and accepted the punishment as a way of purifying his soul.

The two attempts at Nasser al-Din Shah’s life—the first made in 1852 by the Babi converts and the second in 1896 by Mirza Reza Kermani which cost the Shah his life—provide the author with instances to illustrate how in a fifty-year period Iranian society had undergone major socio-structural changes: whereas the Babis were subjected to a painful and prolonged execution, Mirza Reza’s life was ended by a quick death on the gallows. Rejali, then, argues that methods of punishment in Iran were qualitatively transformed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, by which time punishment had become disciplinary punishment, marking a shift towards a disciplinary society. Here, Rejali seems to overlook the fact that the Babis were declared by Shi‘i ulama as a dangerous threat to Islam, and thus, the reason behind the long and sanguinary death of the Babi assassins was their very belonging to this subversive heretic religion.

Mirza Reza's act, on the contrary, was sanctioned by a prominent dissident religious leader of the time, Sayyid Jamal al-Din Afghani.

The introduction of the modern Western military marked the beginning of a shift toward modernity in Iran. The society became increasingly preoccupied with the ideas of discipline and order as the quickest way of accomplishing progress and increasing efficiency in all layers of social life. It is in this context that the foundation of *Dār al-Funūn* (House of Techniques) as the first modern, quasi-militarized educational institution in Iran finds importance. Soon, a quasi-military form of discipline permeated the spreading modern educational institutions, finding expression in manners like wearing uniforms, standing in queues, and chanting in schools. This idea of discipline also penetrated the institution of the family, and issues such as the protection of children from "outsiders" as well as an excessive concern for the child's health became a permanent obsession of the modern, urban Iranian parent. The author implies that the stress on the protection and health of children, which is a fruit of the Enlightenment, paradoxically resulted in the reinforcement of the traditional Iranian double standard with respect to the issue of virginity among boys and girls. This indicates how a culture incorporates a modern idea into its own traditional paradigm (p. 80).

Rejali refutes the widespread Marxist view that a shift towards a disciplinary society was a precondition for the accumulation of capital in Iran (p. 44). He argues that discipline and torture were not employed as means of increasing production; in fact, what happened was quite the opposite. In many instances, SAVAK agents (the Iranian secret police during the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah) became labor spokespersons and confronted employers in many cases (p. 101). According to the author, torture persisted in the new Iranian society because the elements that encouraged its use existed in the fabric of Iranian culture and society. Torture is an extreme method of stabilizing a specific type of social behavior regarded as "normal behavior." It is indeed compatible with a disciplinary society for they both serve to normalize the citizen's social behavior. Therefore, Rejali concludes, "resistances to torture... were not merely struggles against the state but also rebellions against forms of rationalization" (p. 79).

Modern torture deprives the subject of his or her most elementary ability—that is, maintaining control over his or her own body. It turns the body of the victim into the scene of an extra-corporeal power play. In this respect, Rejali writes along the lines developed by Foucault who singled out the interconnectedness of power and knowledge. Rejali asserts that regardless of its origins, modern torture soon became a relatively autonomous social institution available to any new regime. *À la* Foucault, he also argues that penitential institutions create the means of resisting punishment and torture within themselves: exchanging their prison experiences and taking care of one another, prisoners try to counterbalance the effects of torture (p. 117). In such instances, Rejali seems to be far too influenced by Foucault's panopticism, a concept that originated with Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), a British political philosopher who proposed a grand architectural project for building panoptic prisons, hospitals, asylums, and schools. Foucault argues that the ideal of modern rational thought was to create a panoptic society where, by erasing its discursive location, power became invisible, and thus omnipresent. In such a society, the subjects of power involuntarily take on the role of power-enforcer over themselves: "the perfection of power should tend to render

its actual exercise unnecessary," Foucault concludes. The project of panopticon, however, was only an ambitious proposal that never really materialized. Foucault did not pay attention to the fact that no discourse can be either perfect or immune to the infiltration and intrusion of other discourses. It is in such instances that Foucault's ideas seem to neglect the factors that lead to social change. That the structure of prison creates the means of resisting it, as Rejali argues (p. 117), stems from the fact that the discourse of prison is never perfectly complete, and it is continuously intruded on by discourses and knowledges of the prisoners.

The author believes that one of the elements that encouraged the extensive use of torture under the Islamic Republic was the Islamic pragmatist doctrine of *zarūrat* ("the doctrine of overriding necessity") which allows a temporary abandonment of Islamic laws in times when such laws might endanger the very existence of the community. According to the author, this explains why the day after gaining power, the leaders of the revolution resorted to torture, despite their condemnation of torture as a heritage of the corrupt Iranian monarchy and even despite the fact that many of them were subjected to torture themselves in the prisons of the shah. The author writes that in spite of his initial expectation, changes in the methods of punishment did not follow the political transformation. That is to say, new regimes do not bring with them new ways of punishment. To the contrary, new methods of punishment or techniques of torture are invented in times of relative political stability when the rulers have the luxury of time and resources to develop them. The constitutional movement of 1905-11, Reza Shah's seizure of power in 1921, and the Islamic Revolution of 1979 prove that when new regimes gain power after political crises, they try to ensure their stability in the shortest possible time by resorting to the older techniques of the *ancien régime* which have already proved their effectiveness (p. 135-36). It is in such analyses, where the author alludes to the dialectics of stability and change, that, despite the admitted influence of Foucault on his theory and method (p. 139), Rejali indeed adds to Foucauldian ideas.

According to Rejali, the persistence of torture in our world is indicative of the rational projects of modernity: politics is ideally founded on "human trust," yet since the aim of modernity is the enhancement of efficiency in a homogeneous manner, human trust in the hands of reformist politicians has turned into "functional trust," and the human role has thus lost its significance in this process. Consequently, torture—which is paradoxically an extremely costly and troublesome process—has become one symptomatic manifestation of modern rationalization, in addition to market and discipline. Despite its claims of serving humanity, the project of modernity has just used humans as a means of accomplishing its own ambitious goals (p. 159).

The study of torture, as any other discourse, requires its own language; a language that is able to reflect different aspects of it. The three major approaches to the problem of torture—the humanist approach (Hannah Arendt), the developmentalist approach (Samuel Huntington, Lucian Pye, Mancur Olson), the state terrorism approach (Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman)—lack the appropriate language for the analysis of the specific facets of torture. These approaches analyze the problem of torture using the languages of economy, politics, and so on. The weakness of the fourth approach, the Foucauldian one, lies in approaching such a problem by using theoretical frameworks that are specific to the

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Europe of past centuries. The problem of torture in Iran is in fact indicative of the process of making citizens asocial as well as apolitical. Thus, one of the main points of the book is to stress the relationship between torture and the rationalizing processes of the modernization of social life.

Torture and Modernity is indeed written with precision. Its very few errors in citing names or English equivalents of Persian words by no means detract from its value. The book is not only an indispensable work for scholars of Iran, it is useful for those researchers who study human rights, methods of control, suppression, discipline, and politics in our time.

Peyman Vahabzadeh