



Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism

By Janet Afary, Kevin B. Anderson

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In 1978, as the protests against the Shah of Iran reached their zenith, philosopher Michel Foucault was working as a special correspondent for *Corriere della Sera* and *le Nouvel Observateur*. During his little-known stint as a journalist, Foucault traveled to Iran, met with leaders like Ayatollah Khomeini, and wrote a series of articles on the revolution. *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution* is the first book-length analysis of these essays on Iran, the majority of which have never before appeared in English. Accompanying the analysis are annotated translations of the Iran writings in their entirety and the at times blistering responses from such contemporaneous critics as Middle East scholar Maxime Rodinson as well as comments on the revolution by feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir.

In this important and controversial account, Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson illuminate Foucault's support of the Islamist movement. They also show how Foucault's experiences in Iran contributed to a turning point in his thought, influencing his ideas on the Enlightenment, homosexuality, and his search for political spirituality. *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution* informs current discussion on the divisions that have reemerged among Western intellectuals over the response to radical Islamism after September 11. Foucault's provocative writings are thus essential for understanding the history and the future of the West's relationship with Iran and, more generally, to political Islam. In their examination of these journalistic pieces, Afary and Anderson offer a surprising glimpse into the mind of a celebrated thinker.

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Editorial Review

Review

"I am very impressed by the authors' clarity of thought, meticulousness of research, and important insights. Their book's originality lies in the way it links Foucault's main ideas to the Iranian revolution, thereby illuminating one through the other. The authors remind us of Foucault's immense influence on the dominant views in the current debates on Islamism and Iran."--Azar Nafisi, author of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (Azar Nafisi)

From the Inside Flap

Philosopher Michel Foucault was working as a special correspondent for "Corriere della Sera" and "Le Nouvel Observateur" in 1978 when the protests against the shah of Iran reached their zenith. During this little-known stint as a journalist, Foucault traveled to Iran, met with leaders like Ayatollah Khomeini, and wrote a series of articles on the revolution. "Foucault and the Iranian Revolution" is the first book-length analysis of these essays on Iran, the majority of which have never before appeared in English. These provocative writings, included here in their entirety as annotated translations, are essential for understanding the history and the future of the West's relationship with Iran and, more generally, to political Islam.

About the Author

Janet Afary is associate professor of history and women's studies at Purdue University. She is the author of *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906-1911*, and current president of the International Society for Iranian Studies. **Kevin B. Anderson** is associate professor of political science and sociology at Purdue University and the author of *Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism*.

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