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Woman Life Freedom and The Collapse of Iran’s Hypermasculine Governmentality

**Claudia Yaghoobi1**

*1University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA  
E-mail: yaghoobi@email.unc.edu*

**Abstract**

This article examines the enduring struggle of Iranian women for their rights, with a focus on their assertion of presence in public spaces historically designed to exclude them. Over the past decade, the Internet and digital media have become pivotal tools for these movements, enabling campaigns such as #GirlsOfRevolutionStreet, #MeToo, #MahsaAmini, and #WomanLifeFreedom to combat targeted violence and amplify voices of survivors. Tracing over four decades of feminist resistance, this article highlights how targeted violence has reinforced male privilege and patriarchal power while women’s movements have worked to dismantle these structures through public discourse and awareness. This analysis is further enriched by an exploration of Mohammad Rasoulof’s The Seed of the Sacred Fig, a film set against the backdrop of the Woman, Life, Freedom (WLF) movement. The film portrays the unraveling of patriarchal dominance in both public and private spheres and juxtaposes intergenerational tensions, feminist awakenings, and societal collapse, symbolizing the broader dynamics of Iranian gender politics and the disintegration of hypermasculine authority. The Seed of the Sacred Fig serves as a microcosm of Iranian gender culture, reflecting the interplay of tradition, resistance, and change.

**Keywords**

Iran, Woman Life Freedom, Rasoulof, hypermasculinity, governmentality

**Recent Publications:** Minimum 3 publications to be included (Not mandatory)

**Peer Reviewed Monographs**

2023 *Transnational Culture in the Iranian Armenian Diaspora.* Islamic and Middle East Studies: Diaspora and Transnationalism Series. Edinburgh University Press.

2020 *Temporary Marriage in Iran: Gender and Body Politics in Modern Persian Literature and Film.* Global Middle East Series. Cambridge University Press.

2017 *Subjectivity in ‘Attar, Persian Sufism, and European Mysticism.* Comparative Cultural Studies Series.Purdue University Press. (translated into Persian, 2021)

**Peer Reviewed Edited Volume**

2023 *The #MeToo Movement in Iran: Reporting Sexual Violence and Harassment*. edited Volume. Sex, Marriage and the Family in the Middle East series. IB Tauris/Bloomsbury Press.

**Biography** **(150 words limit)**

Claudia Yaghoobi is a Roshan Distinguished Professor of Persian Studies and serves as the director of the Center for the Middle East and Islamic Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Yaghoobi is a scholar of Iranian cultural studies, and gender and sexuality studies with a focus on the members of sexual, ethnic, and religious minoritized populations. Yaghoobi earned her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Feminist Studies from the University of California at Santa Barbara in 2013. Leveraging her extensive knowledge and expertise, she teaches diverse courses encompassing Iranian literature and culture, Middle Eastern literature, gender and sexuality, diaspora studies, and human rights. A true embodiment of her multifaced identity, Yaghoobi identifies as an Iranian Armenian American. Her research encapsulates the literary landscape of the Middle East, with an acute emphasis on Persian and Armenian literature. Particularly, she hones on the experiences of those who belong to sexual, ethnic, and religious minority groups, often positioned at the periphery of normative society. Through her academic inquiry, she delves into the nuanced intersections of liminality as they are expressed by authors, artists, and directors, who valiantly challenge and deconstruct prevailing social hegemonies.

**Presenting Author Details and Photo**

Full Name: Claudia Yaghoobi  
Email ID: yaghoobi@email.unc.edu  
Phone No: 818-531-8335

LinkedIn:

Twitter: n/a  
Recent Photograph:

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