

Fatemeh Shams. *A Revolution in Rhyme: Poetic Co-Option under the Islamic Republic*

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REFERENCES

Fateme Shams. *A Revolution in Rhyme: Poetic Co-Option under the Islamic Republic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021, 400p., ISBN : 9780198858829

- 1 In this ground-breaking monograph, Shams studies the role of poetry for the government of the Islamic republic by focusing on ten key official poets of the revolution. She analyses the evolving roles they played in instituting poetry as the most important cultural product for the post-revolutionary government. Shams also endeavours to study literary institutions like the *Howzeh-ye Honari*, as well as events like the poetry nights organised by Khomeini. Her study is both chronological, ending with the 2020s, and thematic. Themes include the war with Iraq and nostalgia for rural life. She succeeds in combining sociological reflexions on the intersection between literature and politics, to close readings of poems by official poets, especially those using classical forms like *ghazal* and *qasideh*. A strength of the book is that it studies the lineage between these poets and classical poets, and how official poets and the institutions working on the sphere have endeavoured to revivify literary traditions.
- 2 While these poems have often been denigrated for lacking in literary quality, they have an enormous impact on a large proportion of Iranian population, including school children, and it is not possible to simply ignore them. Shams thus takes on the challenge of studying them in a systematic and convincing way. It is a book that will be useful to anyone working on contemporary Iran, given the importance of poetry to the socio-political system, and a very welcome addition to the field of contemporary Iranian literature.

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