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Silenced and Stone: A Feminist Critique of Gendered Violence and Legal Injustice in The Stoning of Soraya M

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Abstract

The Stoning of Soraya M. vividly depicts systematic gender inequality in films, therefore highlighting the terrible reality experienced by women in patriarchal countries. Filmed from a feminist perspective, the movie questions the junction of legal inequity, gender-based violence, and the silence of women's voices. Tragically accused of adultery and put to public stoning, Soraya's tragedy reveals the misuse of judicial processes in patriarchal settings that devalues women's life and voices. The movie shows how gender-based violence functions as a weapon of societal control meant to silence and create fear in women as well as as a kind of punishment. It also emphasises the internalised sexism that keeps the cycle of oppression running as well as the cooperation of men and women in preserving these systems. Examining Soraya's social and economic condition, the study also looks at the intersectionality of her oppression and stresses the part cultural and religious deception plays in supporting patriarchal domination. Through emphasising Soraya's narrative and the act of resistance Zahra embodies, the film asks for a worldwide feminist reaction to destroy institutionalised sexism and guarantee justice for women everywhere.

Keywords: Feminist Critique, Gender-Based Violence, Legal Inequality, Systematic Oppression, Women's Voices, Internalised Misgyny, Public Stoning, Gender And Power Religious And Cultural Manipulation; Global Feminism.

The Stoning of Soraya M is an insightful and uncompromising description of systematic gender oppression, a clear monument to the terrible reality experienced by women in patriarchal countries, not just a movie depiction of a sad occurrence. Feminist criticism allows this picture to be a strong critique of the entwined forces of gender-based violence, legal inequity, and the covert silence of women. Soraya's horrific experience, false charge, and later public execution expose the ways in which patriarchal systems maintain power and highlight the immediate necessity of destroying institutionalised sexism.

At the core of Soraya's tragedy is a foundation of patriarchal authority and a very defective and controlled justice system. Using the system's innate prejudice against women to create false allegations of infidelity, her husband, Ali, gets out from under an unwelcome marriage. The basic disparity of justice is shown by the lack of due process, the uncritical acceptance of male evidence, and the complete contempt of Soraya's possible defence. This echoes a larger feminist criticism as judicial systems in patriarchal countries

are often created to favour male interests, therefore discounting women's voices and empowering them less.

Beyond Soraya's community, this systematic gender bias shows itself in many judicial systems all over where women are disproportionately penalised and their rights are subordinated. As the movie shows, gender-based violence serves as a deliberate weapon of societal control as much as a punitive one. Designed to instill fear and compel compliance among the female population, Soraya's public stoning is a spectacle of violence meant to silence any opposition and so reinforce the idea that women's autonomy is a dangerous transgression. Feminist thinkers like Judith Butler contend that gender is a performative performance and that such aggressive behaviours help to confirm. It needs to support the current power systems. UN studies show that Soraya's tragedy, modern reality with honour murders, and other types of gender-based violence are connected, therefore highlighting the worldwide character of this tyranny.

Maintaining patriarchal authority depends critically on women's being silenced. Soraya is denied the chance to defend herself throughout her suffering; her voice seems useless against the weight of masculine power. Even Zahra, the brave lady trying to reveal the truth, encounters constant opposition; her efforts are discounted and her voice is muffled. This systematic silence is not just a result of personal bias; it is an intentional tactic used by patriarchal systems to guarantee that women lack the ability to oppose their persecution. As Bell Hooks clarifies, patriarchal structures flourish on the marginalisation of women's voices, therefore prohibiting them from expressing their experiences and advocating justice.

The movie also clarifies the complicated mechanics of internalised sexism and complicity. Driven by fear, societal pressure, or well rooted patriarchal ideas, some women in the community actively cooperate as males plan Soraya's murder. According to Simone de Beauvoir, this complicity results from women internalising patriarchal conventions, therefore enabling agents of their subjugation. They are taught to police other women and to accept male authority, therefore extending a cycle of enslavement. Breaking this loop calls for education, solidarity, and empowerment to destroy internalised sexism, not just opposing male supremacy.

A potent critique of the systematic character of judicial injustice and gender-based violence, The Stoning of Soraya M. Beyond personal suffering, Soraya's narrative reminds us sharply of the continuous fight against patriarchal tyranny all around. Demanding immediate legislative and social changes to defend women's rights and destroy the systems supporting their subordination, it is a call to action. Remaining vital in ensuring that Soraya's destiny is not just a historical incident but also a catalyst for ongoing change is feminist activity supporting fair judicial systems, women's empowerment, the destruction of patriarchal conventions. The ghosts of her suppressed voice have to drive an unrelenting quest of justice so that no woman is ever once again stoned or silenced.

Building on the feminist criticism of "The Stoning of Soraya M." means exploring the many layers of power, agency, and resistance the film offers. It's important to recognise that Soraya's story is not unique; it speaks to the experiences of many women exposed to systematic oppression in many different cultural and geographic settings.

One important question to investigate is how religious and cultural interpretations could help to sustain gender disparity. Although the movie presents a particular cultural setting, it begs more general issues on how religious beliefs and cultural practices could be distorted to support patriarchal dominance. Many times, women's opinions and views are discounted or excluded while interpretations of religious books are selectively used to support male domination. Under the cover of cultural or religious validity, this selective application helps to justify legal discrimination based on gender and acts of violence.

The movie also emphasises how intersectionality of oppression works. Soraya's vulnerability comes from her social and financial situation as much as from her gender. Dependent on her husband and male relatives for survival, she is a lady from a remote, underdeveloped town. With many kinds of marginalisation supporting each other, this intersectionality emphasises the complicated ways in which power functions. To properly understand the dynamics of Soraya's oppression, a feminist perspective has to take these interacting elements into account.

The movie also invites us to consider agency in a very limited space. Although Soraya seems to be a passive victim, Zahra's account of her shows some resiliency and resistance. Zahra is a powerful act of resistance by standing witness and by refusing to allow Soraya's narrative to be deleted. This emphasises as weapons of resistance the use of narrative and storytelling. Zahra questions the prevalent patriarchal narrative by recovering Soraya's story and emphasises the need of women's voices.

Furthermore, one should examine closely the way the movie presents the male characters. Using his position to manage and influence others around him, Ali, the husband, reflects the sneaky character of patriarchal authority. The institutionalised sexism is shown by the male religious and community leaders who easily accept his charges and help Soraya to be executed. Their cooperation emphasises men's joint need to preserve patriarchal systems.

Furthermore taken into account in a feminist perspective should be the psychological effects of living under continuous danger of oppression and violence. The worry and terror that pervade the movie mirror the actual realities of many women exposed to patriarchal rule. Although it is often disregarded, this psychological component of oppression is very important in helping one to grasp the terrible consequences of gender-based violence.

The feminist criticism of the movie also comes from its visual and audible aspects. Soraya's story's emotional effect is enhanced viscerally by the starkness of the environment, sombre colour palette, and terrible stoning noises. These components express the sensation of isolation and vulnerability Soraya encounters, thereby enveloping the observer in the repressive environment of the hamlet.

Finally, *The Stoning of Soraya M.* is a very poignant and provocative movie that provides a strong prism through which feminist analysis may see. Through highlighting legal disparity, gender-based violence, and the silence of women, the video reveals the ingrained patriarchal structures allowing such injustices. Furthermore, it emphasises how men and women help to keep these repressive systems in place whether by active action or passive cooperation. The terrible destiny of Soraya is not just a single narrative from the past but also a sobering reminder of the continuous fight for justice and gender equality all around. A feminist strategy has to go beyond local problems and adopt a worldwide viewpoint and aggressively attack and destroy the structures that still subjugate women if significant change is to be produced.