



From Oppression to Resistance: Gender Discrimination in “Lipstick Under My Burkha” and “Provoked”

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Abstract

This essay presents an in-depth analysis of gender discrimination and female resistance as depicted in the biographical film ‘Provoked’ (2006) and the Indian film ‘Lipstick Under My Burkha’ (2016). Both narratives showcase the inherent oppression that women undergo within patriarchal societies, even as they belong to differing environs—namely, the modern city and country of India, as opposed to the South Asian diaspora settled within the United Kingdom. A discussion on how the societal perpetuation of a gender bias will be shaped, taking into consideration factors of societal mandates, financial reliance, sexual restraint, moral mandates, and spouse abuse will also be examined. In addition, it also aims at understanding how these women defy societal mandates against them as they strive to gain control.

Keyword:

Gender Discrimination, Female Resistance, Provoked, Lipstick Under My Burkha, Patriarchal Societies, Societal Mandates, Financial Reliance, Sexual Restraint, Moral Mandates, Spouse Abuse.

1. INTRODUCTION

The effort to create a more equal society and eliminate gender differences has not yet produced the desired results in South Asian countries including India where still patriarchal norms are dominant. Film, as an art form, reflects and at the same time breaks the prejudice. The two films Provoked and Lipstick Under My Burkha carry women's narratives, gender discrimination, and, ultimately, the claim to women's liberation. The present research will perform a detailed comparative study of the two films concerning their common themes of resistance and discrimination.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual frameworks of patriarchy, feminist film theory, intersectionality, and theories of agency are utilized for the analysis of the two films. Walby positions patriarchy as an institutionalized male dominance. The “male gaze” of Mulvey is used to analyze women's cinematic representation. Intersectionality of Crenshaw discloses the multi-dimensionality of gender discrimination where it overlaps with race, class, and immigration.

2. Literature Review

The major issue in the Research on Provoked is domestic violence in immigrant communities and the acceptance of the battered woman's syndrome, while the studies on Lipstick Under My Burkha point out its critique of sexual repression and moral policing. The critics highlight the courage of the film in exposing the women's inner world. The current article addresses a gap in the literature by presenting a comparative study of the two films.



Gender Discrimination in Lipstick Under My Burkha

The four main characters have to face different types of oppressions: 1. Controlling sexuality: Leela is reprimanded for wanting intimacy, Buaji's wants are mocked, and Rehana's behavior and dress are controlled. 2. Domestic gender roles: Shire has to endure marital rape and protect her husband. 3. Economic dependency: Shireen is not allowed to be financially independent and has to keep her job a secret. 4. Surveillance: Women are under constant observation and evaluation. 5. Psychological abuse: Submission is enforced through fear, shame, and guilt.

Gender Discrimination in Provoked

1. Kiranjit Ahluwalia's experiences reveal: 1. Domestic violence: She has to suffer physical and sexual abuse for years. 2. Cultural pressures: The fear of being discredited in marriage and loneliness of the immigrants. 3. Economic helplessness: She will not be able to escape if she is not financially independent. 4. Legal injustice: The prolonged abuse is at first punished without giving the recognition it deserves. 5. The deep psychological conditioning is shown in the trauma-heredity.

3. Comparative Analysis

Both films portray:

Every tale highlights the same points: -Awakening and self-discovery; -Group assistance—women supporting women; -Ruling out patriarchal values; -Regaining control and personhood; -Muteness considered a survival tactic and a showcase of compelled obedience at the same time; -Private areas as a place of power; -Women taking in and reflecting fear, guilt, and shame that society imposes on them.

From Oppression to Resistance Resistance occurs through:

1. Resistance takes place via:
 - Self-awareness—Recognizing one's suffering is the initial stage that leads to empowerment.
 - Solidarity—Support groups give rise to bravery.
 - Defiance—Women confront the norms and claim their liberty.
 - Legal and social acknowledgment—Provoked results in the court's recognition of domestic violence.
 - Reconstruction—Lipstick Under My Burkha closes with collective hope and renewal.
2. Discussion:

These films reveal that:

 - Women are often oppressed through very subtle yet very strong ways.
 - Gender bias has no borders and affects all classes and ages, and in every corner of the Earth.
 - Patriarchy varies, but the harm caused is similar.
 - Film is a crucial way to highlight and tackle gender inequality.

COMPETING INTERESTS:

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose. The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Conclusion

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