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Female Resistance in 'The Legend of Sigh'

Sarah AbdulRazak/Georgetown University

Hypothesis

- How does Sigh's messiah figure simultaneously embody the roles of both the patriarch and matriarch?
- What does the duality of Sigh's character inform us about women's social issues and their relations with society?

Methodology (Parallel theories)

Theory #1: Hamid Naficy's Realist Illusionist theory.

Theory #2: Carl Jung's mythological study on the 'Anima and Animus.'

The beginning of an end: Female versus the male nation

The paradox of Sigh in action:

- The patriarch controlling female emotions as a symbol of familial and national morality.
- The matriarch threatening masculine ideologies by using grief and suicide as a strategy of resistance.
- Who wins? The paternal trickster (Sigh) in disguise.
- Women's issues are 'too deep' for a resolution and hence, the war on resistance continues into other feminist films.

Who is Sigh?

Sigh's response:

"I was born when the first human heart suffered. Adam. He sighed when he was driven from paradise."

"I'm like a mirror in which you see your own self."

- Christ lookalike (religious icon)
- Mythical character from Azerbaijani legend (adapted into film as the psycho-politico figure)
- Paradoxical Messiah figure
- Religious and political icon
- Dual masculine/feminine guide
- Trickster: half divine, half human
- 'Wise-man persona'

Maryam: Rich, widow writer

- Major depressive on the brink of suicide.
- Lives alone as a widow in her mansion.
- In conflict with patriarchy.
- Sigh retains her modesty.

Solmaz: Rural Turkwoman

- Domestic and illiterate woman.
- Lives in a rural village with defined sex roles
- Desires an college education much to her husband's dismay
- Impotent husband suffering from an inferiority complex.
- Her only son dies in an accident

Rebellious Student

- A female intellectual: symbol of the 'westernized rebel'
- Studies Architecture: a traditional male field of study.
- Determined to succeed.
- The 'anti intellectual ideology' does not believe in legends and competes with Sigh.

Khatoon: Urban Housekeeper

- She runs the domestic household, both socially and financially.
- Husband is unemployed and runs away with all wages earned by her.
- Her power source: Financial income
- Her weakness: Losing control over money and contemplating suicide...-sigh!

Maryam: Poor, divorced writer

- Writing: struggle and resistance
- Lack of support from family & society
- Constantly pinned down by her brothers
- Sigh blocks her reflection in the mirror: symbol of patriarchal surveillance, where women are veiled from exploring their inner and outer self.