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## **Delineation of Trauma and Honor Killing in Souad's Burned Alive**

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### **Abstract:**

Research on honor killings is relevant across geographic and cultural barriers. Women, and occasionally men, are killed for the sake of honor in order to stop or correct behavior that is deemed to damage a family's reputation. Honor-related issues include a variety of violent crimes, including rape, murder, kidnapping, beatings, and forced marriages. Honor killing confirms that women are the protectors of familial honor, which appears to be acceptable in the concept of "honor." A true description of an honor killing was written by the victim herself in *Souad's Burned Alive*. Her brother-in-law set her ablaze because she committed the "crime" of having an extramarital relationship with the man she loved. Souad amazingly survived the savagery even though 70% of her body was burned; she was rescued by the villagers' ladies. Souad began a new life in Europe with an aid worker who loved and cared for her, giving her the support she needed to move past her past. This essay attempts to investigate the trauma-related effects of this inhumane practice from the subjective perspective of the victim. This essay attempts to demonstrate how the victim was mentally impacted and how traumatic experiences cause conflicts in the unconscious mind of the victim.

**Keywords:** trauma, inhuman, social violence, repercussion, honor killing.

### **Introduction:**

With tight ties to religion, honor killing is a controversial topic all across the world. Honor killing is a persistent practice that exists everywhere in the world. For men, honor is the capacity to maintain, and for women, it is the standard of their moral conduct, chastity, and virginity. Honor persists in the behavior of a particular group. Family honor is significantly influenced by women. The reputation of a woman's family in society might be damaged or enhanced by her simple behavioral

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features. The murder of a female member of a particular community or religious group who has disobeyed certain laws or traditions is referred to as an "honor killing" or "shame killing." Honor killings can occur for a variety of reasons, such as forced marriage, relationships with people from different communities, having sex before getting married, and divorce. Simple behavioral traits of a woman may harm or improve the reputation of her family in society. An "honor killing" or "shame killing" is the term used to describe the murder of a female member of a particular community or religious group who has defied certain laws or traditions.

Forced marriage, interactions with members of other communities, having sex before being married, and divorce are only a few of the causes of honor killings. Several oppression methods are employed depending on a person's location, regional culture, and socioeconomic status. In her memoir, Souad uses painful narratives to rebuild her past. When a survivor recounts their trauma, it is seen as a therapeutic technique because it "empowers survivors to gain more control over the traces left by trauma" (Brison 40). The story of Souad is filled with shattered pictures, jumbled memoirs, violent acts, and trauma that drove her to travel to Europe. Without crying or showing any sign of fear, Souad calmly shares a devastating narrative of his former existence, which will always weigh heavily on his heart. The narrative opens with the author's awful experience, which began when she was eighteen years old. "The day the flames devoured me, my memory was lost in the smoke, but I have tried to recreate what happened" (13). With the help of Shattered images, she is attempting to piece together her past in the second chapter. In trauma narratives, memory becomes important. Painful memories are hard to recall and have the propensity to change throughout the narration. She claims at the beginning of the narrative that her second life began at the tail end of 1970 in Europe. Her childhood, dislike of girls, and the way the community treated girls are all described in the second chapter of her memoir. At her home, she also incorporates gender discrimination in the way men treat women. She relived her horrific past as a victim, which left a deep hole in her psyche. As a young girl, she saw the killing of a newborn baby by her mother due to her dislike of young girls. One such occurrence stayed with her and led to catastrophic depression. Souad also has nightmares about her mother threatening to kill her with a knife in her hand. Another factor that continues to be a major effect in traumatic life is fear. Due to her looks from the burns on her body, the victim was unable to interact with society and avoided going to restaurants and swimming pools. Souad lost her skin while grieving her loss, in which "such losses are easily recognized because the absence of what was physically present signal a loss has taken place" (Figley 42). Her flaws and strengths are reflected in her skin, which also conveys her anger, resentment, social withdrawal, and worry about the outside world.

The memoir *Burned Alive* might be seen as a powerful window into the

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despair of girls who had the misfortune of being born into strict families in East Midland. Five sections make up the book's structure, each of which focuses on a different time in her life in the Midwest and Europe. Since that frenzied honor killing was widespread and accepted in the East Midlands, she made a contrast between the Middle Eastern region and Europe in her narrative. The reason for her premarital intercourse with a humanitarian worker is she was the victim of the heinous crime of honor killing. Because she had damaged their family's reputation, her brother-in-law Hussein tried to burn her alive. She unintentionally fled with the aid of a social worker named Jacqueline, who transported her to Switzerland. She had 24 surgeries and other brutally painful healing treatments despite the fact that she lived. She had culture shock when she moved to

A Western nation where women are allowed the freedom to live their lives as they choose. She observed female nurses conversing with males while donning short clothes and cosmetics. With her spouse and three children, she enjoyed her second stage of life. Souad was viewed as a powerful, independent lady who had managed to endure a difficult previous life.

Despite the melancholy tone of the book, Souad recounts how she was mistreated as a child; her story made her existence in Europe psychologically fragile. Souad's obsession with the terrible event's memories manifests in her dreams, flashbacks, and nightmares. According to the critic Shay,

Traumatic memory is not narrative rather, it is experience that occurs , either as full sensory replay of traumatic events in dreams of flashbacks, with all things seen, heard, smelled and felt intact, or as disconnected fragments. These fragments may be implacable rage, terror, uncontrollable, crying or disconnects body states and sensation (qtd. in Brinson 43).

Souad, a survivor of an honor killing, experienced several psychiatric depressions as a result of her illegal connection. Her skin was damaged in layers, causing excruciating burns and a difficult existence. She became an honor victim because of her love for Faiez, their extramarital relations, and subsequent pregnancy. Since she had denigrated the values of her family, she felt embarrassed of herself and thought of herself as a nasty girl. Although being illiterate, she was unable to defend herself and ultimately gave herself up to death. This memoir brilliantly depicts Souad's personal interactions as a result of her awareness that "woman" is a servant and "man" is a master who may win his independence rather than as a result of his own moral failing.

Souad's life is a journey from nothing to something to everything. As she ultimately adopts Marouan totally, her emotions of shame and inadequacy for having conceived and given birth to him diminish along this process. The reader ultimately has a really poignant experience as she feels at ease and connected to being a woman.

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When one Reads the book, it becomes clear that an illegal connection is not portrayed as a theological problem but rather as a social and psychological one.

Souad's early years suffered from gender discrimination, physical assault, and mental abuse, which contributed to her developing traumatic disorder. She describes a physical abuse episode involving her father in the second chapter. Her wonderful background and her mental instability are intertwined.

Throughout her life, she unintentionally came upon a photograph of a dead girl who had been strangled with a telephone cord, which brought back memories of the time her older sister was brutally murdered by her brother Assad when she was a youngster. One's mental health is negatively impacted by even little events.

As Souad transforms herself from the remnants of her own local culture into something more European, the readers may see her from an integrationist perspective. Her life in Europe was tranquil and joyful, but the memories of the past caused her psychological pain. Her horrible history and emotional instability are deeply connected to her previous existence. Her previous existence threatens to become a nightmare that frustrates and mentally sickens her. A nightmare is said to be the repetition of distressing imagery or pictures, which increases anxiety and panic. Even though she isolated herself from society, she still felt unworthy and valuable. Being the victim of an honor killing, Souad had to deal with awful situations in real life. Even though she had fled the violent society, she was unable to escape the memories of her past, which continue to terrorize and shock her to this day.

Trauma and the brain are related in that the former has an impact on the latter, which in turn causes depression. She tried to commit herself by taking sleeping pills as a result of this trauma. She also experiences shame, which causes her to evaluate herself and see herself as a flawed being. Her self-evaluation led her to agree with her mother's choice to give Souad a glass of poison. She accepts with disbelief and afterward hates herself for giving herself to a guy. Her scars and wounds made her assets

She creates a sense of hatred toward her life and behavior. She also blames herself by saying "I would endure the fate of all women who sully the honour of men" (169). She is unable to get past the terrible event as a result of her self-blame. She is subjected to a lot of psychological strain. Her kid, Marouan, serves as a constant reminder of her former behavior. Marouan is sent to her foster parents to be cared for so that she may avoid having to deal with him. She was in a different frame of mind when she began a new life in Europe, which enabled her to escape the trauma and loneliness.

Souad's entire existence illustrates the independence that every female ought to experience as an independent. Souad was fortunate enough to have escaped the harshness of her community, but there are many others who were impacted by and made a victim of honor killings. Through her early hardships, a reader might examine

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and comprehend the depth of the brutality in her book. There are connections between shattered pictures of violence, trauma, psychiatric depression, and memory. Souad's experience is a first-person account that wasn't told by a third party or a second witness. Only her lovely family members can help her overcome her psychological sadness. She developed an identity after traveling to Europe and was able to endure despite all of her physical and emotional agonies. She described how killing family members was a matter of land law and the craziness of honor. She, as a victim and survivor, mentioned that "in my Village, I am officially dead, I have been forgotten for a long time, but if I were to go back today they would try will to kill me a second time for the honor of my family. It's a law of the land" (111). She isolates herself from society and sees herself as something worthless and inferior. Merely denouncing the crime and organizing a demonstration won't stop such heinous actions. To cope with the eradication of crime against women, appropriate steps must be taken. Souad bravely raised the veil in opposition to Muslim society in the 1970s. She was able to recuperate from her physical injury, but she has a difficult time getting over her distorted memories and images, which puts psychological pressure on her. At the end of her memoir, she signed as somewhere in Europe and says

I have my life for the first time by forcing out my memory the things that were buried deepest. It was more challenging than a public testimony, and more painful than answering the children's questions. I hope that this book will travel in the world, that the men will not burn it (333).

The autobiography discusses the recollections of misery, grief, and suffering that serve as the spokesperson for many honor killing victims. Souad is successful in conveying the intensity and dread of the heinous deed. Each reader must assume the role of Souad in her story, and she compels them to consider what they would do if the same situation occurred to them. Only because her two girls and husband were in Europe did Souad manage to get over the flashbacks and dreams that brought back horrible incidents. Even she began to have nightmares about her spouse, who was standing in front of her while holding hands with another lady. These dreams are a result of her early experiences as a youngster. Trauma is defined as "a danger to life or physical integrity, or a close experience with violence and death" by American psychiatrist Judith Herman (qtd. in Horvitz 6). Even when they made mistakes, her father, brother, and other males were lauded for their behavior, and they were granted complete authority over the family's female members.

### **Conclusion**

Yet though they continue to happen often, honor murders remain a crime that receives little media attention. By all means, honor killings were committed by men. Young Souad, the protagonist of *Burned Alive*, had considerable anguish in many areas of her life and was repeatedly disciplined by male family members for making

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foolish mistakes. Since they accept physical violence as normal, beating women has become ubiquitous. Souad describes all of her struggles in her memoir, revealing the suffering of her life with her parents. In her community, young girls are typically treated more like slaves than like human.

Beings. In Palestine, domestic abuse of women develops into an ongoing problem. Although having witnessed amazing childhood moments, she was unable to go over the memories that are traumatising. The lives of victims must be saved, and a legal structure is required to address both physical and psychological violence against women. Honor killing is a cruel behavior, and it is often sparked by interlaced factors such as culture, religion, community, and women's chastity. Psychological trauma results from an emotional imbalance in the victim.

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