

Handout for: Bitterly Rhetorical: Terror in the Autobiography of Zainab Salbi

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Presentation Outline:

Introduction

Women's Suffering and Insights to Salbi's Autobiography

Situations to Explore:

1. **Terror and Oppression Were Imposed** (*included below*)
 - 1.1 Analysis
2. **Abusive Friendship and the Silenced Culture** (*included below*)
 - 2.2 Analysis

Conclusion

Works Cited (*included below*)

1. Terror and Oppression Were Imposed

In the autobiography Salbi displays a terrifying event she and her mother witness on TV. It reflects an abused political dimension. Hussein had called all government officials to join a meeting in an auditorium, and he made sure that all were present. However, no one knew the purpose of the meeting. He brings out an official to confess his plotting against Hussein, and to call out the names of those who participated with him in it. As the men are mentioned, guards fetch them from the audience and take them away to be executed. At the end, the terrorized audience stands to applaud Hussein (Salbi and Becklund 17).

2. Abusive Friendship and the Silenced Culture (*included below*)

Salbi shows how difficult it was to be friends with Hussein and orients us to the silent culture they embraced for the security of their lives, reflecting an abused cultural dimension. After Salbi's father became the private pilot, Hussein visited or invited the Salbis whenever he desired, including in the middle of the night, and he instructed them to invite as many people as possible (Salbi and Becklund 19). In these gatherings Hussein spoke of how "death would be the punishment for any friend who betrays a friend" (106), and all listened silently. Furthermore, Salbi explains that she could not show any reactions when she knew about Hussein's crimes in Iraq (117). Later, when Salbi becomes a beautiful young lady, her mother notices a nasty desire in Hussein towards her as he keeps staring at her one night while she is standing near the lake. Shortly after that, her mother marries her off to an Iraqi living in America, who turns out to be abusive. This fact is revealed when Salbi confronts her mother with what she had done to her (236-241).

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