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Resisting Cultural Hegemony in Nadia Murad's *The Last Girl*

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Resisting Cultural Hegemony in Nadia Murad’s *The Last Girl*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Anil Poudel has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research paper explores the resistance against Islamic cultural hegemony in Nadia Murad's semi-autobiographical novel The Last Girl (2017). Nadia, as a representative of the Yazidi community, delineates her traumatic experience of ISIS brutality and their cruel behavior toward her community in the name of religious transformation. Antonio Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony uncovers the text as the site of resistance for the Yazidi community against ISIS as the dominant group. Gramsci argues that the process of hegemony is led by the mainstream culture to shed light on its own cultural value upon the working class through their brutal acts. For this reason, the mainstream culture of Islam tries to flourish its own cultural branches with violence, killing, raping, and torturing. Moreover, Michael Foucault's notion of Truth, Power, and Knowledge ventures the text from the perspective of criticizing the false ideology made by ISIS as their ideology incorporates a false narrative to hegemonize Yazidis. Reading and analyzing biography, ISIS found to be expanding their religious propaganda to the Yazidi community as following the devil's path; this is how the power creates knowledge as real to disseminate their own cultural values. Similarly, Louis Althusser's notion of the Ideological States Apparatus excavates the text as a site of rioting for the Yazidi community against state-level policymakers as well as ISIS militants. In conclusion, the research finds that Nadia's biography is a record of resistance to cultural hegemony, an appeal for justice, existence and the pursuit of freedom for the Yazidi population in the Islamic state, conveying the message that hegemony is always resisted in one or the other way.

Keywords: *Culture, Hegemony, Resistance, Marginal voice, Existence*

Resisting Cultural Hegemony in Nadia Murad's *The Last Girl*

“Those who thought that by their cruelty they could silence her were wrong. Nadia Murad's spirit is not broken, and her voice will not be muted.”

-Clooney Amal

The above quote strongly indicates what the writing of Murad concentrates on. Clooney's quote of Nadia Murad's biographical text *The Last Girl: My Story of Captivity and My Fight* against Islamic State stands as a metaphor, asking for rights and justice for the entire Yezidi people. Apparently, its subtitle is provocative towards rebellious protest against Islamic state and its taboos. It shows from the beginning that the central character Nadia Murad revolts against Islamic cultural hegemony for Yezidis rights, freedom, equality, existence and culture. Moreover, the biographical novel revolves around the story of Nadia and her community resisting against an Islamic state hegemony. The author uncovers her experience in a deeply personal tone, which serves as the testament to her previous chapter of her life. Nadia says, “Yezidi in Kocho usually felt the impact of the violence by ISIS like the aftershocks of an earthquake” (46). In this sense, Nadia's work demonstrates resistance to mainstream culture's cultural control over marginal culture. The Yezidi community has been physically and psychologically subjugated by the dominant ISIS culture. As a result, Nadia retains her community's collective memories as well as her opposition to ISIS's ideology of erasing Yezidi identity.

Similarly, the biography of Nadia has captured the dreadful incident faced by her community to give justice for the entire Yezidi by revolting against unnecessary ideology carried by the Islamic principal and militant rumors about religion. Her work becomes a testimonial record of Yezidi history and the incident

happened in 2014. Moreover, Murad's biography demonstrates the historical context of the Yezidi persecution held in Northern Iraq by ISIS in August 2014. The inhumane incident attributed ISIS militants' chopping and killing of approximately 600 Yezidi including author's brothers and sisters. Apparently, Nadia did not succumb to her circumstances, rather resisted the Islamic code for Yezidi's safety in her biography. Yezidis are an ethnic group who used to live in the village of Kocho in Mount Sinjir. ISIS forces captured Yezidis, and they treats Yezidis as an animal because of their religious belief. Murad says "Islam considers Tawasi Malek, whom the minority group Yezidis used to worship, to be a devil."(53). Thus, this paper intends to explore how Nadia is resisting the Islamic code for Yezidi's safety in her biography. It further aims to discover the challenges faced by Yezidis people for their survival, struggle, oppression, and resistance across the motive of ISIS towards Yezidi's in Islamic State.

There are various reviews and research done on this text right after its publication. Some reviewers have examined Nadia Murad and Jenna Keajeski's *The Last Girl: My Story of Captivity and My Fight Against the Islamic State* and demonstrated their findings about the struggles Nadia endured as a member of the Yezidi community. For example, Intisar Rashid Khaleel and Iraq's Saif Ali Abbas article *Testimonial narrative of the unspeakable crimes in Nadia Murad's The Last Girl*, discusses the issues of ISIS kidnapped and enslaving Yezidi women because of Yezidi religious belief system. Nadia is revealing how the religious institution in the name of conversion dominate, exploit, rap, and kills the Yezidis people to conform them to the Islamic principle. This article shows that, Nadia's future is in question because of such power-holder tactics. Evidently, they contend;

Nadia Murad recounts how she was kidnapped and raped in her own home and then thrown into a pit of misery while being raped, insulted, and having her dignity destroyed simply because she did not believe in the same God as them. Also, due to the unknown existence of the identity and membership of many small religious organizations, her future is currently in question. It also draws attention to the worldwide human rights violations due to authoritarian regressive power tactics. (9)

In essence, both researchers' analysis shows the pathetic situation faced by Nadia and her resisting voice against the backdrop of Islamic ideological beliefs ISIS has been responsible for the oppression and exploitation of the Yezidi community in a brutal and harsh manner. The above lines revealed the sorrowful condition faced by the Yezidi community. Researchers note that the ruling class Islamic people persecuted the Yezidi ethnic group while also turning them to Islam. The power tactic of Islam is to erase the identity of Yezidi by breaking the concept of human rights, which is the process of cultural hegemony to remove the existence of minority groups. The future of Yezidi is in the question mark. The religious institution creates a question mark just because Yezidi belongs to a minority group.

Similarly, researcher Sruty Prakash in his article *Oppression of Women in Nadia Murad's Memoir the Last Girl* highlights the problem of women because of the position of the Yezidi group as a low group in the Islamic state who had to lose everything just because they are in minority including their family, husband, children, and relatives. In this regard, Prakash points out:

Women lost their husbands and children. Yazidi men and boys who had reached puberty were separated from the women and often shot dead on roadsides. Women were supposed to remain submissive to the excruciating

pain in the ISIS camps. Their sons had been taught to hate their mothers for being born as Yazidi. These women were extremely tortured because they belong to a minority community that is Yazidi. (169)

Srutya Prakash's research shows, how ISIS persecuted Yazidi man and captured the woman in the name of religious serenity. Yazidi belongs to a subaltern group and ISIS physically, mentally, and sexually tortures them. Moreover, the mother painfully gives birth to a baby but the ISIS is teaching Yazidi children to hate their own mother who introduces him/her to the universe and culture. It shows that ISIS is forcing Yazidi Children to change their religion by neglecting their mother through the process of cultural hegemony as power holders ISIS militants brainstorm the little Yazidi children.

Similarly, Dona Mariya Thomas in her article, *An Impetus for Survival: Cultural Memory in Nadia Murad's The Last Girl*, articulates the worldview about religion and the strengths of Nadia Murad to express her collective voice about hunting memory encountered by Yazidi in Islamic states to stand as a rock for entire Yazidi religion. She writes:

In a world where religion is seen as a dividing power, Nadia gains courage and strength from her memories of the Yazidi culture to which she was born into. Today, while all Yazidis are on the verge of extinction due to blindness of the entire world towards the attack against them, her memoir, *The Last Girl: My Story of Captivity and My Fight against the Islamic State* remain as a figure of memory to the future. As a part of humanity, respect towards each culture has to be trained and cultural memory in a human has to be strengthened, so that, like Nadia, many could resurrect through the cultural memory that concretizes faith and resistance and thus pave the way to survival. (45)

According to Mariya, religion is the one of the paramount ground that is decisive while disintegrating people's ethos. The power holders create a dichotomy of high and low religion for their own benefit. Nadia's small piece of work through her biography caused a ripple in the religious propagandist mind, and revolutionizes a voice representing the marginals. This leads to the realization that, the belief about the Yezidi community made by the Islamic state is under attack and questioned by the voice of Nadia. The cultural memory of Yezidi reveals that leads every culture to respect each culture because culture gives us identity. Her work is about Yezidi identity even though ISIS is destroying them.

Similarly, another researcher, Mah-Rukh Ali in his article *ISIS and Propaganda: How ISIS Exploits Women* shows the arrogance of ISIS group. Here, the chief of ISIS claims that the almighty God sent them to destroy their enemy. ISIS takes Yezidi as their enemy and they are ready to do anything to Yezidi if they are not ready to convert themselves into Islam. He writes:

ISIS claims that they believe in overwhelming the enemy with fear and terror and admits that this is part of its tactic. They use Islamic literature to justify this, such as referring to *hadith*. They adhere to one of the Prophet's *hadiths* from the early wars of Islam: "We came to you through slaughter". Allah made me victorious by awe and by frightening my enemies. Other texts are similarly adapted to solidify a fighting doctrine within the ranks, and justified it through the promise of paradise without accountability. (11)

In the article, he shows how ISIS creates myths to consider they are superior to Yezidi. ISIS believes that Allah had sent them into the world to terrorize their enemy. They take other than their religions as an enemy. Here, the other religion stands as Yezidi who is the victim of persecution. By the medium of power holder ideology

ISIS is trying to hegemonies the marginal group (Yezidi) into Islam. For this, ISIS is ready to make terror and they are ready to slaughter their enemy if they are not being converted.

Likewise, Biswajit Pramanik in his article, *The Catastrophe of Yazidis: A Study of Nadia Murad's The Last Girl: My Story of Captivity, and My Fight Against the Islamic State* shows the genocide and the sexual crimes is against the human being which creates catastrophe among in Yezidis: He writes;

Nadia is now motherless, displaced, migrated, traumatized, grief-stricken and the ongoing recipient of ISIS death threats because of her gender and religious identity. In this sense, these are not only her own alone problems but also the whole Yazidis have no space of their own which can dismantle the boundary of gender and religious minority and help them to mingle with the common human mainstream. (4)

According to Pramanik claim despite being a minority group, Yazidis had to overcome many challenges. ISIS had long before traumatized and dehumanized Yezidi. Yezidi is being tortured, exploited, killed, and rapped from generation to generation. Consequently, Nadia loses everyone in her family because of the power structure's control, and she has been left motherless. She fled to a new location demanding justice for her community since that remained as memories full of traumatic events. She thus portrays in her works of biography not only her own pain but also the pain of the entire Yezidi people. Because of their status as a minority within the Islamic State and Yezidis are powerless.

Although Yezidi people went through the brutality of ISIS and they did not give up on their hard times. Apparently, Nadia's biography vividly portrays the position of Yezidi community in an Islamic state with justice in return. To

recapitulate, Pramanik's interpretation of the article displays the collective memory of the Yazidi community from the perspective of Nadia's voice.

Furthermore, Fabitha Ibrahim's article, *Traumatic Experience of the Yazidi Community in Nadia Murad's The Last Girl: My Story of Captivity, My Fight Against the Islamic State*, shows the traumatic experience faced by Nadia as well as the entire Yazidis, which seems unbelievable to accept. His finding shows that the works of Nadia emphasize the painful experiences faced by the Yazidi population and excavate the reality of the trauma of survival. He states;

The traumatic experience of Yazidi people was incredible to accept.

Thousands and hundreds of people were lost their lives, family, native land and culture. Nadia Murad's 'The Last Girl' is absolutely a testimonial of the traumatic experience they had been suffered during the ISIS militant's invasion in Iraq. Here Nadia Murad and other Yazidi people are presented to the witness to show trauma of survival. (96)

According to Ibrahim, the experience faced by Yazidis seems sad given the history of persecution. Yazidis lost everything, including their lives, family, existence, motherland, and culture. The work of Nadia stands as a testimony that reflects the situation faced by Yazidi during the ISIS invasion of Iraq. With the process of the ISIS invasion, Nadia as well as other Yazidi followers have faced various obstacles that have dragged them to the trauma of survival.

All the previous researchers are concerned with different issues such as memory trauma, sexual violence against women, power structures in policy, domination, and harassment, killings of Yazidis, violence, and oppression. However, there is still a massive gap in terms of exploration through the concept of resistance against hegemony. Therefore, this paper explores resistance to Islamic cultural

hegemony as a major contention in this biography. By focusing on the situation created by the power holder (ISIS) to Yezidis and Nadia's voice toward Islamic State ideology, Antonio Gramsci's idea of cultural hegemony, *The Ideology of the Ruling Class*, depicts the issue of power, violence, resistance, and ISIS ideology. Similarly, Louis Althusser's notion of Ideological State Apparatus clarifies how Islamic State ideologies aimed to convert the Yezidi to Islam through the principle of Islam. Gradually, the concept of *Power and Ideology* by Michael Foucault focuses the role of the agency ISIS as a power holder and the role of resisting voices of Yezidi as the voice from the margin.

The autobiography contends the humanitarian call for resistance against injustices imposed upon Yazidi community. Islam's rule as the dominant class forced its cultural beliefs on the Yezidi by using control and coercion. Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemonic power operates at two levels: coercive and consent. He states that, "Ruling class people not only maintain their power by the use of force but by shaping their value by controlling the dominant cultures" (190). The same is with Nadia's biography, she says, "It was hard not to feel bad when a Muslim wedding guest refused to eat our food, no matter how politely- but still there was genuine friendship" (5). In this regards, the hegemony by power leded with consent way. They use constant way to hegemonies through the medium of Islam follower. As a result there is hardship faced by Yezidi in the Islamic State during any occasion Muslim neighbors refused to eat food prepared by Yezidi group but they show mutual respect seems to be a fake friendship.

Additionally, Nadia in her biography says, "ISIS had launched surprise attacks on several nearby villages, driving thousands of Yazidis out of their home and toward Mount Sinjar in a dizzying, the panicked mass that soon thinned to a frail march"

(56). In this aspect, the hegemony is lead through coercive way as Gramsci notion. ISIS surprisingly attacked several parts of the Yezidi community and the Yezidi people were taken to Mount Sinjar. Slowly, the huge populations turned out to be small community and the group becomes weak. The power- tactics not only try to show the power to suppress the working-class group but, the ruling class main agenda is to control; the existed culture by shaping ideology. The ISIS had launched a surprise attack on the Yezidi community. In this regards, Nadia's biography represents as a testimony of tortures against Yezidi community imposed by ISIS as a dominant group to hegemonize the minority group as evident in the text.

Wolfgang Fritz Haug in his article *Socialism and Democracy* claims, "Gramsci's philosophy of praxis urges people to actively participate in social, political, and cultural life, as well as to investigate and question dominant beliefs" (7). In this sense, every individual employs the theory of praxis as practice in order to deal with society's accepted assumptions. Similarly, the philosophy of praxis works through the process of hegemony with the medium of structure and superstructure in Gramsci's *Prison Writing Notebook*, "The philosophy of praxis attacks the complex of superstructures and affirms their rapid transience in that they tend to hide reality, namely struggle and contradiction" (197). Regarding this Nadia's biography, reveals various forms of superstructure used by ISIS to control the Yezidi community. They manipulate religious propaganda using media, canonical institutions, and educational places to make Yezidi fearful. For instance, Nadia writes, "We would stop talking to the Muslim students at school or to be drawn inside in fair if a stranger came through the village. We watched news of the attack on TV and started to worry more about politics" (12). In order for Islamic culture to grow, ISIS had taken over every sphere of society, including media outlets and educational institutions, which it used to

spread false information about Yezidis. Additionally, it tortures the Yezidi people's minds by instilling a fear of outsiders.

The above-quoted line shows that Nadia's biography stands as a pillar to bring hope where the Yezidis continue to oppose their voice about politics and propaganda despite the fact that her terror of ISIS is rising quickly and they are speaking out against injustice. Here, the theory of praxis leads Yezidi to express the reality of the incident to make public view. Through many means, the ISIS idea of hegemony over the Yezidi group is made explicit throughout Nadia's life. Thus, the activism of Nadia Murad echoes Gramsci's appeal for intellectuals to unite theory and practice, to confront entrenched beliefs, and to take an active part in processes of transformation.

According to Thomas R. Bates's journal, *Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony*, he states that hegemony functions both by force and by the idea of creating cohesion among ruling class values. The set of rules is the foundation of the ruling class's belief system. "The basic premise of the theory of hegemony is one with which few would disagree: that man is not ruled by force alone but also by ideas of a ruling class" (351). This shows the hegemonic process is the way to create cohesion through the power of politics to flourish the cultural values of the ruling culture in minor cultures and expand their own belief systems. The biography of Nadia reveals these hidden things through her words. She states;

I was quickly learning that my story, which I still thought of a personal tragedy, could be someone else's political tool, particularly in the place like Ira. I would have to be careful what I said, because words mean different things to different. Hajji Salman once used oily words to know about our plan of escape. (285)

The above-mentioned quotation shows the personal story of the Nadia tragedy, which became the political tool of Militant Hajji Salman. Who once used oily words to know the reality about Nadia's idea of escaping and badly treated her after knowing the reality? Here, the hegemony functions merely in the form of an idea of a power structure in the process of religious conversion from Yezidi to Islam.

Furthermore, Gramsci says, those in the ruling class not only lead their position of authority by using force but also by influencing the culture in power. Nadia's text emphasizes the religious war against them not only with force but also via the soft power of religion. We can also find the concept of intellectual and moral subjugation is just not only the ideology of the ruling class to subjugate the working class but also to exploit them. As a result, Nadia's attempt at resistance links to the idea of a cultural hegemony led by ISIS. Due to this hegemony, Yezidis are facing a cultural war, and ISIS militants have been ruling over them for decades. Gramsci states:

The struggle for hegemony is a 'war of position', in which the terrain on which the war is fought is the entire fabric of social life, and not only the military battlefield. The aim of this war is not the physical destruction of the enemy, but his intellectual and moral subjection, the conquest of his will and of his consciousness. (208)

The war of position between ISIS and Yezidi, happens at both physical and moral levels. As stated in the above-mentioned lines, the Yezidi people face battles in every aspect of their lives social, cultural, and existential levels. Although the Yezidi are not on the battlefield, they are tortured physically, mentally, and culturally after they had been kidnapped. ISIS abducted the Yezidi women and took them wherever they pleased. Nadia Murad speaks, "The militants killed anyone who refused to convert to

Islam or who was too stubborn or confused to flee, and they pursued those who were sluggish on their feet, shooting or cutting their throat" (56). This is Naida's narrative the in-depth account of Nadia Murad reveals the militants' cruel behavior, including the murdering of those who refused to convert or fled, painfully exposing the serious use of violence and intimidation as a form of control.

Similarly, for the part of its application, the criticism of the ruling class idea of the ruling system is indispensable to analyze the concept of false narrative made by the power structure. Whereas, Michael Foucault's idea of power and ideology examines how Nadia resists the power tactics practiced by the Islamic State. Foucault argued that power and ideology are inseparable and interwoven with each other. While ideology aids in preserving and defending power, power is the essential component of ruling through extending the concept of social relationships. In this respect, he reflects power originated from multiple sources and practices with various methods and techniques including discourse, hidden narrative, and social rules. Hence, the ruling class interconnects its hidden power and ideology to shape knowledge. Foucault writes:

Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. Power comes from the people; it is diffused everywhere and is without a fixed localization. Knowledge is similarly diffused, it is produced not only by scholars and scientists but also by innumerable other social agents. Consequently, power and knowledge are inseparable. (93)

Foucault's line incorporates with Nadia's narrative and it demonstrates Nadia's confrontation with the power of ISIS, an extremist group that wields power by brutality, coercion, and the imposition of its ideology. This power is not restricted to a

single location, but rather extends its reach to govern the lives of Yezidi individuals and their communities. The biography contends, “There were Islamic State militants everywhere, dressed in uniform with their radios squawking constantly. They watched us as we were sent into three rooms, each of which opened onto a small landing” (125-26). This description depicts the pervasive and omnipresent nature of power, as represented by Foucault's view that power is everywhere and not isolated to certain locales. Therefore, this scene emphasizes the obvious presence and control of militants in Nadia Murad's surroundings as a means of exerting and maintaining power. Furthermore, Nadia says,

People say that Yazidism is not a “real” religion because we have no official book like the Bible or the Koran because some of us don’t shower on Wednesdays- the day that *Tawusi Melek* first came to earth, and our day of rest and prayer- they say we are dirty. (28)

Fundamental ways, Nadia brings the referent from her religious tool to critic the central authority of power. The people who follow the Islamic religion create a system for right and wrong in order to hegemonize the culture of Yezidi. Religion is only the way to provide a sense of faith, and spirituality to lead a systematic life, but the power ISIS is teaching their people to neglect Yazidism as other and are inferior to Islam. Similarly, according to Nadia biography there is no official history of Yazidism unlike Koran and the Bible, however; the Yezidi followers follow their own unique code of conduct taken Yazidism as their culture. But the power is manipulating the society negatively about the Yezidi religion that they are dirty and uncivilized people. Apart from this, Yezidi says *Tawasi Melek* first come to the universe on Wednesday and Yezidi do not take a shower on Wednesday because of their religious faith and concern for the divinity of God. However, the rulers are taking it as a false narrative.

In similar way, Louis Althusser talks about the concept of the Ideological State Apparatus in his book *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* 1971. The topic of the book title *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus*, explores the concept of state policy to reform their ideology in a specific manner. The government uses two forces to inject its ideology; namely- Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA). He says, “The Army and the Police also function by ideology both to ensure their own cohesion and reproduction and in the “values” they propound externally” (Althusser, 80). In his context, Nadia’s biography reveals;

“Any paper that says you are a Yazidi, give them to us,” militants said, shoving them into a bag. Downstairs they piled up all the documents- IDs, ration cards, birth certificates and burned them, leaving the ashes in a mound. It was as though they thought that by destroying our documents, they could erase the existence of Yazidis from Iraq. (132)

In this respect, the biography revolves around the voice of Yezidi for their right, freedom, and identity. However, the army and police play the role of villains to flourish the state policy by capturing the document of Yezidi. The military forces are functioning brutally to erase the Yezidi identity and to transfer them to Islam. For this, militants went to the homes of a Yezidi community, and collect importance documents such as ID cards, birth certificates, and other necessary documents and burnt them.

Moreover, the repressive state apparatus utilizes the army to enforce state policies upon citizens by torture. In the case of Yezidi Community, the ISIS uses repressive state apparatus to influence the existing culture of Yezidi. The torture done by ISIS militants toward Yezidi is an example of Repressive Status Apparatus.

Althusser states:

Every State Apparatus, whether Repressive or Ideological, “functions” both by violence and by ideology, but with one very important distinction, which makes it imperative not to confuse the Ideological State Apparatuses with the Repressive State Apparatus. Repressive State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression including physical repression, while functioning secondarily by ideology. (80)

The above-mentioned lines incorporate with the work of Nadia in which she is resisting her voice against the state-level hegemonic process and ideology. The Ideological State Apparatus operates secondarily in order to flourish its ideology via Repressive States Apparatus (RSA). The aim of the state-level policy led by the military forces is to create cohesion and systems in which ideology has been created by the state- level policy to erase the identity of Yezidi and combined them to Islam. The biography presents, “Attacking Sinjar and taking girls to use as sex slaves wasn’t a spontaneous decision made on the battlefield by the greedy soldier” (139). This is Nadia narrative. In this aspect, the concept of Ideology functions whether Ideological state apparatus or repressive state apparatus, both function in the same baseline. However, the ideological state apparatus seems hidden but directs the repressive state apparatus to expand its vision and goal. Thus, the use of the military by state-level dominates, exploits, and tortures Yezidis to destroy the physicality of Yezidi identity and culture furthermore, Nadia says:

ISIS planned it all: how they would come into homes what made a girl more or less valuable, which militants deserved a *sabiyya* as an incentive, and which should pay. They even discuss *sabaya* in their glossy propaganda magazine, *Dabiq*, in an attempt to draw new recruits. What they thought was and was not

legal under Islamic law, and they wrote it down so that all Islamic State members would follow the same brutal rules. (139)

The given lines arouse rhetorical questions regarding ISIS magazine about its propaganda. Is it possible for militants to publish a magazine on their own without following the ruling ideology? Without a doubt, Yazidi's prices are haggled for the magazine published by ISIS fighters with the navigation of ruling ideology. The ideological state government is a foundation tenant of ISIS periodicals. The government supports ISIS to impose its religious hegemonic ideology over the Yazidi people. However, an intellectual plot is afoot that aims to enslave the Yazidis as *Sibiya* by outright labeling them as animals. Thus, militants are dependent on state ideology to create a magazine with a price tag of Yazidis people. This is how the ideology function of the state is clearly mentioned in the above lines.

The research determines Nadia's semi-autobiography *The Last Girl: My Story of Captivity and My Fight Against the Islamic State* and investigates Nadia's narrative and her revolt against Islamic hegemony. She is expressing her voice with the support of her pathetic experience as she faced in an Islamic state. The oppression of Yazidis by ISIS appears sad given that the Yazidi community has lost everything, including their family, identity, and existence. Moreover, women are being kept like slaves in the Islamic state because mainstream culture captured all the sectors of media and so on. Biography contends, "Since Yazidi had no real representatives in the media and no strong voice in politics to explain what had really happened" (48). This demonstrates how the real broadcast system had been taken by popular culture, with the voice of the Yazidi community being far removed from the voices of every other segment of society.

The biography itself serves as a metaphor for the extreme suffering that Yazidis endured during their persecution in Kocho, Northern Iraq. Every Yezidi man has a responsibility to watch over Kocho for its safeguarding. Nadia states, “After the attack, we suffered some persecution. Men guarded Kocho in shifts, two stationed on the east side and two on the west, armed with Kalashnikovs and Pistols”, (49). By securing the border, the Yezidi guards continue to believe that they can protect their people by fighting the extremist. The Yezidi people strive to safeguard their cultural heritage and sense of self, and they struggle for the community's freedom, security, and peace.

Nadia raises her voice, demands justice for all minorities' religions, and denies the power holder's concept. She is against hegemony led by power politics and wants freedom, equality, and prosperity. Nadia says, “I wanted to tell them that so much more needed to be done; we needed to establish a safe zone for religious minorities in Iraq; to prosecute ISIS” (300). This line shows that the voice raised by Nadia is to demand rights and liberty in Iraq for all the minorities' religions, such as Yezidi, and her demand is against Islamic ISIS militants who engage to destroy the identity and existence of her community in the name of religious transformation.

Moreover, Nadia Murad's work gives voice to the voiceless Yezidi community, demanding rights and equality to live freely in her own culture. She reflects on her memory of her village, Kocho. She says, "I didn't know what it would feel like to see Kocho, the place where we were separated and where my brother was killed” (305). In this way, the words shared by Nadia drag us to the pathetic situation faced by Yezadis in an Islamic state, and this shared line shows that she does not want to forgive those militants who engage to destroy her relatives, identity, and existence.

One of the prominent writers Steven Pressfield discusses the process of resistance in his 2002 book *The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles* which can be hooked as a reference to Nadia's biography as well as in this study. According to him, resistance examines how the dominant class happens to shape reality. If you analyze it, the voice from the context emerges and gives the analysis of the prevailing value for each person's equity its true meaning. Pressfield says;

Resistance manifests itself in diverse ways such as depending on the context, the word "resistance" can signify many different things. In order to express the nature of reality, it means challenging the dominant worldview. (107)

In addition to this, Nadia narrates, "I want to see how Hajji Salman looks and hear how he talks without the power of ISIS behind him" (177). Nadia narrates. In this aspect, Nadia wants to see the person in charge work independently of ISIS. She questions the authority as well as Hajji Salman about the power structure. It was because she had been brutally raped that she was sold to another man. Thus, she is revolting against the Islamic principal carrier with the help of the force they used to dominate the Yezidi community.

Furthermore, by imposing its particular ideological system on marginal groups, ISIS maintains its social status. We catch a peek at the truth of ISIS policy and their treatment of the Yezidi community in Nadia's narrative. Evidently biography presents, "A large Islamic State flag decorated the top of the courthouse, ISIS controlled Mosul, women had to be converted to Islam to save their lives" (149-50). In this way, ISIS is in charge of the Yezidi community's territory and the Islamic State flags that are flown outside the courts. Where, the courthouse adhered to Islamic law

in order to flourish the Bourgeois ideology of maintaining the status quo by coercing the Yezidi to convert to Islam.

Even though the Islamic code carriers hold the Yezidi in high regard and think they can convert them to Islam but Nadia still places a high value on her faith in her own culture. She says, “I prayed to God furiously to forgive me for what was about to happen. I will always believe in you, I prayed. I will always be a Yazidis” (150). In this regard, Nadia and her community are more concerned about their own religious beliefs despite the destruction and brutality ISIS has inflicted upon them. However, the psychological anguish had been constructed in a torturous way. Even if Nadia converted to Islam by force, she still will consider herself Yezidi.

Resistance is a way of speaking out against the bad things that are happening or happened in our society. Here, Nadia is fighting against Islamic hegemony by speaking up for victims, exposing her personal story, and revealing the atrocities committed by ISIS militants, such as execution, raping, and abuse. Some of the girls committed suicide in order to relieve themselves from the torture. Nadia says, “Some of the girls have committed suicide or tried to, by cutting through the veins in their wrist over there” (129). The biography of Nadia displays her pathetic side of embodiment including scenes of blood and the girl ripping her own veins. She is putting up an argument against the ISIS militant’s immoral strategy of using psychological abuse to convert the Yezidis to Islam, which is a burning issue for the Yezidi people. For instance, biography contends;

Hajji Salman told his mother, “Nadia was an infidel, but she has just converted,” Morteja responded her son, and she raised her thick arms in enthusiastic congratulation to Hajji Salman, “It’s not your fault that you were

born a Yazidi,” she said to me. “It is the fault of your parents and you will be happy now”. (152)

The above-mentioned conversation takes place between Morteja, the mother, and Hajji Salman, the person who bought Nadia as a *Sibbiya* and converted her to Islam. They are thrilled about their achievement after successfully converting Nadia to Islam. In addition, Morteje informs Nadia that everything will be appropriate by showing the fault of Nadia's real mother and her true religion of upbringing. In this way, Nadia is presenting the real story faced by her in an Islamic state to show the propaganda of the ISIS belief system about religion and commenting on the Islamic authority by presenting her memory with the incident in her biography.

The militants besieged the community of Nadia and killed the majority of the males and elderly women. They executed the people and transported women who do not want to convert. They grab young girls as slaves and transport them to various parts of Iraq. Nadia 17- year- old girl had been taken as a slave with another young girl. Then, Hajji Salman purchased Nadia as an animal and coerced her to marry him. Nadia bemoans, “This was a contract for rape that the militants, including Hajji Salman, called Marriage” (150). They were forced to wear Arabic clothing in order to conform to ISIS's worldview and recognize themselves as the mainstream class that surfaces their ground.

ISIS and their agency want to keep Yazidis under the veil to keep them under the veil to make them their follower to followers-followers their but, according to Nadia Murad “It was impossible to tell who might be a Sunnai woman going to market and who might be a Yezidi girl escaping her captor” (168). In this respect, power wants to dominate but the dominant group sometimes makes them fools. Again Nadia States;

The biggest mistake they made was dressing us like all the women in Mosul in the anonymous black *abaya* and *niqub*. Once we were in that clothing, we blended in, and with a woman, they didn't know on the street and therefore were less likely to find us out. (168)

The text describes an incident that occurred to Nadia at the hands of her own, Hajji Salman, a high-ranking ISIS judge. She once underwent animal-like torture when she tries to escape. In addition, she was brutally raped by passers-by at the checkpoint, and then she was transferred to another owner, who was even worse than the previous one. Thus, although dressed in a black *abaya* and *niqab*, she reveals the secret pain experienced in Islamic states and the cruelty of ISIS and revolt against them.

According to Nadia, with ISIS's victory in Iraq, the process of othering began. They conquered the area of the Yazidi community and started to spread their belief systems. In this essence, Nadia is revealing the negative ideology carried by the ISIS in an Islamic state. Nadia narrates;

ISIS had instituted an intense system of re-education and brainwashing for the teenager they kidnapped. While the boys were taught Arabic and English, they+ learned words of war like gun, and they were told that Yazidism was a religion of the devil and that their family member who wouldn't convert would be better off dead. (223)

In this respect, the younger people are taught that it is better to be dead if they are not converted to Islam. Moreover, ISIS kidnapped teenagers and taught them how to wield a weapon to kill a Yazidi group. And ISIS is navigating the young generation of Yazidi to kill their families if they do not convert. Therefore, Nadia is critiquing the false narrative made by ISIS to brainwash adolescents and leading the process to erase Yazidi identity.

Furthermore, despite numerous obstacles such as being sold, raped, and tortured, Nadia was able to flee from ISIS territory with the help of a genuine Muslim individual. She seeks refuge in the home of a Muslim, where she was provided with shelter and food. Finally, she understands that not all Muslims are ISIS, and they supported her in escaping to Kurdish region for safety. She wants to have an interview with the Patriotic Union of Kurdish about her real-life experience as a Yezidi in ISIS territory. While giving interview, Nadia begins with, "I'm Yazidi from Kocho. My ID is fake. I got it in Mosul, where I was held captive by Daesh" (260). Because of her efforts and struggles, she has a voice in the open space to convey the facts of ISIS's philosophy and conspiracy. As a result, Nadia claimed asylum in Germany, joined the council to combat human trafficking, and wrote her true narrative. She mentions at the end of her biography, "I wanted to look the men who raped me in the eye and see them brought to justice more than anything else" (306). In this aspect, she is resisting and revolting by bringing her real-life incident in front of international media, and her only demand is to punish ISIS militants who involve in cruel activities to erase the identity of her and her community.

In conclusion, Nadia Murad's biography, *The Last Girl*, depicts the voice of the marginalized and hegemonies' Yezidi community. The narrative revolves around the story of the Yezidi community and gives them a voice to claim a distinct identity amongst the Muslim community. It reveals the ideological intention of ISIS to convert Yezidis to Islam and to expand the notion of Islamic hegemony. Nadia's biography stands as evidence to show ISIS brutality upon Yezidi to hagimonize them and to spread own cultural belief. Therefore, the findings of the research show the biography of Nadia deals with the process of Islamic hegemony and Nadia's resistance to it.

The views of Nadia's resistance flourish to give justice to the entire Yazidi community while defending Islamic hegemony with the medium of violence, excursion, and brutal way. She witnessed multiple traits of violence, exploitation, domination, and losing her family in the name of expanding Islamic culture by ISIS militants. Despite this, she developed her faith and was finally able to publish her biography, revealing her sorrowful experience and demanding justice for the Yazidi community, as well as punishment for the brutal acts of ISIS.

Moreover, the Yezidi group is portrayed in Nadia Murad's memoir as a pitiful victim of ISIS persecution that happened in northern Iraq in an act of religious conversion; however, this text equally vocalizes the Yezidi Community. She discovers her experiences in an Islamic state, including sexual abuse, murder, and slavery, through the representation of her embodiment as a Yezidi girl, employing her own words that pave the way for resisting dominant hegemony.

Apparently, Nadia's opposing opinions are widespread in order to provide the Yezidi community justice. She offers dramatic photos of the Yezidi people's misery and suffering to demonstrate the truth of ISIS's force. In an Islamic state, she faced numerous challenges such as slavery, rape, loss of family, and loss of identity. However, she resists the Islamic ideology, but she is not mentioning that all the Islam followers are negative, but the power holders, who are in a position to misuse their power in order to convert Yezidi for their hegemonic process.

Consequently, Nadia's work in *The Last Girl* sheds light on the plight of the Yezidi people and exposes the horrors they have endured under the ISIS regime. She discusses her personal experience and speaks out against the oppression to her and her community. Her experience seems to be horrific because in the name of conversion ISIS militants tortured entire Yezidi girl pathetically. Similarly, she seeks to challenge

ISIS control by amplifying the voice of the true victim and criticizing the extremist group's philosophy and ideology.

Therefore, Nadia's biography uncovers the reality of ISIS's false narrative about religion to convert a Yezidi into Islam. However, her narrative captured the pathetic conditions, including massive killing, persecution, and rap, faced in the regime of the Islamic state. All of this happened because ISIS wanted to create cohesion to expand its own culture. Nadia's biography reveals the hidden reality of ISIS's motive, which is to harvest the seed of hegemony, so she is revolting against those false narratives, and her biography stands as a testimony to uncover the reality of Islamic hegemony. Thus, the finding of the paper shows Nadia's voice against Islamic hegemony as well as injustice done by ISIS in the name of expanding its hegemony. However, she revolts against the false Islamic code carried by ISIS but she is not blaming all the Islamic followers because she becomes able to flee by the help of Muslim friends.

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