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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**Gender, Ethnicity, and Religion in Gharbi M. Mustafa's *What Comes with the Dust Goes with the Wind***

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to bring to light various forms of oppression and enslavement of female Yazidis under the oppressive regime of ISIS depicted in Gharbi M. Mustafa's novel *What Comes with the Dust Goes with the Wind* 2017. Through the lens of intersectional feminism, the experience of the protagonist of the novel, Nazo Heydo, who represents thousands of Yazidis, will be discussed and examined. Nazo was enslaved, traded, and abused physically and verbally by brutal ISIS militants. The paper analyses gender, ethnic, and religious related factors that caused the protagonist to go through her unfortunate experience as she was captivated by ISIS militants. Moreover, it explores the intersection and interaction of the previously mentioned factors in the genocide and enslavement of female Yazidis represented by the main character, Nazo. It is true that the novel depicts the harsh experiences of male characters, too, yet it is different from that of Nazo and all other female characters just because they were women. This paper aims to answer the following questions: 1. To what extent does the novel succeed in depicting women's oppression represented by Nazo? 2. How does the narrative address the impact of ethnicity on the genocide and enslavement of female Yazidis? 3. What is the role of religion in framing the atrocities of female Yazidis imposed upon them by ISIS militants in the novel?

**KEYWORDS**

Gender, Ethnicity, Religion, ISIS militants/fighters, Female Yazidis.

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**1. Introduction**

Throughout history, women have been subject to gender-based discrimination, inequality, and oppression. They have been in a serious struggle to gain equal rights and life opportunities in various aspects of life, such as education, employment, politics, etc... The oppression is deeply reflected in traditional societies where women have no voice and lack every form of self-representation. As a response, several feminist movements came to being fighting against gender inequalities and urging women to speak for themselves, instead of being spoken for. In that respect, international feminism recognises all kinds of discrimination, inequalities, and oppression practiced against women. Intersectional feminists recognise the diversity of women's struggles and experiences and also look at women as an indifferent-ed category of society. In the meantime, feminists are anti-patriarchal, anti-racist, and anti-capitalist, and they believe that all kinds of discrimination and oppression against women are connected (Aira & Pascua, 2020). In August 2014, ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) launched a massive militant operation against Yazidis living in Shengal (the Kurdish name of Sinjar), which led to a merciless genocide against this ethnic group. The militant campaign left hundreds of thousands homeless, who fled to other cities and lived on to sorrowfully witness the killing, raping, trading, and all forms of dehumanisation of those who were captured alive. Several countries and international organisations recognised that the atrocities committed by ISIS against Yazidis inaugurate genocide, including The USA, The United Nations, and The European Union. Yazidis of Iraq, who are also found in Turkey and Syria, are non-Muslim Kurdish speakers who primarily inhabit the two main towns of

Shengal and Shaikhan and have been persecuted historically. Sadly, Yazidi women were persecuted in a different manner compared to the way men were.

As an artistic form of story telling, literature plays an inevitable role in spreading awareness and shedding light on the lives of those who experience it on the margins of a nation. In that respect, Mustafa's *What Comes with the Dust Goes with the Wind* is a considerable example of such a form of literature that upholds unbiased views on the Yazidis' experiences and the traumatic experiences of women of Shengal. The novel will be examined through the lens of intersectional feminism in order to identify and explore the intersection of gender, ethnicity and religion, simultaneously the depiction of them. It is crucial to know that the main point of this study is to analyse different means of discrimination against the characters in the novel, how they are interlaced, and how gender, for example, is interwoven with race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and age (Nina Lykke, 2010, p.51). This paper applies intersectional feminist theory due to the nature of the novel because the brutal act that was imposed on Yazidis by ISIS militants was partly related to religion and ethnicity, and the main victims were female Yazidis who were tortured and tormented physically and mentally.

## **2. Literature Review**

One of the challenges of this study was that Mustafa's novel *What Comes with the Dust Goes with the Wind* didn't receive enough attention from academic researchers and critics. The only available academic study about the novel is conducted by (Ahmed ed al, 2021), entitled "The Principles of Resistance in Gharbi Mustafa's *What Comes with the Dust Goes with the Wind*". The study places its focus on the unconquerable souls and beliefs of Yazidis, as well as the inner and outer reactions of characters in hardship. Additionally, it is an introduction to the origins of Yazidis and their existence. Furthermore, the paper closely examines the book and analyzes it in relation to persistence, optimism and self-confidence. It makes no reference to the themes of gender, ethnicity, and religion. Contrary, throughout this study, we want to shed light on the brutality of the ISIS regime, especially those practiced against women. We intend to bring to light Mustafa's realistic novel that to a certain degree, has been overlooked. In this paper, the novel will be examined through the principles of intersectional feminism and analyse the intersection and interaction of gender, ethnicity, and religion.

## **3. Methodology and Theory**

When ISIS declared war against Yazidis, they announced them as infidels, killed their males, refused to convert to Islam, enslaved their females, and sold them to human trafficking and drug dealers. Even with ISIS gone, they left thousands of female Yazidis in psychological instability and mental disorders. This study discusses how certain means of discrimination, inequality, and marginalisation caused the genocide of Yazidis and the enslavement of their females, as depicted in the novel, through textual analysis of certain parts and paragraphs of the book. Mustafa's novel *What Comes with the Dust Goes with the Wind* will be analysed, applying intersectional feminist theory critical concepts. Intersectional feminist theory is a framework that investigates the experiences of marginalised people and analyzes how an individual can be victimised several times based on different means of discrimination such as gender, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, class, color, etc.....

According to feminism, the oppression of women has a long history in Western societies, and ancient Greeks facilitated that by declaring men to be superior and women to be inferior and accusing women of preventing men from discovering their full potential. The development of feminism in the later half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was one of the remarkable incidents in the studies of literature. It tries to obtain equal rights for all women or all people, regardless of some radical views, in all aspects of life, such as psychology, social injustice, economy, and politics. The term feminism is an umbrella term used for the approaches against the oppression of women, and within it, we have many subcategories to culture and literature such as radical feminism, postmodern feminism, intersectional feminism, etc. (Charles E. Bressler, 2011 pp. 143 to 149). The term intersectionality, was first coined by Crenshaw in 1989, and her ideas and insights will be central to support the arguments and to answer research questions. It is crucial to note that along with Crenshaw, Lykke's *Feminist Studies* (2010), Hooks *Ain't I a Woman* (2015), Fitzgerald's *Recognizing Race and Ethnicity* (2018), and Ridgway's *Framed by Gender* (2011) will be referred to, to support the arguments of intersectionality and the answers of research questions. Fitzgerald (2018) states that intersectionality concentrates on the interaction of different means of oppression, like gender, sexuality, class, religion, ethnicity, and any other form of oppression. These means of discrimination are complex and are the sources of inequality among people. Intersectionality recognises this systematic inequality and understands that these forms of discrimination don't work independently but rather occur in relation to each other and often influence one another, therefore creating a new experience for its victims. For example, a white woman who gets paid less than a man is victimized once, but a black woman that is paid less than a white woman is victimised twice; once because she is a woman, another because of her skin color. Consequently, this intersection and interaction of means of discrimination create divergent stories of the same experiences of people who are of the same sex.

#### 4. Depictions of Gender in *What Comes with the Dust Goes with the Wind*

The undeniable fact that women have been continuously dehumanised based on gender is a disgraceful mark in the history of humanity, more specifically during war time, as they are victimised on two levels: first, on a personal level, as they experience all forms of physical violence. Second, on a psychological and emotional level, witnessing the loss of family members and beloved ones and the traumatised experience after they survive. What happened to Yazidi women was no different because gender was one of the main factors behind the hardship of Nazo, as a representative and an example of thousands of other females of her ethnic group. In that respect, Ridgeway states that "We can think of gender inequality as an ordinal hierarchy between men and women in material resources, power, and status" (2011). Mustafa's novel opens with Nazo trying to end her miserable life on her wedding day after she managed to escape from ISIS militants, "Today is Nazo Haydo's wedding day, and today she will set herself on fire. Wearing her white gown, Nazo walks towards the bathroom door. In her right hand, she clutches the handle of a kerosene jerry can (Mustafa, p.1)". The wedding day is supposed to be the happiest day in any girl's life, but not for the unfortunate Nazo, who is holding a kerosene can and trying to burn herself to death. The depression of the girl cannot be overlooked as she stands helpless to overcome her traumatic experience of constant trafficking and rape; she prefers death to life. All her rights have been ripped away and ignored as a girl who has no say in her life about who she wants to be with and what she wants to do. What physical torture and mental struggle must have made suicide to be the best choice for Nazo? Was she treated like an object or a human? These perplexing questions cannot be answered only by those who have truly undergone the experience.

Gender based objectification of female Yazidis occupies a large space within the novel and the literature written to describe the war crimes of ISIS in general. Reports from prestigious international humanitarian organisations and news agencies emphasised the horrific experience of those who were caught under the brutal regime of such a militant group that fights in the name of religion. However, those experiences vary, the brutality and harshness, from one ethnic group to another, more specifically when it is about women. Relevantly, Ridgeway argues that "gender inequality is a state of affairs in which the average member of one sex is advantaged compared with the average member of the other sex"(2011). A young, captivated Yazidi girl was not treated or tortured the same way a young man was in a scene where another victimized girl, who lives with twenty other Yazidi girls in a house of women trafficking, admitted that they were currently raped and given to fighters as war prizes. She begins telling her story by saying, "It wasn't just him, she told Nazo in a faint voice, he gave me to four more fighters after he finished with me. Please, sister, help me to end this wretched life, strangle me with your headscarf...They laughed at my weak body. They spat on my face each time one of them was done with me. They called me the ugly daughter of Satan. I hate myself! I hate this body! She wailed (Mustafa, p. 54)". What could be worse for a young girl than hating her own body? A body that was passed over from one fighter to another as if they were offering a drink or a smoke! Before the arrival of ISIS militants to Shengal, they killed, displaced, and exploited people in every single city and town they arrived at, but what they did to the Yazidi women was unprecedented. In this scene, the girl is being victimised, and worse than that, she is traumatised and depressed because of her gender. If she had been born a male, none of these would have happened in this exact way; she would have been killed at the beginning and spared the humiliation, misery, mockery, and suffering she experienced.

The author successfully depicts the brutality and oppression ISIS practiced against females to a degree that it cannot be overshadowed because it is no longer about equality in education and job opportunities. Nazo, as a representative of Yazidi females, was not only dealing with the question of life or death. Tragically, she had to cope with the trauma of her body being violated and her soul being occupied by an undesirable entity. This is evident when she was about to be raped; Nazo was forced to watch a video of ISIS fighters strangling a woman and was threatened to face the same fate in case of disobeying: "Then he pushed Nazo through the mud brick house into a bedroom. Then he forced her to watch a video of ISIS men strangling a woman to death. He warned her that she would suffer the same fate if she disobeys him or showed any resistance (Mustafa, p. 41)". In this scene, the oppression and discrimination of ISIS militants take four forms. Firstly, she was sold to a dealer just like an object; secondly, she was about to be raped by a merciless old man, thirdly, she was forced to watch a death clip, and as a result, she is abused mentally; finally, she shouldn't resist; otherwise death awaits her. Being a woman, more specifically during war time, means being helpless and weak in the eyes of those who have no mercy, dignity, and humanity at all.

The dilemma of Yazidi girls continues as another character named Sara is brought to the scene. She sought courage, security, and consolation in Nazo and was terrorised when ISIS arrived at the house, not knowing that Nazo herself was traumatised. "Once they arrived at the house, Abu Talha, the ISIS fighter in charge of the building, pushed the girls into the garden with Sara still clinging to Nazo's neck and her plastered leg dangling over Nazo's arm. A man emerged with a black cable in his hand, and the three girls screamed for mercy at just the sight of him (Mustafa, p. 57)". ISIS didn't allow women the very basic human needs, as they had to face their inevitable torture. Likewise, Nazo, the one who is supposed to inspire other girls, is not safe, too, as "The cable landed everywhere except for Nazo's face, and she screamed for all she was worth. She screamed so loud she expected people at the end of the street could hear her. Her skin broke; her voice broke; her spirit broke. Soon, she could do nothing but lie on the ground and wait for it to end (Mustafa, p. 57)". The cruelty and mercilessness of ISIS fighters depicted in this novel go beyond human

imagination. She screamed for all she was worth and could; she screamed for mercy; she didn't scream for equal economic and political rights, but just for the beating to stop, just to be treated as a normal human being. Her voice broke, her spirit and skin; she could do nothing but lie down and wait for her miserable life to come to an end. All that has happened to Nazo and other Yazidi women because they were not of the same sex, and it would have happened differently if only they were males.

Against all humanistic and religious laws, ISIS militants committed countless numbers of war crimes against helpless civilians in Shengal and all other places they stepped into, but not in the same manner or for the same causes. Another striving Yazidi victim portrayed in the novel is Sharmeen, "Sharmeen has cancer, but the guards refuse to take her to the hospital. They think she is faking to avoid being raped and sold (Mustafa, p. 61). ISIS fighters had no doubt that Sharmeen was terribly ill because she had cancer and needed to go to a hospital, yet they denied her a very basic human need and right, which was getting medical service. As if the pain she had from cancer was not enough, they still wanted to burn her spirit to ash just because they "think" she is faking it, faking it because she wants to run away. They never asked themselves why would she try to run away. She is running away from being sold, from being raped again, and being beaten again before another monster puts his hands on her soft skin. What was practiced upon female Yazidis, as they were sold, killed, raped, beaten, tortured, cannot be categorised but as women dehumanisation. It is evident that female Yazidis first and most were raped by ISIS fighters; secondly, were sold to human trafficking and drug dealers; and thirdly, awaking to the bitter reality, they preferred death to life under ISIS regime, but unluckily that was not a choice for them. It can be proclaimed that female Yazidis were persecuted and ill-treated and were viewed more like sex objects and a way of gaining money than being viewed as human beings. The main reason for their suffering was their gender; it would have happened in a different form if they were not women. The savageness and brutality of the ISIS militants had left millions of people in constant sorrow that could be felt in the eyes of those who have survived to tell their stories; however, what they did to the Yazidi women is indescribable.

##### **5. Depictions of Ethnicity in *What Comes with the Dust Goes with the Wind***

Minor ethnic groups, more specifically the stateless ones, have consistently been subject to discrimination, subjugation, ethnic cleansing, and displacement. Ethnic minority regularly equates to voicelessness and misrepresentation as members of such groups strive to speak and represent themselves within the border lines of a nation. Worth to mention that ethnicity intersects with religion, to a large extent, in constructing 'binary oppositions' for middle eastern ethnic groups. The role of ethnicity in shaping the radical views and militant operation of ISIS towards the Yazidis cannot be overshadowed. Relevantly, in the novel, the author brings to light the experiences of the Yazidis as a disadvantaged ethnic group, especially regarding Yazidi women, for they are perceived as helpless and submissive. ISIS justified their savage actions out of religious urgency, based on Abu Jihad's (an ISIS leader) statement that reads "we are not bloodthirsty murderers. We are soldiers of Allah implementing His Almighty's will upon the infidels (Mustafa, p.37)". No Islamic constitution permits what was observed on the ground of victimising and rapping of non-Muslim innocent girls and women in Shengal. The harsh and criminal actions of ISIS against Yazidi women were not exercised in the same manner in Arabic cities caught in their hands. This is not to say that Arab populated cities and towns were spared the cruelty of ISIS militants, as hundreds of thousands fled to other parts of the country, but rather to declare that they were treated in a different way. For instance, a large number of civilians in Mosul lingered in the city after it was conquered. Accordingly, ethnicity exposes the double standard policy of ISIS towards Yazidis and other ethnic groups, and it appears as one of the major causes of the catastrophe by killing males and taking females as hostages in order to be sold and rapped over and over. Every human have the choice to think or believe independently, but ethnicity, for certain, is not a choice one could make.

It is said that "History repeats itself." During the modern European colonisation of several parts of the world, indigenous peoples were enslaved, displaced, and ethnically cleansed. With the arrival of an occupying power at any land, the original identity of the local ethnic groups is being distorted, not by the power of civilisation of the coloniser, but rather by the civilisation of power. As Fitzgerald sights Menchaka (2001) in her discussion of the exploitation of native Americans by European colonisers: "Native women were depicted by Europeans as sexually deviant, dirty, and thus deserving of rape and sexual assault." The invading military force remains as an intruder that forcibly attempts to invert the social, cultural, and religious values of the original inhabitants of the territory or region they arrive at. Similarly, the threat Yazidi women were targeted with remains indistinguishable from the ones women of ethnic minorities elsewhere have been suffering from five centuries ago. With a devastating justification, an ISIS fighter states: "We ought to impregnate their women to cleanse this Aryan bloodline (Mustafa, p. 17)". Islam forbids any sexual intercourse between a man and a woman outside marriage, and it will be counted as adultery. Imagine Yazidi women who had no power to prevent being rapped just because she is not of the same "bloodline"; moreover, they were impregnated in order to give birth to a child of another ethnic bloodline that attempts to wipe out their ethnicity.

Helen Carby, in her essay "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood", points out that "Western feminism is criticised for the Orientalist ways it represents the social practices of other 'races' as backward and barbarous, from which black and Asian women need rescuing by their western sisters" (sighted in McLeod 2000). Carby delves into a sensitive issue

which is the “sisterhood” of women of different racial or ethnic backgrounds according to which white women fail to understand and view the issues of their non-white sisters. Similarly, Nazo’s journey takes another turn after she is sold by ISIS, tied up to a bed and raped, and denied every basic human need and right; she is being abused even by an ISIS fighter’s wife as if what she had from men was not enough. The wife discerns Nazo as impure because of her ethnicity; she orders Nazo by saying, “You filthy Yazidi infidel. Get up and wash the Mujahedeen’s clothes, sneered the woman as she leaned to cut the rope (Mustafa, p. 42)”. The reasons this woman had no mercy for Nazo could be seen on three levels: first, she has grown up in a muscular environment; therefore, she behaves like a hardhearted man. Second, Nazo’s ethnicity leaves no margin for her sympathy since it is a big sin to be born a Yazidi. Third, religious intolerance might be at the centre of it, which is the result of the radical views of ISIS. Tragically, Nazo wonders what Mujahedeen is? To Nazo, those men are not just rapists who stole her dreams and ripped off her innocent soul in front of another woman who is supposed, at least, to have sympathy and feel sorry for what she was experiencing.

Ethnic based hatred and harassment have deep roots in the history of humanity; to be adequate, it is reflected in the behaviour of certain society members. Unfortunately, it threatens the coexistence and social harmony that, on certain levels, the middle eastern region is characterised with. Respectfully, the writer uncovers another Yazidi female character called Soz, the Mountain Shingle’s camp doctor who explains her encounter with an ISIS fighter and says, “He stared at me for a moment, his eyes glazed with desire. I recognized him, Nashwan, an Arabian boy from a neighboring village who used to harass me in secondary school (Mustafa, p. 73)”. The encounter of Soz with Nashwan, the Arabian boy from a neighboring village, indicates that Yazidi women were targeted and harassed even before the arrival of ISIS, as the harassment goes back to when they were at secondary school. What could be more terrifying than a neighbor to turn into a savage enemy? Living side by side with someone who lurks in the shadow for the prey. Moreover, it’s evident that after he joined ISIS, to him, Soz was only a sexual object rather than a woman, for Nashwan’s eyes glazed with desire the moment he laid eyes on her. Dramatically, Soz describes how men and women were treated indifferently by telling what happened to her family when saying, “A couple of days later, I received the news that ISIS had killed most of the people from my village, including my father and my two younger brothers. They took Soleen, my thirteen-year-old sister (Mustafa, p. 75)”. All males were killed, but women, including a thirteen-year old girl, were taken as slaves, displaced and exiled, raped and sold; this is the journey of thousands of Yazidi girls, tasting death many times in several ways. Yazidi women went through experiences that were incomparable to death, as every single breath they had was death itself but in slow motion.

With the existence of national and international organisations and activists that demand equality and justice regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, or religion, racism remains a discrimination generally practiced against ethnic groups with darker skin colour, and it is vital in spreading hatred and creating tension in multi-ethnic communities. As Fitzgerald states, “Despite undeniable racial progress, our society remains divided along racial lines, and racial inequality persists” (2018). Seemingly, in this dialogue between two ISIS fighters when they were transporting Nazo and Soleen, one of them states, “Maybe we can’t touch the money, but we can have some fun with the Yazidi girls before delivering them to their owners, said prominent Nose. Sleeping with them is an act of good; Bushy Eyebrows chuckled at his own joke (Mustafa, p. 89)”. It is divulged that ISIS did see rapping and sleeping with female Yazidis as “an act of good” because they are another ethnic background. According to them, no body cares about the girls; they are on their way to be delivered to someone who has bought them. They cannot touch the money, but they have the freedom to do whatever they wish to the girls; this is evident when Soleen is beaten to death when she refuses to be sexually abused. This happened to Soleen and Nazo as representatives of thousands of other female Yazidis, as a result of being born a female and Yazidi, an ethnicity that acquires no respect in the eye of this brutal army. As the drama against Yazidi women continues, the author brings to the fore another devastating fact which indicates the blood thirstiness of the neighboring villagers to take Yazidi females as slaves when Soz states, “You cannot coexist with the people who want to pull the rug out from under your feet. Have you forgotten how our neighbors turned against us and sided with the Daesh (ISIS) when they killed our men and took our women as slaves? (Mustafa, p. 177)”. Once ISIS took over Yazidi populated towns and villages, some neighboring Arab villagers sided with ISIS and opened their houses to them. This catastrophe decreased the chances of coexistence and undermined the trust of the neighborhood between those who have shared the land for hundreds of years. Necessary to mention that many other neighbouring Arabs accommodated and sheltered Yazidi refugees. Eventually, ISIS regarded Yazidi females as goods and left thousands of women in psychological anxiety and instability. Evidently, ethnicity can be recognised as one of the major reasons for the genocide of Yazidis. It can be concluded from the fact that what happened to Yazidis, more specifically women, didn’t happen the exact way in other cities and towns with non-Yazidi populations. Yazidis, as an ethnic group, did not violate the rights of anyone; rather, they lived on the land inherited from their ancestors, and they were ripped off this simple right.

## **6. Depictions of Religion in *What Comes with the Dust Goes with the Wind***

Religious identity, like any other belief based collective identity, polarises people as much as it unites them. Such polarisation demands, similar to Edward Said’s concepts of the “self” representing the West and the “other” representing the East, each group to stand in opposition to one another. Similar to gender and ethnicity, religion sequentially intersects with other forms of discrimination and oppression. After the September 11, 2001 attacks and the radical reaction of Western political powers against

Islam and Muslim, the world witnessed a counter reaction that led to the birth of several radical Islamic groups who advocate religious intolerance that led to catastrophes. However, the intention of a large number of those groups remain suspicious and contradict the core beliefs of Islam to a large extent, and ISIS could make the perfect match. Relatively, in this section, the impact of religious beliefs on shaping Nazo's image in the novel is going to be analysed, as how did religious beliefs of Nazo cleared the way to fall into her unwished journey. And to see how religious differences affect characters judgement and world view, along with ethnicity and gender. As the name suggests, ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) was a regime that claimed to follow the orders of "sharia." Accordingly, most of the crimes committed against humanity by this group were done in the name of Islam, and this constructed a world view according to which every single Muslim is held countable for those crimes they already have condemned.

The tragic experience of Yazidis takes another form as the writer depicts religious based humiliation and discrimination of the Yazidis in general, and their women more specifically. As Nazo and her mother were having a conversation, she wakes up to the fact that religious rules could be bent by the masculine society that uphold different views of the sins committed by men and women when her mother says, "Remember, a decent girl will only lose her virginity to her husband on her wedding night. If she never marries, then a decent girl will die a virgin (Mustafa, p.10)". Nazo's mother explains the beliefs and traditions of Yazidis; like any other mothers, she is advising her daughter against any sexual affairs before marriage because a "descent" Yazidi girl should not be deflowered only by her husband. This indicates the double standard of conservative religious communities as men and women are not discerned similarly when committing adultery. In certain cases, a man with a number of mistresses may swagger. Accordingly, Nazo is victimized twice, once by ISIS when raped and sold her. Second, traditional social values, often set from a masculine viewpoint, are less applicable to men. A girl's virginity is the badge of honour in Yazidi communities; the girl who loses it dishonors herself and her family. The fact that Nazo's mother, as a woman, thinks and behaves in a masculine manner indicates that women's rationale is being administrated and controlled by men; otherwise, the mother wouldn't counsel her daughter this way if she were a boy.

Simone de Beauvoir, In her book *The Second Sex* (1949), argues that religious ideas regarding the natural creation of men and women represent women as a human "other." This "otherness" is deeply rooted in the ways men have historically privileged themselves by religious divinity through masculine interpretations of the holy books in which women are marginalised and their role is diminished. Throughout the novel, the depiction of religion as being socially constructed indicates its utilisation by certain groups to serve their personal interests by which religion is being demonised. Misrepresentations of religion function as a means of discrimination and have a strong impact on shaping the events experiences of the characters, especially the females, as ISIS fighters consider them as their war share. When ISIS arrive at the village, one of them shouts to the girls who have locked the door of the house, "Islamic state, open the door...The house is surrounded. You have ten seconds to open the door, or grenades will fly (Mustafa, p. 31)". The ISIS fighter shouts in the name of the Islamic State that there is no other way except for the women to open the door, or else they will open it forcibly. In this quotation, the robust impact of religion becomes clear, and religion becomes the first and foremost cause of the genocide and enslavement of female Yazidis. As a matter of fact, it wouldn't have happened if they were Muslims. The author emphasises that failing to acknowledge religion and the ideology of ISIS equates Yazidis to rendering them significant and ultimate catastrophe leading them towards their death. Sadly, the role of religion is portrayed and represented negatively by ISIS; religion is meant to be an umbrella of harmony for different back grounded peoples to live under rather than being a means of categorisation and a reason for erasing and wiping out each other.

Wars cause chaos and mass destruction, during which innocent civilians are victimised on several levels for unjust justifications. Moreover, its impact remains timeless, especially on those who are being exploited in every possible way. Crenshaw (1991) asserts that "the violence that many women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities." The violence practiced against women is diverse and differs from one experience to another. Accordingly, various forms of identification and classification intersect in mapping the reality of Nazo and other Yazidi women portrayed in the novel. When Nazo was captivated, an ISIS fighter told her, "You are my share of the gift that God has bestowed upon the Mujahedeen, His Almighty warriors, in the sacred war against the pagan world (Mustafa, p. 41)". Likewise, in this scene, an ISIS fighter tied Nazo with a rope with the intention to rape her, "Then he knelled down in the middle of the room and prayed to God. In his eyes, what he was about to do was an act of devotion, a sacred rite that would draw him closer to his God (p. 41-42)". As defined by Britannica, Mujahedeen refers to "Muslims who fight on behalf of the faith or the Muslim community (*ummah*)"; in other words, it stands for "holly warriors." Those "holly warriors" are not supposed to insult, humiliate and raped captivated women, not even to force them to convert to Islam. A true Mujahed is supposed to be recompensed by God in the here after life, not to fight for plunder. Besides other factors mentioned earlier, Nazo's religion appears central to the mistreatment and discrimination she experiences at the hands of militants who misrepresent Islam and Muslims. Sadly, Nazo has no agency when the fighter states, "You are my share." this is enslavement in the name of religion, as he thinks he owns her. A real Mujahed wouldn't rape an innocent, powerless woman; rather, he would have protected her if he had a true understanding of his own religion.

Hankivsky states that "According to an intersectionality perspective, inequities are never the result of a single, distinct factor. Rather, they are the outcome of intersections of different social locations, power relations, and experiences". Hankivsky highlights several interrelated factors that lie behind the oppression, discrimination, and enslavement of one group towards another. "Power relations" remain central to such aggression and violence, either during war time or when are at peace as one group stands superior to another. The application of such ultimate power is found contradicting when imposed upon men on one hand and women on the other hand. An ISIS fighter tells Azad, the man that Nazo intends to marry before the arrival of ISIS, "You have three days to convert to our religion. If you don't profess your faith by reciting the Shahadah, if you don't do exactly as I say, I will be delighted in pulling both of your blues eyes and feeding them to crows (Mustafa, p. 17)". This indicates that Yazidis were victimised on religious bases; however, men and women went through the experience in different manners. Therefore, it can be concluded that religion has been intentionally used as a means of discrimination and is perceived as a central reason behind the massacre of male Yazidis and the enslavement of female Yazidis by ISIS fighters. The fighters see Yazidi females as their war share as a reward for their "holly" designation of fighting in the name of Islam. In their eyes, what they were doing was an act of devotion, while, in fact, their true intention was to serve their personal and collective interests of selling girls for money and fulfilling their disgraceful sexual desires. It is evident that ISIS militants have committed merciless crimes against humanity, not only in Shengal but everywhere they stepped, disguising themselves in the name of religion.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper concludes that *What Comes with the Dust Goes with the Wind*, through its portrayal of Nazo, manifests the brutality and cruelty of ISIS militants towards Yazidis in general and women more specifically. It illustrates that Yazidis were persecuted based on classifications that the majority are innate and beyond human control, such as gender, ethnicity, and race. From an intersectional feminist standpoint, the story is viewed as a critique of the biased policy of the savage regime of ISIS and their unjust treatment of women. Mustafa successfully brings to the light gender, ethnic, and religious factors behind the indescribable experiences of Yazidis, indicating what was performed upon them is beyond language and description.

This study presents the novel as a powerful depiction of the genocide and enslavement of female Yazidis by ISIS militants by taking women as hostages; the young ones, first and foremost, were raped and sold, and the aged ones were taken as servants. On that grounds, the paper declares that there were three major factors behind such horrifying experiences. At the top of it lies gender, according to which women were depicted as submissive and were intentionally kept alive so they satisfy the sexual desires of the brutal militants, while men were killed unless they converted to Islam. Ethnicity remains another central factor for the tragic experiences of the Yazidi women based on which their counterparts of other ethnic groups were not enslaved, raped, and sold from one fighter to another. Finally, another major factor that played a huge role in framing the tragedy against Yazidi women was religion, and it is visible through the way ISIS militants enslaved, rapped and sold women, considering that a "holly mission" or an "act of good"; tragically, that act stands in opposition to religious beliefs and values of Islam. Worth mentioning that Mustafa, through this story, provides the public eye with the involvement of women in a war that had many reasons behind it and sheds light on the objectification views of ISIS fighters towards them and their unconcealed wretchedness, misery, and anguish. On the one hand, it is devastating to state the endlessness of the story as thousands of Yazidi women are left in ISIS captivity and experience the same hardship and agony day after day. On the other hand, a large number of the perpetrators of these atrocities remain unpunished and continue doing what they have been doing a decade ago.

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