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Patriarchal Oppression, Religion, and Female Resistance in “*The Girl Who Escaped ISIS: This Is My Story*” by Farida Khalaf

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes how Farida Khalaf's memoir *The Girl Who Escaped ISIS* deals with the issues of language, religion, patriarchy and resistance. Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis is used to explore the connections between language, religion, patriarchy and resistance. Farida Khalaf's self-narrative is based on the argument that the Yazidi identity is traditionally vulnerable and she tried to reveal ISIS's gendered violence with references to religion and military force. At the textual level the religious, educational, feminine, independent and courageous being identities are constructed by using narrative techniques of oppositions, evaluative labels, as well as narrating religious practices. At the discursive level, the narrative exposes the struggle between dominant ideology and a counter voice of resistance, and at the social level Khalaf discloses ISIS's structural patriarchal violence, forced religious conversions, and objectification of women. This article also relies on the theories of Smith and Watson to demonstrate how the autobiography of Khalaf serves as an act of discovering and reclaiming one's own self. Khalaf's memoir is not just a survival testimony but also a strong counter-discursive narrative, which confronts and opposes the ideological violence of ISIS.

Introduction

Farida Khalaf is a Yazidi survivor of Kocho, a village located in the North of Iraq, her life was brutally changed when ISIS attacked her village in 2014. She was a schoolgirl at the time with a great interest in mathematics and a future ambition of becoming a math teacher. Her ambition for education and teaching was ruined when the men of her village were killed and the women were brought into slavery and captivity. She was kidnapped, when she was 18, with other dozens of

women and girls and victimized, enslaved, oppressed and forced to change their Yazidi identity. When Khalaf was kidnapped, she was just a teenager and a sensitive girl, at such early age she was sold in the slave market in Raqqa, Syria (which was the self-proclaimed capital of the ISIS "caliphate" at the time). She became the property of her owner who treated her brutally and sold her to other men just for money. At last, after four to five months of captivity she managed to escape and found refuge in Germany in 2015. In 2016 she published her autobiography *The Girl Who Escaped ISIS: This Is My Story*, co-written with journalist Andrea C. Hoffmann, in which she narrates all the wrong doings of ISIS as religious and patriarchal masters. *The Girl Who Escaped ISIS: This Is My Story* is thus not an autobiographic account of trauma and survival but also a strong voice of how religious extremism and patriarchal violence come to work together in order to dominate, silence, and dehumanize women.

This research study analyzes how Khalaf constructs identity, reveals ideological authority, and expresses resistance through her narrative. Fairclough's framework is particularly useful for textual analysis which connects the language with wider social relationships and demonstrates how discourses represent and re-create power, inequality, and ideology (Fairclough, 1992; Fairclough, 1993). Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's theories of life writing help to analyze the narrative techniques employed by the Farida Khalaf to construct her identity and her criticism of patriarchal oppression in her memoir (Fairclough, 1992; Smith and Watson, 2010). Khalaf has constructed her religious identity as being a Yazidi among the Sunni Muslims, to whom she blames as the exploiter of their religious identity. Her narrative can be discussed as one of the locations at which the Yazidi identity is established based on religious exclusion and extremism. The memoir exposes the patriarchal culture that objectifies women and legitimizes male violence through religious and ideological discourse (Khalaf & Hoffmann, 2016). Through autobiographical narration the author reasserts subjectivity, revealing oppression, and resistance of patriarchal structure. Smith and Watson's framework support this argument by defining autobiography as the practice of identity construction and the resistance instead of silence and coercion (Smith & Watson, 2010; Smith, 2016).

Research Question

How Farida Khalaf resist patriarchal oppression and constructs her identity in her autobiography *The Girl Who Escaped ISIS*?

Methodology

This paper uses qualitative interpretive approach to analyze Farida Khalaf's memoir *The Girl Who Escaped ISIS: This Is My Story* as a narrative of ideology, trauma, and resistance. The analysis applies Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), examining discourse at the textual, discursive, and social-practice levels (Fairclough, 1992). This method allows the researcher to move from close linguistic analysis to the broader social contexts that give language its meaning. Khalaf's memoir is not examined just as a transparent record of events but as a socially produced text in which power relations are represented and identity is constructed.

At the textual level, the analysis focuses on lexical choice, pronoun use, evaluative language, repetition, and metaphor to show how identity and domination are textualized. This aligns with Fairclough's claim that discourse is never neutral: even minor linguistic choices carry ideological force (Fairclough, 1992). At the level of discursive practice, the analysis shows how the memoir uses religious, political, and autobiographical discourses to depict ISIS ideology and Khalaf's opposition. In the memoir the text at the social-practice level is contextualized within broader

structures like patriarchy, war, genocide, and minority persecution to link textual meaning with historical and institutional factors (van Dijk, 2008; Fairclough, 1992).

This paper follows Smith and Watson's theories of life writing, which interpret autobiography as self-construction, testimony, and relational practice rather than mere self-reporting (Smith & Watson, 2010). The framework guides the analysis by foregrounding how autobiographical acts produce personal judgment and social bonds. Smith and Watson's theories is particularly relevant to Khalaf's memoir because it aligns personal pain as social testimony and enables narrative agency (Smith & Watson, 2010). This view is supported by Gusdorf, who argues that autobiography is shaped by the cultural and historical circumstances of the speaking subject, and by Olney, who contends that autobiographical writing orders the self through memory and metaphor (Gusdorf, 1980; Olney, 1980). This study adopts a feminist life-writing approach, focusing on women's narrative power and their resistance to patriarchal violence. Stanton (1987) and McLean (2010) argue that women's autobiography destroy dominant scripts and introduce new kind of subjectivities. This concept is particularly suitable for Khalaf's memoir because it frames her experience not only as a struggle for freedom or survival but as a discursive struggle against systems that tried to keep her silent. Methodologically, the study combines Critical Discourse Analysis and autobiographical theories to examine how Khalaf narrates trauma, identity, and resistance through language.

Literature Review

The origin of autobiography is unknown for scholars. Olney (1980) argues that autobiographical writing has long been widespread (p. 7), while Gusdorf (1980) expose that autobiography is relatively a new phenomenon, historically and geographically circumscribed phenomenon (p. 29). Alabi (2005) traces autobiography's deeper roots to African oral traditions, long used for self-expression and communication (p. 6). In contrast, Mason (1980) attests *The Book of Margery Kempe* (1432) as the first English autobiography (p. 209). These alternative views analyze that autobiography cannot be conceived from a single historical origin but emerge from different cultural practices of self-narration which further become a literary form. Its definition is also controversial: Olney (1980) explains that autobiography is not regulated by some formal codes and offers the more inclusive term periautography to write about yourself, thus offering autobiography as a form of literature that is least restrictive (p. 4). Smith and Watson (2010) argue that life writing is a relational practice in which identity is constructed through memory, address, and cultural context. Their framework is particularly relevant to Khalaf's memoir, as it illuminates how personal testimony transforms into public witness and political resistance.

The feminist scholarship has also revealed that gendered subjectivity is frequently revealed in the narratives of women and that these narratives reveal the social frameworks which govern them. Stanton (1987) challenges the belief in a universal autobiographical subject and Mason (1980) and Bowlby (1988) highlight the uniqueness of women writing about their lives in patriarchal societies. The same argument is made by McLean (2010) and Johnson (2023), who state that feminist life writing is often a narrative resistance that enables women to disrupt the scripts that are imposed on them. These understandings are significant to the text of Khalaf since her memoir does not simply describe the victimhood; it is a proactive challenge of the meanings constructed by ISIS and patriarchal ideology.

The analysis is further strengthened by theoretical work on patriarchy. Walby (1990) develops the concept of patriarchy as a social system that is perpetuated by institutions, culture and violence. Both MacKinnon (1987) and Nussbaum (1995) demonstrate that the subordination of women has a strong structural background in the sexuality and power structures and objectification degrades

women to the status of a tool to be used by others. Enloe (2000) shows that militarized societies are based on the management of bodies and identities of women. These patterns shed some light on the ideology logic of ISIS in the memoir written by Khalaf, autobiography has traditionally been viewed as the genre, which is influenced by history, culture, and self-representation. According to Gusdorf (1980), there is no such thing as a straightforward reflection of fact by autobiography but it is a self-interpretation that is influenced by the circumstances of narrative production. Smith and Watson (2010) analyze that writing is a relational practice whereby the autobiographical subject establishes identity based on memory, address, and cultural context.

Feminist scholarship has also revealed that the narratives of women tend to reveal the social frameworks that govern gendered subjectivity. Stanton (1987) doubts the existence of an autobiographical subject that is universal and Mason (1980) and Bowlby (1988) highlight the uniqueness of the life writing by women in patriarchal societies. Similarly, McLean (2010) and Johnson (2023) suggest that feminist life writing is often more of a narrative resistance in which women can subvert the scripts that have been enforced on their lives. Such insights play a crucial role in the text of Khalaf as her memoir is not just a retelling of being a victim, but it is an assertive challenge to the meanings constructed by ISIS and patriarchal ideology. This analysis is further enhanced by theoretical work on patriarchy. Walby (1990) conceptualizes patriarchy as a system of social relations which is perpetuated by institutions, culture and violence. MacKinnon (1987) asserts that the issue of subordination of women is intrinsic within sexual and power structures whereas Nussbaum (1995) demonstrates how objectification degrades women into being used by others. Enloe (2000) shows that militarized societies are based on controlling the bodies and identities of women. Those frameworks can be used to understand the ideological reasoning of ISIS in the memoir by Khalaf, as women are commodified, religious difference is a crime, and violence is justified as a divine command. Recent research about Yazidi women and ISIS captivity has demonstrated the trauma experienced by the captives was both psychological and structural. Kizilhan et al. (2020) explain the extreme psychological effects of captivity on Yazidi women, and Abbas (2024) and Bhattacharjee (2022) highlight the motifs of captivity, survival, and identity in the memoir of the author of the memoir Khalaf.

Analysis

This research analyzes Farida Khalaf's memoir *The Girl Who Escaped ISIS: This Is My Story* (2016) as a first-person narrative which exposes the themes of sexual slavery, captivity, and escape during the Yazidi genocide. Her memoir is not just a personal narrative but also a political text that exposes the patriarchal domination and asserts agency through narrative. The analysis is established with the perspective of Eastern culture on the key terms like patriarchy, resistance, power, oppression, empowerment, self-representation, and identity construction. Which show how Khalaf's voice disrupt silence and reclaims language as a tool of survival and witness. Farida Khalaf's story presents her personality at two different levels, one where she presents herself as a localized Yazidi girl and her second reflection is about global issues such as war, abduction, and religion. Theoretically, this research article employs Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how language constructs trauma, identity, and resistance. Here the Critical Discourse Analysis model is supported by Smith and Watson's theories of life writing, particularly their view of autobiography as a dialogic and political act. Collectively, these frameworks demonstrate how Khalaf's self-narration resists patriarchal authority and reconstructs her identity as both a survivor and a global witness.

Gendered Violence, Patriarchy, and Objectification

Throughout the memoir, a repeating theme is the reduction of women to objects of buying and selling. The claim that “Muslim women only benefit our protection” (Khalaf & Hoffmann, 2016, p. 66) transforms rights into privileges and equates safety with submission to a prescribed religious identity. This is a clear instance of objectification in Nussbaum’s sense (1995). Women are portrayed as entities whose worth is measured by their usefulness to male power. The grammar of ownership is explicit in the line, “you are now our property” (p. 58), which portrays women solely as objects, dependent on male authority to define and control their existence. Enloe (2000) explains this subordination as a function of militarization, since armed conflict often depends on the control and subjugation of women. In Khalaf’s memoir, ISIS is not only assaulting women physically but also reshaping social meaning so that women become prizes, slaves, wives, or bodies to be possessed. These violences are structural, not incidental, and are perpetuated through the intersection of patriarchy, war, and religious ideology.

Masculine privilege is embodied in scenes such as Azzad’s declaration to Khalaf “I want to make you my wife,” while keeping “his rifle close at hand” on the bed (p. 126). In this case, the proposal itself functions as a weapon: the rifle becomes a phallic symbol of both physical and symbolic power. This imagery reflects Simone de Beauvoir’s idea that woman is constructed as the “Other” in relation to man, who is positioned as the transcendent and armed subject. Marriage in this context is deprived of mutual consent and reframed as Authoritarian acquisition, where man has right to make decision, and the woman must have to obey it. Violence is embedded not only in the act but also in the language of religion. The “chant of Allahu Akbar” after every abusive action (p. 104) transforms a devotional phrase into an instrument of misogyny. Religious speech becomes an acoustic weapon, masking coercion and legitimizing domination. This concept is aligned with feminist discourse of patriarchal religion which analyze that how language can be mobilized to sanctify masculine dominance and suppress femininity, particularly under conditions of war and conquest.

Fairclough’s three-dimensional model examines discourse at the macro level, situating language within socio-political structures. It demonstrates how language both sustains and is sustained by institutionalized power relations (Fairclough, 1992). In Khalaf’s narrative, ISIS constructs a patriarchal economy that reduces women to commodities within the state. This system operates through interconnected principles that reinforce one another. The first is commodification, where women are treated as currency and rewards. The command to “offer a woman as a reward” (p. 95) literalizes the logic of war spoils, circulating women’s bodies as prizes for male warriors. Feminist studies of wartime sexual economies show that conquest treats women as both symbolic and material resources (Enloe, 2000). Second, militarized masculinity links aggression to sexual entitlement. Commands such as “I will teach you a lesson!” and the killing of female defiance function as corrective violence to secure male authority over women’s bodies (p. 104; Connell, 1995). Third, religion is enlisted to justify coercion. Threats like “If you don’t start showing respect for the one true God” (p. 119) and hurried prayers before assault (p. 118) fuse ritual with rape, masking violence as divine sanction (Christ, 2013). This three-dimensional model produces what Enloe (2000) calls the military-sexual complex of patriarchy. Militarized masculinity requires the victimization of women to validate itself. In ISIS, systematic enslavement, slave markets, coerced marriage contracts, and enforced contraceptive use are not aberrations but state policy. Women are treated as the infrastructure of the caliphate.

Discourse and Religious Domination of ISIS

In Khalaf's memoir, ISIS appropriates religion to legitimize its power. Baghdadi declares himself caliph and proclaims that their group is belonged to Muslim state (Khalaf & Hoffmann, 2016, pp. 29–31). He asserts this claim globally with his words like "O Muslims everywhere!" (p. 30). These proclamations fuse political authority with sacred sanction. The language naturalizes domination and suppresses dissent. ISIS frames coercion as a religious duty. The memoir presents violence as a form of holy correction. Statements like "In our Islamic State we will not tolerate any infidels" and "You must renounce this false belief and admit Islam instead" (p. 45) frame coercion as moral duty. This aligns with Walby's concept of structural patriarchy (1990) because her momoir exposes patriarchy not as a single act of violence but as a system of power embedded in religion, family, and social control. Khalaf is not oppressed by one male only she suppressed by a large patriarchal structural in which ISIS enforce ideology, armed force and social rule to control Yazidi women. MacKinnon's argument that male power is maintained by controlling women and sexuality (1987) is compatible for Khalaf memoir because ISIS describe women through their bodies, treat them as sexual property, and use religious discourse to legitimize their control over women. Khalaf shows that the misuse of religion is not merely tactical but a strategic rebranding to legitimize patriarchal, militarized authority.

Paternal Support to Daughter

Khalaf starts her narrative with the glorification of her father's image and identifies herself with her father. She narrates how her father is a competent father to raise his daughter. She mentions how he trained her for the upcoming challenges in life. She admires the fatherhood traits, instruction, motivation and protection, of her father by narrating how he taught her shooting with gun. According to Totenhagen et al., (2024) fathers are a source of empowerment that includes emotional support, involvement, and belief in the ability of daughters, instead of merely re-creating control-based, authoritarian masculinity. She gives a detailed explanation how her father taught her the use of gun. She narrates the commanding tone, when her father instructs his daughter "put your left foot a touch further forward and bend your legs slightly" (p. 6). She justifies the competence of her father as Iraqi border guard soldier by his instructions while teaching her the use of gun. She also portrays her a strong fifteen years old girl when she narrates the "Kalashnikov wasn't as heavy as I'd anticipated" (p. 6). Khalaf constructs her identity in relation to her father that like her father she is also brave and strong and face the upcoming hardships in life as being Yazidi and not a Muslim. She clearly narrates in the prologue that the major problems that were waiting for her were religion oriented. She admires the foresightedness of her father that he had given training to her mother, brother and to her for Yazidi and Muslim conflict. At first she thought that training is for the protection of home from the burglars. In this case of fatherhood, the masculine control is associated with protection, developing of skills, and confirmation, but not the domination or violence. Arguably, this is a nurturing patriarchy in lexicon (bravo, piece of cake, gentle imperatives) that avoids belittling of the Farida and puts her in readiness to struggle. The review also emphasizes that fathers who take an active role in the abilities and future agency of daughters also help to build long-term resilience and agency, such as the readiness of girls to overcome gender inequality and find means of protecting themselves in hostile settings. His prior assumption that she should be able to defend herself assists in scripting her subsequent taking charge in plotting escape and assisting other girls, which in fact, in theory, is what Totenhagen et al., (2024) say supportive fathering should do, empower their daughters to resist their sisters later on in life to the same sort of oppressive structures.

At the level of discursive practice, the father's speech participates in and reproduces patriarchal fatherhood. He invokes an older logic of delegated responsibility and demanded commitment: "You... must take care of the rest of the family till I come back. My daughter, promise me you will, my daughter?" (p. 28). He does not explicitly tie power to masculinity; that connection emerges when Farida asks, "Who is to defend us here?" and he replies, "You" and, "Or do you think teaching you how to shoot was a waste of time?" (p. 28). His answer expresses the belief and trusts he places in his daughter because he has made her strong enough to face life's challenges. This pattern of discursive entrustment repeats when he passes her the "third Kalashnikov" and asks her to watch the street from the roof (p. 35), converting a symbol of militarized masculinity into an ordinary family instrument. Through Smith and Watson's framework, it demonstrates how Farida navigates competing ideological discourses: her father's patriarchy equips her to handle a weapon (p. 7), which she can then deploy against ISIS's totalizing patriarchy "you are now our property" (p. 58). Her autobiographical performance, narrated as competence with the rifle, positions her as an agent who occupies the masculine-coded space of protection (Smith and Watson, 2010, p. 14). As Zhou et al. (2024) show, fathers' presence significantly promotes teenage girls' resilience, fully mediated by psychological security and partially mediated by achievement goal orientation, particularly mastery and performance goals.

At the social-practice level, the father and daughter's interactions must be analyzed against the broader patriarchal structures of ISIS's violent theocracy. Patriarchy exists locally, but it is not monolithic. The father is head of family, yet he supports his daughter's school expenses and entrusts her with protecting her mother. The mother's claim, "I will live on in her" (p. 50), analyze moral authority. This dynamic shift patriarchy toward a form of proto-feminist empowerment: fatherly power here make the daughter stronger rather than silences. Farida's autogynographical rejection of the slavery script models resistance, as Smith and Watson describe women's life writing as a means of self-authorization. By contrast, ISIS's patriarchy dehumanizes women treating them as property and "like the livestock market," equating bodies with animals (pp. 64-65). A girl raised in a flexible patriarchal family can therefore become the strongest challenge to an absolutist, misogynist regime, as Abdul Hamid admits: "If all the Yazidi men had fought like you, I bet we wouldn't have defeated them" (p. 127). This discussion demonstrates that the father-daughter relationship is not a side story but a core social engine by which patriarchal constructs are replicated as well as dismantled in a strategic way.

This study aligns with Corleis and Lesch (2024), who show that egalitarian fathering strengthens daughters' assertiveness against gender roles, and Zhou et al. (2024), who link paternal trust to resilience through psychological safety and mastery goals. Farida's father embodies this non-hierarchical trust, turning protection into skill-sharing that equips her to resist ISIS violence. Philipp et al. (2018) demonstrate that fathers of daughters often develop more empathetic attitudes toward gender barriers and support equality more than fathers of sons. This "daughter effect" pushes girls toward competence in traditionally male fields, not passive protection. Khalaf builds her identity on the courage her father instilled. Her defiant phrases "I spat at him," "Hurt me I will kill you" (p. 126) reverse ISIS's commodifying speech and reclaim agency. By narrating herself in active verbs, she echoes her father's insistence that women should learn to use weapons, symbolized by the Kalashnikov he entrusted to her (pp. 7, 35). As Philipp et al. argue, such paternal empowerment promotes gender equality, and as Zhou et al. note, it fosters resilience. Under ISIS violence, Farida's empowered voice becomes a direct threat to patriarchal control and foreshadows her escape.

Dehumanization vs. Identity Construction

According to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Norman Fairclough, the language used by the ISIS militants, is not merely descriptive, but actively constructs a social reality in which the Yazidi women systematically depersonalized. It starts with religious othering where ISIS dehumanize Yazidis on the base of their religion, as witnessed in the narrative when they declared their caliphate, O Muslims everywhere! (Khalaf, 2016, p. 30). The establishment of a strict binary between the faithful and those they call infidels is what enables the perpetrators of this discourse to construct a worldview in which human rights become conditional. The weaponization of religious ideology to legitimize the suspension of moral and legal protections of the other as one of the captors' states, "Infidels like you have no rights at all" (Khalaf, 2016, p. 66), which is how religious ideology is weaponized in order to justify the suspension of ethical and legal protection of the other. This dehumanization is further embedded by the language of objectification and commodity where the human beings are linguistically and physically transformed into economic resources. The discourse of Abu Arram, who is described as a "dealer" who buys and sells women (p. 84) replaces human identity with a market value. Farida is specifically labeled as property and slaves (p. 58). The classification that Smith and Watson (2010) analyze it as the identity. In this context, the autobiographical I of the victim needs to fight against a story that is forced by the oppressor. The fact that the militants laughed at the idea that she was going to be killed and dismiss it as a waste (p. 53), proves that her life is seen only through a functional and sexual prism, but not through a human one.

Khalaf start reasserting her identity by taking part in intellectual subversion, whereby she uses the same discourse of her oppressors to oppose them. She resists against ISIS through their religious context that there shall be no compulsion in the religion (p. 121) depicts that Khalaf use religious discourse of ISIS as a tool to fight against them. Her memoir shows that how she rejects the religious perspectives of ISIS taught her in captivity, "are we supposed to learn this by heart but ignore its meaning?" (p. 121) through this rhetorical change Khalaf turn from a position of obedience to critical agency, directly undermining the authority of her captor which he claims on her. This concept aligns with the Fairclough CDA which focuses on how individual can resist against power by revealing the contradictions and ridiculous piety of the dominant ideologies. Khalaf's shift from silent victim to theological debater, shows her rejection from the identity imposed on her. The girl who was degraded by ISIS "little bitch" (p. 53) become strong and prominent "little heroine" (p. 130) among the other captive girls. This transformation aligns with the Smith and Watson's (2010) concept of performing I which analyze she will no longer be a "property" to be sold, she is a rebellious subject whose identity change through communal recognition, and she feel proud on her survival (p. 146).

Scholars such as Bourke (2007) analyze that dehumanization is a psychological system of violence and Khalaf's narrative confirmed this claim, as captors linguistically reduce her from human to animal by calling her an "animal" or a "slut" (p. 82). This is calculated extermination of her humanity which is meant to make her sexual and physical exploitation acceptable within the ideological framework that the captor have. Nevertheless, the text ultimately suggests that identity is not lost for forever; it can be restored through communal recognition and the re-appropriation of agency. The fact that Farida feels pride and embarrassment (p. 146) when complimented about her rebelliousness, is the fact that restores the image of her social being, proving the fact that she has already surpassed the status of a property and has become a person, whose own courage and actions define her social being, rather than the labels of her oppressors.

Conclusion

This research reveals that Farida Khalaf's autobiography *The Girl Who Escaped ISIS: This Is My Story* (2016) is the narrative of resistance, survival, testimony, and memory. In the beginning Khalaf narrate herself as a typical Yazidi girl who lives her life with family, community and education. The ISIS attack shatters this life, transforming her into a captive subjected to terror and violence. The analysis demonstrate that her identity does not remain confined at victimhood it evolves into survivor and witness. Khalaf's autobiography is an attempt to reclaim her voice, reimagine experiences, and counter the identity imposed by ISIS. Instead of submitting ISIS ideology and accepting powerlessness, she constructs her identity as survivor, resister, and witness. Instead of yielding to their ideology and accepting powerlessness, she constructs herself as survivor, witness, and resister. This research analyzes that Khalaf resistance operate in both physical and discursive way. Physically, it appears in her escape, her refusal to submit to sexual slavery, and her defiance of control. Discursively, it emerges through narration speaking for herself and exposing the violence embedded in ISIS's religious discourse. Her memoir asserts selfhood. It demonstrates that even when women are reduced to objects, they can still speak. Farida's voice is therefore not only personal but political. It breaks the silence imposed by ISIS and transforms speech into an act of resistance. A second key insight is that in Farida Khalaf's memoir, religion functions as a tool of patriarchal oppression. ISIS interpret divine's will to justify violence, using religious rhetoric to legitimize slavery, sexual assault, and the subordination of women's bodies. Religion here operates less as faith or morality than as ideological domination. Khalaf's narrative exposes how patriarchal violence is enacted through the abuse of religion, reducing women to commodities of male power. At the same time, her narrative differentiate faith from violence. Her crucial narrative allows her to unveil the manipulation of religion from pure dignity of faith and human spirit.

In conclusion the preceding analysis demonstrates that, *The Girl Who Escaped ISIS* is not only a survival narrative; it is also a story of recovery and empowerment. Farida Khalaf's testimony analyzes that violence can destroy identity, but narrative can gain it. Her memoir depicts that survival is not physical but also discursive as she faces all the challenges and become the witness of every violence, and asserts her humanity and agency. The text evaluates patriarchal power and discourse which shows how society, language, religion, and ideology impose silence on women and sustain power. Through Critical Discourse Analysis, these systems are demonstrated to be systematic and legitimized rather than arbitrary. Memory, narrative, and survival enable Farida to break imposed silence and stand for herself. Her account stands as testimony to suffering, but equally to dignity, resistance, and the reclamation of voice.

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