

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

*The Fall of the Imam* by Nawal El Saadawi is a translational novel from *Soqout Al-Imam* (Arabic) by a translator, Sherif Hetata, her husband. The novel first published in Great Britain 1988 by Methuen London. *The Fall of the Imam* has 175 pages divided in 39 chapters. That novel has strong influence to the reader. By the novel, the writer tells about conditions of community such as form, term, rule and the excess from them therefore that make it interest to the reader. The novel describes an inequality in Arabic culture so that the novel is banned in Egypt, the place where the writer lives. When the novel is published in the state, public and religious authority do not like the novel as it against their influence. It is very wonderful how the novel tells about religious rules which are opposite to human rights. The novel tells about illogical deed which people believe in. When *The Fall of the Imam* was published in Cairo, the writer began to receive threats from fundamentalist religious group. In 2004, Cairo's al-Azhar University, the most influential seat of Sunni Muslim learning in the world, banned novel *The Fall of the Imam*. *The novel was written as a symbol of protest to Arabic culture and some religious rules which are practiced in the state and make human suffering.*

El Saadawi was born in 1931 in Kafr Tahla, a small village outside of Cairo, in the Nile Delta region of Lower Egypt. Her family was relatively

traditional, and yet somewhat progressive. Her father was a government official in the Ministry of Education; his integrity as a man opposed to corruption gave El Saadawi a model of independent thinking and also taught her self-respect. Against the common practice, her father insisted that all of his nine children should be educated and sent them all to school. El Saadawi's mother came from an upper-class family; she died when El Saadawi was twenty-five, and soon afterward, El Saadawi's father died. El Saadawi said about her mother that she would have been an early fighter for women's rights, if she had not buried her beliefs in her marriage. Despite limitation imposed by both religious and colonial oppression on rural women, El Saadawi attended the University of Cairo and graduated in 1955 with a degree in psychiatry. After completing her education, El Saadawi practiced psychiatry and eventually rose to become Egypt's Director of Public Health. El Saadawi met her husband, Sherif Hetata, also a doctor, while working in the Ministry of Health, where the two shared an office together. Hetata shared El Saadawi's leftist views, he had been imprisoned for 13 years for his participation in a left-wing opposition party.

Since she began to write over 25 years ago, El Saadawi's books (27 in all) have concentrated on women, particularly Arab women, their sexuality and legal status. From the start, her writings were considered controversial and dangerous for the society, and were banished in Egypt. As a result, El Saadawi was forced to publish her works in Beirut, Lebanon. In 1972, her first work of non-fiction, *Women and Sex*, which as the title suggests, dealt with the highly taboo subject of women and sexuality, and also the sensitive subjects of politics and religion. This

publication evoked the anger of highly placed political and theological authorities, and the Ministry of Health was pressured into dismissing her. Under similar pressures she lost her post as Chief Editor of a health journal and as Assistant General Secretary in the Medical Association in Egypt.

From 1973 to 1976 she researched women and neurosis in the Ain Shams University's Faculty of Medicine. Her results were published in *Women and Neurosis in Egypt* in 1976, which included 20 in-depth case studies of women in prisons and hospitals. This research also inspired her novel *Woman at Point Zero*, which was based on a female death row inmate convicted of murdering her husband that she met while conducting the research.

In 1977, she published her most famous work, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, which covered a host of topics relative to Arab women such as aggression against female children and female genital mutilation, prostitution, sexual relationships, marriage and divorce and Islamic fundamentalism. From 1979-1980 El Saadawi was the United Nations Advisor for the Women's Program in Africa (ECA) and the Middle East (ECWA).

Later in 1980, as a culmination of the long war she had fought for Egyptian women's social and intellectual freedom, an activity that had closed all avenues of official jobs to her, she was imprisoned under the Sadat regime, for alleged crimes against the state. El Saadawi stated that she was arrested because she believed Sadat. He said there is democracy and they have a multi-party system and they can criticize. So she started criticizing his policy and she landed in jail. In spite of her imprisonment, El Saadawi continued to fight against oppression. Although she

was denied pen and paper, El Saadawi continued to write in prison, using a stubby black eyebrow pencil and a small roll of old and tattered toilet paper. She was released in 1982, and in 1983 she published *Memoirs from the Women's Prison*, in which she continued her bold attacks on the repressive Egyptian government. In the afterward to her memoirs, she notes the corrupt nature of her country's government, the dangers of publishing under such authoritarian conditions and her determination to continue to write the truth.

El Saadawi formed the Arab Women's Solidarity Association in 1981. The AWSA was the first legal, independent feminist organization in Egypt. The organization has 500 members locally and more than 2,000 internationally. The Association holds international conferences and seminars, publishes a magazine and has started income-generating projects for women in rural areas. The AWSA was banned in 1991 after criticizing US involvement in the Gulf War, which El Saadawi felt it should have been solved among the Arabs.

When she came out of prison there were two routes she could have taken. She could have become one of those slaves to the ruling institution, thereby acquiring security, prosperity, the state prize, and the title of great writer; she could have seen her picture in the newspapers and on television. Or she could continue on the difficult path, the one that had led her to prison. Danger has been a part of her life ever since she picked up a pen and wrote. Nothing is more perilous than truth in a world that lies. Nothing is more perilous than knowledge in a world that has considered knowledge a sin since Adam and Eve. There is no power in the world that can strip her writings from her. Even after her release

from prison, El Saadawi's life was threatened by those who opposed her work, mainly Islamic fundamentalists, and armed guards were stationed outside her house in Giza for several years until she left the country to be a visiting professor at North American universities.

El Saadawi was the writer in residence at Duke University's Asian and African Languages Department from 1993-1996. She also taught at Washington State University in Seattle. El Saadawi continues to devote her time to being a writer, journalist and worldwide speaker on women's issues. Her current project is writing her autobiography, laboring over it for 10 hours a day.

Her works are all originals in Arabic. Many have been translated into English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Italian, Dutch, Finnish, Indonesian, Japanese, Iranian, Turkish, Urdu, and other 30 languages. Some of her literary works are *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* (Cairo, 1958), *The Absent One* (Cairo, 1969), *Woman at Point Zero* (Beirut, 1973), *The Death of the Only Man on Earth* (Beirut, 1975), *The Children's Circling Song* (Beirut, 1976), *The Hidden Face of Eve* (1977), *The Fall of the Imam* (Cairo, 1987), *Granat and the Devil* (Beirut, 1991), *Love in the Kingdom of Oil* (Cairo, 1993).

*Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* was wrote in Cairo in 1958 and then published in London on June 1987. The memoir criticizes government which banned revolutionary feminist novel which revealed the double exploitation of Egyptian women both their general, social oppression and their private oppression through the institution of marriage.

*Woman at Point Zero* was published in Beirut (1973) stories about alive trip of an Egypt woman who named Firdaus. She is born at village, grown adult be bitch up to approach her death caused death sentence verdict caused by she kills a pimp.

*God Dies by the Nile* first published in Arabic in Beirut in 1974, under the title *The Death of the Only Man on Earth*, and first published in English in 1985. The novel stories Zakeya, who lives in a village on the banks of the Nile, is a poor, illiterate peasant woman whose relatives are cynically exploited and victimized by the mayor and his local cohorts. Her story is a simple, tragic one of a petty tyrant's determination to satisfy his illicit sexual lust for her two young nieces, a story which culminated in her ultimate revenge. This new novel by Nawal el Saadawi illustrated the class dimension of the oppression of women, as well as of their families. It can also be seen as a metaphor for the Sadat regime and landlords' oppression in general.

*The Hidden Face of Eve* was published 1977. This novel is a personal and often disturbing account of growing up into womanhood in the Islamic world. The author ranges over a host of topics - from sexual aggression against female children and the circumcision of young girls, to prostitution, sexual relationships, marriage and divorce. She relates women's position in the Middle East to the struggles between the left and right in Islam, and shows how the political priorities of Western and Third World women differ.

*The Fall of the Imam* novel tells about Bint Allah, a girl who is born without a father, they also call the daughter of Allah. Her mother was killed. She

was stoned to the death. People said that her mother never knew what loyalty means, neither to the land, nor to the Imam of Allah. She died as an infidel, and will be burn in hell. But Bint Allah never accept that, she said her mother never be a traitor. When she was born, her father left her away, she said to the people her father is the Imam. When she replies that he is the Imam, they scream and cut out her tongue. This scene varies in the details each time that it appears within the book. Sometimes she is stoned to death, other times she is stabbed or shot.

There is no equality between women and men. Buffalos are more precious than women. Men can have four wives but can only have one buffalo. Bint Allah usually thinks her self was visited by God. God appears in many faces, sometime with Imam's face. Bint Allah grows up in an orphanage after her mother's death and she is given the name Bint Allah, which means "Daughter of God." Within the orphanage, her caretakers subject her to mental and physical abuse. One in particular is a man named Baba. His right hand always held a stick. Bint Allah is unaware of what the punishment entails until Baba decides that it is her turn.

The Imam has a power in his land. Imam uses religion and shariat to abuse the power that belongs to him as an Imam. His words are rules. He governs according to the law of God's shariat. There are many laws should be obeyed such as stoned adulterous women to the death, cut off the hands of those who commit a thief, slash off the tongues that speared rumors about irradiated milk, pour all bottles, a cask, and all barrels of alcoholics drink, into the water of the river. The Imam is a vindictive figure. He was born peasant, he was so poor. He despises richer and more intelligent man than him, and he holds those grudges still. He

wishes to control the world, to make it into a rigid place, everything is in order, even the party of the opposition (hizb al shaitan), which himself funds with the intention of making himself look democratic. The Imam's bodyguard is a double. They save the Imam from a murderer. He has ungraceful figure, full of spite and rage, who even betrays his own mother.

The next day the assassination attempt on the Imam occurs. It is possible that the reader could interpret those last lines as Bint Allah's decision to kill the Imam. However, because of the ambiguity that surrounds every event in this story, it is hard to find concrete details to support that interpretation from Bint Allah's mother's death, to her abuse in the orphanage, to her subjection at the hands of the Imam, and finally to her death.

*The Fall of the Imam* is the novel that has message to readers to have freedom of thought in their minds. Saadawi hopes to the reader to ignore every rule in the world as long as the rule is not suitable with truth despite the rule come from costume or religious ordinary. She believes that the highest truth come from human view so that something can be decided true whether it has useful in human life. Beside that, she hopes the reader to fight leader as long as he has bad character. In the novel, Saadawi often shows how some Arabic culture and religious rule make suffering to human and how culture treats woman under standard of human values. Saadawi also often picks up a religious deed which consciously was discredited in order to ironies some of religious order.

Saadawi creates the novel based on human fact in her life and fact of life arises caused by human activities. She has world view that the fact should be

fought because it is not suitable with human right. The novel is one of ways to do it. She hopes by the novel she protests to inequality in society. Saadawi carries the reader to wake up their thought method, to awareness themselves that parameter of true is its useful to human life.

Writer chooses the novel to be analyzed since the novel tells about inequality in society, despite of there is no one to fight that since the rule which cling them sources from custom and religious rules. The fact makes dependent thought in life of the society. Writer knows that the fact is supported by many of people, because that the writer builds the study to open view of the world of reader. Writer wants the reader has freedom of thought in his mind.

Based on the data, writer analyzes *The Fall of the Imam* by Genetic Structuralism approach to dig up Saadawi's view of world and entitles the study *Freedom of Thought in The Fall of the Imam Novel by Nawal El Saadawi (1988): A Genetic Structuralism Approach*. To reach the purpose of the study, writer analyzes the novel on its nature of literary, nature of author, and nature of society.

## **B. Literature Review**

Having checked and observed exhaustively the writer finds there are many researches that have been conducted to study Nawal El Saadawi's works. The writer will present the previous research that deal especially with the variety of the study about Nawal El saadawi's works.

The previous research was done by Diana Royer in King's College 2009 entitled "A *Critical Study of the Works of Nawal El Saadawi, Egyptian Writer and Activist*". This study sets El Saadawi's literary work within the context of her

activism, in particular showing how her ideas for the renewal of society run through her writing. As a companion for reading her fiction and nonfiction, this study contextualizes her work by taking into consideration the complexities of Egyptian society today – in particular, Islamic fundamentalism and women’s status. It also introduces the current scholarly debate on ancient women’s status. Chapters on individual novels look both at technique (oral literary traditions, woman’s narrative, imagery) and topic (female circumcision, gender roles, prostitution, honor killing). Novels were examined are *Two Women in One*, *The Circling Song*, *Woman at Point Zero*, and *God Dies By the Nile*.

In additions, the previous research was done by Pranjals in Egypt 2008 entitled “*Female Degradation in Egyptian Novelist Nawal Saadawi’s Woman at Point Zero (1998) and Its Broader Feminist and Cultural Implications*”. This study explains that *Woman at Point Zero* novel have taken a dim view of the particularly inhumane treatment of many Muslim women within southern areas, such as the Africa, where Islam is practiced. The study points out that Nawal El Saadawi’s work about women's unequal treatment by men in Islamic societies. The novel relates the plot of Saadawi's story about the protagonist Firdaus, an Egyptian-born perpetually abused woman, who out of desperation becomes a prostitute and murders a pimp.

Third, the previous research was done by Mellen in London 2004 entitled “*Saikaku, Pushkin, and Saadawi: Is Justice Possible?*”. The study sets that the concept of justice, in literature and in life, is a universally cherished yet complex and inherently ambiguous one. Ihara Saikaku in “*The Barrelmaker, Brimful of*

*Love*", Alexander Pushkin in "*The Queen of Spades*", nor Nawal El Saadawi in "*In Camera*" depict justice as feasible within the socially-constructed institutions (e.g., insane asylums; courtrooms; marriage) or other elements of a perceived human nature (e.g., agreements; promises, exchanges of goods for services, verbal contracts) depicted within these three stories. Instead, self-interest takes precedent over justice (or even fair play, propriety, or basic human decency).

Based on the three researches above, the writer can conclude that this research is different from them. This research discusses Saadawi's world view which present in *The Fall of the Imam* novel. Writer will show the novel on its nature of literary, nature of author, and nature of society. The first previous study, she examines *Two Women in One*, *The Circling Song*, *Woman at Point Zero*, and *God Dies By the Nile*. She concludes Saadawi's ideas in these novels for the renewal of society. The second researcher examines *Woman at Point Zero*. He relates the plot of Saadawi's story about the protagonist Firdaus. The last previous study, he discusses about concept of justice which is presented by Nawal El Saadawi in *In Camera*.

### **C. Problem Statement**

The major problem of this study is "how is Nawal El Saadawi's world view reflected in her novel *The Fall of the Imam* using Genetic Structural Approach?".

### **D. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of study are as follows:

1. To describe the structural elements of the novel.

2. To analyze the novel by means of sociological perspective particularly Genetic Structuralism approach to find the world view of Nawal El Saadawi.

#### **E. Limitation of the Study**

This study only concerns in The *Fall of the Imam* novel by Nawal El Saadawi, analyzes the novel on its nature of literary, nature of author, and nature of society to dig up Saadawi's view of world.

#### **F. Benefit of the Study**

The study is expected to give benefits as follows:

##### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

To give some contribution to the development of the large of knowledge, particularly the literary study on The Fall of the Imam, principally, Genetic Structuralism approach.

##### **2. Practical Benefit**

To enrich literary study, particularly among the students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.

#### **G. Research Method**

##### **1. Type of Research**

In writing the study, the writer employs the descriptive qualitative research. Moleong (1983: 3) affirms that qualitative research is a research which result in the descriptive data in the form observed people or behaviors. Then, the steps of conducting this qualitative study are (1) determining the

object of the study (2) determining the source of the data (3) determining the method of data collection, and (4) determining the technique of data analysis.

## **2. Object of the Study**

Object of the study is novel *The Fall of the Imam* by Nawal El Saadawi.

## **3. Type of the Data and Data Source**

### **a. Primary Source**

The primary data are taken from novel *The Fall of the Imam* by Nawal El Saadawi. It comprises such things as words, phrases, sentences events, and narration.

### **b. Secondary Sources**

The secondary data are taken from any information related to the novel. The writer also gathers information of Nawal El Saadawi's background and her works from many books.

## **4. Technique of the Data Collection**

In conducting the study, the writer uses the techniques of documentation in collecting the data.

1. Reading the novel repeatedly.
2. Taking notes of important part from primary and secondary data available.
3. Selecting the data by rejecting the irrelevant information which does not support the topic of the study.

## 5. Technique of the Data Analysis

In analyzing data, the writer employs descriptive qualitative analysis of content. The steps of technique of the data analysis arrange as follows:

1. Analyze the structural elements of the work.
2. Try to decide the sociological analysis of the literary work.
3. Make discussion of the finding.
4. Make conclusion and discussion.

## H. Paper Organization

The organization of this study is explained in order the reader to be able to understand the content of the paper easier. They are as follows:

*Chapter I* is introduction, which consists of background of the study, literary review, problem statements, objectives of the study, limitation of the study, the benefit of the study, research method, and paper organization.

*Chapter II* is underlying theory, which presents the notion of genetic structuralism, major principles of genetic structuralism, structural elements of the novel, notion of freedom of thought.

*Chapter III* is social background of the Egypt society in the middle twentieth century. It relates to the social background which consist social, economic, political, science and technology, cultural, and religious aspects. It also relates biography of Nawal El Saadawi.

*Chapter IV* is structural analysis which presents structural elements and discussion.

*Chapter V* is sociological analysis. Writer will present genetic structuralism analysis which relates human facts, collective subject, world view, structure of work, dialectical conception between comprehension and explanation, and discussion.

*Chapter VI* is conclusion and suggestion.