

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Fedwa Malti-Douglas writes, in her 1995 study *Men, Women, and Gods: Nawal El Saadawi and Arab Feminist Poetics* that no Arab woman inspires as much emotion as Nawal el Saadawi. No woman in the Middle East has been the subject of more polemic. Certainly, no Arab woman's pen has violated as many sacred enclosures.' The metaphor is apt, for enclosures of all kinds have been a dominant concern for El Saadawi throughout her written work: the enclosures of the house, of religion, of the family, and most powerfully that last enclosure of the female body, the hymen, symbolic of a woman's honour or disgrace and too often the determiner of her fate. The image of violation also moves beyond clichée, for violence and its aftermath is El Saadawi's great subject, both the symbolic violence of repression and the specific traumas which she herself has witnessed. Violence, and in addition justice, are the poles of meaning in her work; and these two forces pull within her fiction, both providing its power and demonstrating its limitations.

Female oppression is a problem that still exists in present day society. fact that we live in modern world with monumental technological advancement has not changed the grim reality that women are

discriminated against and suppressed because of the patriarchal molded structures (Laligens, 2012: 15-16).

The cultural beliefs, traditions and religions of most societies give more attention to patriarchy thereby ensuring the continuation of the domination and repression of women. Any attempt by women to protest against the injustices and discrimination meted by the men folk is equal to challenging age long tradition and culture which is perceived to be a sacrilege. Therefore she is made to accept her subordinate and second class position. It is no gainsaying that women have proved their mettle in social, economic and political spheres of the society by making meaningful contribution to its development. In spite of these, a woman, especially in Africa, is only respected and regarded as fulfilled when she performs her traditional duties as a housewife, mother, homemaker and caregiver who is meant to be seen and not heard. Any other role contrary to these stereotypical roles is regarded as an affront to male authority and ego which results in violence and oppression (Laligens, 2012: 16).

Nawal El Saadawi is an Egyptian novelist, a doctor and a militant writer on Arab women's life conditions. She was born in 1931 in the village of Kafr Tahla in the Egyptian Delta, and attended college at the Faculty of Medicine in Cairo, "one of approximately fifty women among hundreds of men (Douglas ,1995: p. 11).

Nawal El Saadawi is known for her controversial writings, often an invitation to question authority and patriarchal power. Dismissed from Ministry of Health, Chief Editor of an important health journal, Assistant General Secretary in the Medical Association in Egypt, and imprisoned in 1981 for her courageous political activity, Nawal El Saadawi has often been silenced for advocating women's liberation. Her Arab Women's Solidarity Association, an international organization dedicated to "lifting the veil from the mind" of the Arab Women (Douglas ,1995: p. 11), and her controversial books, are just few examples of her important work.

Nawal El Saadawi was born in 1931 in the village of Kafr Tahla in the Egyptian Delta, and "grew up in a large family of nine brothers and sisters". Her father believed strongly in education, which helped him to become a high official in the Egyptian Ministry of Education. El Saadawi, for her part, attended public schools before going on to study in the faculty of medicine at the University of Cairo. In other words, El Saadawi's formal education took place in native Egyptian Arabic-language schools. This is hardly a given for Arab intellectuals, many of whom received substantial amounts of their education either outside the region or in foreign (and generally foreign-language) schools in the Middle East. Nor was Nawal the only child in her family to attend college: all her siblings did as well. But El Saadawi did not choose to pursue medicine for its own sake. Rather, as she puts it, "the Faculty of Medicine takes the best students, those with the highest grades." One of approximately fifty women among hundreds of men

she graduated in 1955. As a physician, El Saadawi practiced in the areas of thoracic medicine and psychiatry. She was appointed to the Ministry of Health in 1958, but in August 1972 she was dismissed from the ministry and from her post as Egypt's national public health director owing to her frank writings on sexuality, specifically in *Woman and Sex* (Doglas, 1955: 7).

Nawal El Saadawi has held positions of Author for the Supreme Council for Arts and Social Sciences, Cairo; Director General of the Health Education Department, Ministry of Health, Cairo, Secretary General of Medical Association, Cairo, Egypt, and Medical Doctor, University Hospital and Ministry of Health. She is the founder of Health Education Association and the Egyptian Women Writers Association; she was Chief Editor of *Health Magazine* in Cairo, Egypt and Editor of *Medical Association Magazine* (<http://www.Webster.edu/%7Ewoolfm/saadawi.html>)

In 1972, she published her first work of non-fiction, *Women and Sex*, which evoked the antagonism of highly placed political and theological authorities and led to a dismissal at the Ministry of Health. Other works include *The Hidden Face of Eve*, *God Dies by the Nile*, *The Circling Song Searching*, *The Fall of the Imam and Women at Point Zero*. This novel in an Initially, Egyptian publisher rejected the book and the first Egyptian publisher in Lebanon in 1985. *Women at Point Zero* has subsequently been published in twenty-two languages. The English language translation was originally published in 1983 by Zed Books Ltd in London and Room 400 in New York.

At the end of 1972 Saadawi was removed from her position as the Director of Health Education and the Editor-in-Chief of *Health* magazine after the publication of *Women and Sex*. She began research on neurosis in Egyptian women, during which she met a doctor at Qanatir Prison who talked to her about the inmates, including a female prisoner who had killed a man and had been sentenced to hanging. Saadawi was interested in meeting the woman and visiting the prison, and her colleague arranged for her to conduct her research at Qantair Prison in the autumn of 1974. Saadawi visited many women in the cell block and in the mental clinic and was able to conduct twenty-one in-depth case studies for her 1976 publication, *Women and Neurosis in Egypt*, but Firdaus remained, a woman apart. Firdaus was executed in 1974, but she left a lasting impact on Saadawi, who said she could not rest until she'd written about Firdaus' story and finished the novel in one week. Saadawi describes Firdaus as a martyr and says she admires her because, "Few people are ready to face death for a principle. Later, when Saadawi was imprisoned in Qanatir in 1981 for political offenses, she reflected that she would find herself looking for Firdaus among the prison population, unable to believe that the woman who had inspired her so much was truly dead. ([http://www. Woman at Point Zero- the free encyclopedia.html](http://www.Woman at Point Zero- the free encyclopedia.html)).

The novel opens with a psychiatrist who is researching inmates at a women's prison. The prison doctor speaks of a woman, Firdaus, who is unlike any of the murderers in the prison: she rarely eats or sleeps, she never

talks, and she never accepts visitors. He feels certain the woman is incapable of murder, but she has refused to sign any appeals on her behalf. The psychiatrist makes several attempts to speak with her, but Firdaus declines. This rejection causes the psychiatrist to have a crisis of self-confidence. She became consumed with the idea that Firdaus was better than herself, and possibly better than even the president, whom she has refused to send an appeal to. As the psychiatrist is leaving the warder comes to her with an urgent message: Firdaus wants to speak to her. Upon meeting, Firdaus promptly tells her to close the window, sit down, and listen. She explains that she is going to be executed that evening and she wants to tell her life story. (<http://www.Woman at Point Zero –the free encyclopedia.html>).

There are four reasons why the writer is interested in studying this novel; first is researcher has a high regard for the bravery of Nawal El Saadawi. The second is researcher want to several Sexual Harassment in the novel. The third is women position in that era. The fourth is plot in the novel Women at Point Zero. The fifth is the main issue.

The first, researchers has a high regard for the bravery of Nawal El Saadawi as women at Point Zero (1983) writer. The writer thinks that Nawal El Saadawi is a popular female writer in Egypt. Most of her work radical. They opposed Egypt Islamic review and social value, because they were talking about sexuality, women and sex. Second is the researcher want to several sexual harassment in the novel.

The third reason is that the novel talked about women's position on that era. *Women at Point Zero* (1983) became possible to challenge the normative standards of Mubarrak's Era. Egyptian women have struggled throughout the century to establish their presence as full-fledged partners with men in the public sphere. Their presence outside the domestic sphere has increased as a result of numerous factors, namely education, economic necessity, and the will of the political elite; but most importantly as a result of their own efforts.

The Fourth reason is that the plot of the novel is interesting. The writer of the novel aroused the problem from unpredictable part of the novel. The readers can't guess the crucial problem before they finish reading the novel. Fifth, the main issue of the novel is reflected well. *Women at Point Zero* (1983) is popular with issue of the sexual harassment.

The researchers uses the feminist approach as an approach to analyze this novel, because the story of the novel is the sexual harassment women about sex, prostitution and oppression in life before she died. By so doing, the writer gives the title: **SEXUAL HARASSMENT REFLECTED AT NAWAL EL SAADAWI 'S WOMEN AT POINT ZERO (1983): A FEMINIST APPROACH.**

B. Literature Review

The writer presents the previous study that deals with the study of this novel. There are others writers who conducted different studies of the women at point zero for their thesis.

The thesis of charity Izzumi Isaka (2010) from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology entitled the Situation of the Women in Patriarchal African society: A Study of Nawal El Saadawi's *God Dies by The Nile and Women at Point Zero*. Content from this novel about the existing literature on Africa clearly shows that women occupy an inferior position in society. The study found that even though women occupy an inferior position in traditional society; Islamic societies manipulate the precepts of Islam in order to oppress and restrict women. Besides, the study concluded that patriarchy, a cultural constraint in *God Dies by the Nile and Woman at Point Zero* emerges as a system with political, economic, social, cultural, and psychological manifestations bound together by underlying class dynamics.

Fwangyil, Gloria Ada (2012) in his thesis entitled *Cradle to Grave: an Analysis of Female Oppression in Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero* from Department of English, Faculty of Arts University of Jos, Nigeria. This content from this novel about the subjugation of women is a plague that cuts across African societies. This social evil of marginalization that cuts across an entire continent calls for a concerted effort from women around the world to join hands together and fight for their liberation.

Since suffering is a common denominator that they share together, they need to unite and see to its stoppage.

Priccilia Wulan Agustin (2011) in her thesis entitled *Fighting Patriarchy Women at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi from SatyaWacana Christian University Salatiga. Content about The subjugation of women is a plague that cuts across African societies. This one from the human rights denial is gender-related in this patriarchal world, women are often considered to be in a lower position than men and are actually still under control by men.

Christine Rene, in her thesis entitled *A Study on Men's Oppression and its Effect toward Firdaus which Leads to Her Search for Self Esteem in Nawal El Saadawi's Women at Point Zero*. In this content about This thesis mainly deals with men's oppression and its effect toward Firdaus which leads her to her search for self-esteem in Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*. I find out that Firdaus, the main female character in the novel, has experienced unbearable suffering in her life which leads her to hate men and the hatred makes her wants to find her own self-esteem in order to be respected.

Francesca Coin (2006) in her thesis entitled *On the Condition of the Colonized Woman: the Nervous Conditions of Firdaus in Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero* (1983), Giunti, Firenze 2001. A Content about analysis Nervous Conditions of Firdaus.

C. Problem Statement

Based on the previous background of the study, the writer proposed the problem: “How is Sexual Harassment reflected at Nawal E Saadawi *Women at Point Zero* (1983): A feminist Approach?”

D. Limitation of The Study

To make it easier for the writer to conduct the study, she gives limitation of the problem on the central character Firdaus in her sexual harassment, viewed Feminist perspective.

E. Objectives of the Study

In carrying in this research the writer formulates the objectives of the study as follows are:

1. To describe novel *Women at Point Zero* (1983) based on structural elements of novel.
2. To analyze in the sexual harassment women Firdaus’s in the novel *Women at Point Zero* (1983) reflected at Nawal El Saadawi.

F. The Benefit of the Study

The writer really hopes that his research on sexual harassment women Firdaus’s in the novel *Women at Point Zero* (1983) reflected at Nawal El Saadawi.

The benefit of this study will be distinguished into two benefits:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The result of this study is expected to be able to give information and contribution the development of the knowledge, an academic reference

by other researches to conduct further research and particularly the literary studies on sexual harassment women Firdaus's in the novel *Women at Point Zero* (1983) reflected at Nawal El Saadawi.

2. Practical Benefit

The study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience of the writer and another student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or another University who have interest with literary study on the novel from feminist Approach.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the study

In this research, the writer uses a qualitative research. It is a library research while the data are using literary data. It purposes to analyze novel using feminist approach. The steps to conduct research are (a) determining the type of the study (b) determining object of the study, (c) determining data and source, (d) determining technique of data collection, and (e) determining technique of data analysis.

2. Object of the study

The object of the study is suppression women to Firdaus reflected at Nawal El Saadawi in *Women at point zero* (1983): feminist perspective. It is analyzed by using a feminist perspective.

3. Type of the Data and Data Source

There are two data sources that are needed to do this research, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources.

Primary data sources

The primary data sources in novel *Women at Point Zero* (1983): published by Nawal El-saadawi.

Secondary data sources

The secondary data sources are from other sources related the study, such as: website, dictionary, some books that support the analysis.

a. Technique of Data Collection

The methods of collecting data are documentation the note taking, with the steps are:

- 1) Reading the novel,
- 2) Determining the character that will be analyzed,
- 3) Taking notes of important thing both of primary and secondary data source,
- 4) Classifying and determining the relevant data,
- 5) Browsing on the internet to search information that relates with novel.

b. Technique of Data Analysis

The technique used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. It concerns with structural element of the novel on ssexual harassment women

to Firdaus reflected at Nawal El Saadawi in *Women at point zero* (1983): feminist perspective.

H. Paper Organization

The research paper organization of: “Sexual Harassment to Firdaus reflected at Nawal El Saadawi in *Women at point zero* (1983): feminist approach.” is as follows Chapter I is Introduction, limitation of the study, objective of the study, literary review, problem statement, benefit of the study, theoretical approach, research method and research paper organization. Chapter II comprises of the theoretical approach, women’s position, women’s right, women’s role, women’s participation. Chapter III deals with structural analysis of the novel, which involves the narrative elements and discussion. Chapter IV presents the Feminist analysis criticism and discussion. Chapter V presents conclusion and suggestion. The last part will be bibliography, virtual reference, and appendix.