

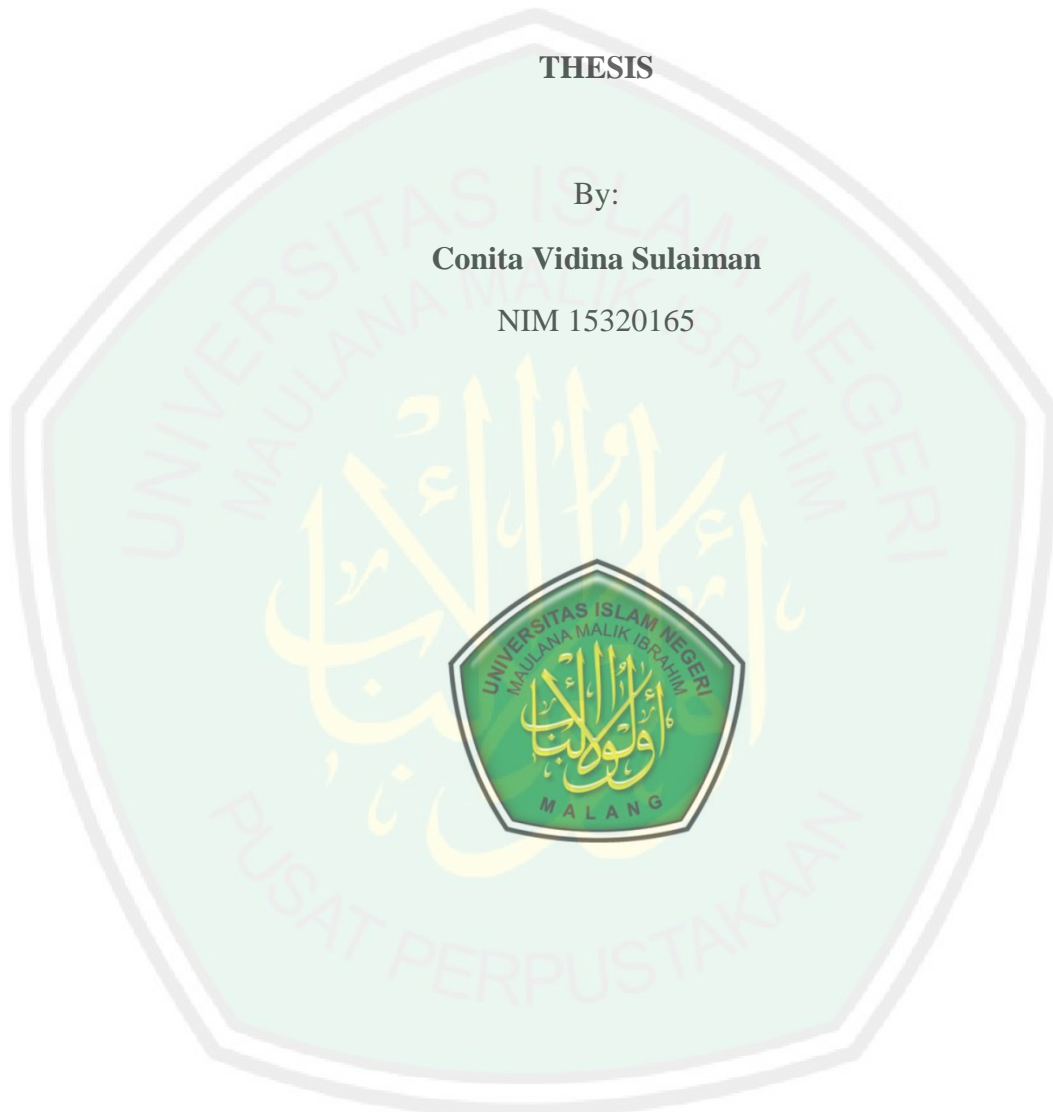
**FIRDAUS' PROBLEMS AS AN EGYPTIAN WOMAN OF 1980s
REFLECTED IN *WOMAN AT POINT ZERO* BY NAWAL EL-
SAADAWI**

THESIS

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM
MALANG
2019**

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THESIS

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S)

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MALANG
2019**

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled "*Firdaus' Problems As an Egyptian Woman of 1980s Reflected in Woman at Point Zero by Nawal El-Saadawi*" is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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MOTTO

A girl becomes a woman,

When she learns to love herself more than she loves a man

-Emma Watson-



DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved mother, Juhairiah and my lovely father, Sulaiman. I also dedicate this thesis to my one and only sibling that I have, Ahmad Denny Pramudia Ananta. This little family has provided endless supports and prayers to my Sarjana Study.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All praises to Allah SWT, who has given His blessings and guidance from all periods of my life, including this Sarjana study journey. Blessing and salutation may be upon our prophet Muhammad SAW who has been a good figure in the overall of our life.

My deepest gratitude goes to my advisor Mr. Ahmad Khozi, M.A for his endless love, encouragement, commitment, and supervision during the study. During the process of working on this thesis, he also has provided me clear directions, feedback, guidance, and critical questions. I also would like to say thank you to Mr. Agung Wiranata for being like a father who always reminds me and gave me evaluations, suggestions and also motivations during working on my thesis. I also profoundly thank the examiners whose questions, clarifications, and suggestions have been improving the quality of my thesis.

I am also profoundly thankful to all lecturers at the English Literature Department of Humanity Faculty for the insightful knowledge and inspiration. I also present a great honor to this university and all the staff that have given some helps such as facility, legality, time, and energy.

I am also honored to have my parents and family for giving me the chance to prove and improve myself through all walks of my life. I would also thank my friends who work under the same advisor: Rini and Hakim who have fought together and supported each other so that I can finalize this thesis. Sincere thanks

and apologies to my friends: Fadlurrahman, Ila, Tata, Latifa, Siska, Husnaya, Wulan, Rosalina, Wieska, Qonita, Ericha, Nadya, Nia, Danang, Bayu, Ilham, and some others name that I cannot include all for providing me laughter and support, as well as listening to my tears, complains, and to my heavenly bliss.

Lastly, I realize that this thesis has some weaknesses and imperfections. Thus, critical comments and constructive suggestions are welcomed for the better of my future studies.

Malang, 30 December 2019

Conita Vidina Sulaiman

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ABSTRACT

Sulaiman, Conita Vidina. 2019. *Firdaus' Problems as an Egyptian Women of 1980s Reflected in Woman at Point Zero by Nawal El-Saadawi*. Thesis. Department of English Literature. Faculty of Humanities. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Ahmad Khozi, M.A.

Keyword: Egyptian Women, Sociological Approach

The novel of *Woman at Point Zero* written by Nawal El Saadawi tells about the problems experienced by Firdaus. This novel is based on the true event where the writer meets Firdaus, the protagonist of this novel in a jail in Egypt. In this novel, Saadawi portrays the main character as a female named Firdaus who struggles for her freedom and revolts against the society's rule. She faces a sad life because of poverty and harassment she experiences in her life. She always becomes a victim of cruel treatments from men. The aims to research this novel is to know the Firdaus problems that happened towards Firdaus, to know how Firdaus responses to solve the problems in her life through the novel *Woman at Point Zero*, and to know how Firdaus reflect the problems faced by Egyptian women of 1980s.

This research used descriptive qualitative with the writer design used in this research is literary criticism which used sociological literary criticism as an approach to deal with the data. The data are collected from the words or statement from books which related to the topic. In this research, the researcher used literary criticism with sociological approach because this approach involved a turn towards exploration of the society especially women.

After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the problems that happened towards Firdaus in *Woman at Point Zero* divided into five; Force Marriage, Education's Discrimination, Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Patriarchal. While the result of Firdaus responses to solve the problems are happened in several ways; becoming a prostitute due to the sexual harassment which she received, becoming an employee due to her realization to become respectable person, quits her job to become a successful prostitute by cherishing higher price, kills a pimp who tried to kill her, and the last, she letting herself to be executed because she was discriminated by men. Lastly, there are some similarities that are found between the problems faced by Firdaus through the novel *Woman at Point Zero* and the problems faced by Egyptian women of 1980s. As revealed through the novel, Firdaus experienced the same problems as Egyptian women. They were being forced to be married on such a young age, being restricted to continue their study, received violence and being the victim of patriarchy.

ABSTRAK

Sulaiman, Conita Vidina. 2019. *Firdaus' Problems as an Egyptian Women of 1980s Reflected in Woman at Point Zero by Nawal El-Saadawi*. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Humaniora. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Ahmad Ghazi, M.A.

Kata Kunci: *Perempuan Mesir, Pendekatan Sosiologi*

Novel *Woman at Point Zero* yang ditulis oleh Nawal El Saadawi menceritakan tentang masalah yang dialami Firdaus. Novel ini didasarkan pada peristiwa nyata di mana penulis bertemu Firdaus, protagonis dari novel ini di suatu penjara di Mesir. Dalam novel ini, Saadawi menggambarkan karakter utama sebagai perempuan bernama Firdaus yang berjuang untuk kebebasannya dan memberontak melawan aturan masyarakat. Seseorang wanita Mesir yang mengalami kehidupan yang sangat dramatis. Firdaus menghadapi kehidupan yang menyedihkan karena kemiskinan dan pelecehan yang dia alami dalam hidupnya. Dia selalu menjadi korban perlakuan kejam dari pria. Tujuan untuk meneliti novel ini adalah untuk mengetahui masalah Firdaus yang terjadi terhadap dirinya, untuk mengetahui bagaimana respons Firdaus untuk memecahkan masalah dalam hidupnya dalam novel *Woman at Point Zero*, dan bagaimana Firdaus mencerminkan masalah yang dialami oleh perempuan Mesir tahun 1980an.

Penelitian ini menggunakan deskriptif kualitatif dengan desain yang digunakan penulis dalam penelitian ini adalah kritik sastra yang menggunakan kritik sastra sosiologis sebagai pendekatan untuk menangani data. Data dikumpulkan dari kata-kata atau pernyataan dari buku-buku yang terkait dengan topik. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti menggunakan kritik sastra dengan pendekatan sosiologis karena pendekatan ini melibatkan perubahan ke arah eksplorasi masyarakat khususnya perempuan.

Setelah menganalisis data, peneliti menemukan bahwa masalah yang terjadi pada Firdaus dalam novel *Woman at Point Zero* dibagi menjadi lima; Perkawinan Paksa, Diskriminasi Pendidikan, Kekerasan, Pelecehan Seksual, dan Patriarki. Sementara hasil tanggapan Firdaus untuk menyelesaikan masalah yang terjadi dalam beberapa cara; menjadi seorang pelacur karena pelecehan seksual yang ia terima, menjadi seorang karyawan karena realisasinya untuk menjadi orang terhormat, berhenti dari pekerjaannya untuk menjadi pelacur yang sukses dengan menghargai harga yang lebih tinggi, membunuh seorang germo yang mencoba membunuhnya, dan pada akhirnya, dia membiarkan dirinya dieksekusi karena dia didiskriminasi oleh laki-laki. Terakhir, Terdapat kesamaan yang ditemukan antara masalah yang terjadi oleh perempuan Mesir tahun 1980 dalam novel *Woman at Point Zero*. Seperti yang sudah dijelaskan dalam novel, Firdaus mengalami masalah yang sama seperti yang dialami oleh perempuan Mesir. Mereka dipaksa menikah di usia dini, dilarang untuk melanjutkan pendidikan, menerima penyiksaan, menjadi korban atas patriarki.

ملخص البحث

سليمان ، فنيئة في الدين 15320165، 2019، مشاكل الفردوس كمرأة مصرية في 1980 القرن الماضي تتعكس في المرأة عند نقطة الصفر من قبل نوال السعداوي بحث جامعي، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وأدبها، جامعة مولانا مالك الإسلامية الحكومية الإسلامية مالانج.
مشرف: الأستاذ أحمد غزي، الماجستير

الكلمة الرئيسية : النهج الاجتماعي، المرأة المصرية.

تحكي رواية "المرأة في بوينت زيرو" ، التي كتبها نوال السعداوي ، قصة مشكلة تواجهها الجنة. تستند الرواية إلى حدث حقيقي حيث قابل الكاتب فردوس ، بطل هذه الرواية في أحد السجون في مصر، في هذه الرواية ، تصور سعداوي الشخصية الرئيسية كامرأة تدعى فردوس تناضل من أجل حريتها وتمرده ضد قواعد المجتمع. امرأة مصرية تعيش حياة مثيرة للغاية، الغرض من البحث في هذه الرواية هو اكتشاف مشاكل فردوس التي حدثت لها ، ومعرفة كيفية استجابة الفردوس لحل المشكلات في حياتها في رواية المرأة في بوينت زيرو ، وكيف عكست الفردوس المشكلات التي واجهتها المرأة المصرية في 1980.

يستخدم هذا البحث النوعي الوصفي مع التصميم الذي يستخدمه الكاتب في هذا البحث وهو النقد الأدبي. يتم جمع البيانات من الكلمات أو البيانات من الكتب المتعلقة بالموضوع. في هذه الدراسة ، استخدم الباحثون النقد الأدبي باتباع منهج اجتماعي لأن هذا النهج ينطوي على تغييرات في اتجاه استكشاف المجتمع ، وخاصة النساء

بعد تحليل البيانات ، وجد الباحث أن مشكلة الفردوس في الرويات ومان بوين زيرو قسم على خمسة أقسام: الزواج القسري والتمييز التربوي والعنف والتحرش الجنسي والبطيريركية. حتى يكون الفردوس الوقحة وقتل أيضًا قوادًا حاول قتله ، وفي النهاية ، سمح لنفسه بإعدامه لأنه تعرض للتمييز على أيدي رجال، أخيرًا ، توجد أوجه تشابه بين المشكلات التي حدثت للمرأة المصرية في عام 1980 في رواية "المرأة في بوينت زيرو". كما هو موضح في الرواية ، واجه الفردوس نفس المشكلات التي واجهتها المرأة المصرية. أجبروا على الزواج في سن مبكرة ، ممنوع من مواصلة تعليمهم ، وقبول التعذيبهم ، وأصبحوا ضحايا للنظام

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher will explain the background of the research that show the topic of discussion and the reasons why the researcher choosing the novel to be analyzed, two research questions as the basis for analyzing novels, the objectives of the research which explain the purpose of the study, scope limitation, the significance of the research, research methods, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

According to Damono in Habibi (2019:05), Literature describes the situation and social conditions in which the literary work was born. This view sees literature always reflecting social phenomena where literary works are made, such as social, structure, kinship relations, and class conflict. This makes the literary sociologist required to combine imaginary figures in a work with history or the reality of a society that develops at a certain age.

As Habibi et.al (2019:05) stated that Wellek and Warren think based on the study conducted by Thomas Warton about the literary work was born. Warton and his followers argued that literature is a reference to civilization, culture, habits and habits of a community group. Wellek and Warren also said that literature was used to describe summaries socially which considered to be relevant considering the function of literature as social documentation. Therefore, what needs to be remembered is that there is a real connection between the birth of literature and social reality.

According to Robert and Jacobs (1995:2), literature may be classified into four categories or genres, there are prose fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction prose. From those categories, the writer chooses to discuss the prose fiction especially on novel. Novel is one of the prose fictions that reflect a move away from an essentially religious view of life towards a new interest in the complexities of everyday experience, but sometimes novels present a documentary picture of life.

According to Van de Laar (1969), a novel is a work of art in so far it introduces us in to a living world; in some respects resembling the world we live in, but with an individuality of its own” (p.163). Henkle (1977) elaborates that a novel can portray society, characters of people, norms, religions, or even science. It brings the picture of the world in to writings.

Since a novel always presents society and culture in the setting and plot of the story, readers will be able to obtain knowledge on how people live in different society and cultural situation. By reading novels we will see how the world is. The setting presented in a novel shows us the culture and the society where the characters in the novel live. A novel written by an Egypt author Nawal El Saadawi entitled *Woman at Point Zero* portrays Egypt society as the setting. Therefore, the readers are able to see the society and culture of Egypt in the novel.

The novel which discuss in this research is *Woman at Point Zero* written by Nawal El Saadawi which translated into English language by Sherif Hetata in 1990. This novel was firstly published in Beirut in 1983. This novel is

regarded as one of famous novels and has been translated to more than twenty languages. Nawal El Saadawi, the author of the novel is a great author who bears many good novels. Most of her novels tell the story of women in Middle East. *Woman at Point Zero* is one of famous novels that portrays the society and culture of Egypt. Therefore, the readers are able to see the society and culture of Egypt in the novel. She delivers her sympathy and critics about the oppression experienced by most women in Middle East through her novels.

This novel is based on the true event where the writer meets Firdaus, the protagonist of this novel in a jail in Egypt. The writer got very much attracted towards Firdaus as she was the only person she has ever met in her life who wanted to die. The writer got so enchanted to know her story, but Firdaus refused to meet her like she refused to meet others. However, the writer never gave up the wish to meet her and finally she got the chance as Firdaus agreed to meet her on the day where Firdaus is going to be executed.

In this novel, Saadawi portrays the main character as a female who struggles for her freedom and revolts against the society's rule. The novel tells the story of Firdaus, an Egypt woman who experiences a very dramatic life. She faces a sad life because of poverty and harassment she experiences in her life. This novel is a dramatic symbol of female revolt against the norms of Arab worlds. Firdaus, the main character of this novel always becomes a victim of cruel treatments from men. After all the bad treatments she gets from men in her society, she finally transforms to be a smart, brave, and confident lady who was able to conquer the concept in her society which put women in

the second position under men. She brings that ambition in to reality by becoming a successful prostitute who stands above men. At the end of the story, she kills a pimp who tried to stop her when she was about to get the freedom from being prostituted. At last she gets a death sentence from the judge.

Since the thesis deals with the individual life and society which both of them have mutual correlation where the individual is part of the society. Subsequently, the conditions of individual such as physical, economic, spiritual, or social are influenced by society. For this reason, the researcher applies the sociological approach for this analysis.

Sociological approach concerns toward society therefore when we want to understand the self of the individual's life we need to know the society where the individual is living. Since the individual life appear as the reflection of society. As Wellek and Warren (1996:96) presented three perspectives of sociology literature relationship including the sociology of the writer, the social content of the literary works, and the literature's influence on society.

Sociological approach is an approach which is used to study about human behavior, especially their interaction in a group and social community. Each of individuals is actually part of society. Therefore, sociological approach is quite appropriate to know how social communities affect human behaviors mentally. As Ratna (2004:45) states that sociological approach analyzes human in society by understanding process about from society to individual.

Basic philosophy of sociological approach is there is natural relationship between literary works and society.

In this research also has a previous study that also investigates the same novel. The previous study that is used the same object is from Nenden Syahbana Mandakini and Dr. Ali Mustofa, M.Pd, they wrote an article discusses how is prostitution depicted within society and how is prostitution described as an institution for women in El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*. The second previous study is from Risa Pareka (2008) with the title *Motivation of The Main Character in Becoming a Prostitute: A Comparative Study of Paulo Coelho's Eleven Minutes and Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero*, she discusses how the main characters on the object got motivation in becoming a prostitute. Another discussion about Saadawi's work is made by Lusi Kusumawarsi in "*Nawal El-Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero: The Influence of Religion and Politics on Woman's Life in Egypt*", she discusses how women are regarded only as subordinate and follower.

The writer chooses Nawal El Saadawi's novel *Woman at Point Zero* as the object of the study because she finds that the novel is very inspiring. It challenges the writer to see a different sort of woman life who struggle in an Islamic country to get her freedom which she has never gotten. She fights against the society and the view that women's position is lower than men. This is the voice of a woman in an Islamic country who asks for her right.

From the writterr's review, the novel is ironic, very strong, and gives an inspiration to the reader. The reader will feel sad, curious and proud at the

same time. Because of the uniqueness of the novel, it is very interesting to discuss. Moreover, *Woman at Point Zero* presents a teaching on how a woman is able to survive and uphold her honor, as well as her pride in the society which put her under oppression. It shows a woman's courage to live as an uncommon woman who is brave, confident, autonomous, determined, and resistant.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the research can be formulated as follows:

1. What kind of problems that happened towards Firdaus as a woman in *Woman at Point Zero*?
2. How does Firdaus responses to solve the problems that happened towards her in *Woman at Point Zero*?
3. How does Firdaus in *Woman at Point Zero* reflect the problems faced by Egyptian women of 1980s?

1.3 Research Objectives

In accordance with the problems of the research, the objectives of this research are:

1. Firdaus's problems as a woman that happened towards her in *Woman at Point Zero*.

2. How Firdaus responses to solve the problems.
3. How Firdaus in *Woman at Point Zero* reflect the problems faced by Egyptian women of 1980s

1.4 Significance of the Research

This research is supposed to give contribution in both practical and theoretical. Practically, the researcher hopes this research is expected to be able to add literary treasures for students majoring in literature and readers in general. In theoretically, This research is expected to be able to provide motivation and contribution for students majoring in literature, literary observers, and the general public in expressing modern Indonesian literature.

The researcher also hopes this thesis will be a reference for those who experience the same event as Firdaus, which is become a prostitute is not something that will make life better and happier. The researcher also hopes that the analysis of individual and social problems that occur in *Woman at Point Zero* will provide a beneficial contribution for students who want to learn about the study of sociological literature.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

In this research, the researcher wants to focus on one form. It is identifying the main character of the novel named Firdaus which she was born as a woman who experienced bad treatment from man and regarded as a

subordinate since she was a child. In this research, the researcher applies the sociological approach which focus on the sociology of literary work for this analysis, since the thesis deals with the individual life and society which both of them have mutual correlation where the individual is part of the society.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

This section presented the definitions of some important terms used in this study to avoid misconception.

1. Egyptian Woman

A woman who suffers by the problems as an Egyptian woman which includes of forced marriage, violence, patriarchy, and more.

2. Sociological Approach

Sociological approach is an approach which is used to study about human behavior, especially their interaction in a group and social community.

1.7 Previous Studies

From the results of previous studies found by researchers different from the focus of this research. The first is a research by Nenden Syahbana Mandakini dan Dr. Ali Mustofa, M.Pd, entitled *Dismantling Prostitution as an Institution in Nawal El-Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero*. The result shows that the portrayal of prostitution in society in the novel is reversed. This is contrary to the hierarchical system of prostitution in the discourse of society in general.

It was described as opposed to two social institutions, marriage and social work. Hierarchically, binary opposition is built to become prostitutes > prostitution and social work > prostitution. However, from the perspective of Paradise's narrative as the main character, this binary opposition is reversed because it influences the power relations within these institutions. Thus, prostitution turns out to replace marriage and social work as women's institutions that fall for success, protection, respect, while at the same time they actively play the role of subjects.

The difference between Nenden Syahbana Mandakini and Dr. Ali Mustofa, M.Pd with this research is from the focus of the research. They chose prostitution as an institution to focus their studies. Meanwhile this research focuses on how the main character responds to solve the problems as a woman who suffered by society.

The second is from a research by Risa Pareka Y, (2008) entitled *Motivation of the Main Character in Becoming a Prostitute: A Comparative Study of Paulo Coelho's Eleven Minutes and Nawal El-Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero*, reveals that there are two findings based on the analysis. The first finding illustrates the characterization of Paradise and Mary. The second finding reveals Firdaus and Maria's motivation to become prostitutes. There are several motivations that are directed by five types of needs and personality components. Physiological needs are basic motivation. Both come from families that are economically low, so their id and ego motivate them to make a lot of money. According to Firdaus, prostitute is a profession that can make

Firdaus feel safe from men. Meanwhile, being a prostitute with lots of money makes Maria feel safe because she doesn't have to worry about making her family happy.

The difference between the Risa's research and this study is the focus of research. She focuses on how the main character is motivated to become a prostitute. Meanwhile this research focuses on how the main character responds to solve the problems as a woman who suffered by society. The second difference is the analysis approach. Risa's research uses a psychological approach because this research deals with the motivation of the main characters to become prostitutes and character theory and characterization, comparative study theory and also motivation theory. Meanwhile this research uses a sociological approach.

The third research is from Lusi Kusumawarsi entitled *Nawal El-Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero: The Influence of Religion and Politics on Woman's Life in Egypt (2005)*. Her study revealed that in Egypt at that time, where and when the novel took place, women are regarded only as subordinate and follower. Men have power when women do not. Firdaus is also a powerless woman who has no courage to lift her hand to give lesson to all men who have made her suffer. However, it is the law, the society, and the religion that do not allow woman to be more powerful than man. She also agrees that patriarchal system is part of Egyptian society that flourishes to be a culture that controls all aspect of Egypt.

The difference between Lusi's research and this research is the main focus. Lusi's study focuses on how the patriarchal system in Egypt flourishes to be a culture that controls all aspect of Egyptian women. Meanwhile this research focuses on how the main character responses to solve the problems as a woman who suffered by society.

1.8 Research Method

In this research, the data will be taken from books, journals, and websites. The data source was taken to enrich the knowledge and understanding of researchers in conducting this research. However, the data sources in this study were mostly taken from the novel itself. This novel was firstly published in 1983 with Nawal El-Saadawi as the author of the novel. This novel is one of the novels that criticize the unfair treatment of women in Egypt.

1.8.1 Research Design

The research design that is used in this thesis is literary criticism which used sociological literary criticism as an approach to deal with the data. In this research, the researcher use literary criticism with sociological approach because this approach involved a turn towards exploration of the society especially women as the prostitued in the society.

As Cresswell (2007:37) said that the sttudy is a descriptive qualitative research which begins with assumptions, a worldview, the

possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups. The problems of this research has been formulated clearly to specify the type of the important formulation needed. The research design means the arrangement of condition for collecting and analyzing the data that are taken from a novel *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El-Sadawi which translated into English language by Sherif Hetata in 1990.

1.8.2 Data and Data Sources

In this research, the data will be taken from books, journals, and websites. The data source was taken to enrich the knowledge and understanding of researchers in conducting this research. However, the data sources in this research were mostly taken from the novel itself which translated into English language by Sherif Hetata in 1990. This novel was firstly published in 1983 with Nawal El-Saadawi as the author of the novel. This novel is one of the novels that criticize the unfair treatment of women in Egypt.

1.8.3 Data Collection

The data collection process consists of four steps, namely reading, recording, interpreting data, and categorizing data. The first step, researchers read and understand the novel. After that, the researcher decides which part of the problems faced by Firdaus as an Egyptian woman of 1980s, how Firdaus responses to solve with those problems,

and how Firdaus reflect the problems faced by Egyptian women of 1980s. Then, selecting data, underlines the words, phrases and sentences that are in accordance with the topic of analysis which is examined by using Sociological Literary Criticism as the approach.

1.8.4 Data Analysis

The first step is to analyze the data that has been collected. The second step is to group the data according to the research objectives to be studied. The third step is linking data with topics in the analysis. The fourth step is to interpret the data that has been categorized into the formulation of the problem namely what are the problems faced by Firdaus as an Egyptian woman of 1980s, how Firdaus responses to solve with those problems, and how Firdaus reflect the problems faced by Egyptian women of 1980s. The fifth step is to present all data from the analysis results. The final step is to draw conclusions from the analysis.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter deals with the related theories and information that is sufficient to complete researchers in analyzing the research. Thus, there are several important points which will be explained in this chapter.

2.1 Sociological Approach

According to Spencer in her book *Foundation of Modern Sociology* (1986:6), sociology can be defined as the human group life. Human groups have their own dynamics, their own outcomes, and that cannot necessarily be explained in terms of the qualities of their individual members. It means that sociology just described focus on the individual and the study and study learned on two or more people who form a group or organization and when social life is viewed not in terms of the people involved but in terms of the structural relationship that identify their interaction. As Steward in his book *Sociology and Human Science* (1981:4) also stated that Sociology is the scientific study on society, human group, and organization and all forms of human interaction.

Since this thesis deals with the individual life and society which both of them have mutual correlation where the individual is part of the society. Subsequently, the conditions of individual such as physical, economic, spiritual, or social are influenced by society. For this reason, the researcher applies the sociological approach for this analysis.

According to Stryker (1990:2), he stated that the sociological approach to understand the society in which the self is acting, and keep in mind that the self is always acting in a social context in which other selves exist. It means that the certain people are actually having interaction with its environment which comprise of a group of society and they will be affected by society therefore they can act, understand and feel everything in social context.

Sociological approach concerns toward society therefore when we want to understand the self of the individual's life we need to know the society where the individual is living. The form of the individual's life can be everything that may influence or change social relationship, such as love, fight, marriage, divorce, etc. Since the individual life appear as the reflection of society. As Wellek and Warren (1996:96) presented three perspectives of sociology literature relationship including the sociology of the writer, the social content of the literary works, and the literature's influence on society.

Sociological approach is an approach which is used to study about human behavior, especially their interaction in a group and social community. Each of individuals is actually part of society. Therefore, sociological approach is quite appropriate to know how social communities affect human behaviors mentally. As Ratna (2004:45) stated that sociological approach analyzes human in society by understanding process about from society to individual. Basic philosophy of sociological

approach is there is natural relationship between literary works and society.

According to Craib (1992:42), there are some statements about sociology which concern to everything that related to human being in society. Therefore, when we concern about sociology, it cannot be separated from how people interact and socialize each other. Sociology is the study which deals with everything that related to social environment of human.

From the stated above, it clearly shows that literary works are the reflections of the society in social contact as the creation of author to deliver his feeling, emotion, view even his thought about what is going on in the certain period. Based on sociological approach, there is relationship between the literary works with society.

In relation to this research, the researcher applies the literary work as the object of research that reflects the woman in the society through the novel of *Woman at Point Zero*. The sociological approach in literary work is eligible to be applied in this research since it reveals the woman condition in the society of Egypt through the novel *Woman at Point Zero*.

2.2 Woman in Egypt

Egypt is one of the countries in the Arab world that is still strongly bound by patriarchal culture, where patriarchy is a behavior that prioritizes men over women in certain societies or social groups. The patriarchal

ideology places women who are still regarded as the second class whose existence in social and political life looks very marginalized.

However, according to Nemat Guenena and Nadia Wassef (1999), Egypt is a Muslim country that is quite flexible in granting rights for women, especially Egypt is also a democratic country that provides equal rights and accomplishments for all its citizens. The difference in the freedom of women in Egypt with those in other Muslim countries is also influenced and gained from the efforts of feminists and Egyptian women activists for decades. Like the study of women's movements in Egypt money began in 1919 marked by the emergence of feminist activists who are affiliated with the Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU). However, the condition of women and their rights in various aspects of life often experience dynamics in each era.

As Nikki R. Keddie (2007) also stated that in the era of President Gamal Abdul Nasser between 1956 and 1979, women began taking political roles, gained their representation in Parliament and at the cabinet level. Nasser's 1962 socialist Charter for National Action or known as the Nasser Socialist Charter for National Action in 1962 supported the existence of gender equality and the right of all citizens to get access to health, education and employment. Nasser tries to create a new political and economic space for women. Although the Nasser regime has opened opportunities for the advancement of women's public, the regime still does not question family structure, patriarchal power and culture, or religious

law about the family. Men continue to dominate in the family, workplace and government.

The existence of women began to develop attention in the public space and the intellectual world, social life, and professional experience to continue their activism under the authority of Anwar Sadat. However, in the 1971 Constitution in the Anwar Sadat era, the Egyptian Constitution annulled the law of women's equality that had been guaranteed under the Nasser regime, and allowed for gender equality only if it did not conflict with Sharia law. The 1971 Constitution states: "The state guarantees a balance and agreement between a woman's duties with her family, on the one hand, and on her work in society and her equality with men in the political, social and cultural fields, on the other hand without violating Islamic Sharia law."

According to Nadia Sonneveld (2009: 34), the reason for international relations in the 1970s later, Sadat began to push for women's rights. *Infitah* Sadat's ("open door"), restoration of relations with a strong pro-Western United States, and continuing struggle to grow a global reputation as an effort to modernize, all of people support women's rights. Sadat wanted to safeguard the Egypt's image above other countries without giving up political authority to Islam, which is the majority religion in Egypt.

Nadia also added that at the end of the Sadat Regime in 1981, Egypt began to assert its seriousness in granting rights to women by

signing the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Egyptian government ratifies articles / articles that are biased against the Shari'a and Egyptian social norms, but they do so with reservations. However, at the end of the Sadat era, women still lacked strong independent organizations and there were still programs that were not aimed at the general situation in promoting women's rights.

After the Sadat era was replaced by the Husni Mubarak regime, the role of women can be quite developed. Women have the freedom to be able to work, study, and even to get a seat in parliament (Sally Baden 1992: 31). Nemat Guenenna and Nadia Wassef also added that the Egyptian government made extraordinary efforts towards achieving women's equality under the law, the Egyptian government took steps at the international level and sought political aspirations by finding allies in the West.

Basically, under the Mubarak regime, the role of women can be quite developed. Women in Egypt have the freedom to be able to work, study, and even to gain seats in parliament. However, during his 30 years in office until 2011, during the Mubarak era the dynamics of giving rights to women and the struggle to achieve gender equality still did not end until the overthrow of him in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

According to Georgina Waylen (1994: 327), after being led by the Mubarak regime for 30 years, the Egyptian government was taken over by

the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. Waylen explained, "after the transition began and political parties have been reshaped and continued their activities, the focus tends to shift women's organizations and social movements in general and towards more conventional forms of political institutions, especially when the opening of the transition period is controlled by the military."

Egypt under the SCAF further aggravates the position of women in Egypt after the collapse of the Mubarak regime. For example, a quota of 64 parliamentary seats or the equivalent of 12% was actually canceled in July 2011. This policy was replaced with an amendment to the electoral law calling on all parties to have at least 1 female candidate. And in the first stage of the election, none of the 376 female candidates were selected. According to Amnesty International, this policy change shows a major failure in guaranteeing women's political participation in the country.

On 30 June 2012 Mohammed Morsi, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, Freedom and the Justice Party, became the first democratically elected president in Egypt. SCAF was dissolved soon afterwards; a sign that meaningful change is happening in government institutions. Morsi appointed two women in his cabinet. 2012 Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, women were almost completely erased from public life.

Since the rise of Mohammad Morsi who was part of the Muslim Brotherhood as the first President after the revolution, in fact the Muslim

Brotherhood / Ikhwanul Muslimin group dominated the Egyptian government. This has greatly influenced the role of women after the 2011 Egyptian government revolution. Under the domination and governance of the Muslim Brotherhood group, everything about women contained in "Suzanne Laws" was abolished because it was felt as one of the instruments and parts of the Mubarak regime.

This is consistent with what was stated by Azza Kamel, a female activist who is the president of ACT (Appropriate Communication Techniques for Development) in Egypt who stated that after the revolution most Egyptians, especially Islamists, tried to take back the rights that were before the revolution has been fought for and obtained by women, trying to change the law regarding divorce and child custody, enforcing FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), and changing the age of a woman to get married from 18 years to 9 years. Women actually face a new challenge from the dominance of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt because basically the Muslim Brotherhood limits the role of women in the country. Muslim Brotherhood also supports patriarchal practices which disadvantage women. Although in fact the principle of equality for all citizens is still listed in the constitution but it seems that it is only black on paper, women after the 2011 revolution still have to fight for their full rights. <http://www.equalpowerlastingpeace.org/tag/azza-kamel/> . Accessed 21 October 2019.

2.3 Woman Condition in Egypt

As it is known that since 1956 the Egyptian Law guarantees that women have full and equal suffrage with men, women are gradually given the opportunity to participate and have the right to live life as men do. This has become a legal basis which is strong for women's human rights in Egypt.

Although the State has guaranteed equality of gender rights between women and men in an Egyptian constitution in various leadership regimes, real problems of equality still occur in women in several aspects of life and lack of appropriate implementations mechanisms to ensure equal access for people women towards justice and the law.

Based on a survey conducted by the Thomas Reuters Foundation in 2013 stated that,

'Egypt ranks last among 22 countries in the Middle East as the worst country for women. Since before the 2011 Revolution until after the 2011 Revolution, Egypt has not been ranked well enough in the Global Gender Gap Report conducted by the World Economic Forum. For example, in 2015, Egypt was ranked 136 out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index with a figure of 0.599, which means that Egypt is among the ten worst countries in gender equality. The rating shows that Egypt is a country that experienced significant gaps in providing opportunities and sharing of resources for women and men. The assessment is carried out by looking at the level of participation and economic opportunities, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment of men and women, where most of the opportunities and distribution of these resources are given to men.'

The statement can be concluded that the condition of inequality between men and women is still on the verge of seriousness because the results of the high percentage value where the results of the percentage stated that women in Egypt experienced this to date in several aspects.

2.3.1 Forced Marriage

Forced marriages mostly occur in girls who are only 15 years old or even lower. They were forced to marry by their parents for several reasons. Some parents even reasoned that they did not need to take care of the costs of their children and others.

According to Mahmoud Mostafa (2015), the responsibility of marriage is borne by them when they are just on the verge of maturity. Egyptian marriage laws also stipulate a legal age for a woman's marriage at the age of sixteen, while Islamic (Sharia) law defines the age of marriage to puberty, which is generally set by Muslim scholars at age 15. (Daily News Egypt, 22 March 2015 , <http://dailynewsegypt.com/2015/03/22/i-don't-know-how-old-i-am-child-marriage-in-egypt/>. Accessed on 24 October 2019)

This can be ensured that forced marriages at an early age are very common. Plus the Egyptians don't think about age limits that should have been set. Whereas Islam defines the age of marriage to the age of puberty, which is generally determined by Muslim scholars at the age of 15 years.

2.3.2 Education

Education is one of the important topics that also often discussed by people throughout the world. The irony of being a woman is that they are considered by men that they don't need to get an education because their place is only in their own home.

Mary Wollstone Craft, a great feminist in her book titled *Vindication of the Rights of Women: With Structures on Political and Moral Subjects* talk about how much education is important for women for their survival and emancipation. He stated that education is very important for women and the nation to empower it.

As in the State of Egypt, women experience discrimination against education where parents are more concerned with boys to achieve higher education than girls. They assume that girls do not need to attain higher education because they will become a wife who only takes care of married life. So that women are only considered as a people who cannot stand by herself.

An article written by Maryam Jamilah (2017), stated that data from the Egyptian government shows that 82% of all young Egyptian groups who have never tasted education are women (IDSC, 2010, p.11). As many as 13% of all total young women in Egypt never attend school whereas compared to men who do not attend school it only reaches 3% (IDSC, 2010, p.11). This is one proof that more parents' investment in education is given to boys than girls in Egypt.

These patriarchal values which then cause the position of women in their own families become less important because one day they will leave their core families. So parents prefer to invest their money in the future of their sons rather than daughters.

2.3.3 Violence

Violence is one of extremely emotional issues and it has probably always been part of the human experiences. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), violence defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, deprivation.

According to the 2014 UNICEF statistical analysis of violence against children revealed that almost one billion children in the world, between the ages of 2 and 14, suffer regular physical punishment, and almost 1 in girls between the age of 15 and 19 experienced physical violence.

The novel *Woman at Point Zero* which telling the main character, Firdaus an Egyptian woman was experienced the physical violence. She even received it since she was a child. The impact of violence she received even causes scars that are not only imprinted physically, but also mentally.

2.3.4 Sexual Harassment

In recent years, sexual harassment and violence have reached significant numbers in Egypt. Cairo, in particularly, has become known as a dangerous place for women to walk, both in groups and individually. Women in Egypt suffer from nightmares every day when

they go out. Women are the target of daily sexual harassment on the streets, public transportation, shops, markets, schools, universities, clubs, tourist attractions and workplaces.

A 2013 UN Women study also reported that 96.5% of the women surveyed had been physically abused, touched, touched, raped by men in public places. 95.5% of women report being verbally abused. The study states that the main areas where sexual harassment takes place are public roads (89.3% of those interviewed) and public transportation (81.8% of those interviewed). Then 19.2% of them said that sexual harassment occurred every week, 7.3% said it occurred monthly, while 68.9% said it happened every time. The majority of them said that men of all ages were involved as the perpetrators of the harassment. Accessed on 25 Oktober 2019, <http://www.un.org.eg/Publications.aspx?pageID=43>

So, from the above statement it can be concluded that almost all women have experienced sexual harassment by men of various ages. This can be proven in a study published by the Egyptian Center for Women's Right in 2008 found that 86% of the men interviewed claimed to have sexually abused women and 83% of women (including foreign women living in Egypt) had experienced sexual harassment and 46 % experience it every day.

2.3.5 Patriarchy

Patriarchy is when the men rule of everything, from family, region, and the country. As Bhasin (2006:3) also stated that the word 'patriarchy' literally means the rule of the father or the 'patriarch', and it originally it was used to describe a specific type of 'male-dominated family' – the large household of patriarch which included women, junior men, children, slaves, and domestic servants all under the rule of dominant male. Not it is used more generally to refer to male domination, to power relationship by which men dominate women, and women are kept subordinate in a number of ways.

Equality problems between men and woman become a crucial problem for Middle East countries. This is happened because the countries are mostly have patriarchal culture where the rule of the father or the power relationships by which men dominate women. According to Moghaddam (2010), women's status in the Middle East is low measured by some indicators such as literacy levels, women's fertility, health, educational attainment, access to employment, earnings, and political participant.

Egypt is one of the Middle East countries where patriarchy is often happened. As Saadawi's work *Woman at Point Zero* which the story is set in Egypt, as the object of this research patriarchal culture in the Middle East. Men domination in economic, politic, and ideological, including social domination were represented in the story.

CHAPTER III

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data found in the novel and discusses them to answer the research questions, as declared in the research questions. The discussion divided into two major sections, which are in line with the research objectives, i.e., problems that happened towards Firdaus as a woman and how Firdaus response to solve the problems.

In this novel, Saadawi portrays the main character as a female who struggles for her freedom and revolts against the rule in the society. Firdaus is an Egyptian woman who experiences a dramatic life. She faces a sad life because of poverty and harassment she experiences in her life. She always becomes a victim of cruel treatments from men. After all the bad treatments she gets from men in her society, she finally transforms to be a smart, brave, and confident lady who was able to conquer the concept in her society which put women in the second position under men. She brings that ambition into reality by becoming a successful prostitute who stands above men. At last, she kills a pimp who tried to stop her when she was about to get the freedom from being prostituted. Then she gets a death sentence from the judge.

3.1 Firdaus's Problems as an Egyptian Woman

3.1.1 Forced Marriage

The first form of problems that happened towards Firdaus is forced marriage. Forced marriages mostly happened towards girls who are only 15 years old or even lower. They were forced to be married by their

parents for some reasons, such as they do not need to take care of their children's salary, etc. Meanwhile, they do not care about the feeling of their children at all and they do not allow to continue their studies by their own parents.

According to Mahmoud Mostafa (2015), the responsibility of marriage was imposed upon them when they were just on the verge of adulthood. The Egyptian marriage laws also set the legal age for women's marriage at sixteen, whereas the Islamic law (Shari'a) defines the age of marriage with the age of puberty, which the majority of Muslim scholars generally set at 15. (Daily News Egypt, 22 March 2015, <http://dailynewsegypt.com/2015/03/22/i-don't-know-how-old-i-am-child-marriage-in-egypt/>. Accessed on 24 October 2019).

Firdaus's problems did not end in her childhood. She suffered a lot of things including forced marriage. As a daughter, Firdaus is only valued by the dowry which her parents can get from the husband. Under Firdaus's uncle and aunt willingness, they forced Firdaus to marry with Sheikh Mahmoud who is much older than her. It can be seen from the conversation of her uncle and aunt in the quotation below.

'Your holiness, I have a wonderful idea.'

'What is it?'

'My uncle, Sheikh Mahmoud, is a virtuous man. He has a big pension and no children, and he's been on his own since his wife died last year. If he marries Firdaus she will have a good life with him, and he can find her an obedient wife, who will serve him and relieve his loneliness. Firdaus has grown, your holiness, and must be married. It is risky for her to continue without a husband. She is a good girl but the world is full of bastards.'

Firdaus cannot state her opinion toward something. She cannot complain in order to protect herself. Her uncle and aunt even do not care with her feeling toward the marriage.

'Supposing Firdaus refuses him?'

'Why should she refuse him? This is her best chance to get married. Do not forget what a nose she has. It's big and ugly like a tin mug. Besides, she has inherited nothing, and has no income of her own. We will never find a better husband for her than Sheikh Marmoud.'

'Do you think Sheikh Marmoud will welcome the idea?'

'If I speak to him I am sure he will agree. I intend to ask him for a big dowry.'

'How much?'

'A hundred pounds, or perhaps even two hundred if he has the money.'

The quotation above can be concluded that her uncle and aunt only used her to get the benefit of her marriage. They did not care about her feeling. They forced Firdaus to marry Sheikh Mahmoud in order to fulfill her income so that they do not have responsibility to raised her anymore.

3.1.2 Education

Education is one of the important topics that often being discussed by feminists across the world. The irony of being women is they considered by men that they do not need to get education due to their place which is only on their own home. If only they allow to gets education, they could stand as independent woman, they even would be aware of their rights. They are also being the important role for their children. However, men are being the opposite and assumed that women are just inferior to the males.

Religious interpretation has contributed toward woman marginalization (Fakih, 1996:15). Egypt, which is a dominantly Islamic country, has influenced Firdaus character. The main character, Firdaus experienced restriction of education. It can be seen when Firdaus's uncle explaining to Firdaus that only men who allow to study in El Azhar in the quotation below.

'What will you do in Cairo, Firdaus?'

And I would reply: 'I will go to El Azhar and study like you.'

Then he would laugh and explain that El Azhar was only for men. And I would cry, and hold on to his hand, as the train started to move. But he would pull it away with a force and suddenness that made me fall flat on my face (p.14)

After the death of her parents, Firdaus lived her new life with her uncle who got married with his teacher's daughter. Her uncle started to allow Firdaus to study. She goes to school and became a good student. She is also smart and brilliant student. She managed to graduate as the second best student in her secondary school. From that achievement, Firdaus attempts to fulfill her dream to be a doctor or politician. However, when she wants to continue her study, her uncle and aunt did not let her because some unspecific reason. It can be seen from the conversation of her uncle and aunt in the quotation below.

'So what do we do with her then?'

'We can be rid of her by sending her to university. There she can live in the quarters allocated to the girl students.'

'To the university? To a place where she will be sitting side by side with men? A respected Sheikh and man of religion like myself sending his niece off to mix in the company of men?! Besides, where will the money come from for her lodging, and books, and clothes? You know how high the cost of the living is these days. Prices seem to have gone mad, and yet the salary of us government officials only rises by a few millimes.' (p.37)

Those can be concluded that Firdaus cannot study at El Azhar because of her uncle and aunt did not allow her and forced her to marry an old and rich man instead. They also think that based on his religion that is Moslem, it is inappropriate to allow young girl sitting by side with men. Those are also example above reflects how religion contributes to woman marginalization.

Meanwhile, Fatimah Mernissi once stated that Islam affirmed the idea of individuals as subjects who had the freedom and awareness of sovereignty that would remain as long as they were alive. She also invited Muslims to trace back the history of Islam, which was marked by women's participation not as historical objects but as historical subjects. Based on historical sources and works written by scientists, women have a very significant role in the formation of Islamic culture and civilization, both in the political, social, cultural, and others (1987:121).

From her statement above, it can be concluded that originally, Islam as their religion does not assume women to do what she wants. It means that women are able to get education in order to fulfill their knowledge.

3.1.3 Violence

Firdaus experienced violence in her whole life since when she was a child. One day, her aunt came and immediately cuts her clitoris and she being a kid who only thought that she did some mistakes and her mother

gave her punishment. She cried all night in pain but nobody gave attention and took care of her. It can be proved by the quotation below.

'Sometimes I could not distinguish which one of them was my father. He resembled them so closely that it was difficult to tell. So one day I asked my mother about him. How was it that she given birth to me without a father? First she beat me. Then she brought a woman who was carrying a small knife or maybe a razor blade. They cut off a piece of flesh from between my thighs'. (p.12)

Firdaus is a poor child who had to suffer alone by her parents and nobody even care about her. Her parents also used to treat her unwell. They did not treat their own child like what other children to be treated like. Parents who supposed to treat their children like an angel, but it cannot found the way how her parents did to her.

'I could tell she was my mother, how I do not know. So I crawled up to her seeking warmth from her body. Out hut was cold, yet in winter my father used to shift my straw mat and my pillow to the small room facing north, and occupy my corner in the oven room. And instead of staying by my side to keep me warm, my mother used to abandon me alone and go to my father to keep him warm.' (p.16)

'.....I stayed awake all night weeping alone, trying to muffle my sobs so that they would not disturb my little brothers and sisters sleeping on the floor beside me. For like most people, I had many brothers and sisters. They were like chicks that multiply in spring, shiver in winter and lose their feathers, and then in summer are stricken with diarrhea, waste away quickly and one by one creep into corner and die'. (p.17)

From the quotation above, it tells that her parents did not treat their own child like what other children to be treated like. Parents who supposed to treat their children like an angel, but it cannot be found the way how her parents did to her. Parents who supposed to give their children warmth, but they let their children sleep on the floor that makes them catch a cold until they die.

Not only her parents, Firdaus also suffered by her own uncle and aunt. She got beat by them just because she asked their servant to sleep on the bed with her instead of sleeping on the floor.

'I went to school every day. Once back I swept the house and washed the floor, the dishes and the clothes. My uncle's wife only did the cooking, leaving the pots and pans for me to scour and clean. Later, my uncle brought home a small servant girl who slept in my room. The bed was reserved for me, so she slept on the floor. On a cold night I told her to come and sleep with me in the bed, but when my uncle's wife entered the room and saw us, she beat her. Then she beat me also'. (p.23)

It proved that her aunt beats her just because she's being kind to let their servant to sleep on the bed so that she won't catch a cold. It also can be seen that how clearly her aunt being disrespectful to the servant and concerning the inequality between employer and servant.

The violence that experienced by Firdaus did not end up here. After she forced to be married with Sheikh Mahmoud that she thought she would be happier, but the reality is not like what she thought would be. She received a bad treatment. He treated her more like a servant than a wife. He often beats her for a small mistake that may not be able to be considered as mistake. It can be proved by the following quotation below.

'He had retired from his job, was without work, and without friends. He never went out of the house, or sat at a coffee-house, lest he be obliged to pay a few piasters for a cup of coffee. All day long he remained by my side in the house, or in the kitchen, watching me as I cooked or washed. If I dropped the packet of soap powder and spilled a few grains on the floor, he would jump up from his chair and complain at me for being careless. And I pressed a little more firmly than usual on the spoon as I took ghee out of the tin for cooking, he would scream out in anger, and draw my attention to the fact that its contents were diminishing much more rapidly than they should. When the dustman came to empty the refuse from the bin, he would go through it carefully before putting it out on the landing. One day he discovered some leftover scraps of food, and started yelling at me loudly that all the neighbors could hear. After this incident, he got into the habit of beating me whether he had a reason for it or not.' (p.47)

Firdaus is a poor girl who has to suffer through all those bad treatments from her own husband. She suffered both physical and mentally. She did not receive a love from her husband. When she was not able to stand it anymore, she ran into her uncle but he said religion allow her husband to beat her wife as seen in this quotation.

'On one occasion he hit me all over with his shoe. My face and body became swollen and bruised. So I left the house and went to my uncle. But my uncle told me that all husbands beat their wives, and my uncle's wife added that her husband often beat her. I said my uncle was a respectable Sheikh, well versed in the teachings of religion, and he, therefore, could not possibly be in the habit of beating his wife. She replied that it was precisely men well versed in their religion who beat their wives. The precepts of religion permitted such punishment. A virtuous woman was not supposed to complain about her husband. Her duty was perfect obedience'. (p.47)

The statement declares that beating a wife is a usual thing to do for a husband. Moreover, a husband who beats his wife is assumed as a good husband. Firdaus experiences the true suffering in her marriage. She feels valueless and death under the perfect obedience toward her husband.

After she left the house, she met a man named Bayoumi. She stayed at his house until she finds a job. One day when she wanted to leave in order to find a job, Bayoumi became angry and started to beat her. It can be proven by the quotation below.

'You're busy all day in the coffee-house, and you haven't even tried to find me a job. I'm going out now to look for one.'

'I was speaking in low tones, and my eyes were fixed on the ground, but he jumped up and slapped me on the face, saying, 'how dare you raise your voice when you're speaking to me, you street walker, you low woman?'

'His hand was big and strong, and it was the heaviest slap I had received on my face. My head swayed first on one side, then to the other. The walls and the floor seemed to shift violently. I held my head in my hands until they grew still again, then I looked upwards and our eyes met.'

She fails to protect herself. She let herself being suffered.

3.1.4 Sexual Harassment

Young Firdaus was a very plain girl who did not understand anything about ripe or sexual harassment. Those cases were something that never been discussed in the family. Nobody told her that man must not touch her in improper way and nobody educates her that what sexual harassment is.

A little boy called Mohammadain used to pinch me under water and follow me into the small shelter made of maize stalks. He would make me lie down beneath a pile of straw, and lift up my galebaya. We played 'bride and bride groom'. From some part in my body, where exactly I did not know, would come a sensation of sharp pleasure. Later I would close my eyes and feel with my hand for the exact spot. The moment I touched it, I would realize that I had felt the sensation before (p12).

From the quotation, it explains that Firdaus received sexual harassment from Mohammadain who invited her on a game. She even does nothing when her playmate treated her improperly. Her ignorance made her keep silent the wrong treatment she got from the man who only wanted to take benefit from her.

Firdaus is a very kind girl who loves her whole family. She even closes with her uncle more than her father. She does not even expecting that her own uncle treated her improperly. She received sexual harassment by her own uncle which more than what Muhammadain did to her.

To knead the dough I squatted on the ground with the trough between my legs. At regular intervals I lifted the elastic mass up into the air and let it fall back into the trough. The heat of the oven was full on my face, singeing the edges of my hair. My galabeya often slipped up my thighs, but I paid no attention until the moment when I would glimpse my uncle's hand moving slowly from behind the book he was reading to touch my leg. The next moment I could feel it travelling up my thigh with cautions,

stealthy, trembling movement. Every time there was the sound of a footstep at the entrance to our house, his hand would withdraw quickly. But whenever everything around us lapsed into silence, broken only every now and then by the snap of dry twigs between my fingers as I fed the oven, and the sound of his regular breathing reaching me from behind the book so that I could not tell whether he was snoring quietly in his sleep or wide awake and panting, his hand would continue to press against my thigh with a grasping, almost brutal insistence (p.13).

Not only that, her uncle also took her to the cinema to watch a movie that showed about a couple hugging, kissing while they were naked, which Firdaus was not supposed to watch a kind a movie like that because she was only a child who had been just got awarded her primary school certificate.

When I was awarded my primary school certificate he bought me a little wristwatch, and that night took me to the cinema. I saw a woman dancing, her thighs were naked. And I saw a man hugging a woman. Then he kissed her on the lips. I hide my face behind my hand and did not dare to look at my uncle. Later, he told me that dancing was a sin, and that kissing a man, too, was a sin, but now I could no longer look into his eyes. That night when we returned home I did not sit beside him on the bed as I often used to do before, but I hide myself under the eiderdown on my little sofa (p.21).

I was trembling all over, seized with a feeling I could not explain, that my uncle's great long fingers would draw close to me after a little while, and cautiously lift the eiderdown under which I lay. Then his lips would touch my face and press down on my mouth, and his trembling fingers would feel their way slowly upwards over my thighs (p21).

From the quotation above, it tells that Firdaus's uncle tried to make Firdaus to see something that she does not supposed to see, so that Firdaus would feel okay when her uncle harassed her right after watched the movie when they arrived at home. It was really a strange thing that happened to her, strange because it had never happened to her before, or because it had been happening to her all of the time, ever since she could remember. Somewhere in some distant spot within her body was awakening an old pleasure lost a long time ago, or a new pleasure still unknown, and

indefinable, for it seemed to arise outside her body, or in a part of her being severed from it many years ago.

Since her childhood, Firdaus became the victim of the brutality of men's desire. She got lack of caring and affection from her parents. One day, when she escaped from her rude husband, she was about to find a job and then she met someone named Bayoumi. He wanted to help her to find a job and gave her a place for her to stay until she finds a job. At first, Bayoumi was being very gentleman until one day when Firdaus realized that Bayoumi did not do anything to help her to find a job, she was about to leave him. However, he slapped her and harassed her. He even locked Firdaus up on the room until one night some of Bayoumi's friends came and harassed her. It made Firdaus realized that Bayoumi used her body to be sexualized by men freely in order to get him money. It can be seen from the quotation below.

It was as though I was seeing the eyes that now confronted me for the first time. Two jet black surfaces that stared into my eyes, travelled with an infinitely slow movement over my face, and my neck, and then dropped downwards gradually over my breast, and my belly, to settle somewhere just below it, between my thighs. A cold shiver, like the shiver of death, went through my body, and my hands dropped instinctively to cover the part on which gaze was fixed, but his big strong hands moved quickly to jerk them away. The next moment he hit me with his fist in the belly so hard that I lost consciousness immediately (p.52-53).

He took to locking me in the flat before going out. I now slept on the floor in the other room. He would come back in the middle of the night, pull the cover away from me with all his weight. I kept my eyes closed and abandoned my body. It lay there under him without movement, emptied of all desire, or pleasure, or even pain, feeling nothing. A dead body with no life in it at all, like a piece of wood, or an empty sock, or a shoe. Then one night his body seemed heavier than before, and his breath smelt different, so I opened my eyes. The face above me was not Bayoumi's (p.53).

The statement above reveals that Firdaus did not only receive harassment from Bayoumi, but also using her body to be sexualized by men just in case he can get money. He also used to beat her and did not treat her in proper way.

3.1.5 Patriarchy

Patriarchy is also one of the important issues that often happened towards women. The patriarchy is already happened from a long time and even still being discussed until today. The equality between men and women are way different which men assumed that women are in the lower place. Even though religion has told them that men and women are indeed on the same place, there is no difference between men and women.

According to Fatimah Mernissi (1987:19), Islam strongly affirms the equality of men and women. This is based on the idea of monotheism which not only means individual but also socially individual, not only having a transcendental dimension but also profane. This idea of monotheism implies the principle of human freedom which also means the principle of universal human equality. All people wherever and whenever, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, color, sex, language, power are equal and equal before God.

The statement above reveals that Islam indeed strongly affirms the equality between men and women. However, the patriarchy seems still

being experienced by women. Firdaus, which is the character of the novel *Woman at Point Zero*, is often to experience the patriarchy.

Firdaus is one of the many females who face such obstacles and oppressions of patriarchy. The problem began from the point onwards when she realized that her father discriminates between boys and girls. It can be seen from the quotation below.

'When one of his female children died, my father would eat his supper, my mother would wash his legs, and then he would go to sleep, just as he did every night. When the child that died was a boy, he would beat my mother, then have his supper and lie down to sleep.' (p.17)

The quotation explains that when any of her brothers died out of diarrhea, her father would beat up her mother, have his meal, and then fall asleep. Whereas, when any of his female children died, he would simply have his meal and then fall asleep. He would trash his wife for the death of boy because he blamed her for her negligence. On the contrary, the death of a girl child would only relieve him of the trouble of caring for a burden. It also can be concluded that a son is more valuable than a daughter.

At the moment when she walks on the street, a policeman approached her. He asked her to come with him to his house in order to fulfill his desire. However, he threatened her when she refused his order.

'I'll pay you. Don't you think I want to have you for nothing? I am not like other policemen. How much do you want?'

'How much do I want? I don't know.'

'Don't play games with me, and don't try to haggle with me either, or I'll take you off to the police station.' (p.66)

The quotation clearly tells that the policeman threatened Firdaus if she refusing his order. He threatened her that he will take her to the police

station which is show that man's position is higher than woman. Moreover, Firdaus cannot do anything because the man is a police that she thought she does not have power to refuse a police. Then, she obeys him instead.

However, it becomes even worse when Firdaus obeys his order. She was fooled by the police. He said that he could not pay her and promised her to give her the money later, but it is only his fudge.

'What are you waiting for? I have no money on me tonight. I'll give you the money next time'. (p.67)

When Firdaus was become a successful prostituted, she was paid the highest price, and even men of great importance competed for her favors. However, Firdaus stills being picky to choose men whom she wants. One day, a very important personality from foreign even arranged things in such way that he could look her over without noticing and sent for her but she refused to go.

'...I knew that successful politicians cannot bear to accept defeat in front of others, probably because they always carry defeat within themselves. A human being cannot stand up to a double defeat. That is the secret of their continuous attempt to rise to power. They draw a feeling of supremacy from their power over others. It makes them feel victorious rather than defeated. It hides how essentially hollow they are inside, despite the impression of greatness they try to spread around them, which is all they really care for.' (p.97-98)

The quotation above explains that men or even politicians cannot accept whether they are lost or defeat of something. They always attempt to win everything in order to rises their power. They only care about the impression of being greatness by people.

Men even would do anything to protect their honor. They would use such in various way or even if it is something that would cause a bad impact. They also would use something which is related from the government. They do not really care around them. It can be proven by the quotation in below.

'My refusal made him even more intent on gaining a victory over me. Every day he would send me a man from the police, and each time this man would try a different approach. But I continued to refuse. Once he offered me money. On another occasion he threatened me with prison. On still a third, he explained to me that refusing a Head of State could be looked upon as a result to a great man and lead to strained relations between two countries. He added that if I really loved my country, if I was a patriot, I would go to him at once.' (p.98)

It can be concluded that Men were attempt to get the victory over Firdaus. They sent her police to threaten her just in case that she will accept it. The men also threatened her that she shall not refuse the Head of State's order. The men also told her that she did not love the country if she refused the order. Those are examples of men could use everything to rises their power. It also shows that how clearly patriarchy can be used as the weapon to do anything.

Another man and policeman once also defamed her. It happened when Firdaus refusing a Prince who asked her to fulfill his desire. They talked to each other until a policeman come and arrested her.

*'He said to the police, 'Don't let her go. She's a criminal, a killer.'
And they asked me, 'Is what he says true?'
'I am a killer, but I've committed no crime. Like you, I kill only criminals.'
'But he is a prince, and a hero. He's not a criminal.'
'For me the feats of kings and princes are no more than crimes, for I do not see things the way you do.'
'You are a criminal,' they said, 'and your mother is a criminal.'*

'My mother was not a criminal. No woman can be a criminal. To be a criminal one must be a man.'

'Now look here, what is this that you are saying?'

'I am saying that you are criminals, all of you: the fathers, the uncles, the husbands, the pimps, the lawyers, the doctors, the journalists, and all men of all professions.'

'They said, 'You are a savage and dangerous woman.'

'I am speaking the truth. And truth is savage and dangerous.' (p.109-110)

It also can be concluded that once again, the equality between men are higher than women, moreover if he is a prince. Firdaus cannot complain anything in order to protect herself. Whenever she speaks up, the police do not care about her. The police stills arrested her. They dare to ignore the woman position.

Firdaus even knew men are controlling women's life. It can be proven by her statement in the quotation below.

'Yet not for a single moment did I have any doubts about my own integrity and honor as a woman. I knew that my profession had been invented by men, and that men were in control of both our worlds, the one on earth, and the one in heaven. That men force women to sell their bodies at a price, and that the lowest paid body is that of a wife.' (p.99)

The quotation explains that Firdaus stating men are only seen women as a something that could be sell and paid. The men only used women's body to be sold just in case they could get the benefit. They also assumed that women have different prices, from the highest price until the lowest price which is their own wives.

Becoming a prostitute is making Firdaus way stronger and fearless towards everything. One day a pimp came to her and say they she need protection because woman could not protect herself. It can be proven by the quotation below.

'Every prostitute has a pimp to protect her from other pimps, and from the police. That's what I'm going to do.'

*'But I can protect myself,' I said.
 'There isn't a woman on earth who can protect herself.'
 'I don't want your protection.'
 'You cannot do without protection, otherwise the profession exercised by
 husband and pimps would die out.'*

It proves that the man assumed that women are weak, they cannot protect herself. Meanwhile Firdaus is able to protect on her own. She even say that by herself, but the man stills considered Firdaus as a weak woman as same as others woman who could not be able to protect herself.

The patriarchy also shows when the pimp laughed over Firdaus because of she wants to be the master instead of the slave. The pimp said to her that woman cannot be a master, he continue to say that let woman be alone by herself.

*'I don't want to be anybody's slave.'
 'And who says there is anyone who is not someone else's slave? There
 are only two categories of people, Firdaus, masters and slaves.'
 'In that case I want to be one of the masters and not one of the slaves.'
 'How can you be one of the masters? A woman on her own cannot be a
 master, let alone a woman who's a prostitute. Can't you see you're
 asking for the impossible?'
 'The word impossible does not exist for me,' I said. (p.103-104)*

In that case, the pimp once again trashing a woman by saying that woman is only able to be a slave rather than be a master. Woman cannot be a master, only a man will do. The pimp also said that it is impossible to Firdaus to become a master since she was a prostitute. However, Firdaus snap back over the pimp that the word 'impossible' does not exist on her life. Also in fact, all people are possible to become a master. It is possible for Firdaus who is a prostitute and trying to get a new proper job or even become a master. Every people, men and women, are allowed to be someone that what they deserve.

Beside of men trying to get power over women, men are also assuming that women could become a dangerous person towards men. It can be seen in the novel where Firdaus was about to be executed. Men are afraid of Firdaus's life so that they decided to execute Firdaus no matter what happens.

In the following statement below reveals the evidence.

'I knew why they were so afraid of me. I was the only woman who had torn the mask away, and exposed the face of their ugly reality. They condemned me to death not because I had killed a man – there are thousands of people being killed every day – but because they are afraid to let me live. They know that as long as I am alive when they will not be safe, that I shall kill them. My life means their death. My death means their life. They want to live. And life for them means more crime, more plunder, unlimited booty.' (p.110)

The quotation also tells that Firdaus was treated like a real murderer when the truth is Firdaus is killing a pimp who tried to kill her because he did not let Firdaus to leave in order to find a new proper job.

Another statement that shows the evidence is in the quotation below.

'For death and truth are similar in that they both require a great courage if one wishes to face them. And truth is like death in that it kills. When I killed I did it with truth not with a knife. That is why they are afraid and in a hurry to execute me. They do not fear my knife. It is my truth which frightens them. This fearful truth gives me great strength. It protects me from fearing death, or life, or hunger, or nakedness, or destruction. It is this fearful truth which prevents me from fearing the brutality of rulers and policemen.'

'I spit with ease on their lying faces and words, on their lying newspapers.' (p.112)

Regarding the statement above, the men are afraid towards Firdaus who is being courage as a woman who does not fear of everything. She has the truth which can destroy the men around them. The truth makes the men

fear about her. They decided to execute Firdaus so that they can live peacefully without fear.

3.2 How Firdaus Faces the Problems

Firdaus forced to be married with Sheikh Mahmoud, she used to be treated more like a servant than a wife. Her husband beats her for a little mistakes or something that cannot be able to be considered as a mistake. She often felt that she cannot stand anymore until she left the house to come to her uncle. However, her uncle and aunt did not help her at all. They did not care towards what Firdaus going through.

When Firdaus came back to her home, her husband still did not have a heart to treat her in properly way. Her husband even became more arrogant than before. Until Firdaus gives up and left the house but this time she does not come to her uncle but she's gone somewhere until she met someone named Bayoumi. It can be seen in this quotation below.

*'One day he hit me with his heavy stick until the blood ran from my nose and ears. So I left, but this time I did not go to my uncle's house. I walked through the streets with swollen eyes, and bruised face, but no one paid any attention to me. People were rushing around in buses and in cars, or on foot. It was as though they were blind, unable to see anything. The street was an endless expanse stretched out before my eyes like a sea. I was just a pebble thrown into it, battered by the waves, tossed here and there, rolling over and over to be abandoned somewhere on the shore'.
(p.47-48)*

It can be concluded that Firdaus thought that she did not know what should she does. She felt weak because there is nobody who cares about her. She struggles her feeling until she gives up and decided to lefts

her house in order to protect herself from her husband. She attempt to escape and started a new life.

When she stayed with Bayoumi, she felt so warm because he asked her to stay in his house until she finds a job and he also promised her to find a job. Until some day, she wants to leave his house to find a new job by her own but Bayoumi got angry and slapped her. He even harassed her and locked her up in the room. He also used her for the sake of money by letting her to be sexualized by all men.

Firdaus ran and escaped from Bayoumi until she met a beautiful and kind woman named Sharifa. Shaifa knew that she was being harassed by men. Then, Sharifa attempts to make Firdaus to realize that she can price herself, means for being prostitute.

'Sharifa said to me one day, 'Neither Bayoumi nor any of his cronies realized your worth, because you failed to value yourself highly enough. A man does not know a woman's value, Firdaus. She is the one who determines her value. The higher you price yourself, the more he will realize what you are really worth, and be prepared to pay with the means at his disposal. And if he has no means, he will steal from someone else to give you what you demand.' (p.58)

Sharifa still tries to open Firdaus's eyes that she, as a woman, should have a value to build herself and realized that people should not be able to touch her without paying the price that she's already set.

'And do you have a price?' I asked cautiously.'
'Of course. Nobody can touch me without paying a very high price. You are younger than I am and more cultured, and nobody should be able to come near you without paying twice as much as what is paid to me.'
'But I cannot ask for anything from a man.'
'Don't ask for anything. That's not your affair. It's mine'. (p.59)

Firdaus felt changed, she thought she already opened her eyes and realized that she should stand by herself. As a result she let herself become a woman who prices herself to be touched by men.

'I never used to leave the house. In fact, I never even felt the bedroom. Day and night I lay on the bed, crucified, and every hour a man would come in. there were many of them. I did not understand where they could possibly have come from. For they were all married, all educated, all carrying swollen leather wallets in their inner pockets. Their swollen heavy paunches hung down with too much food, and their sweat ran copiously, filling my nostrils with a foetid smell, like stagnant water, as though it had been held back in their bodies for a long time'. (p.61)

Firdaus is an innocent girl who did not easily understand something. One day, a man named Fawzy came and told her the truth that Sharifa is not a good woman. She does not even know that Sharifa is actually fooling her and only used Firdaus in order to get benefits from her. At the end she decided to escape from Sharifa.

'He gave a short laugh and kissed me on the lips. 'Sharifa's fooling you, and making money out of you, while all you get out of it is the pain.' (p.62)

'...I tip toed back to my room, put on the first dress I could lay my hands on, took my little bag, and hurried down the flights of stairs into the street.' (p.65)

Firdaus once again fails to protect herself. Instead of fight her right that she should not to be treated like that. She did not know what supposed to do. She faces the problem with escape and left Sharifa.

After something that experienced by Firdaus from Sharifa, she decided to stand by her own. She opened her eyes and realized that she can do everything by her own. She even prices herself higher and started to be selective to choose a man that she whom to go. She is become a successful prostitute. It can be proven by the quotation below.

'A man come up to me and whispered. I looked him straight in the eye and said 'No'. Another man came up to me and muttered something secretive voice which could barely be heard. I examined him carefully from head to toes and said, 'No.' he required: 'Why no?' I replied: 'Because there are plenty of men and I want to choose with whom to go.' So he said, 'Well then, why not choose me?' 'Because your finger nails are dirty, and I like them to be clean.' 'A third man approached. He pronounced the secret word, the key to the riddle I had solved. I asked, 'How much will you pay?' 'Ten pounds.' 'No, twenty.' 'Your wishes are my orders,' and he paid me on the spot.' (p.73-74)

Firdaus becomes a successful prostitute. She becomes rich and even having her own apartment. She felt that she is finally got the freedom and being an independent woman. She used to be friends with people from any kind of profession, including a journalist named Di'aa.

One day, Firdaus was in her apartment having a conversation with Di'aa. They talking about books until she got slapped by Di'aa's word that stuck in her head and makes her feel ashamed.

'You make me feel like I'm in a clinic. Why don't you hang up a price list in the waiting room? Do you also have emergency visits?' There was a note of irony in his voice, but I could not see why, so I said, 'Are you being sarcastic about my work, or about the medical profession?' 'Both' he said. 'Are they similar to one another?' 'Yes,' he said, 'except that a doctor while carrying out his duties feels he's worthy of respect.' 'What about me?' 'You are not respectable,' he replied. (p.65)

The word 'respectable' did not leave her ears with him that night. They had cut their way through to her mind in a moment of time which now belonged to the past which is could not turn back the hands of time one single moment. Slowly after, Firdaus realized the meaning of the word that her friend referring to. She decided to find herself and starting a new life. It can be seen in the quotation below.

'Nothing in the world seemed capable of making me the same woman I had been before I heard the two words pronounced by the man that night. From that moment onwards I became another woman. My previous life was behind me. I did not want to go back to it at any price, no matter what torture and suffering I might have to go through, even if I were to know hunger and cold, and utter destitution. Come what may, I had to become a respectable woman, even if the price were to be my life. I was prepared to do anything to put a stop to the insults that my ears had grown used to hearing, to keep the brazen eyes from running all over my body.' (p.78-79)

The quotation shows that Firdaus wants to start a new life as a respectable woman. She prepared to do anything and decided to apply for a job. There, she finally got one as an employee and have her own small office.

Becoming an employee for three years, there is no one dares to touch Firdaus, even a top executive or higher official. On the office, she realize that other girls around Firdaus were guileless enough to offer their bodies every night in return for a meal, a good yearly report, or just to ensure that they would not be treated unfairly, or discriminated against, or transferred.

Firdaus felt sorry for that. Firdaus did not do anything as what other girls do. She refused all the people on the office who tried to make her a proposition. Because she thinks that offering bodies in order to get a better place and get a good salary is a way lower than being prostitute. As

Firdaus says in the quotation below.

'It's not that I value my honor and my reputation more than the other girls, but my price is much higher than theirs.'
'I came to realize that a female employee is more afraid of losing her job than a prostitute is of losing her life. An employee is scared of losing her job and becoming prostitute because she does not understand that the prostitute's life is in fact better than hers. And so she pays the price for her illusory fears with her life, her health, her body, and her mind. She pays the highest price for things of the lowest value. I now knew that all

of us were prostitutes who sold themselves at varying prices, and that an expensive prostitute was better than a cheap one.' (p.82)

From the quotation above, she decided to stand and did not let her becomes a prostitute like other female employees in order just afraid of losing her job.

Firdaus loves her job. She spent years of time for being an employee in the office. Not only a job, Firdaus also falls in love with someone who also an employee in the office, named Ibrahim. She felt like it was never been happened to her. Ibrahim is being so kind towards Firdaus. He did not do anything bad or even harasses her like the way men did to Firdaus before. He did not try to get benefits of her.

However, the happy ending that Firdaus thought that it could be happen, the reality is being the opposite. Ibrahim is asked to marry the daughter of the office director. Firdaus lost someone who she loved. She felt so broken and stress. The broken heart made Firdaus gives up of her life. She decided to leave and being a prostitute that she was already did on the past.

'The time had come for me to shed the last grain of virtue, the last drop of sanctity in my blood. Now I was aware of the reality, of the truth. Now I knew what I wanted. Now there was no room for illusions. A successful prostitute was better than a misled saint. All women are victims of deception. Men impose deception on women and punish them for being deceived, force them down to the lowest level and punish them for falling so low, bind them in marriage and then chastise them with menial service for life, or insults, or blows.' (p.94)

From the quotation above, Firdaus realized that women are only the victim of deception. The truth is that men do not care about them at all. The equality between men and women are way different. All they know is

men is in higher position so that everything is being controlled by them. Women cannot do anything. They only receive punishment from the men.

Firdaus also realized that woman should stand by herself and fight for something that woman supposed to deserve. She is free to do what she wants and free to not to do it. Firdaus becomes stronger to what she was going through. She decided to be free and independent. She decided to be a woman who does not fear of anything at all. It can be seen by the quotation below.

'...I was like a woman walking through an enchanted world to which she does not belong. She is free to do what she wants, and free to not to it. She experiences the rare pleasure of having no ties with anyone, of having broken with everything, of having cut all relations with the world around her, of being completely independent and living her independence completely, of enjoying freedom from any subjection to a man, to marriage, or to love; of being divorced from all limitations whether rooted in rules and laws in time or the universe. If the first man who comes along does not want her, she will have the next, or the one after. No need to wait any longer for just one man. No need to be sad when he does not turn up, or to expect anything and suffer when one's hopes are razed to the ground. She no longer hopes for anything or desire anything. She no longer fears anything, for everything which can hurt her she has already undergone.' (p.95)

'...because I was intelligent I preferred to be a free prostitute, rather than an enslaved wife. Every time I gave my body I charged the highest price. I could employ any number of servants to wash my clothes and clean my shoes, hire a lawyer no matter how expensive to defend my honor, pay a doctor for an abortion, buy a journalist to publish my picture and write something about me in the newspapers. Everybody has a price, and every profession is paid a salary. The more respectable the profession, the higher the salary, and a person's price goes up as he climbs the social ladder.' (p.99)

Those quotations show that Firdaus stand as a woman who allowed to do what she wants. She also stated that women should make them become a respectable person. So, nobody could not get the power over woman easily.

Firdaus used to become a prostitute who is being controlled by a pimp. However, she realized that she was not as free as she thought it would be. She also realized that becoming a prostitute under power of the pimp is only giving the pimp benefits by doing nothing, but only using her body as a machine working every day. She attempts to leave and get to find others job that suitable with her.

'I realized I was not nearly as free as I had hitherto imagined myself to be. I was nothing but a body machine working day and night so that a number of men belonging to different professions could become immensely rich at my expense. I was no longer even mistress of the house for which I had paid with my efforts and sweat. One day I said to myself, 'I can't go on like this.' (p.103)

It tells that Firdaus is no longer freely like she used to do before. She wants a freedom that nobody could control her, so that she attempts to escape from the pimp. However, when she was about to leave, the pimp immediately appeared and prohibiting her to leave.

'I tried to slip through the door, but he pushed me back and shut it. I looked him in the eye and said, 'I intend to leave.'
'He stared back at me. I heard him mutter, 'You will never leave.' (p.104)

Firdaus attempts to fight the pimp so that she could leave him. However the pimp still pushed her away and beat her. He even slapped her and almost killed her by a knife, but Firdaus quickly seizes the knife from the pimp, then she buried the knife into the pimp's body. It can be proven by the quotation below.

'....I caught hold of the latch of the door to open it, but he lifted his arm up in the air and slapped me. I raised my hand even higher than he had done, and brought it down violently on his face. The whites of his eyes went red. His hands started to reach the knife he carried in his pocket, but my hand was quicker than his. I raised the knife and buried it deep in his neck, pulled it out of his neck and then thrust it deep into his chest and plunged it deep into his belly. I stuck the knife into almost every part of his body.' (p.104)

From the quotation above, Firdaus is killing the pimp. However, she killed him because in order to protect herself before he was about to kill her before. She also did not attempt to kill him until he tried to reach a knife from his pocket and about to buries it into Firdaus's chest. If only the men did not push her and prohibit her to leave, he would not be died.

'I was astonished to find how easily my hand moved as I thrust the knife into his flesh, and pulled it out almost without effort. My surprise was all the greater since I had never done that I was doing before. A question flashed through my mind. Why was it that I had never stabbed a man before? I realized that I had been afraid and that the fear had been within me all the time, until the fleeting moment when I read fear in his eyes.' (p.104)

The quotation shows Firdaus also did not feel afraid to what she had been doing. She did not panic of everything. She is even questioning herself that where was all the courage that she has already waiting for so long, why did she has to wait until this day. All the problems that she receives since she was a child until she become a grown woman, she changed from being a fearful woman to become a woman who stand by her own power.

At last she was killing a pimp who trying to kill her due to her leaving to find a proper job to her. She was trying to find her freedom by quitting from prostitution to become a respectable woman. When she was about to be arrested by the police, Firdaus tried to explain what has been happened. However, the police asked her to send an appeal to the President which makes her revoke and decided to be executed. It can be proven by the quotation below.

'There's a hope for your release if you send an appeal to the President asking him to pardon you for the crime you committed.'
'But I don't want to be released,' I said, 'and I want no pardon for my crime. For what you call my crime was no crime.'
'You killed a man.'
'If I go out once again to the life which is yours I will never stop killing. So what is the use of my sending an appeal to the President to be pardoned?'
'You criminal. You deserve to die.'
'Everybody has to die. I prefer to die for a crime I have committed rather than to die for one of the crimes which you have committed.'

The quotation shows how bravely Firdaus for making decision. She rather to be died, than ask a pardon for her crime that she's been committed to the government. Because in fact, the crime she was made was not really a crime when she was not really trying to kill the pump. However, the crimes of men that have been committed towards Firdaus are the worst. She does not even able to fight her rights in order to protect herself. At last, she's finally being executed.

3.3 How Firdaus Reflect the Problems Faced by Egyptian Women of 1980s

To answer the third formulated problem, to how does Firdaus reflect the problems faced by Egyptian women of 1980, here the researcher will combine the problems which happened towards Firdaus in the novel *Woman at Point Zero* with the condition of Egyptian women of 1980s. As has been discussed before, there are the problems that happened towards Firdaus as Egyptian Woman in the novel *Woman at point Zero*, it includes forced married, education, violence, sexual harassment and patriarchy. Those

problems are also reflected to the condition of Egyptian women of 1980s which will be explains in the statements below.

3.3.1 Forced Married

Forced marriages mostly occur in women who are only 15 years old or even lower. They were forced to marry by their parents for several reasons. Some parents even reasoned that they did not need to take care of the costs of their children and others. This issue was also reflected by Firdaus where Firdaus was being forced to marry an old man by her uncle and aunt in order to fulfill her life in the future.

As Mahmoud Mostafa (2015) stated that the responsibility of marriage is born by them when they are just on the verge of maturity. Egyptian marriage laws also stipulate a legal age for a woman's marriage at the age of sixteen, while Islamic (Sharia) law defines the age of marriage to puberty, which is generally set by Muslim scholars at age 15.

The statement above is clearly shows that mostly women under the age of 20 were forced to be married because their parents think that they did not need to take care of the costs of their children and others. This is also experienced by Firdaus who only at the age 15 and is forced to be married by their uncle and aunt.

They did not let Firdaus do what she wanted, and finally they forced her to marry an old man.

3.3.2 Education

Education is one of the most important things to do by all people around the world, including women. However, mostly Egyptian women experience education restriction where parents are more concerned with men to achieve higher education than women. They assume that women do not need to attain higher education because they will become a wife who only takes care of married life. So that women are only considered as a people who cannot stand by herself.

An article written by Maryam Jamilah (2017), stated that data from the Egyptian government shows that 82% of all young Egyptian groups who have never tasted education are women (IDSC, 2010, p.11). As many as 13% of all total young women in Egypt never attend school whereas compared to men who do not attend school it only reaches 3% (IDSC, 2010, p.11). This is one proof that more parents' investment in education is given to boys than girls in Egypt.

This kind of issues is also reflected by Firdaus which she did not allow to continue her study. Instead of being asked to find a job, she was forced to marry a man which much older than her. At

the end, she did not have a choice. She finally let her dream for becoming a politician fall down.

3.3.3 Violence

Violence against women has increasingly been recognized as the significant social and legal problem in Egypt. Violence against women in Egypt can be described along the broad categories: they are violence committed by institutions of the state, domestic violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), and the structural violence that deprives women of equal participation and a chance to change the conditions that perpetuate the other forms of violence.

In a report entitled *Spousal Violence in Egypt* (2010) by Ibrahim F.Kharboush, Farzanah Roudi-Fahimi, Hanna M.Ismial, Heba M. Mamdouh, Yasmine Y. Muhammad, May M. Tawfik, Omnia G. El Sharkawy, and Hassan N. Sallam in Population Reference Bureau explored the conditions in which the Egyptian women suffer this domestic violence done to them by their spouses. This report defines the concept of ‘domestic violence’ according to the UN which states that, “Any act of gender based violence that result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in

private life” (pp.2). This report argued that one third of Egyptian woman faces this domestic violence, according to the 2005 Egypt Demographic and Health Survey.

As reflected by the novel *Woman at Point Zero*, Firdaus was also being the victim of violence where her own husband treated her improperly. Her husband was so rude towards her. Her husband often beat her for a mistake which could not be considered as a mistake. At last, she left the house to be free and peace.

3.3.4 Sexual Harassment

In the novel *Woman at Point Zero*, Firdaus portrayed as an Egyptian woman who was being the victim of sexual harassment. She even received it since her childhood. She gets lack of caring and affection from her parents. One day, when she escaped from her rude husband, she was about to find a job and then she met someone named Bayoumi. He wanted to help her to find a job and gave her a place for her to stay until she finds a job. At first, Bayoumi was being very gentleman until one day when Firdaus realize that Bayoumi did not do anything to help her to find a job, she was about to leave him. However, he slaps her and harasses her.

As has been explored before, sexual Harassment and violence have reached significant numbers in Egypt. Based on a survey conducted by the Thomas Reuteurs Foundation in 2013,

Egypt ranks last among 22 countries in the Middle East as the worst country for women. Cairo, in particular, has become known as a dangerous place for women to walk, both in group and individually.

Women in Egypt suffer from nightmares every day when they go out. Women are the target of daily sexual harassment on the streets, public transportation, shops, markets, schools, universities, clubs, tourists' attractions and workplace. A 2013 UN Women study also reported that 96.5% of the women surveyed had been physically abused, touched, touched, raped by men in public places.

3.3.5 Patriarchy

Egypt is one of the Middle East countries where patriarchy is often happen. As Saadawi's work *Woman at Point Zero* which the story is set in Egypt, as the object of this research patriarchal culture in the Middle East. Men domination in economic, politic, and ideological, including social domination was represented in the story.

Firdaus is a woman who face such obstacles and oppressions of patriarchy. It could be seen on the previous analysis when she realized that her father discriminates between boys and girls. When any of her brothers died out of diarrhea, her father

would beat up her mother, have his meal, and then fall asleep. Whereas, when any of his female children died, he would simply have his meal and then fall asleep. He would trash his wife for the death of boy because he blamed her for her negligence. On the contrary, the death of a girl child would only relieve him of the trouble of caring for a burden. It also can be concluded that a son is more valuable than a daughter.

This case also reflects the condition of Egyptian women of 1980s. The UN Decade of Women (1975-1985), pressure from Egyptian and international feminist groups, and advocacy of women's rights by Sadat's wife, Jihan Sadat, also induced the regime to promote gender issues. Sadat established the Egyptian Women's Organization and the National Commission for Women to handle family planning, illiteracy, and child welfare. This has become a legal basis which is strong for women's human rights in Egypt. At the same time Jihan, set up women's welfare organizations and initiated a series of reforms, known as "Jihan's law," granting women legal rights in marriage, polygamy, divorce, and child custody, Torunoglu (2016).

This Personal Status Law of 1979 was implemented by a presidential decree when parliament was in recess and was short-lived. Facing strong opposition from the Islamists who condemned it as Western-oriented and un-Islamic and some nationalist leftists

who argued that it was passed unconstitutionally by Sadat, the Law was nullified by the Constitutional Court in 1985. Despite the progressive laws of 1979, the state did not encourage independent feminist activism under Sadat's regime. In September 1981, Dr. Nawal al-Saadawi, a medical doctor and a prominent feminist author, whose writings, including her famous book *al-Mar'ah wa Al-Jins* (Women and Sex, 1971) were censored by the state, was arrested and jailed for months.

The statement above also reflected by Firdaus through the novel *Woman at Point Zero* where Firdaus was treated like a real murderer when the truth is Firdaus killed a pimp who tried to kill her because he did not let Firdaus to leave in order to find a new proper job. However, the men were afraid towards Firdaus who was being courage as a woman who does not fear of everything. She has the truth which can destroy the men around them. The truth made the men fear about her. Lastly, they decided to executed Firdaus so that they can live peacefully without fear.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Finally, the researcher has arrived at the next chapter consisting of conclusions and suggestions. In this chapter, researchers will provide conclusions related to the analysis done in the previous chapter. Researchers will also provide suggestions related to this research for readers who will use the same theory and objects.

4.1 Conclusion

From the analysis which conducted by the researcher in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the problems that experienced by Firdaus reveals that she has received bad treatments as a woman that are also experienced by Egyptian women in various aspects, including forced marriage, education, violence, sexual harassment, and patriarchy. Firdaus is an Egyptian woman who experiences a very dramatic life. She faces a sad life because of poverty and harassment she experiences in her life. She always becomes a victim of cruel treatments from men. After all the bad treatments she gets from men in her society, it does not deter men from putting women in a lower caste than men.

By this chance, the researcher analyzes the main character problems by sociological theory. Firdaus efforts to solve the problems that happened towards her has made her became a strong woman, independent, fearless of everything, and able to stand alone by herself. She finally transforms to be a smart, brave, and confident lady who was able to

conquer the concept in her society which put women in the second position under men. She brings ambition into reality by becoming a successful prostitute who stands above men. At the end of the story, she kills a pimp who tried to stop her when she was about to get the freedom from being prostituted. At last she gets a death sentence from the judges.

The last formulated problem is about the reflection of Firdaus' problems faced by Egyptian women of 1980s. From the researcher analysis, there are some similarities found between the problems faced by Firdaus through the novel *Woman at Point Zero* and the problems faced by Egyptian women of 1980s. As revealed through the novel, Firdaus experienced the same problems as Egyptian women. They were being forced to be married on such a young age, being restricted to continue their study, received violence and being the victim of patriarchy.

4.2 Suggestion

Firstly, it is recommended for the readers especially the literature students to understand the status of woman as the part of society, particularly from its basic terms such as rights, the important role of woman, and the equality between women and men. Those terms may give more critical analysis upon the literary works in private interest or current issues.

Secondly, this research is presented with a great hope that readers of those who are fond of reading novels maintain the study of literature

where the story is related to reality, in order that they can develop their historical knowledge and increase their appreciation towards literary works.



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CURRICULUM VITAE



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APPENDIX

TEXT 1

Synopsis of the Novel *Woman at Point Zero*

In *Woman at Point Zero*, Nawal El Saadawi describes her experiences as a psychiatrist in Egypt, studying the psychological effects of prison on female prisoners. She states in her introduction that when she was conducting these studies, she had no idea that one day she would be imprisoned by the government. On one visit to Qanatir prison, Nawal meets a doctor who tells her that there is a prisoner there who is truly remarkable. She is awaiting the death penalty for killing a man, but the doctor cannot believe that this woman is capable of killing anyone. He wrote out a request for a pardon, but the condemned woman refused to sign it. Nawal desperately wants to meet with this woman, named Firdaus, but Firdaus keeps refusing to meet with her. Finally, the day before she is to be put to death, Firdaus agrees to meet with Nawal.

Nawal goes to Firdaus's cell, and Firdaus commands her to sit on the ground. Firdaus begins to tell her life story. She was born into an extremely poor family in the countryside. Her father often beat her mother; sometimes he beat her as well. Firdaus used to play in the fields with other children. A boy named Mohammadain was her special playmate, and when they were young, they used to play "bride and bridegroom." Firdaus got pleasure from her sexual experiments with Mohammadain. One day, her mother performed a clitoridectomy on her, and after that, Firdaus is no longer allowed to play with Mohammadain, nor does she

ever feel sexual pleasure in the same way. Soon, Firdaus's mother and father die, and Firdaus is sent to live with her uncle, a sometime scholar, who lives in Cairo.

At first, everything goes well for Firdaus in Cairo. She and her uncle get along well, and she is allowed to go to school, which she loves. She and her uncle share a bed and are close. Her uncle gets married and the new wife does not like Firdaus, so Firdaus is sent to a boarding school. Firdaus is an excellent student and works hard. Unlike the other girls, she does not fantasize about boys and marriage. She spends most of her time at the library and in the courtyard, where she encounters a teacher named Miss Iqbal, with whom she forms a friendship. When Firdaus graduates, she is given an award, but she and her family are not at the ceremony, so Miss Iqbal accepts it for Firdaus. When school is over, Firdaus's uncle comes to get her.

Back at her uncle's house, Firdaus is miserable. One night, she overhears her aunt and uncle discussing whether they will marry Firdaus to her aunt's old uncle, Sheikh Mahmoud. He is sixty and has a facial deformity. Firdaus runs away, but while she is on the streets, she is terrified by the strange men who approach her, so she returns home. They marry her to Sheikh Mahmoud. He is selfish and stingy and beats Firdaus. His facial deformity is a large swelling on his chin with a hole in the middle that leaks pus. After one bad beating, Firdaus runs away. She ends up in a coffee shop, where she meets Bayoumi, the coffee shop owner. She goes with him to his apartment. At first Bayoumi is kind to Firdaus. Then Firdaus announces that she wants to get a job, and Bayoumi is enraged. He

beats her and begins to lock her in the apartment when he leaves. He brings his friends home and allows them to have sex with her. Firdaus escapes with the help of a neighbor and flees Bayoumi's apartment for the city.

Resting by the Nile, Firdaus feels hopeless until an wealthy-looking woman approaches her. Her name is Sharifa, and she is a prostitute. She takes Firdaus in and teaches her to become a high-class prostitute. Sharifa makes money from Firdaus's body until one night when her friend Fawzy comes over. Firdaus overhears Sharifa and Fawzy fighting over who will get to keep her, so she runs away again. Still a prostitute, Firdaus becomes her own boss and eventually has a beautiful home and expensive things. One night, a client named Di'aa tells her that she is not a respectable woman, and Firdaus is devastated. She gives up her nice apartment and beautiful things, moves into a shack, and begins working as an office assistant. There, she realizes that the life of an assistant is in many ways worse than the life of a prostitute. She meets a man named Ibrahim, and falls in love with him. They have a relationship, and Firdaus begins to feel that the world is not so horrible, until she discovers that Ibrahim has become engaged to the boss's daughter.

Firdaus leaves the company and becomes a prostitute again. She is very expensive and very popular. Many powerful men come to her, and she turns some of them away to prove that she has power over her own body, and because she despises them. Ibrahim comes to her, and she realizes he never loved her; rather, he just wanted free sex. A pimp tries to take over Firdaus's life, and for a little

while, she lets him. Then they fight and she kills him. Shortly after that, Firdaus meets an Arab prince who takes her home and offers her \$3,000. She sleeps with him, rips up the money, and slaps him. Terrified, the man calls the police. They come and arrest Firdaus. Firdaus is tried and sentenced to death.

She is, she tells Nawal, just waiting to die, because she is excited to go somewhere new. She knows that the men who sentenced her want to kill her because they're afraid of the truth she has to tell, not because they're afraid she'll kill again. After she finishes her story, police come to her cell and take her away to be executed. Nawal leaves the cell and is ashamed of the world. Everywhere she looks, she sees lies and unhappiness. As Nawal drives away from the prison, she thinks about running people over with her car, but she doesn't. She realizes that Firdaus is braver than she is.

TEXT 2

Biography of Nawal El-Saadawi

WRITTEN BY: The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

LAST UPDATED: Oct 23, 2019

Source : <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nawal-El-Saadawi>



Nawal El Saadawi, also spelled **Nawāl al-Sa‘dāwī**, (born Oct. 27, 1931, Kafr Ṭaḥlah, Egypt), Egyptian public health physician, psychiatrist, author, and advocate of women’s rights. Sometimes described as “the Simone de Beauvoir of the Arab world,” El Saadawi was a feminist whose writings and professional career were dedicated to political and

sexual rights for women. El Saadawi was educated at Cairo University (M.D., 1955), Columbia University in New York (M.P.H., 1966), and ‘Ayn Shams University in Cairo (where she performed psychiatric research in 1972–74). In 1955–65 she worked as a physician at Cairo University and in the Egyptian ministry of health, and in 1966 she became the director-general of the health education department within the ministry. In 1968 she founded *Health* magazine, which was shut down by Egyptian authorities several years later, and in 1972 she was expelled from her professional position in the ministry of health because of her book *Al-mar`ah wa al-jins* (1969; *Women and Sex*), which was condemned by religious and political authorities. El Saadawi was jailed in September 1981, and during the two months of her imprisonment she wrote *Mudhakkirāt fī sijn al-nisā`* (1984; *Memoirs from the Women’s Prison*) on a roll of toilet paper using a smuggled cosmetic pencil.

In 1982 El Saadawi founded the Arab Women’s Solidarity Association (AWSA) and later served as editor of the organization’s publication, *Al-nūn*. In 1991 the government closed down *Al-nūn* and then, several months later, AWSA itself. Due to her outspoken views, El Saadawi continued to face frequent legal challenges from political and religious opponents, including accusations of apostasy. In 2002 a legal attempt was made by an Islamist lawyer to forcibly divorce her from her husband, and in May 2008 she won a case that had been brought against her by al-Azhar University, the major centre of Islamic learning, that included charges of apostasy and heresy.

El Saadawi’s novels, short stories, and nonfiction deal chiefly with the status of Arab women, as in *Mudhakkirāt tabībah* (1960; *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor*), *Al-khayt wa al-jidār* (1972; *The Thread and the Wall*), *Al-wajh al-‘arī lī al-mar`ah al-arabiyyah* (1977; *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World*), *Al-ḥubb fī zaman al-naftī* (1993; *Love in the Kingdom of Oil*), and *Al-riwāyah* (2004; *The Novel*). The oppression of women by men through religion is the underlying theme of El Saadawi’s novel set in a mental institution, *Jannāt wa Iblīs* (1992; *Jannāt and Iblīs*). The female protagonists are Jannāt, whose name is the plural of the Arabic word for paradise, and Iblīs, whose name refers to the devil.