

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages
Department of English



Master Thesis

**The Role of Modern Feminism in Illuminating the Connection
between Religion, Sex and Politics in Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman
at Point Zero* 1983**

Submitted and defended by: Bellebcir Maroua

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and Foreign Languages as Partial
Fulfilment for a Master Degree in English Language: Literature & Civilization

Board of Examiners

Mrs. BOUGOFA Zeyneb	MAA	Supervisor
Mr. Boulegroune Adel	MAA	Examiner
Dr. Lamjed Lhamel	MCB	Examiner
Mrs. Djaalal Mariem	MAA	Examiner

Academic Year: 2021-2022

Dedication

At first, I want to say Al Hamdoulleh and thank God for those endless blesses around me. I would like to thank my lovely family, my parents, sisters and brothers. Thank you for all the love and the support over years. I dedicate this work to my superhero, Mohammed my father, who teaches me to never fail and keep trying. My words won't be enough to thank u for your encouragement. To my mother, Moufida the fighter, who was there for me whenever I needed an ear to listen and a heart to pray for me. I wouldn't have done it without you.

I would love to extent my gratitude to my generous and humble supervisor who literally was there for me whenever I needed guidance, you made me believe that I choose right the day I chose u as my supervisor and I did never regret being one of your candidates.

To my dearest cousin Halima, I appreciate your patience with me. You were always there for me. Thank you a lot dear.

To my best friends Belkis, Amira and khawla, Thank you for the five years of memories, laugh, tears and the amazing friendship. I love you all.

To the one who was there to motivate me whenever it gets dark and to the one who believed in my abilities thank u so much for being there.

Thank you all for being proud of me and accompanying me along the long journey.

Acknowledgements

I am extremely Thankful to my supervisor Miss Zeyneb BOUGOFA for her hard efforts, time, patience, encouragement, and her offer for advice throughout the entire thesis. I am grateful and happy for working with such a great advisor like you, this work wouldn't be done without your assistance. I also would like to express my sincere thanks to the jury members: Mr. BOULEGROUNE Adel, Miss DJAALAL Meriem, and Dr. LHAMEL Lamjed for their helpful opinions and feedbacks in validating my research. I owe my gratitude to my family members and my friends for support and love whenever I needed them.

Abstract

Sexuality, religious fundamentalism, patriarchy and the status of women in the Arab world were the main concepts that the Egyptian feminist Nawal El Saadawi talked about in her novels. As one of her generation's prominent writer and activist, she addresses the issues that women confront in Egypt and around the world, in which she never seems to have shied away from tough topics like prostitution, domestic violence and religious extremism in her writings and *Woman at Point Zero* (written in 1975 and translated in 1983) is no exception.

Woman at Point Zero, in fact, is a cry of help of not only by the character Firdaus but all women in the Arab societies. It is an out-loud scream of injustice and misrepresentation of ladies in the Arabic world where equality is supposed to be achieved by the principles of Islam; the thing that Nawal criticizes the most in the novel. Both Marxist-feminism and postcolonial theories will be used for a better study of the book. The findings of the research may answer the main question of how did the modern feminism impacted Nawal in connecting the three doctrines of Sex, religion and politics in a feminist work. It will also mirror how the marginalization of women affects their striving for self improvement and self development.

Key Terms: Modern Arabic Feminism, Patriarchy, Political Islam, Oppression, Sexual Harassment.

ملخص

تعتبر الجنسانية، الأصولية الدينية، النظام الأبوي ووضع المرأة في العالم العربي من المفاهيم الرئيسية التي تحدثت عنها النسوية المصرية نوال السعداوي في رواياتها. وباعتبارها واحدة من الكاتبات والناشطات البارزات في جيلها، فإنها تتناول القضايا التي تواجهها المرأة في مصر وحول العالم، والتي يبدو أنها لم تتعد فيها أبداً عن المواضيع الصعبة مثل الدعارة والعنف الأسري والتطرف الديني في كتاباتها وكتاب "المرأة عند النقطة الصفر" (الذي كتب في عام 1975 وترجم في عام 1983) ليس باستثناء. المرأة عند النقطة الصفر، في الواقع، هي صرخة استغاثة ليس فقط من قبل شخصية فردوس ولكن من قبل جميع النساء في المجتمعات العربية. إنها صرخة عارمة من الظلم والتحرير للسيدات في العالم العربي حيث يفترض أن تتحقق المساواة من خلال مبادئ الإسلام و هو أكثر شيء تنتقده نوال في الرواية. سيتم استخدام الماركسية النسوية ونظريات ما بعد الاستعمار لدراسة أفضل للكتاب. ستجيب نتائج البحث على السؤال الرئيسي حول كيفية تأثير النسوية الحديثة على نوال في ربط المذاهب الثلاثة للجنس والدين والسياسة في عمل نسوي. كما أنه سيعكس كيف يؤثر تهميش المرأة على سعيها لتحسين وتطوير الذات.

المصطلحات الرئيسية: النسوية العربية الحديثة، النظام الأبوي، الإسلام السياسي، الاضطهاد، التحرش الجنسي.

Table of Content

Dedication.....	I
Acknowledgements.....	II
Abstract.....	III
ملخص.....	IV
Table of Content.....	V
Literature Review.....	1
General Introduction.....	3
Chapter One: Overview on Feminism in the Worldwide.....	6
1. Introduction.....	6
1.1 Definition of Feminism (Literature).....	6
1.2 Waves of Feminism.....	7
1.3 Feminine writings.....	8
1.4 Pioneers of Feminine writings and Their Main Works.....	9
1.5 Feminism in the Arab World.....	9
1.6 The Islamic Feminism in the Arab World.....	11
1.6.1 Feminism in Egypt (1800-1900's)	13
1.7 Theologian Feminism.....	14
1.8 Marxist-Feminism.....	16
1.9 Arabic Islamic Feminist Writings and Doctrines of Sex, Politics and Religion.....	17
1.9.1 Sexuality in Islam.....	18
1.9.1.1 Female sexuality in Muslim Society.....	19
1.9.2 Religion (Islam and Feminism).....	20
1.9.3 Politics (Political System in the Arabic World and patriarchal system in	

Egypt).....	21
1.9.3.1 Bourgiba’s Political Experience with Feminism in Tunisia.....	22
1.9.3.2 Political Islam.....	23
1.8 Conclusion.....	24
Chapter Two: <i>Woman at Point Zero</i> in Context.....	25
2. Introduction.....	25
2.1 Biography of Nawal EL Saadawi	26
2.1.1 Education- Work- Life (Political Situation and Tendencies, Religion and Sexual Tendencies).....	26
2.1.2 El Saadawi and Religion.....	27
2.1.3 Works and Achievements.....	28
2.2 Setting of <i>Woman at Point Zero</i>	30
2.3 plot.....	31
2.4 Influential Characters.....	34
2.4.1 Firdaus.....	34
2.4.2 The Psychiatrist / Narrator.....	35
2.4.3 The Father of Firdaus.....	35
2.4.4 Firdaus’s Uncle.....	36
2.4.5 Firdaus’s Mother.....	36
2.4.6 Sharifa Salah El Dine	36
2.4.7 Biyoumi.....	37
2.4.8 Marzouk.....	37
2.5 Nawal El Saadawi as an Arab Modernist Feminist.....	37

2.6	The Connection between Sex, Politics and Religion in Oppressing	
	Women.....	39
2.6.1	Oppression.....	39
2.7	The Economic and the Political Situation of Arab and Egyptian	
	Women.....	40
2.8	The Rights of Women in Islam and its Misuse.....	42
2.9	Feminist Analysis of <i>Woman at Point Zero</i>.....	44
2.10	Conclusion.....	48
	General Conclusion.....	49
	Works Cited.....	51
	Abstrait.....	61

Literature review

Females took the feminist path as the only tool that would guarantee their empowerment and liberty. Feminism starts in the late 19th c to be one of the most powerful movements that seeks for equal opportunities between the two genders and fulfill females' wishes within a patriarchal society. This movement shifted from a continental reputation into a worldwide one few years after. Nawal Al-Saadawi was one of the prominent Arabic feminist writers who contributed to the rise on feminism in the Arabic community. In her "*Woman at Point Zero*" (1983), Nawal visually portrays the oppression, sexual harassment, domestic abuse, and repression that Egyptian women face.

Nawal El Saadawi is noted for her divisive works, which frequently investigate into question authority and patriarchal dominance. Nawal El Saadawi has been rejected for calling for women's emancipation, having been dismissed from the Ministry of Health, Chief Editor of an important health magazine, Assistant General Secretary of the Egyptian Medical Association, and imprisoned in 1981 for her bold political activities.

As one of her courageous works, "*Woman at point Zero*" (1983) depicts the story of the protagonist Firdaus who suffers from sexual abuse, oppression and masculine rule within the Egyptian society; hence, reflecting the Egyptian female's experience. The novel is an allusion of Egyptian women's battle against patriarchy and colonial authority, told through the life of Firdaus, an Egyptian woman convicted of murder and awaiting execution at the Qanatir Prison. As shown in her work, "*Woman at Point Zero*" El Saadawi shows how women in her geographical environment are twice oppressed and abused, first by males and secondly by society.

Simola (2005) investigated the route to prison of two women, Lemona and Firdaus, the protagonists of *Woman at Point Zero* (1982). He looked into the position that these two

people find themselves in while jailed. The scholar draws parallels between Lemola's and Firdaus' lives. Simola (2005) makes no attempt to explain why the author of *Woman at Point Zero* (1982) utilizes the first person point of view to highlight Firdaus' situation. As a result, the current research is devoted to examining these issues. The current research is based on Simola's (2005) analysis of Firdaus' experiences in *Woman at Point Zero* (1982), which focuses on the issue of oppression.

Spath (2005) conducted research on Saadawi's life and career. In his thesis, he looked into Saadawi's work and how it would be received by other activists and the government, as well as the influence it has on the rest of the globe. Despite the fact that the researcher is working with Saadawi's works, the research concentrated on the author's writing skill rather than his biography.

In Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*, Mustofa and Mandakini (2014) conducted research on preventing prostitution as an institution. They examine the negative portrayal of prostitution in Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*, which is portrayed in a different way. Deconstruction was employed as the interpretive theory in this study. This research limits the researcher's ability to generate themes from the narrator's experiences, thereby shifting from deconstruction to feminist narratology.

From the previous review, it should be declared that El- Saadawi's work is a focus of many intellectuals either from its narrative style or the set of discussed themes.

General Introduction

Since their born, women all around the world fight for their recognition. They want to live freely, have equal rights with men, enjoy justice and emancipate in the society's process of development. However, patriarchy and the suppressed male dominance are among the main reasons behind females' revolt. Feminism, as the outcome of the previous mentioned problems, it focuses on finding ways of participating and reducing the strong male dominancy. Moreover, demanding equal rights in the political, intellectual, cultural and even literary fields are prominent goals of feminism. Feminists see the Feminist theory as a strategy that studies the struggle of women. It started in the beginning of the 20th century in the West as a manifestation to have the right to vote, then to the rest of the world as a large meaningful theory of liberating both the female's voice and body.

Fighting male dominance is a common theme in El Saadawi's life. In the eyes of the West, El Saadawi is a lone rebel over patriarchy and a victim of Islam's conservative suppression of women. Her critique of gender inequality is among the most current, if not the most sophisticated and highly relevant. El-Saadawi believes that patriarchy and the patriarchal structure of society should be reformed without damaging the power of the Arab family. Culture, politics and Islam are also figurative themes that Nawal, as an Arab activist, tries to tackle in her writings; insisting on the idea that the political and the cultural awareness are necessary for women. Feminist literature according to Nawal El –Saadawi is what can make a change in women's life; their search for recognition and appreciation is what make their works an art fiction, struggle can sometimes be the motivation for a radical change.

Woman at Point Zero 1983 by Nawal El Saadawi is a revolutionary, audacious and a challenging story that excels in capturing the real conflict of the Arab women politically, socially and economically. The author's desire to mirror the brutal reality of the Arabic and the Egyptian society in particular, is shown through the protagonist's story. She plays the role

of both the narrator of the novel and the psychiatrist who visits Firdaus and gets amazed by her talks and suffers. Her investigations represent a big challenge to the Egyptian patriarchal regime that underestimates women and puts a limit to their abilities; therefore, belongs to sensitive feminine issues like sexual harassment, marriage and circumcision.

Research Primary Question

How is the connection between religion, sex and politics reflected in *Woman at point Zero*?

Sub-Questions

The current research seeks to answer the main questions:

- What are the sexual, political and religious tendencies of Nawal El Saadawi?
- How does *Woman at Point Zero* explore the connection between sex, religion and politics in the discrimination of women in the Arabic world?

Methodology

This dissertation will be adopting the Eclectic approach. It relies on both Marxist-Feminism and post-colonialism. It will be presenting the relationship between Marxism and feminism in shedding the light to the women's oppression and how is living in a capitalist patriarchal society looks like. The study will aim to decipher El- Saadawi's concept of the capitalist system's subjugation of women.

The actual research relies on the primary source of Nawal El-Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* as the main reference, in which the plot, the setting and the characters are all described in details. The set of information that will be discussed later is extracted from encyclopedias, websites, articles, journals and online books. Audio visuals (interviews and speech sources) are also a helpful source to rely on. Formally, the 8th edition of MLA is followed to academically structure the work.

Structure of the Study

During the process of finding suitable answers for these questions, this study attempts to look after the biographical background of the author to explore her religious, political and sexual roots. Hence, studying the political and the economic situation in the Arabic area specifically in Egypt, is among the essential purposes of this research. Furthermore, helping readers to boost up their awareness towards the female's suffrages in a patriarchal masculine society is also seen as a necessary goal for Nawal as a feminist to reach.

Structurally, this academic work consists of two main chapters. Chapter one, as a theoretical section, will introduce the feminist movement in the west and its access to the Arab world. In addition, Islamic and theologian Feminism take a place of investigation in here. Moreover, it indentifies the Marxist feminism and its prominent pioneers. Finally, it introduces the Arabic feminist writings and writers, and explains the three doctrines of sex, religion and politics. Political Islam is also an important part in the first chapter.

The second chapter will typically depicts the biographical background of the Egyptian feminist and writer Nawal El-Saadawi and a literary review of one of her best known novel *Woman at Point Zero*. The novel's plot, setting and some selected characters will be examined through the second section. In time, it describes Nawal as a modernist feminist and lists her awards in depicting reality of Arab and Egyptian women. Last but not least, it portrays the political and the economic positions of women in Arab societies focusing on the importance or precisely the role of women in the society's growth.

Chapter One: Overview on Feminism in the Worldwide

1. Introduction

The struggle over gender equality and liberty is always a matter to females since ages. Women around the world started their journey towards freedom in the West during the 20th century. It first appears as a manifestation to vote and then it develops into the widest movement of Feminist issues as “Feminism”. Its effect extends to the Arabic and the Middle Eastern regions, where women like Nawal El Saadawi fight against patriarchy and masculine doctrines of the Arabic political and social regimes. Feminists in the Arab world challenge culture, society and its customs to regain their deprived natural rights. This fight gives born to the Political Islam and the Islamic Feminism, which are writing their trace for a worldwide reputation. This chapter will address the feminist concept in literature and its historical background in both Western and Arab worlds. This theoretical chapter will also highlight the different stages of both Arabic and Western Feminism; hence, listing the most important Arab and international names that helped its emergence. Both Marxist and Theologian feminism will be presented in this chapter, thus mentioning the main figures of each variant. At the end of this chapter, we will shed the light on the Islamic feminism and political Islam and their influence to the Islamic boundaries in the Arabic sphere especially in Egypt and how it contains a reference to doctrines like sex, religion and politics.

1.1 Definition of Feminism in Literature

As a reaction to men’s superiority and women’s inferiority, the feminist theory is used as a sphere where women can fight for their freedom in the world of politics, economy, sociology and literature. Pioneered by Virginia Wolf’s book “*A Room for One’s Own*” (1929), Feminism emerged for the first time in the early twentieth century. It developed more in the 1960’s and expanded to include the cultural, economic and social areas rather than only seeking for equal rights with men (Mila Arizah, 510).

The liberation movement of the 1960's in the West gave rise to the feminist movement, which seeks to fight for women's rights and break down the system of dominance and hegemony. Feminism, indeed, arose from women's dissatisfaction with being subjected and subjugated from everything. However, it is the only way to express their needs and share their voices. The feminist theory is a weapon that women use to fight for equal rights in various realms against men (Mila Arizah, 510).

1.2 Waves of Feminism

The roots of feminism go back to Olympe de Gouge (1791), Mary Wollstonecraft (1797) and Jane Austen (1817). All of these thinkers contended for the female sex's dignity, intellect and basic human potential. However, until the late of the 19th century that feminism starts to be considered as a distinct and self-aware movement or rather a set of movements; where the debate over equal rights for women is initiated (Rampton).

Feminism started to rise as a political demand for voting in the 1900- mid 90's to transform into an international theory that fights for women's protection and equality (Tag-El-Din, 12). Following the previous three waves, the fourth wave of feminism (late 90's – till the present) continued to manifest for the rights of women. Issues like rape, violence against women and sexual abuse are having a wide spread recognition and attention nationally and internationally. The main concern of this wave's supporters from both men and women was to gain the biggest number of audience to discuss such previously mentioned problems (Master Class staff).

The core point of the 4th wave is that Feminism does not only focus on women's struggles, but calls for gender equality. Thanks to the growth of the online platform, Fourth wave feminists may now conduct worldwide campaigns online. The followings are some of the distinguishing features of the 4th wave of feminism: intersectionality, solidarity, internationalism, and decentralization (Master Class staff).

1.3 Feminine writings (Pioneers and Their Main Works)

According to Penrod, as being translated from French to English, *Écriture Feminine* becomes “women’s writings” or “writings of women”. It is sometimes interpreted as “writing from the body” and represents a women centered theoretical view point (25).

The term Feminine *Écriture* was created by the French feminist Hélène Cixous in her famous essay “*The Medusa’s Laugh*” in 1975. The essay was translated into English a year after its publication and becomes notably significant in the academic Feminism in the United States, where it is still a case of study in feminist theory classrooms. Feminine *Écriture* investigates the link between feminine uniqueness in writing and the psychological and cultural image of the female body “(Écriture feminine)”. It exemplifies the importance of writing and how gorgeous it is to feel the beauty of writing about females by females and for females. Cixous states that “Women must write herself; must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently from their own bodies...” (279). Hélène clarifies that writing is the only effective way for females to express their feelings and share their voices.

Cixous’s first use of the term *Féminin écriture* was to explain the belief that the female’s desire is essentially different from male’s want was too close to biological essentialism. She tries to connect both women’s repressed desires and the restriction of women’s words. Cixous suspects that females are subjugated and represented as “The Conscious of masculine society”. She writes “Write yourself, your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring fourth” (880) .She thinks that showing the feminine physical beauty through words will represent the beautiful existence of women.

1.4 Pioneers of Feminine writings and Their Main Works

Different literary works mark the beginning of feminine *Écriture*. *Language and Woman's place* by Lakoff is deemed as the first feminine *Écriture* that was written in 1973. Linguistic gender differences are the focus of this book. Robin, in his literature, focused on the fact that the language of women is discriminated and inferior. Therefore, the scope of this literary work is gender discrimination in language and their impact on gender inequality (Lakoff, 1). Luce Irigaray also added to the legacy of feminine *Écriture* by her work *Speculum de L'autre Femme* in 1974.

Hélène Cixous, on the other hand, highlights the urgently call for women's writing and getting rid of the old tradition of masculine oppression. Her thoughts and others were expressed in her work entitled *Le Rire de la Méduse* 1975 (Cixous et al, 879). Also, Chantal Chawaf, the French writer, in her work *Maternité Ward* 1979 focused on the theme of motherhood and how would be the relationship between the mother and her daughter, with a remarkable emphasis on the beauty of maternity.

1.5 Feminism in the Arab World

The late 19th century witnesses a large wave of intellectual ideologies about women's situation in the Middle East and (MENA) regions, females start to search for their forbidden equal rights, confront state authority and modernize the Arabic culture away from patriarchy. Arab women see feminism as the refugee that would legitimize their human and citizenship rights; hence, to make a radical change over the social and cultural regimes among the Arab communities (Al Atiyat, 1-2).

During the 20th century, a set of Arab female writers gave rise to the growth of the feminist perspective to provide women with a voice; thereafter, to highlight feminism, gender and class issues from a feminist point of view. Some of the female figure writers are Layla Baalbaki, Assia Djebar, Sahar Khalifeh, Hanan Al-Cheikh, Azar Nafisi and Nawal

El-Saadawi (Behrooz).

Layla Baalbaki is a Lebanese feminist who tries to bring the female voice to the Arab literature focusing on female's issues. *I live* (1958) by Layla is a pioneering work about a young Lebanese lady who is attempting to navigate her place in the world, while pursuing the social, political and financial independence. Another Francophone Algerian feminist writer is Assia Djebar. Through her works, she examines the situation of the Algerian woman within the context of post-colonialism describing a variety of scenes of female tyranny and liberation. *Women of Algiers in their Apartment* that was written in 1980 by Assia is a collection of short stories inspired of Delaroix's classic work *The Women of Algiers* of 1834. It is a response to the patriarchal institutions that pervade the current Algerian society and the inequality that define women's life (Behrooz).

Sahar Khalifeh is the first Palestinian feminist writer who portrays the position of woman in a contemporary Palestinian society; thus, depicting the reality of life from a feminist point of view. Her remarkable novel *The Inheritance* of 1997 tells the story of a number of Palestinian women who give their all to their men and their country, only to not be forgotten or unnoticed (Behrooz).

Hanan Al-Cheikh (1945) is another Lebanese writer, whose works raise issues about women's position in Arab society and oppose the deep-stated patriarchal norms that completely dominate women's lives. Al-Cheikh is a ground breaking writer in the Arab globe since her writing covers numerous traditionally forbidden issues like abortion, homosexuality and female infidelity. *The Story of Zahra* 1995 by Hanan is the best feminist work that portrays women's sufferance of domestic violence and their way towards liberation (Behrooz).

As far as the Iranian feminist works are considered, Azar Nafisi (1955-still alive) is a landmark. Azar is the Iranian professor of literature and she is one of the prominent figures

of feminism who tries to demonstrate the lack of female's freedom in Iran. Nafisi's piece of work *Lolita in Tahrán* (2003) narrates a story of a group of ladies who gather secretly in Nafisi's residence to study illegal works, mostly in Western literature. Her work exposes the gradual loss of liberty in post-revolution Iran, and the misery of the Iran-Iraq war (Behrooz). As a result, "*Lolita in Tahrán*" serves as a picture of the cultural and national memory. The following extract is from the work *Lolita in Tahrán*:

Imagination in these works is equated with empathy; we can't experience all that others have gone through, but we can understand even the most monstrous individuals in works of fiction. A good novel is one that shows the complexity of individuals, and creates enough space for all these characters to have a voice; in this way a novel is called democratic not that it advocates democracy but that by nature it is so. (Nafisi, 87-88)

Among the other important Arabic feminists, the notable figure Nawal El Saadawi, the Egyptian doctor, novelist and critic saw the hardships and the physical responsibilities that women, particularly those from the common people, face as a kind of insult for women. She starts to make links between women's psychological and physical issues and the cruel patriarchal conditions in which they live in. *Woman at point Zero* by El-Saadawi (1983) is the book that got many critics from Egyptian publishers. It tells the story of Firdaus, the murderer, who is not like the other criminals of the prison. This book Highlights women's subjugation in Middle Eastern societies. The main two themes of the work are violence and domination (Behrooz).

1.6 The Islamic Feminism in the Arab World

Margot Badran claims that Islamic feminism arose as a reaction to both patriarchal Islam(ism) and secular feminism. Islamic feminism emerged at a period when the Islamist

movement was building popularity (Badran, 17-23). Women's rights within Islamic law are becoming exposed for discussion in a public debate with the rise of Islamism. Islamic feminists recognize the difficulties that Muslim women face today under Islamic law, and in most regions of the Muslim world, they are most commonly related to family law or personal status law. Islamic feminists' primary argument is that while the Quran supports the ideal of justice and equality for all human beings, the experience of equality of women and men in today's Muslim countries has been perverted by patriarchal beliefs, rituals, and practices (Tønnessen, 2-3).

During their journey of empowering and raising the female's voice, Arabic Islamic feminists like Leila Ahmed, Nawal El Saadawi, Amina Wadud struggle challenging social barriers and norms. They face problems like discrimination, repression, patriarchal oppression and gender inequality in the different Arabic states.

Islamic feminists claim that Islam came as a revolutionary religion that is flexible, adaptable and self-renewing. Mernissi, Wadud, Egyptian-American writer Leila Ahmed, Pakistani-American scholar Asma Barlas, Algerian feminist novelist Assia Djebbar, and many more Islamic feminists hold the conviction that the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) was an inspired revolutionary, a man who rejected all forms of violence and tribal conflicts prevalent in the pre-Islamic era (jahiliya), and sought to establish a community that is strengthened and unified by the spiritual bond of Islam.

(Youssef El Kaidi).

Islamic feminism in literature is found in the 1990's; as a literary genre that comes to dig into the misinterpretation of the Islamic texts by patriarchal figures, also to liberate women to participate in social and political spheres. The former is divided into two

categories: transnational and national Islamic feminism. The first one refers to English studies conducted by Muslim women scholars such as Mir-Hosseini and Amina Wadud, while the latter refers to studies conducted in Egypt, Morocco, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and South Africa. The main goal of the Islamic Feminism is to reread and reinterpret Islam's key texts, the Quran and Hadith, from a feminine perspective. Many academics and women, like Barlas and Wadud, focus on patriarchal facts and underline that many Muslims misinterpret the Quran in masculine and misogynistic ways (Gürkan, Senem, 489-490).

1.6.1 Feminism in Egypt (1800-1900's)

The feminist movement in Egypt refers back to the social reconstruction that took place in Mohammed Ali's reign (1805-1848). A debate existed at that time about the necessity of the female's education for national growth. Women were outspoken in their opposition to colonial practices in the mid twentieth century. They were active members, alongside men, claiming for Egypt's liberation during the 1919 revolution. Even when their male colleagues were granted authorities in 1922, women were still thirsting for some political rights (H. Hoodfar).

This led to the formation of informal activist networks, such as Huda Sha'rawi's Egyptian Feminist Union in 1923, Zaynab al-Muslim Ghazali's Women's Society in 1936, and Doria Shafiq's Daughters of the Nile Union (Bint al-Nil) in 1948. However, most of these organizations were activated during Gamal Abdel Nasser's leadership, when legislation was introduced to bring all civil society organizations under state supervision, a time known as "State-feminism," which modified significantly during President Sadat's term of power owing to his open-door economic policies. Women were given the right to vote under Abdel Nasser's reign of power in 1956 and during Sadat's reign of power; women's aspirations for economic rights were satisfied to a degree (Rana Magdy).

Intellectuals like Kasim Amin advocated for equal access to education for all women

and denounced polygamy by citing Quran to back up their claims. There were 14 magazines dedicated to women's issues by 1914. Women took part in anti-colonial demonstrations and social democratic party activities while also fighting for better woman's rights. Egypt was the first Arab Islamic country to unveil women in 1924 without the intervention of the state. In 1942, women's political party was formed to manage the struggle for female's equality and family law reform (H. Hoodfar).

When Egypt got its independence in 1956, women's full political rights were recognized and the first female minister, Hekmet Abu-Zaid was elected in 1962. In the first decades of the newly independent state, the feminist movement faced many obstacles to be paused by sharing those feminist ideologies (H. Hoodfar). Nowadays, the feminist issues have been developed by years to become an issue of gender discrimination living in a society where protected by law patriarchal norms.

1.7 Theologian Feminism

Feminist theology (or, to be more precise, theologies) has evolved in recent years as a response to masculine dominance in religion and culture. Despite having many major origins in pre-modern history, feminist theology has only recently evolved as a fully conscious movement with its own literature, representatives, ideals, and methodologies (Slee, 1). The first critical feminist theological work "*Sexism and God-Talk*" by Rosemary Radford Ruether emerged in the United States in the beginning of the 1960s.

It is influenced and empowered by women's secular movement of the 1960s, the Civil Rights movement in the US, and theologian liberation in Latin America. It spread from there to Europe and the rest of the world. According to the Cambridge Companion the Feminist Theology; "The rise of white feminist theology in the modern period (...) was intertwined in the wider political, cultural, and social configurations of its time," (Kwok Pui-Lan, 26). In any case, feminist theology has grown into a global movement with many

distinct political, intellectual, and theological origins to articulate its concerns and convictions in just a few decades.

There is no such a thing as a single feminism or feminist theology. Feminist theologians represent a diverse range of religious traditions, ethnicities, backgrounds, and scholarly perspectives. Feminists, and which support and develop feminist theology are the subject of intense debate, but understanding them is necessary if you want to understand what feminism and feminist theology are all about. According to feminism, society is marked by a fundamental structural injustice between the two sexes, in which women as a group are ruled by a group of men. Masculinity is associated with logic, strength, and authority, while femininity is associated with feelings and intuition, weakness, and shyness. This duality is manifested in the societal roles allocated to men and women; men rule in the public spotlight, while women rule in the private sector. They believe that God is connected with the man and associated with masculine attributes such as those already discussed, and that God is set over and against the female (Slee, 1-2).

Rosemary Radford Ruether describes feminist theology as follows in her recognized passage:

The uniqueness of feminist theology does not lie in its use of the criterion of experience but rather in its use of women's experience, which has been almost entirely shut out of theological reflection in the past. Thus, the use of women's experience in feminist theology explodes as a critical force, exposing classical theology, including its codified traditions, as based on male experience rather than on universal human experience". (Rosemary Radford Ruether, 19)

She refers to "universal human experience" and shows no interest in a belief system that

reverses inequality.

1.8 Marxist Feminism

As any other variant of feminism, Marxist feminism advocates to dig for the issues of feminism applying Karl's theory "Marxism". Marxist feminism clarifies that gender inequality is related to capitalism, due to the Marxist feminist belief of that capitalism leads to Class-based society where patriarchy is inevitable. Therefore, female's oppression in society is one of the passive outcomes of capitalism. Marxist feminism tries to study the different ways adopted by capitalism to utilize women. They think that the only way for women to get liberation and have a voice is to fight both patriarchy and capitalism. Moreover, such feminist intellectuals apply Marxism to examine sex relations and domestic labor ("Marxist Feminism"). So it can be said that the repression of women is a consequence of the capitalist structures.

According to a video on (Marxism Explained in 76 seconds) posted in YouTube about five years ago, Marxism by the German scholar Karl Marx (1818-1883) is "A political theory that analyses how social classes, money and most importantly the means of production or factories affect society". Karl Marx tends to explain conflicts in the world by referring to that of classes "Conflict Class"; therefore, a conflict between Bourgeoisies (private ownership) and proletariats.

Ruth Robbins declares that the central objective of Marxist feminism is to expose women's double oppression, both by the capitalist system and by domestic sexuality. Ruth elucidates the link between the two by demonstrating how feminist concerns and Marxist principles may coexist. In her first book *Literary Feminism* 1965, she proposes a Marxist feminism in which she analyzes the material conditions of actual people's existence, such as how poverty and under education generate distinct signification systems than works produced in privilege and academic plenty (Rubbins, 13). There are Notable Marxist

feminists such as Karol Cariola, Angela Davis Alexandra Kollontai, Claude Jones and Silvia Federici.

1.9 Arabic Islamic Feminist Writings and Doctrines of Sex, Religion and Politics

Islamic feminism has grown as a new discourse in Islam on gender, women and equality. It emerges from a close relationship between women's existential knowledge and their deep reading of the Quran and other religious texts. Islamic Feminism came into the scene of the Muslim community in the latter half of the twentieth century. The core idea that constructed Islamic feminism is looking for full equality of human beings. It advocates the idea of human equality in both public and private realms. This type of feminism had to take two stages to be the Islamic feminism known today (M, Barden, 8).

First, it starts by the African American scholar Amina Wadud in her book *Quran and Woman* in 1991, regarding the sacred text from a woman's perspective. *Quran and woman* is considered as a fundamental pillar of the Islamic feminism. This famous theologian took gender equality as a serious issue in the Quran to investigate; therefore, referring to patriarchy as a non-Islamic practice. Wadud's book has been translated into a number of languages, including those spoken in Islamic states and Western languages. In the other hand, the Pakistani American feminist Asma Barlas's work *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* 2002, is regarded as another pioneering feminist Islamic work. Asma describes her novel as a discussion between Wadud's *Quran and Woman* and her own. She proclaims that the Quran should not be read as a patriarchal text (Barden, 10).

The second stage represents a new move in Islamic Feminism during the first years of the 21th century. Wadud in her second book, *Inside the Gender Jihad* 2006 shows the advancement of Islamic feminism to a new level. She states that it is going beyond her previous apologetics. The new ideology that updated the old preventions is that the Islamic

feminists of that era seek to obtain gender equal family model beyond the traditional Fiqh (M, Barden, 8-13). As a Muslim feminist, Wadud Amina focuses on the idea of altering the role of women inside Islam as revolutionary and essential; hence, bringing the female's concern of seeking gender equality into discussion among the Islamic communities.

The rise of feminist philosophy in Egypt around the start of the last decade has been frequently noted, although there has been much research into its social contextual information. Women start to consider or precisely profit from the ideology of westernization in class systems, especially among those educated elite of the upper class (Cole, 387-407).

1.9.1 Sexuality in Islam

When it comes to the concept of sexuality in Islam, Muslims in various Muslim nations have common ideas. These beliefs might include the notion that Islam regards sex positively, which implies that it acknowledges sex as a natural aspect of human nature instinct (fitrah), but that it should only be fulfilled in the institution of marriage; since marriage is the only institution where sexual relations are permitted. Nevertheless, Adultery is considered as that kind of sexual relation that occurs outside of the relationship of marriage. Because heterosexuality is the norm, any sexual behaviors or identities that deviate from it are deemed abnormal (Riyani, 1).

The works of Imam al- Ghazali *Ihya Religious Sciences (Ulumuddin, 1965)* of the sexual activity under the category of marriage, and Bouhdiba on *Sexuality in Islam* (1985) are the most quoted books on sexuality in Islam. Both works exhibit conventional Islamic views on sexuality, which favor sex drive over female sexuality, particularly in married life. Bouhdiba in his book expresses his views on how male libido was the major emphasis of Islam and needed to be fulfilled, for instance a wife should not deny her husband's sexual demand or she would be cursed by an Angel (85). According to the description of early

literature on sexuality, authors are more opened than modern writers on the subject. Today's Islamic scholars (learned academics) are hesitant, if not outright hostile, in debating sexuality (Riyani, 2).

1.9.1.1 Female Sexuality in Muslim Society

In Muslim communities, discussing sexuality, particularly female sexuality, is still considered taboo and risky. It is not only associated with sensitive concerns, but it is often dismissed as insignificant and simply ignored unlike debates about hunger, poverty, and unemployment (Accad, 40). According to Accad, the issue of [female] sexuality in Third-World nations is linked to resistance to male's dominance. In the other hand, the demand for acknowledgment of women's sexual right for pleasure in marriage is a big challenge among human rights critics in Muslim nations. The difficulties revolved around the concept that a wife could not deny her husband's sexual desire since it is linked to a sin that is punishable by God. This view is based on the following common Hadith, as recorded in Shahih Bukhari and Muslim, the two most influential Hadith collections. As narrated by Abu Huraira: "If a man invites his wife to sleep with him and she refuses, the angels curse her till the morning" the Prophet remarked (Riyani, 3).

Both Ilkcaracan (2000) and Moghissi (1999) claim that numerous factors impact female sexual oppression in Muslim nations; including religious teaching, culture, economic, and political forces. However, numerous situations in this case prove that religion is an efficient instrument for regulating the female's sexuality and confirming male dominance in patriarchal culture (Ilkcarachan, 2000). Otherwise, Female sexual energy is viewed as damaging by Muslims, who believe it might lead to societal instability (fitna). There is nothing pleasant about the idea of female sexuality in Islam, regardless of the attribution, whether passive or active (Riyani, 4).

1.9.2 Religion (Islam and Feminism)

Religions, according to Nawal El Sadaawi, are not the principal cause of women's discrimination and oppression though they are sometimes used as a weapon, but rather a patriarchal society. She claims that powerful men twisted religious beliefs and ideals for their own personal gain (Tag-El-Din, 26).

Linda Woodhead speaks of "Religious Feminism," arguing that religion isn't always sexist or patriarchal. She claims, for example, that some western feminists have misconstrued the Hijab in Islamic communities. She claims that many Muslim women consider wearing Hijab as a good and a liberating decision. Face veils have been used by women in patriarchal Middle Eastern civilizations to allow them to enter society, gain work, and empower themselves in various ways. Some women in Western nations choose to wear veils to shield themselves from the sight of males. The veil, on the other hand, has been criticized by Nawal El Sadaawi as "an instrument to subjugate women" (Tutor2u.net).

Women are given the roles of nurturing, caring, and giving birth in many religious teachings across a broad range of religions. While these positions are portrayed strongly and as necessary, they promote gender stereotypes and patriarchal power systems in society. Women who refuse to obey gender stereotypes are not only breaking gender conventions and family expectations, but they are also breaking God's will (Tutor2u.net).

Discussion among Islamic academics still exists regarding whether women can ever lead prayers and whether for female-only or mixed congregations, most sects of Islam do not recognize female Imams. Although female Rabbis have existed since the 1970s, Orthodox Jews continue to oppose them. In spite of women ordain as priests in the Church of England since 1994, it took another 20 years for a female bishop to be appointed. According to Linda Woodhead, women's exclusion from positions of leadership and from specific religious rituals emerges from a deep-seated opposition to women's freedom and

choice in general (Tutor2u.net).

1.9.3 Politics (Political System in the Arabic World and patriarchy in Egypt)

Despite the fact that the majority of Arab nations have made several steps to increase women's involvement in decision-making positions, women's engagement in public life and positions of power has not yet reached the intended level. In terms of women's involvement in parliaments, the Arab world ranks as one of the worst in globe. In contract, a strong confidence in women's capacities as human beings capable of leading and shouldering responsibility in the development of their countries is required. Thereafter, human development, women's empowerment, gender and advancement are all new conceptions that have raised awareness for the need of gender integration in long-term development. Thus, all forms of discrimination against women must be abolished (Al Maaitah, et al, 7).

In 2003, the Arab Women's Organization (AWO) was founded. It is an official organization established in Egypt that operates under the authority of the League of Arab States. It arose from the Cairo Declaration published at the First Arab Women Conference in Cairo in 2000, and was made a reality when the Arab Women Organization (AWO) was announced during the Second Arab Women Conference in Jordan in 2002. AWO aims to achieve women participation through practices that encourage legislation based on equality and competence, incorporating women's issues into the priorities of comprehensive developmental activities, and raising the awareness of issues affecting women and their right to interact in decision- making among citizens at all levels in order to improve their role within the family and the community (Al Maaitah, et al, 11).

As a result to this set of movements toward the female's right to interact in political decisions, a big concern grows to achieve gender equality within the Arabic context. Subsequently, Arab women changed the nature of their involvement in international

conferences from passive to active, impacting women's interests based on political, social, and economic realms (Al Maaitah, et al, 12).

1.9.3.1 Bourgiba's political Experience with Feminism in Tunisia

The Tunisian experience with state feminism is a model to draw lessons from, especially for the Arab-Muslim countries whether governed by liberal autocratic regimes or Islamist regimes: whenever the regime talks in favour of women, read between the lines. (Amira Mhadhbi)

Since Tunisia's independence from the French Colonial rule in 1956, women's legal position in Tunisia has been better than those in the Arab-Muslim world. Tunisia's image as a leading light in women's rights stretches back to the first president, Habib Bourguiba, who established a new personal-status law three months after independence in 1956. It eliminated polygamy and substituted repudiation (an informal rapid divorce where a husband merely had to say "I divorce you") with legal divorce, which may be requested by either a man or a woman. In the 1960s, the country aggressively promoted family planning and preserved women's rights to work, travel, and run their own businesses (Amira Mhadhbi).

Bourguiba described the veil a "wretched rag" and was caught on national television removing women's veils. For Bourguiba, providing women with their rights represents an important element in the modernist process of growth (Ursula Lindsey, 2017). In fact, it contributes to Tunisia's reputation as a feminist country. The Code of Personal Status (CPS), one of the earliest pioneering acts of law, was passed on 13 August 1956 by Habib Bourguiba. It adopted the concept of feminist equality and granted women certain basic rights. It was successful. President Bourguiba has been labeled as the "liberator of Tunisian women" (Amira Mhadhbi).

1.7.3.2 Political Islam

Political Islam or what is commonly known as Islamic revival or Islamic resurgence emerged in Muslim communities in response to the collapse of the Ottoman Government in 1923-24, and in response to a nineteenth-century modernist movement. It has long been seen as an Islamic option to modern democratic regimes based on the ideas of justice, liberty, and citizen sovereignty. It has since inspired numerous other movements, who have identified it as their starting point. Before the word "political Islam" became popular, it was referred to by other labels, like Islamism or Muslim fundamentalism, whilst others argue that Islam has always been and will continue to be political (Mohamed-Chérif Ferjani). Mohamed Cherif introduces political Islam as follows;

Political Islam, just like Political Christianity or any other ideologisation of religion anywhere in the world, is a reaction against modernity, democracy and secularisation: It's not the same thing as traditional forms of the political instrumentalization of religion. It also differs from traditional theocracies, which never had the theoretical or practical means to dominate the lives of citizens in a way characteristic of totalitarian states. (2019)

To understand the ideological foundations of this rebirth, we must go back to Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) creation. The MB was formed in 1928 by the courageous Hassan al-Banna (b. 1906) and quickly rose to fame as a religious and a political movement (Eickelman 1998). The movement's fast rise and public popularity may be attributed to its acceptance to Islam as a comprehensive system that can replace the western influence, secular values, and materialism that were now threatening Muslim

nations (Knudsen, 1-2).

1.8 Conclusion

Throughout their long journey, Arab women struggle to be seen and heard; however, the Arabic community they are living in put boundaries for their liberation. Patriarchy, gender inequality, traditions and old norms are what women try to eliminate through creating the philosophical movement of Feminism. Women want equal rights for men and women, as well as equal chances in school and work. Feminism was their hope. It has a significant impact on women's everyday roles in society. The ideal existence of a woman in Arabic society has radically changed. Feminists have fought for more rights and equality for women in the past; thus, feminism is a key principle for today's women in both the Arabic and Western areas, and the battle continues. Women's roles in society have shifted dramatically in recent years and will continue to do so in the future.

Chapter Two: *Woman at Point Zero* in Context

2. Introduction

In most of Nawal El Saadawi's works, examining the Arab women's position is an obligatory concern to tackle in fighting for their independence. Through the works of El Saadawi, she tries to seek freeing females from not only patriarchy but also from the male's dominance in all life aspects. Her life was full of happiness and dissatisfaction, encouragement and rejection; however, Nawal El Saadawi manages to teach, write, and speak about what she sincerely believes and what she presumes require justification and validation. In a way or another, she was influencing feminist movements in Egypt, the Mid East, and around the world. *Woman at Point Zero* 1983 is recognized as Nawal's best known and read book in the worldwide and not only in the Arabic sphere. This novel plays an important role in depicting the reality of the Arab Feminist literature. This selected novel portrays conflicts between society, religion, politics and sex. The beginning of this practical chapter will contain a depiction of the book's plot, setting and a set of chosen characters of *Woman at Point Zero*. It will state how the Arabic and the Egyptian women in specific are living and facing patriarchy, social and cultural norms. By the end of this section we will be able to know the amount of the influence that Nawal left behind in writing her name among the world's modern famous feminists. Therefore, discovering the connection between the three doctrines of Sex, Religion and Politics will be present in the practical part.

2.1 Biography of Nawal El Saadawi

Nawal El Saadawi, the Egyptian Feminist theorist, was the most influential Arab Feminist through the last 50 years. Her beliefs have influenced generations of Arab women, yet they have also sparked debate and criticism. She was productive, releasing over 50 novels in Arabic, several of which were translated and received an international acclaim. El Saadawi believed that patriarchy, capitalism, and hegemony are inextricably linked systems that oppress Arab women and stop them from fully participating; focusing on sex, politics, and religion. From the 1940s to the present, El Saadawi's intellectual life manages to make key changes in Arab modern culture. To fully appreciate her contribution, it's crucial to place her in the historical context that made her works conceivable, necessary, and controversial (Homa Khaleeli, 1-5).

Nawal was the second of nine children born in the village of Kafr Tahla near Cairo, Egypt in 1931 to a middle-class family. Al-Sayed Effendi Al-Saadawi, her father, was a teacher at the Ministry of Education at the time, and her mother, Zaynab Hanem Shoukry, was a wife and a mother at the same time. The mother who was always there for her daughter, supporting and motivating her, in a way of opposing relatives who do not accept the idea of Nawal's revolt against traditions (Spath 4). El-Saadawi Nawal Al-Sayed Habash, grew up at vital points in history, such as the push for girls' education, which had been pioneered by a previous generation of protestors. She did, in fact, attend a school founded by Nabawyya Mousa, a female education pioneer (Tag El Din, 15-30).

2.1.1 Education, Works and Life

El Saadawi joined the British School with the support of a father who trusted in the necessity of education for class mobility. Her academic achievements enabled her to avoid an early marriage and got a scholarship from the faculty of medicine at Cairo University. She received her doctorate in psychiatry in 1955, climbed through the ranks of Egypt's public

health system to become the country's Director of Public Health and the editor of "Health", a significant information magazine. Her first marriage was with the activist Ahmed Helmi, whom she encountered as a medical school classmate. They married and had a daughter Mona, but they later divorced. After her second spouse Rashad Bey, who was a co-worker, demanded that she quit writing, she ended her second marriage with divorce. Her third marriage to the author and the statesman Sherif Hetata, lasted more than forty years but also filed with divorce having a child together. In 2004, she decided to run for presidential elections of Egypt on a platform of human rights, democracy, and more freedom for women. However, in July 2005, she was compelled to abandon her campaign due to government harassment (sparknotes.com).

2.1.2 El Saadawi and Religion

According to Spath, unlike those who blame Islam for women's subjugation, El Saadawi opposes the use of religion as a tool of control and opposes Western misunderstandings of Islam. She accepts early Islam's "undeniable progressive components" and criticizes the others. Arab feminists should avoid falling into the trap of religious opposition. She claims that this is how Imperialists have prepared a trap for us. El Saadawi claims that religion does not oppress women; patriarchy and society do. Personal Status Laws prevent women from participating in today's society (25).

She claims that Islamic Shariaa law is far more advanced than the Egyptian legislation, which she calls "the most backward in the Arab world". She urges women to study religion, interpret it, make their own thoughts about it, and perceive it through their own eyes rather than through the eyes of others because Islam is frequently used as a political weapon. Women may be able to replace the "blind adherence to the literalness of the text" by studying religion, according to El Saadawi (26).

2.1.3 Works and Achievements

She became recognized as the most known opponent of women's subjugation and the first to publicly focus on issues like clitoridectomy, incest and adultery. She spoke out against these concerns without apologies based on cultural or religious grounds (Spath, 10). She has published novels, nonfiction studies of women and men, short stories, essays, and plays in at least 10 languages. Because her writings were prohibited in Egypt, several were originally first published in Beirut (Spath, 13).

Her novels, notably the drama *God Resigns at the Summit Meeting* (2006), have focused on women, particularly Arab women, their sexuality, and legal standing since she began writing for more than 50 years ago. Her first nonfiction work, *Women and Sex* 1972, sparks the wrath of Egypt's high-ranking political and religious officials. Consequently, the Department of Health was forced into removing Nawal from her position. She lost her job as the chief editor of the health publication and assistant general secretary of the Egyptian Medical Association due to similar pressures (Homa Khaleeli).

Woman at Point Zero 1983 is her best known novel in English, and was vastly recognized as an example of Arab feminist literature in both the Arab world and the West. El Saadawi studied women and neurosis from 1973 to 1976. Her most renowned work, *The Hidden Face of Eve* was released in 1977 and examined a wide range of issues affecting Arab women, including genital mutilation, adultery, sexual experiences, marriage, divorce, and Islamic extremism (Coin, 429-433).

El Saadawi served as the UN's advisor for the women's program in Northern Africa and Middle East from 1979 to 1980. She was imprisoned by Anwar Sadat's the so called "dictatorship" in 1980, as an outcome of her lengthy fight for Egyptian women's social and intellectual independence. One of the most successful establishments that she has done throughout the years was The Arab Women's Solidarity Association. El Saadawi created the

AWSA after her discharge from jail in 1981. When the Egyptian government recognized the AWSA in 1984, it became the country's first authorized, independent and feminist organization. It aims for the improvement of Arab women and society overall, economically, socially, and culturally. It also attempts to strengthen relationships amongst women in all Arab nations (Spath-15). One of the most difficult issues the AWSA first had was finding interested women to join the organization and attend meetings. As El Saadawi declares, the "simple truth" is that women confront an obstacle that males do not. They are physically unable to leave the house and attend such meetings (Spath-17).

After her release from jail in 1982, she wrote *Memoirs from the Women's Prison* in 1983, in which she resumed her outspoken criticism of the Egypt's oppressive leadership by narrating her experience in the prison. El Saadawi's life was endangered even after she was released from prison by individuals who opposed her activities, mostly Islamic extremists. For several years, armed guards were placed outside her Giza's house until she left the country to work as a visiting lecturer at colleges in Europe and North America during her exile till 1996. She kept a prominent profile, often participating in TV discussions being the most courageous and outspoken figure. President Hosni Mubarak stopped her from making public appearances in 2005 at the age of 73. In 2008, Egypt established a legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation, thanks in part to her tireless advocacy. El-Saadawi, on the other hand, did not quit up and maintained a prominent profile figure inspiring women the journey toward social liberty (Seddon).

She received honorary degrees and awards from institutions all over the globe, and she held posts at Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Georgetown, Florida State University, the University of California, Berkeley in the United States, as well as the Sorbonne in Paris. At home in Egypt, though, she remained a threat to the stability of the state (Seddon).

She died at the age of 89, unrepentant and indignant. Short tales, poems, lectures, plays, and books, as well as her hugely important early non-fiction publications, are among her literary works. She was described as Egypt's most radical feminist woman and a melt spot of a feminist, novelist, activist, physician, and psychiatrist (Seddon). Leila Ahmed claims in her book that is *entitled Women and Gender in Islam* that: " ... no writer has played a more important and eloquent role than Nawal El-Saadawi-nor has any feminist been more outspoken and done more to challenge the misogynist and androcentric practices of the culture." (219).

2.2 Setting of *Woman at Point Zero*

Since Nawal had spent years researching women's experiences in jail before releasing *Woman at Point Zero*, In collaboration with Ain Shams University's Faculty of Medicine, El Saadawi studied neurosis and women from 1973 to 1976. Her findings were published in a book titled *Women and Neurosis in Egypt* in 1976, which contained twenty case studies of women who had spent time in jail or in prison hospitals. During this time, Nawal El Saadawi's researches served to shape and enrich her writing for *Woman at Point Zero* in 1975, helping her to create a rich and a decent novel. *Woman at Point Zero* was first published in Arabic in 1975, and then translated to English in 1983. This latter is one of the most divisive works which is a metaphor for Egyptian women's battle against patriarchy and colonial authority, told over the life of Firdaus, an Egyptian lady found guilty of murder and waiting for her execution (WordPress).

Al Qanatir Prison represents a significant setting for the novel and an activist like Nawal El Saadawi, who experienced the prison for political circumstances. She wrote "I wrote this novel after an encounter between me and a woman in Qanatir Prison. Few months before, I had started a research on neurosis in Egyptian women and was able to concentrate most of my time on this work as I was then without at job." (9). She admits that she made this

meeting with Firdaus a goal to achieve in playing the role of the psychiatrist who's only interested in interviewing only one woman Firdaus (WordPress).

After the publication of *Woman at Point Zero*, Nawal El Saadawi was arrested in 1981 and accused with unidentified crimes against the state during Egypt's Sadat dictatorship. "I was arrested because I believed Sadat. He said there is democracy and we have a multi-party system and you can criticize. So I started criticizing his policy and I landed in jail", El Saadawi stated. She has been always a threat to the state for being the one who can make a radical change among the Arab females. Nawal's *Memoirs from the Women's Prison* of 1982, is the most suitable work that details El-Saadawi's experience in jail (Seddon).

2.3 Plot

Woman at Point Zero is set at the Qanatir jail in the 20th-century's Egypt and tells the story of the facility's most notable prisoner, a young lady called Firdaus. Firdaus, who was put to death for killing a pimp to defend herself, tells her story to a psychiatrist only hours before she is executed. Firdaus is raised in a poor farming village. Her father is a liar and a thief who beats his wife and steals food from his children's mouths. Her mother is more concerned with Firdaus' father, and her children are regarded as afterthoughts. When the young lady firdaus investigates about the origins of kids, her mother made certain to circumcise her (Gradesaver).

Firdaus grows in Cairo, despite her uncle's repeated sexual assaults on her. She is a bright student with high grades. Her uncle chooses to take care of her after the death of her parents. Firdaus' uncle eventually decides to marry, and his new wife persuades him to send Firdaus to boarding school. Firdaus meets new people and develops feelings for her instructor, Ms. Iqbal, but nothing ends up coming of it. Firdaus earns her secondary school diploma after classified as the second of her class. When Firdaus gets back to her uncle's house, she finds that a lot has changed. Her uncle and his wife already have numerous children, and there is no

place for her in their family. She wants to use her secondary school diploma to find job, but her uncle says that's impossible (Gradesaver).

Her aunt-in-law persuades her uncle that Sheikh Mahmoud, a 40 years man older, is a good groom for Firdaus and she should marry him. Firdaus rejects this proposal and escapes, but she is afraid of being alone in the streets and reappears to her uncle's house the next day. Soon after, she marries Sheikh Mahmoud. Firdaus is miserly abused and assaulted by the Sheikh. One day, Firdaus flees to her uncle's house to feel protected; whilst, her uncle and his wife inform her that all men abuse their wives, and they promptly return her to Sheikh Mahmoud's home. The Sheikh is enraged and crueler to Firdaus than ever before. Finally, he beats her so severely till bleeding, and then she escapes once more, but this time to the streets (Gradesaver).

Firdaus encounters Bayoumi, who operates a coffee shop, while wandering in the streets. Bayoumi appears to be kind and quiet at first. He provides Firdaus with a place to live and promises to assist her in finding a job. Bayoumi rapes Firdaus and profits from her. Suddenly she attempts to flee and escapes to the Nile River's bank. She encounters a famous prostitute. Sharifa takes Firdaus under her roof and teaches her the value of one's own self-worth. Unfortunately, she also organizes sexual customers for Firdaus, but does not pay her a commission. Sharifa's pimp, Fawzy, informs Firdaus about Sharifa's infidelity. After that Firdaus decides to sneak out and knows her value by having her own clients (Gradesaver).

Firdaus becomes a popular prostitute, but when a guy named Di'aa tells her that she isn't a decent lady, she questions her life. Firdaus quits her employment as a prostitute and uses her secondary school diploma to seek a position at a firm company. She observes how female employees at the corporation kneel themselves before the male managers in order to receive increases and retain their promotion (Gradesaver).

Meanwhile, Firdaus met Ibrahim, a coworker in the firm, and falls in love with him. Ibrahim is the one who made Firdaus believe that she found the one and that he will marry her soon. However, he is the reason behind Firdaus's certainty that all men are users and liars. It was time to become a successful prostitute, she thinks. After her return to her domain she meets Marzouk, who later became her pimp by force. He physically assaults her and takes advantage of her earnings. The day she tries to run away after feeling completely frustrated, Marzouk slaps her in the face prohibiting her from going out; nevertheless, Firdaus slaps him back feeling a sense of strength and fearless. Marzouk here tries to grab his knife, but Firdaus is faster and steals it from him. She knifed him to death, realizing she is no longer afraid (Gradesaver).

El Saadawi said: "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, pulled it out of his chest and plunged it deep into his belly. I stuck the knife into almost every part of his body. 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 (Nawal El Saadawi, 95). Firdaus grabs the knife from the pimp's hand and chops his throat. She does this in every region of his body, out and into his stomach, in and out of his chest. She refers to the pimp as "flesh and blood" overwhelmed by her power. Her pimp was nothing but a body, just as she's been a body to many men for years. Firdaus is seeking figurative revenge for years of assault (Giunti, Firenze, 431).

She hurries back to the streets once again. Firdaus goes out proudly walking with head high. Then she gets the attention of a wealthy Arab prince who tries to offer her a good credit for one night, however; Firdaus rips up the money the moment she got irritated from his treatment. The ripping of the prince's cash represents Firdaus' resistance to all the males who have abused her in some manner throughout her life. She ultimately realizes that, while her efforts provide her with wealth and freedom, she can never escape a patriarchal system that

dominates all aspects of existence (Donya Tag-El-Din, 88). At that moment, she informs him that she is a serial murderer who has no problem in murdering a guy. Fearful, the prince phones the police to arrest Firdaus. Firdaus' story impresses the psychiatrist back at the jail. Before she can finish her sentence, the guards arrive and carry Firdaus away. The psychiatrist exits the prison and sits within her car, overcome with emotion. Firdaus is the bravest woman she has ever met, she realizes (Gradesaver).

2.4 Influential Characters

2.4.1 Firdaus

Firdaus is the story's protagonist. Her entire life has been a battle for respect, freedom, happiness and love. However, she is a lady who's attempting to live a respectable life in a world where women have little choices. Throughout the novel, Firdaus struggles not just to determine her own fate, but also to discover who she is. But she doesn't have much time for self-discovery. For the most of her life, what she desires is unimportant and what matters is what men in her life desired. According to Firdaus, all of the males around her are bastards who enjoy their control over women (SparkNotes).

Firdaus' existence is about living in opposition to the males in her life. By time, Firdaus is becoming a prostitute, she found that she may profit of the yearning that men feel for her. She discovers that individuals with money may command respect as well. Firdaus, despite having wealth and gaining respect, does not feel respected. The journey of a prostitute is unpleasant and humiliating to someone who desired to study and become a scholar. Consequently, she is a victim of her environment, customs, and a twisted view of religion. Firdaus symbolizes all women who are victims of assault and have no option because their abusers are protected by law (SparkNotes).

2.4.2 The Psychiatrist / the Narrator

Nawal is both the narrator and the writer of the novel. *Woman at Point Zero* is written and narrated by Nawal El Sadaawi. She offers a fictional version of two actual persons, Firdaus and herself, as the author. El Sadaawi, the imaginary character, first appears when she reaches the jail where Firdaus is awaiting death. El Sadaawi is impatient for her meeting with Firdaus. Firdaus is a prostitute in jail, whereas El Sadaawi, is a well educated and a rich doctor, who's in a considerably higher social class. Nonetheless, El Sadaawi is heartbroken by Firdaus' rejection to be contacted at first; it makes her uncomfortable. When Firdaus eventually agrees to meet El Sadaawi, she confronts her as if she were a patient. El Sadaawi's response to the finale of Firdaus' story, the hopeless anger and grief she feels when Firdaus walks to her execution, expresses her sense of despair even more (SparkNotes).

The reality of Firdaus' narrative, which depicts the situation of women in El Sadaawi's culture so vividly, makes El Sadaawi sense her own lack of authority. She was talking to someone who suffers much more than she did before she gains power. The novel concludes with Nawal's realization that Firdaus seems to have more bravery than she has. Her meetings with the lady who inspired the figure of Firdaus energized the actual El Sadaawi. Among many other things, the real experience motivated her to create the book *Woman at Point Zero* in order to bring the struggle of Egyptian women to a broad community (SparkNotes).

2.4.3 The Father of Firdaus is a poor guy with such a terrible greed, that he has no problem with eating while his kids go hungry. Despite the fact that he frequently attends mosques and obeying God, he abuses his wife and acts as if nothing else matters but him (GradeSaver). He automatically symbolizes a category of Arab men who only care about themselves and their needs regardless to what would their surrenders need.

2.4.4 Firdaus's Uncle represents a contradicted role in her life, and her connection with him serves as a model for her connections with the other males in the novel. Firdaus, a little girl living with her parents, sees her uncle as a source of independence. He is a scholar and a religious man who lives in Cairo and studies in Al Azhar, distant from Firdaus's own family's rural milieu. Despite the fact that he sexualizes young Firdaus, her uncle remains her protector, who brought her to Cairo after her parents die. He decides to send her to school and offer her a far better life than she had with her parents. The marriage of Firdaus' uncle with a woman from higher social state supports his niece's idea that men are disgusting hypocrites willing to do anything for wealth and power (Tugume, 123-124).

2.4.5 Firdaus's mother represents the typical image of the Egyptian hard worker and wife. She gives birth to a big number of kids. She only thinks about her greedy husband and how to satisfy him. She directly exemplifies the image of the Arab world's wife who obeys her husband and her society (GradeSaver).

2.4.6 Sharifa Salah El Dine is the upper-class prostitute who discovers Firdaus sitting near the Nile after escaping from Bayoumi's residence. Sharifa invites Firdaus to her luxury house, and for the first time, it occurs to Firdaus that she may one day have her own home and be surrounded with wonderful things. Sharifa, by her confidence and expert makeup application, shows Firdaus that she is both beautiful and strong. Badly, Sharifa shows Firdaus such things to make her more attractive to her clients. Sharifa does behave as a caring mother towards Firdaus, it is when she is under Sharifa's care that Firdaus realizes that she may be able to exist without the shelter of a male. Sharifa, like Firdaus' mother, simultaneously supports and opposes Firdaus. Firdaus is resurrected as a lovely lady conscious of her influence over men. Sharifa, like Firdaus' mother, is envious of the admiration men show on Firdaus and attempts to dominate her. Firdaus eventually realizes

that she must leave Sharifa. This realization occurs as a result of her need to earn her own money and chart her own course (sparknotes.com).

2.4.7 Bayoumi is a coffee shop possessor, who helps Firdaus when she flees from her husband's house. Later on, he demonstrates that he doesn't differ from Sheikh Mahmoud. He abuses her and takes advantage of her, thereby turning her into a prostitute (GradeSaver).

2.4.8 Marzouk works as a pimp. He begins to threaten Firdaus, as if she is a property. The novel's climax occurs when Firdaus murders him for trying to beat her. Her actions are generalized; so that, the two individuals are not personalities, but gender representations. The woman's anger is limited to "just" the oppressors (Catherine Addison, 4).

2.5 Nawal El Saadawi as an Arab Modernist Feminist

For Donya Tag-El-Din, the shown pictures of Arab women in popular journalism and digital media that present Arab women as humiliated, violated, and subjugated was the only story that existed; nevertheless, Arab women's creative efforts proved differently. They demonstrated women who were ready to fight patriarchy in whatever manner. These women were seeking to recover their independence and oppose the oppressions they were subjected to on a daily basis. Nawal El Saadawi can be the best example in turning her traumas into a successful literary content in the worldwide (09).

Throughout the Mideast, the Arab feminist movement originated in Egypt in the late nineteenth century and has followed a similar path to Western feminism. While national media in the West frequently presents Middle Eastern women and Arab feminist movement, it doesn't really receive the same level of the media's interest like the Western. Women's writing has been extremely the focus of attention in all Middle Eastern feminist groups. Female writers could not only voice their thoughts and ideas on socio-political issues, but they could also compete with their male colleagues. Female writers express their views on marriage,

legal system, veiling, and discrimination. The 2nd wave of Arab feminism, like Western feminism, emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, with women authors like Nawal El Saadawi in the forefront. The first wave of feminism was concerned with hijab, education, and political freedoms, while the second wave was concerned with sexuality, in which authors investigated violence against women and children, as well as violence against women's sexuality (Donya Tag-El-Din, 13-18).

As Donya Tag-El-Din asserted in her work, the Egyptian feminist, El Saadawi is not the only one, as Juliet O'Keefe and her colleagues claimed, but rather a part of Egypt's long feminist tradition, as previously stated. As a result, El Saadawi's appeal for change and the reconsideration of women's roles in Arab society is not exceptional; Huda Sha'rawi, Nabawiyya Musa, Zeinab Al-Ghazali, and many other Egyptian feminists also have advocated for change. El Saadawi, on the other hand, distinguishes out of these Egyptian feminists with a variety of reasons, including the intensity of her style of feminism and her rejection of either Europeanization or a reversion to Islamic doctrine and control. According to El Saadawi, neither of these will liberate Arab women since the emancipation for women must be followed by liberation for the Egyptian society (30).

Through *Woman at Point Zero*, El Saadawi states clearly that women's freedom can only come via employment and financial independence. When a woman can make her own direction in life, she is capable of making her own decisions; whereas, that's purely feminist. Nawal El Saadawi's works aggressively challenge patriarchy and women's repression. She elaborates on the value of typing and how it helps to her political participation and to women's rights. She writes in her work *Exile and Resistance*:

When they had finished the superintendent would growl at me: If we find a pen and paper in your cell that will be more dangerous for you than if we find a gun. Since that moment I have never

ceased writing. Writing has allowed me to reach people in my home country and in other countries of the world. It has torn down the walls of isolation that separated me from them, from myself and from my body. rid me of the feelings of alienation and exile no matter where I am” (El Saadawi *Exile*, 10).

2.6 The Connection between Sex, Politics and Religion in Oppressing

Women

2.6.1 Oppression

Scholars have interpreted the term "oppression" from many viewpoints. For instance, according to Barker,

"Oppression" is explained as “the social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual, group or institution. Typically, a government or political organization that is in power places these restrictions formally or covertly on oppressed groups so that they may be exploited and less able to compete with other social groups. The oppressed individual or group is devalued, exploited, and deprived of privileges by the individual or group which has more power” (Barker, 2003).

Johnson (2000) at the other hand highlights oppression in his definition as: “for every social category that is privileged, one or more other categories are oppressed in relation to it. The concept of oppression points to social forces that tend to press upon people and hold them down, to hem them in and block their pursuit of a goal in life. Just as privileged tends to open doors of opportunity, oppression tends to slam them shut” (Johnson, 39).

Oppression is often associated with the connection of exploitation and dominance on cultural, social, economic, and psychological levels. "Oppression" shall be defined as an

unjust exercise of power, whether publicly or secretly, with continual unfairness and brutality that causes the victim to feel worried and dissatisfied (Nkereuwem, 3).

El Saadawi's novels have been always an important subject to tackle. Since Nawal is the author of the studied novel of this dissertation, *Woman at Point Zero* artistically depicts how women in her terrain are repressed and abused twice: by both women at first and subsequently by males. To Abdulrahman Abdulwahid Idris, Nawal El Saadawi admits that her literature was first motivated by anger. She believes she writes to express herself. "What irritated me the most," she says, "was oppression: oppression of women and oppression of the poor." El Saadawi portrays the harsh circumstances that women are obliged to cope in within her male-centered environment openly and shamelessly in this spirit of rage (207).

According to El Saadawi's medical research on neurosis that was conducted in Al Qanatir prison, it asserts that because of their fellow women and oppressive cultural practices women suffer from psychological and physical problems (206).

2.7 The Economic and the Political Situation of Arab and Egyptian

Women

Doaa Salman Abdo confirmed that Arab women suffer from enormous social, legal, political, economic, and cultural restrictions. These difficulties are the result of customs and stereotyping that support discrimination against women as well as allowing for violations of their basic rights, such as healthcare coverage and education. Women confront a number of economic problems on a daily basis as a result of the lack of understanding their basic economic rights, the problem of poverty among women, large number of unemployment rates, a high percentage of involvement in low-wage occupations, gender segregation, economic and cultural restrictions, and lastly, labor market inequalities (Salman).

Despite significant advances by certain countries, women's access to the labor market remains severely limited; males continue to dominate the structure of employment, and

women's salaries remain substantially lower, even when both genders do the same activity. The decreasing rate of female labor-force participation is due in part to many women working as unpaid housewives. A professional examination of gender inequalities revealed an evident rise in private sector job chances for women that were inversely proportionate to public sector downsizing. However, regardless of work sector, vocation, or rank, women continue to earn less than males, worsening income imbalances (Salman).

This gender disparity gives a basis for investigating changes in women's job position. It is worth noting that the structure of women's employment has changed, with a large proportion of women working in service occupations (professionals, technicians, and administrative support workers) or as skilled agricultural laborers. This emphasizes the importance of the unpaid labor performed by Egyptian women mostly in rural economy (Doaa Salman Abdou 2020). Hartman asserted that, "Patriarchal capitalism theory views the position of women in the labour market as a product of both the economic relations of capitalism and patriarchal gender relations" Hartmann (1981). In other words, Hartmann proposes; that sex segregation and sexual exploitation of women may be explained by examining how patriarchy and capitalism manage to exploit women (Heidi Hartmann, 13-14).

According to Dr. Ikram Adnani, Arab women have been kept out of politics were not permitted to vote until 1950s and 1960s. This is also true in several Western nations, but while those nations see growth in women's political engagement, Arab women remain far apart from gaining rights including the right to enter politics. For a long time, the Arab woman is regarded as an apolitical creature who was only given more attention during election process in order to secure her support while being ignored by political groups and, as in case of female runners, voters. Arab women were not able to have key positions or positions of authority in elected bodies or executive agencies until recently. Some nations, including Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia, have attempted to address this issue

through parity and quota systems. While these regimes have permitted further women to enter politics, the majority of women still do not vote, and few are elected to government (Adnani).

Adnani, moreover, asserted that the limitations to women's political participation are various. They are mirrored in social views that hold women back from participating in the political process or making substantial choices because they are "less reasonable" than males. They are also demonstrated by a lack of coverage in governmental cabinets, parliament, labor groups, and political parties. In Arab communities, males aren't the only ones that stereotype women. Arab women have more trust in males to make political decisions and, as a result, rarely vote over other women. Women's political participation may be recognized as being one of the most essential criteria for democracy. It must offer equal opportunities regardless to gender or age and consider women democracy as necessary to the democracy's flourish. Though equality is written in Arab constitutions, on-the-ground implementation methods need a greater focus on the notion of justice, rather than equality (Adnani).

2.8 The Rights of Women in Islam and its Misuse

Since the spread of Islam among Arab communities, women start to enjoy a set of privileges that has not been existed before. In every aspect of their lives, Islam has provided gender equality and women's rights in Islam. However, due to the Arab's socio-cultural norms and practices, the promise of Islam is not always reflected into concrete actions (Manjur Hossain Patoari).

According to Hossain to acknowledge those rights of honor, dignity and status of women in Islam, their situation before the arrival of Islam must be considered. Islam is the only religion that liberated women by affording them equal rights, all kinds of humiliation and pride. They were treated like slaves at the time, and their circumstances were frequently worse than those of animals. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) advocates an end to all forms of torture, brutality, and inhumanity against women. He reveals brilliance to them. "Fear

Allah in respect of women he advised Muslims”, “The best of you are them who behave best to their wives” and “A Muslim must not hate his wife, and if he is displeased with one bad quality in her, let him be pleased with one that is good” (Doi).

However, in many Muslim communities today, women are not treated according to their Islamic rights. Muslims practice their own cultures and values, while women face cultural issues, patriarchal aspects of their society, and brutal oppression (Sechzer). Although the Quran and the Prophet's (peace be upon him) tradition emphasize gender equality and women's rights, dignity, and status, some people use it to exploit and discriminate women by moderating some verses of the text to demean them (Khanum).

In Islam, a woman who has legal identity and can enter into contracts or make fortune in her own name is completely self-regulating. She has the right to practice any career or business and dispose of her property in the same way as men do. She is entitled to inheritance in several capacities, including mother, wife, sister, and daughter. She has the right to choose her spouse who is obliged to dower and care (Mohammad, & Lehmann, 1-13).

Women are highly respected and honored in Islam. “If she is a wife, she is life partner, if she is as a mother, the paradise is under the feet of mother, if she is daughter it is blessing of Almighty Allah.” (Soomro, & Khuhro, 272-285). Guaranteed by Islam, the several kinds of women's rights are as follow: Inheritance, marriage, dower, maintenance, divorce, the right to choose profession, proprietorship, and the right to seek knowledge, the right to involve in politics, the right to choose residence and economic rights. However, in the Arabic male-dominated culture, several misconceptions about women's rights in Islam exist owing to a lack of sufficient religious education, a lack of awareness among women about their rights as stated in Islam, traditional conventions, and men's dominant personality. Men sometimes practice some negative traditions to deprive women, dishonor women, blaspheme women, or

for financial or political gain, claiming these are Islamic rules, but Islam never encourages these abusive practices (Manjur Hossain Patoari).

Due to a lack of basic Islamic education, women have sometimes blamed Islam for injustice, disgrace, or deprivation. To recognize the real situation of Muslim women, to remove the prevalent misunderstandings surrounding women's rights in Islam, and to change the dominating attitude of males, adequate Islamic knowledge and insight of women is really necessary (Manjur Hossain Patoari).

2.9 Feminist Analysis of *Woman at Point Zero*

El Saadawi's novel tells the story of the traumatized, sexually assaulted, and ignored women in Arab societies by men. It represents the lifetime events that Firdaus live from her birth till her time to execution in jail. Such issues come arose from the injustice treatment of both family and society, even her uncle who thought to be a good educated person harassed her sexually and married her to a 60 year's old widower. Firdaus has never felt safe in her entire life; therefore, she runs away looking for better life conditions and seeking self improvement economically and mentally. She becomes a fearless prostitute who can kill a man if she senses a bit unvalued or discriminated by a man.

From the story, we can understand that Firdaus reject the misrepresentation and the weakening that society related to females. Nevertheless, instead of being a sexually harassed woman, she starts fighting for her rights, becoming a strong prostitute, and accepting her death punishment. According to her statement, "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" (111). This quote shows us her strength of resisting fear, male's dominancy and her no regrets for killing a man (Wilany, 117-118). She also states:

"My skin is soft, but my heart is cruel, and my bite is deadly" (54).

For her being a woman, many people, particularly men, assumed that Firdaus was powerless to resist what they were doing. She was a tough lady who could murder anyone who hurts her. No one knows that she is planning to destroy any man who would stand in her way and disrespect her. Furthermore, Firdaus believes that she was never welcomed in society. She wanted to express that she deserved to be cherished by everyone around her. She claimed: “All my life I have been searching for something that would fill me with pride, make me feel superior to everyone else, including kings, princes and rules”(9) (Wilany, 118).

It is understood that Firdaus lacks a sort of appreciation from anyone she knows. She believes that she is worthy of appreciation, and she lacks attention because she is a woman. She shows her hate against men and their inequality with women, in which those latter cannot enjoy the rights as men do (Wilany, 118), quoting: “However, every single man I did get to know filled me but one desire: to lift my hand and bring it smashing down on his face. But because I am a woman I have never had the courage to lift my hand” (10).

She couldn't raise her hand; it was as though the entire society overlooked women. Her passiveness was also demonstrated by her manner, which allowed the guys to possess her body while assuring that the men could not make her feel joy and delight (Wilany, 118-119).

According to Firdaus, no man is good; they are all users and hypocrites. Their love for control and imposing power make them feel as superior, as Nawal states:

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 (122).

Nawal shows her hate towards men through spitting saying: “Each time I picked up a newspaper and found the picture of a man who was one of them, I would spit on it.” (9). She pictures her disgust for them by spitting to their pictures; she spits to newspaper and not in real life (Eka Wilany, 119). In another declaration, Firdaus stated, “I am not a prostitute. But right from any early days my father, my uncle, my husband, all of them, taught me to grow up as a prostitute.”(135).

Being a Prostitute to her is a result of old traumas, her previous sexual harassments from her environment and patriarchal traditions are the reason for taking this path. Despite the reality that she is involved in prostitution, she is such a successful lady. The man she murdered is a pimp who had priced her for money. She has no choice but to accompany the guys, despite the fact that she doesn't know them. It irritates and infuriates her since she detested doing it. She is satisfied with herself for overcoming all she had denied in her life. She learns a set of life lessons, for example she learns how to evaluate herself and decide what is right and wrong to do (Wilany, 119), she said, “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 honour, 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 salary, and a person’s price goes up as he climbs the social ladder” (124).

Becoming financially independent is among the most significant benefit of being a successful prostitute to Firdaus. Also, she likes being that sort of fearless women who would kill for her comfort. Generally, men fear that type of females; they are terrifying to males. They were frightened by her attitude since they knew she didn't like males, thus they kept wanting Firdaus executed. As stated, “They said, “You are a savage and dangerous woman”. I am speaking the truth is savage and dangerous” (110).

This statement has two deep implemented meanings. In one hand, the truth of males' inner fear of Firdaus and their possible efforts plays an important role in shutting her mouth and sending her to jail. In the other hand, Firdaus's pride of rejecting what discomforts her. She thinks that the action of killing a man who mistreated her is a kind of revolt and defense to her rights as a woman; thus, she doesn't fear prison (Eka Wilany, 120).

Religiously, Firdaus points that religious men are hypocrites. They tend to be educated, cultured and a religious man in front of society; however, he mistreats his wife at home with the presence of his children (Wilany, 119). As stated, "...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" (59).

As Firdaus thinks, well educated and religious men wouldn't beat their wives. But it is the contrary, they consider it as a normal thing for males to beat their female fellows as if they owe them and can do whatever they want which is the case as her husband.

The discussed novel depicts a typical image of the patriarchal Arabic Egyptian woman in society. It demonstrates the hardships a female can struggle in her way of finding self improvement, her deprived natural (political and religious) rights, and towards gender equality. Firdaus is a good example of a full lifeline of hardships, difficulties, assaults and disappointments. Such conditions is the push behind her questioning of her own identity, she draws a parallel between success and self worth through being a prostitute than an executer who chooses prison over a mistreatment (Wilany, 120).

It is true she ended up in jail and killed by men, she proves us right that some life circumstances' can turn u to ran away searching for a refugee where u seek for respect and value. Despite her refusal and passiveness, being economically liberated is also another type of success that horrors men and represents a threat to them. Normally, women in Islam enjoy

many rights since ages; but, unfortunately throughout their entire life they search for emancipation and sense of value. Their challenge against masculinity, injustice and speaking reality only ends them in a prison cell like Firdaus' worthless and hatred (Wilany, 119).

2.10 Conclusion

Nawal El Saadawi is among the world's most influential female activists who has worked extremely hard, even in the face of resistance, to enlighten both men and women on several difficulties such as rights and sexuality, and to empower and inspire women all over the world to come together to fight oppression, all without ever impacting her own values or beliefs. She is a genuinely extraordinary woman whose multifaceted life and writings, which were translated into more than different languages throughout the world over the years, deserve nothing less than the numerous worldwide literary awards and acclaim that she has received. Hers is one of the most well-known activists. Given the recognition she has received as an activist, she is one of the most powerful voices in the burgeoning movement of Islamic feminists for human rights and women's rights. It is an enthusiastic and powerful voice that has affected and encouraged hundreds and thousands of learners, wives, other women and men all throughout the world. El Saadawi's narratives motivate readers to replace defective forms of information that oppress women with new knowledge; a knowledge of what patriarchy is and what it has conducted, can do, and could do to women. The present chapter tries to identify the personal life of the feminist Nawal Saadawi, in which it outlines the plot of her well known novel *Woman at Point Zero* 1975 and some of the selected characters. Patriarchy must be challenged, that is the power of these novels; they have the ability to inspire resistance and change.

General Conclusion

Feminists around the world claim for their political, social and economic rights; admitting that such violated rights are their natural rights since birth. Patriarchal societies tend to misuse those rights for their own benefits. Feminists never attack politics for not supporting their manifestation; nevertheless, they attack masculinity for the injustice and inequality.

Nawal El Saadawi was one of those feminists who applied feminism to make their ways toward liberating women and bringing their demands and needs back. *Woman at Point Zero* intends to clear the image of women's strive for independence, identity and self-awareness. Throughout the novel, the protagonist Firdaus drops the depiction of what the female gender faces in Arab patriarchal counties, especially in Egypt.

Apparently, El Saadawi suffered a lot from the political injustice that was practiced by Anwar Sadat's regime. Therefore, it was similar to Firdaus's experience with politics, in which the character in *Woman at Point Zero* disguised political men since her childhood. The novel depicts the horrors of that era of El Sadat's (The president of Egypt) period of control, especially when it comes to females. He exiled Nawal in 1981 and prevented her from public appearances due to her involvement in women's journey of liberty.

It was found out that Nawal, as an Arab modernist feminist, is against masculine society and their decisions concerning women's independence. She insisted on her refusal for masculine patriarchal societies and not the Quran itself. She believes that the obliteration of the female's identity and repression can make women seek self-identity, self-value and attention. Such conducted political regimes in Arab regions, patriarchal ideologies, the male's misunderstand to the concept of dominance and infantile sexual abuses can turn a normal woman into a prostitute seeking for appreciation.

In her novel, Nawal El Saadawi, tries to illustrate women's struggle in Arab society among the story of Firdaus. Her suffrage of being a daughter of an oppressor, a niece of a

harasser, and a wife of an abuser are the conditions in which Firaus lives in; meanwhile, through such difficulties in her life, she runs away and starts her way towards discovering herself and her price.

Nawal El Saadawi's writings publicly criticize patriarchy and female tyranny. She focuses on the importance of writing and how it benefits her political engagement and women's rights. Nawal El Saadawi uses literature to free women and motivate them to reject discrimination. She insisted on writing within the context of modern feminism loudly in order to show the religious and political restrictions Arab women are confronting in a daily basis. El Saadawi visibly emphasizes in *Woman at Point Zero* that women's emancipation can only come via job and financial independence. When a woman can choose her own path in life, she may make her own decisions, which is entirely feminist.

Finding out the threads and connections between sex, religion and politics in subjugating women in the novel and showing the contradictions between the Islamic principles and their misuse by Muslims to serve their masculine interests are the raising problems of the current dissertation. Consequently, to realize the true position of women in Islam, to dispel common misconceptions about female rights in Islam, as well as to challenge male dominance, proper Islamic education and insight into women is absolutely required.

Firdaus is a result of social conditions. The change that she goes through and the strength she obtains is a result of the injustice she witnesses. She reverses her weak situation into a point of strength, where she starts considering her being as a prostitute as self-independence and self-value.

Works Cited

Books

- Ali, Kecia , et al. *A Jihar for Injustice Honoring the Work and Life of Amina Wadud*. 48HrBooks, USA. 2012.
- Bouhdiba, A. *Sexuality in Islam*, Routledge&Kegan Paul, London. 1985.
- Doi, A. R. *Women in Shari'ah (Islamic Law)*, 4th Ed. Kula Lumpur: A. S. Noordeen, 1992.
- Eickelman, D. F. *The Middle East and Central Asia: An Anthropological Approach*. Upper Saddle River, Prentice Hall,1998.
- El Saadawi, Nawal. *Woman at Point Zero*. Translated by Sherif Hetata. Zed Books Ltd, London, 1983.
- Fallaize, Elizabeth. *French Women's Writing: Recent Fiction*. The Macmillan Press, 1993.
- Fallaize, Elizabeth. *French Women's and the Middle East: Women in Society A Feminist List*. Macmillan Press, LTD, Houndmills, 1993.
- Johnson, A. G. *Privilege, Power and Difference*. McGraw Hill, Boston, 2000.
- Hartmann, Heidi I. *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism towards a More Progressive Union*. South End Press, Boston, Massachusetts. 1 July 1979.
- Ilkcaracan, Pinar. *Women and Sexuality in Muslim Societies*. Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR), Istanbul. 2000.
- Parsons, Susan Frank, editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Pui-lan, Kwok. *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000.
- Ruether, R Rosemary. *Sexism and God Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. Beacon Press; Anniversary edition , April 1, 1993.
- Robbins, Ruth. *Literary Feminism*. St. Martin's Press, New York. 2000.

Wadud, Amina. *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. 1992nd ed., New York: Oxford University Press, (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakati), 1999.

Book Chapters

Accad, Evelyne, “*Sexuality and Sexual Politics: Conflicts and Contradictions for Contemporary Women in the Middle East*”. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Editor Chandra Talpade Mohanty; Ann Russo; Lourdes Torres. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991. pp. 237-250.

Slee, Nicola, “*An Introduction to Feminist Theology*”. *Faith and Feminism: An Introduction to Christian Feminist Theology*, edited and published by Darton Longman & Todd, 1 July 2003.

Journals

Al Maaitah, Rowaida., et al. “Arab Women and Political Development”. *The Journal of International Women's Studies*, vol, 12, no. 3, Mar-2011, pp. 7-26. *Jiws*, bridgew.edu/jiws/vol12/iss3/2/. Accessed 2 June 2022.

Arizah, Mila, “Feminism: Equality Gender in Literature.” *Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Baturaja University*, vol, 1, no. 1, September 2020, pp. 509-515. [Researchgate, researchgate.net/publication/344186149_FEMINISM_EQUALITY_GENDER_IN_LITERATURE](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344186149_FEMINISM_EQUALITY_GENDER_IN_LITERATURE). Accessed 20 Mar. 2022.

Atiyat, Reem. “Hanan Al-Shaykh's the Story of Zahra: A Post-Modern Feminist Literary Criticism of Liberation through Madness”. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, vol, 3, no. 2, Mar - Apr, 2018, pp. 142-147. *IJELS*, dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijels.3.2. Accessed 01 Jan. 2022.

- Badran, Margot. "Re/placing Islamic Feminism", *Critique internationale*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2010, pp. 25-44. www.cairn-int.info/article-E_CR11_046_0025--re-placing-islamic-feminism.htm. Accessed 30 Mar. 2022.
- Cesari, Jocelyne, "Political Islam: More than Islamism". *Religions*, vol, 12, no. 5, 2021, pp. 1-10. 299. [Dx.doi.org/10.3390/rel12050299](https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12050299). Accessed 4 March 2022.
- Cole, Juan Ricardo. "Feminism, Class, and Islam in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1981, pp. 387–407. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/162906>. Accessed 21 Jun. 2022.
- Emecheta, Buchi, "Maternal Oppression of the Girl-Child in Selected Novels". *An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal* , vol, 4, no.2, 2010, pp. 462-470. *AJOL*, DOI: 10.4314/afrev.v4i2.58359. Accessed 6 June 2022.
- Francesco, Coin. "Colonialism, Patriarchy, Nervous, Conditions and Political Resistance in Nawal el Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*." *Deportate*, vol.05, no, 2, 2002, pp. 459-434. *Lancaster University*, www.unive.it/pag/fileadmin/user_upload/dipartimenti/DSL/CC/documenti/DEP/numeri/n5-6/37_Sadaawi.pdf . Accessed 15 March 2022.
- Jaafar-Mohammad, Imani, and Lehmann Charlie. "Women's Rights in Islam Regarding Marriage and Divorce". *Journal of Law and Practice*, vol, 4, no. 1, 2011, pp. 1-13. *Mitchell Hamline School of Law*. open.mitchellhamline.edu/lawandpractice/vol4/iss1/3. Accessed 12 April 2022.
- Idris, Abdulrahman Abdulwaheed, et al. "Depiction of Women as the Primary Architects of their own Oppression: A Masculinist Critique of El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*". vol. 7, no. 4, 01July, 2018, pp. 207-211. *IJALEL*, DOI:10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.7n.4p.206. Accessed 7 Feb. 2022.

Simola, Raisa, "A Journey to Prison of Two Young Women, Lemona and Firdaus." *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, vol, 14, no. 2, 2005, pp. 162-174. *Africabib*, doi.org/10.53228/njas.v14i2.273. Accessed 12 March. 2022.

Soomro, Z. H., & Khuhro, A. A. "Women Rights in Islam". *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering*, 2018, pp. 272-285.

www.coursehero.com/file/132867484/Research-Proposal-by-ZukhRa-Shahrizoda-for-Friday-August-27-2021-Finaldocx/. Accessed 29 Mar 2022.

Tønnessen, Liv, "Islamic Feminism, a public lecture". *Regional Institute of Gender, Rights, Peace & Diversity*, vol, 1, 2014, pp. 2-5. CMI, www.cmi.no/publications/file/5289-islamic-feminism-a-public-lecture-by.pdf. Accessed 10 Jun 2022.

Tugume, Benon. "Interrogating the Male-Female Gender Dichotomy in Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero." *Journal of International Women's Studies*, vol, 22, no. 4, 2021, pp. 118-133. *Jiws*, vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol22/iss4/9. Accessed 10 April. 2022.

Wilany, Eka. Feminism Analysis in the Novel "Woman at Point Zero". *Journal Anglo-Saxon*, vol, 8, no. 1, 2017, pp. 115-121. *ANGLO-SAXON*, www.journal.unrika.ac.id/index.php/jurnalanglo-saxon/article/view/990. Accessed 4 may 2022.

Articles

Badran, Margot. "Replacing Islamic Feminism", *Critique internationale*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2010, pp. 25-44.

Gürkan, Senem, and Yasur Barot. "Gender Jihad or Re-Reading? Upon İslamic Feminism", *Turkish Studies-Comparative Religious Studies*, vol, 14, no. 10, 2019, pp. 485-495.

Hoodfar, H. "A background to the feminist movement in Egypt." *al-Raida*, vol, 10, no. 57, 1992, pp. 11-3.

Khanum, R. A.)." Feminism Status of Women and Islam". *Empowerment*, 2008, pp. 67-78.

Riyani, Irma, "Research On (Women's) Sexuality in Islam". *ISLAMIKA INDONESIA*, vol, 1, no. 2, 2014, pp. 1-18.

Sechzer, J. A.). "Islam and Women: Where Tradition Meets Modernity": History and Interpretations of Islamic Women's Status. *Sex Roles*, 2004. pp. 263-272.

doi.org/10.1023/B:SERS.0000046610.16101.e0.

Svendsen, A. D. "Lakoff and Women's Language: A Critical Overview of the Empirical Evidence for Lakoff's Thesis". *Leviathan: Interdisciplinary Journal in English*, no. 4, Mar. 2019, pp. 1-11.

Thesis

Ahmad, Ambar. *Islamic Feminism – A contradiction in terms?* May 2015. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/indien/11388.pdf.

Al Atiyat, Ibtesam. *The Current Faces of Arab Feminisms: Micro-Rebels, Art Activists and Virtual Heroines*. December 2020. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. www.euromedwomen.foundation/pg/en/documents/view/9880/the-current-faces-of-arab-feminisms-microrebels-art-activists-and-virtual-heroines.

Baraza, Clement. *A Narratological Study of Nawal El Saadawi's Novels "God Dies by the Nile" and "Woman at Point Zero"*. 2015. Master thesis. GRIN, grin.com/document/509658.

Historiana, Natalia Happy. *Firdaus' Rejection toward Traditional Values Attached to Arabian Woman in Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero*. 2004. Soegijapranata Catholic University. repository.unika.ac.id/3773/.

Nkere-Uwem, Regina Tom. *Oppression of women by women in the selected Novels of Nwapa and Emecheta*. 1997. An M. A. Dissertation Presented to the Department of English, University of Maiduguri. www.ajol.info/index.php/afrev/article/view/58359/46704.

- Pruzan-Jørgensen, Julie Elisabeth. *Islamic Women's Activism in the Arab World Potentials and Challenges for External Actors*. 2012. DIIS REPORT (Danish Institute for International Studies). www.diis.dk/files/media/publications/import/extra/rp2012-02-islamic-womens-activism_web_1.pdf.
- Spath, Lauren E. *Power of Women, Solidarity, Unveiling of the Mind: the Life and Work of Nawal El Saadawi*. 2005. An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499). Ball State University, liblink.bsu.edu/catkey/1341097.
- Tag-El-Din, Donya. *Resisting Patriarchy through Literature: The Feminist Writings of Nawal El Saadawi and Hanan Al- Shaykh*. 2009. Electronic Theses and Dissertations. scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/8225.

websites

- Addison, Catherine. "Woman at Point Zero: Nawal El Saadawi's radical Africanfeminism was ahead of its time." *The conversation*, 15 April 2021, theconversation.com/woman-at-point-zero-nawal-el-saadawis-radical-african-feminism-was-ahead-of-its-time-158651. Accessed 15 Sep. 2021.
- Adnani, Akram. "Women's Political Participation in the Arab Region: Progress, Obstacles, and Challenges." *POMED*, March 08, 2021, pomed.org/womens-political-participation-in-the-arab-region-progress-obstacles-and-challenges/. Accessed in 08 Apr. 2022.
- Amira Mhadhbi. "State feminism in Tunisia: reading between the lines." *OpenDemocracy*, 7 November 2012, www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/state-feminism-in-tunisia-reading-between-lines/.
- Amireh, Amal. "Nawal El Saadawi's intellectual life reflected eight decades of Arab society and culture". *The conversation*, 31 March 2021, theconversation.com/nawal-el

saadawis-intellectual-life-reflected-eight-decades-of-arab-society-and-culture-157972. Accessed 10 Apr. 2022.

Behrooz, Anahit, "10 Must Read Women Writers From The Middle East". *The culture trip*, 27 October 2016, theculturetrip.com/middle-east/articles/10-must-read-female-writers-from-the-middle-east/. Accessed 10 Mar. 2022.

Coleman, Jasmine Taylor. "Nawal El Saadawi: Feminist firebrand who dared to write dangerously". *BBC News*. 21 March 2021, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55048245. Accessed 13 Apr. 2022.

"Écriture Féminine." *Uni Sophomore English*, May 8, 2019. <https://unisophomoreenglish.wordpress.com/2019/05/08/ecriture-feminine/>. Accessed 10 Juin, 2022.

Elkaidi, Youssef, "Feminist Thoughts in the Muslim World from Secular Feminism to Islamic Feminism." *Inside Arabia*, Dec19/2018, insidearabia.com/feminist-muslim-world-islamic-feminism/. Accessed 08April 2022.

Ferjani, Mohamed-Chérif, "Political Islam and Conflicts in the Middle East." *Valdai*, 01.10.2019, valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/political-islam-and-conflicts-in-the-middle-east/. Accessed 10 March 2022.

"Fourth-Wave Feminism Explained". *The MasterClass staff*, Mar 12, 2022. <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/fourth-wave-feminism#the-four-waves-of-feminism>. Accessed 15 December, 2021.

Jilani, Sarah. "The Pioneering Anticolonial Feminism of Nawal El Saadawi(1931–2021) ." *Artreview*, 30 March 2021, artreview.com/the-pioneering-anti-colonial-feminism-of-nawal-el-saadawi-1931-2021/. Accessed 23 Sep. 2021.

- Khaleeli, Homa, "Nawal El Saadawi: Egypt's radical feminist". *The Guardian*, Thu 15 Apr 2010, www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2010/apr/15/nawal-el-saadawi-egyptian-feminist. Accessed 24 Feb 2022.
- Lindsey, Ursula. *Al –Fanar Media*, 10 Jul2017, www.al-fanarmedia.org/2017/07/scholars-debate-legacy-state-feminism-chances-overcoming-islamist-secularist-divide/. Accessed in 09/05/2021.
- Magdy, Rana,. *Open Democracy*, 8 March 2017, www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/egyptian-feminist-movement-brief-history/. Accessed in 04/07/2021.
- Mambrol, Nasrullah. "Luce Irigaray and Psychoanalytic Feminism". *Literary Theory and Criticism*, 19 DEC 2016, literariness.org/2016/12/19/luce-irigaray-and-psychoanalytic-feminism/. Accessed 7 May.2022.
- "Marxist feminism." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 2 May 2022, 18:36 pm, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxist_feminism#:~:text=Marxist%20feminism%20is%20a%20philosophical,individual%20ownership%20of%20private%20property. Accessed 14 Feb. 2022.
- Patoari, Manjur Hossain. "The Rights of Women in Islam and Some Misconceptions: An Analysis from Bangladesh Perspective." *Scirp*, Dec 2019, www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation.aspx?paperid=96850. Accessed 20 May 2022.
- Rampton, Martha. "Four Waves of Feminism." *Pacific magazine*, Sunday, 25 Oct 2015, pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism. Accessed 30 Jan. 2022.
- Salman Abdou, Doaa. "Increased Gender Inequality in Arab Labour Markets due to COVID-19: Causes and Solutions." *IEMed*, October 2020,

www.iemed.org/publication/increased-gender-inequality-in-arab-labour-markets-due-to-covid-19-causes-and-solutions/?lang=fr.

Seddon, David. "Truth in a world of lies: the life of Nawal El-Saadawi". *the Review of African Political Economy (ROAPE)*. 14 April 2021, roape.net/2021/04/14/truth-in-a-world-of-lies-the-life-of-nawal-el-saadawi/. Accessed 15 Apr. 2022.

Slee, Nicola. "Feminist Theology 101". *Student Christian Movement*, movement.org.uk/resources/feminist-theology-101. Accessed 30 Dec. 2021.

SparkNotes editors. "Nawal El Saadawi and Woman at Point Zero Background." SparkNotes, com, SparkNotes LLC, 2005, www.sparknotes.com/lit/pointzero/context/. Accessed 19 Jan 2022.

SparkNotes editors. "Woman at Point Zero: Character List." *SparkNotes.com*, SparkNotes LLC, 2005, www.sparknotes.com/lit/pointzero/characters/. Accessed 20 Jan 2022.

Stewart, Amber. Suduiko, Aaron ed. "Woman at Point Zero Summary". *GradeSaver*, 12 June 2019. www.gradesaver.com/woman-at-point-zero/study-guide/summary. Accessed 20 Jan 2022.

"Theology". *Vocabulary.com*, 2022, vocabulary.com/dictionary/theology. Accessed 10 Nov. 2021.

Willette, Jeanne. "Écriture Féminine: Historical Context". *Art History Unstuffed*, 2 Aug 2013, arthistoryunstuffed.com/ecriture-feminine-historical-context/. Accessed 4 may. 2022.

Women at Point Zero, Nawal Alsaadawi's Prison Experiences. *Wordpress.com*, November 2015, <http://womanatpointzero.wordpress.com/2015/11/02/tutour-nawal-elsaadawi-s-prison-experiences>. Accessed in 12/02/2022.

Zuhur, Sherifa. "Woman at Point Zero." *World Literature and Its Times: Profiles of Notable Literary Works and the Historic Events That Influenced Them. Encyclopedia.com*, 10 Jun. 2022. www.encyclopedia.com. Accessed 22 Feb. 2022.

Youtube videos

Dopico, Alex."World History Portal." *You Tube*, 12/18/2020, [www Janet-Panic. Com](http://www.Janet-Panic.Com). Accessed in 22/4/2021.

South Center."Global Feminism and the Middle East." *YouTube*, 10 March 2013, [www.you tube.com/watch?V=ONV CVyrubs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?V=ONV CVyrubs). Accessed 10/02/2022.

Tutour 2. "Feminist Views on the Role of Religions." *YouTube*, 26 October 2021, www.youtube.com tutour 2 net /Socioligy/reference/sociology-feminist-views_on-the_ role of religion. Accessed in 15/05/2022.

Abstrait

La sexualité, l'intégrisme religieux, le patriarcat et le statut de la femme dans le monde arabe étaient les principaux concepts dont parlait la féministe égyptienne Nawal El Saadawi dans ses romans. En tant que l'une des importantes écrivaines et militantes de sa génération, elle aborde les problèmes auxquels les femmes sont confrontées en Égypte et dans le monde, dans lesquels elle ne semble jamais avoir hésité à aborder des sujets difficiles comme la prostitution, la violence domestique et l'extrémisme religieux dans ses écrits et *Woman at Point Zero* (écrit en 1979 et traduit en 1983) ne fait pas exception. *Woman at Point Zero*, est un appel à l'aide non seulement du personnage de Firdaus mais de toutes les femmes des sociétés arabes. C'est un cri d'injustice et de fausse représentation des femmes dans le monde Arabe où l'égalité est censée être atteinte par les principes de l'Islam ; la chose que Nawal critique le plus dans le roman. Elle montre qu'en obéissant aux règles sociales, cela conduira à des résultats catastrophiques comme dans le cas du mariage de Firdaus avec le vieil homme. Par conséquent, Nawal aide à mieux comprendre l'objectivation des femmes dans une société où les femmes ne sont pas respectées. Les femmes, en effet, sont traitées comme des propriétés ; la chose qui donne des avantages aux hommes dans tous les secteurs est représentée dans des nombreuses scènes du roman. Il semble que le roman actuel reflète la façon dont les femmes gèrent le patriarcat et les difficultés auxquelles elles sont confrontées pour vivre dans un monde où la vérité ne peut être révélée.

Les mots clés: féminisme arabe moderne, patriarcat, islam politique, oppression, harcèlement sexuel.