

THE EXISTENCE OF WOMEN IN PATRIARCHAL CULTURE IN THE NOVEL WOMAN AT POINT ZERO

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Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengumpulkan informasi tentang nilai-nilai patriarki dan perilaku seksual di kalangan masyarakat, khususnya untuk tokoh utama buku tersebut, Firdaus. Penerbitan novel Perempuan dalam Titik Nol tahun 1975 berlangsung di Lebanon. Di zaman sekarang ini, ketika kita terus-menerus terlibat dalam kehidupan kita sehari-hari, penulis ingin memperjelas masalah kesetaraan dan keadilan gender yang ada. Analisis dalam hal ini menggunakan analisis kuantitatif yang ketat. Analisis deskriptif merupakan metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis data. Langkah-langkah yang dilakukan peneliti dalam menganalisis data adalah: Membaca, Memahami, Menganalisis, dan Menyimpulkan hasil penelitian. Studi saat ini menetapkan bahwa ada empat kategori representasi gender untuk perempuan dalam novel: Penindasan atau kekerasan, Kekerasan, dan Beban atau peran perempuan. Ketika terjadi diskriminasi dan pelecehan terhadap karyawan serupa, hal itu disebabkan oleh budaya yang meninggikan status laki-laki dan kedudukan sosial secara keseluruhan.

Kata Kunci: *gender, keadilan, patriarki, perempuan, laki-laki*

Abstract

The study is interested to gain a general understanding of women's existence and the limitations or pain they go through in patriarchal cultures, particularly for Firdaus, the main character in the book. 1975 saw the release of the novel Woman at Zero Point in Lebanon. The author wants to convey in terms of equality and justice Gender at that time, we often encounter in everyday life. The research employs qualitative methods. A descriptive analysis was the research methodology used in this project. Steps the researcher took when assessing the data were: Reading, Understand, Analyzing, and Summing up the research results. The research found that are in the novel women are described in 4 categories of gender equality and justice, namely, Gender Injustice, Oppression or cruelty, Violence, and Burden or the role of women. Where there is discrimination and oppression of women both are influenced by a culture that considers the position of men to be higher than the position of women and social status between men and women.

Keywords: *gender, justice, patriarchy, women, men.*

INTRODUCTION

Literature is the expression of life in words of beauty and truth; it is the documentation of the human spirit, including thoughts, feelings, and aspirations; and it is the one and only record of the evolution of the human soul. Its aesthetic, evocative, and enduring characteristics define it. Its two main criteria are its general appeal and its individuality. Its goal is to understand man, that is, his spirit rather than his deeds. Since it protects the race's ideals, which are the cornerstone of all of our civilization, it is one of the most significant and enjoyable topics that can occupy the human intellect. Gender discrimination experienced by women in patriarchal cultures is not only caused by gender but is also caused by social class or social segregation, in accordance with the concept of intersectionality, which is the study of the intersections between various forms of oppression, dominance, or discrimination (Howard, J. A. & Renfrow, D. G., 2014).

As stated by intersecting societal systems like race, ethnicity, social class, and others (Delavande & Zafar, 2013) in Ida Rosida, Lestari Rejeki (2017), women experience varying degrees of prejudice. A number of overlapping systems, such as those that exist where class and gender cross, may lead to gender discrimination against women. Gender discrimination hurts all women, but it might be especially devastating to those who have been economically oppressed, according to Thio and Taylor (2012), who are cited in Ida Rosida, Lestari Rejeki (2017). Therefore, it is reasonable to anticipate that social class can reinforce gender prejudice. Burgess (2022) describes a novel as a made-up literary story of considerable length and complexity that imaginatively explores human experience, generally through a connected series of events involving a group of individuals in a specific context. All seven elements come together to form a cohesive plot. When constructing a tale, you should use these as the main building blocks. When men and women hold different levels of power in a society, this is referred to as a patriarchal culture. The meaning of patriarchal society has changed during the 20th century, according to an article written by the Women's Human Rights Education Institute. Social scientists used to view patriarchal cultures as more complicated forms of organization than the archaic matriarchy in the 19th century. The patriarchal civilization described by Frederic Engels as the first and most well-documented system of dominance in "world history" regarding the defeat of the feminine sex can be found in his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, which was released in 1884.

The majority of feminisms define patriarchy as a social structure in which women are unjustly oppressed, marginalized, or subordinated. On the one hand, Carole Pateman claims that the patriarchal construction of the masculine and feminine ideas is a political distinction between freedom and subordination. Because patriarchy is passed down from generation to generation unknowingly, it is referred to be a culture. Taking the family as the starting point, let's say that the father is the family's head and makes all of the decisions for all of the family members. Then it is systemically bolstered by institutions or systems that support the oppression of women. The control eventually spreads to include thought, sexuality, even spirituality, as well as productivity and ultimately reproduction. The cultures closest to the family sphere are, among other places, examples of patriarchal cultures that exist in Indonesia. For instance, a wife has no choice but to comply with her husband's preferences. Another instance of patriarchal culture, which is still widespread in Indonesia, is that it contributes to domestic violence.

Many authors from all around the world have been interested in the patriarchal debate. In her book, Madsen stated: "Patriarchy is a cultural (ideological) system that privileges men and all

things masculine, as well as a political system that places power in the hands of men and thus serves male interests at the expense of women." In contrast, Walby claimed that patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men rule, oppress, and exploit women in Pilcher and Whelehan's Fifty Keys Concept in Gender Studies.

In addition, Walby defined six patriarchal institutions, including male aggression, sexuality, the state, domestic work, and culture (Moh. Khuza'i, M.A., 2019). Walby is right, as Pilcher and Whelehan noted in their book. 50 Keys to Gender Studies Concepts The patriarch, who is frequently a society senior, has legal power over all men in the social unit, especially younger men, all women, and all children. The relationship between specific cultural ideals and masculine interests, such as the contrasts between rational (man) and emotional (feminine), nature (female) and civilization (male), has been questioned by theorists. Madsen continues by saying that if women don't fit into the patriarchal system, they will be neglected and treated as invisible while they are in the "other" part of men. Ashley Montagu contends in his book *The Natural Superiority of Women* that women have been educated to feel they are inferior to men and that this idea is a universal truth. The dominance of men is accepted as natural because they typically hold the higher positions in society. Women accept it because, whether they are conscious of it or not, they are forced into men's thoughts and think as what men demand from them. The fact that it has been around for so long makes it seem natural. In Jerome and Arlene's *Family in Transition: Seventh Edition*, Gough agrees with Montagu that older women may have influence over younger males and even some authority over them, but men frequently hold positions of more status and control within their families than women.

METHOD

To accurately explain or portray the shackles of patriarchal culture in women at point zero, the researcher used a close reading strategy while conducting this research using a descriptive qualitative methodology. There are specific research methods that are used in every scientific work. The research methodology is a body of knowledge that describes the systematic and logical steps for finding, acquiring, and analyzing information pertinent to the study or research questions. Quantitative and qualitative sections make up the research methodology. Additionally, the writer used qualitative research as a method of inquiry for this work. Because this study uses a close reading technique, the author used descriptive qualitative analysis to effectively describe or show *The Shackles of Patriarchal Culture* in the novel *A Woman at Point Zero*. by Nawa El Shadawi. Close reading is a literary analysis technique that concentrates on the minute elements of a work or text in order to identify any hidden greater meaning. The reader must attentively read the paragraph or text in order to determine its meaning. The descriptive technique involves more than just acquiring data; it also entails data analysis and interpretation, which necessitates comparing the traits of diverse events. The patriarchal culture is the primary subject of this work.

The information for this study was gathered through publications including books, journals, and websites. The data source was used to increase the researchers' expertise and comprehension as they carried out this study. However, the majority of the information used in this study came directly from the novel itself, which Amir Sutaarga translated into English in 1995. Nawal El-Saadi, the author of this book, released it for the first time in 1975. One of the books that criticizes Egypt's unequal treatment of women is this one. Three processes make up the data collecting process: reading, analyzing, and categorizing the information. Researchers must first read and

comprehend the novel. The author then chooses whatever issues Firdaus encountered as an Egyptian woman in the 1980s, how Firdaus dealt with them, and how Firdaus reflected the issues Egyptian women in the 1980s. Then, after choosing the data, underline the phrases, clauses, and sentences that relate to the analysis's subject, which is looked at through the lens of sociological literary criticism. There are three different types of interactive models that they have recommended. These models all involve data reduction, data presentation, and a method for developing and verifying conclusions.

FINDINGS

a. The existence of woman in patriarchal culture in the novel *woman at point zero*

The struggle of Indonesian women for a more balanced existence in every part of society is no longer a secret. The struggle has taken decades and considerable effort for a change. Women are still the second sex after men. Through this literary work created by a famous writer from Egypt, we are invited to open our eyes and think more about the existence of women in society. A good literature is always a mirror of a society. Although not all literary works are real reflections of life, a literary work can reflect the era and society at that time and can be compared from era to era. Even though the Arab country is one of the countries that is quite developed and rich. But similarly in Indonesia the level of public awareness of the existence of women is still lacking and underestimated. In fact, we can see that there are many women's organizations that still depend on their existence from men, like their husbands who work in the bureaucracy or state institutions.

The gender stereotypes that fall under the categories of masculinity and femininity pose a threat to men and women in particular who find themselves in stressful or uncomfortable situations. The patriarchy system also plays a role in the perpetuation of gender stereotypes in patriarchal societies. According to the patriarchal, men are, for instance, domineering, deterministic, self-assured, brave, powerful, level-headed, emotionally emotionless, independent, energetic, and unnurturing. Women, on the other hand, are stereotyped as being dependent, passive, subjective, subservient, unsure, and lacking in self-confidence. They are also described as being meek, quiet, intuitive, emotionally expressive, nurturing, weak, hysterical, unpredictable, and lacking in self-control (especially when menstruating). In addition, women are expected to care for children and work from home, as Brannon writes about gender norms in the workplace. Males who are regarded as having strong personalities, who are required to work outside the home, who complete challenging activities, etc. are notable exceptions to this rule. People in society are constrained by a patriarchal past that promotes male privilege and is obsessed with control over male domination, male identification, and male centering. In this instance, the man piques Firdaus' attention by telling him about her female physique.

*"You're a poor, miserable employee, unworthy of esteem, running after a bus to catch it. I'll take you in my car because **your female body has aroused me**. It is an honour for you to be desired by a respected official like myself. And who knows, maybe some day in the future, I can help you to get a rise before the others."* (Nawal El Saadawi 2021, p. 64).

The words above is a piece of dialogue found in the novel *Woman at Zero Point* written by Nawal El Saadawi. From the words above, it can be seen that the shape of a woman's body which is also a real form of existence can trigger cases of patriarchy which will lead to the possibility of rape. Thus, society tends to justify the existence of harassing behavior against women in the slightest form. For example, by teasing or whistling to women on the street.

Women are often accused of being the trigger for rape or sexual violence that happened to them. For example, from the way she dresses, the way she walks to her presence that makes men aroused and do whatever it takes to fulfill her desires. That is the reason it is important to instill sexual education from an early age to every existing gender, both men and women. This is important to do to gradually change men's perspectives of women. Educational institutions must teach perspectives on sexual education, especially to male students, so that they do not have perspectives that place women as sexual objects.

b. The patriarchal culture shackles woman in the novel *Woman at PointZero*.

In this chapter, the writer presents about women, suffering in patriarchal culture. In this research refers more to the representation of a female character named Firdaus, the main character. Nawal el Shadawi describe it in different social class between women and men. The writer will divide into 5 perspectives of the shackles of patriarchal culture in the novel *woman at point zero*, that is namely gender injustice, oppression or cruelty, violence and the burden or role of women.

1) Gender injustice

In this novel, we will find several sentences that show that there is no equality between men and women. This also becomes a problem in the daily life of the main character, Firdaus.

“ My father never went to bed without supper, no matter what happened. Sometimes when there was no food at home we would all go to bed with empty stomachs. But he would never fail to have a meal. My mother would hide his food from us at the bottom of one of the holes in the oven. He would sit eating alone while we watched him. One evening I dared to stretch out my hand to his plate, but he struck me a sharp blow over the back of my fingers.” (Nawal El Saadawi 2021, p. 19).

From the text above we can see the big difference between men and women. Firdaus' father is the head of the family where he is the most influential and powerful male figure in the family. Firdaus and his mother, who is a woman, must be willing to starve so that his father can have enough dinner for him.

“El azhar was an awesome school world peopled only by men and my uncle was one of them, was a man.” (Nawal El Saadawi 2021, p. 21).

The text above explains that only men deserve worthy education. Since 1877, Mary Putman Jacobi is one of America's most famous doctors and writers. He published a study *“the question of rest for women during menstruation”*, it makes gender inequality considerations. He changed society's view of menstruation in women. Mary said that women do not need physical and mental rest, especially during menstruation. That women's performance will not be disturbed and they can carry out normal activities if they get the perfect nutritional intake. Mary published her journal at that time because society was of the view that intellectual activities could harm women's health. They think that girls are more likely than boys to harm their body and brain functions when doing schoolwork. This is because the female reproductive system is more complex and complicated. For this reason, girls are asked to rest and not study much, especially during the menstrual period.

This novel has clearly shown gender injustice that often occurs in everyday life. Social class also plays an important role in the occurrence of gender inequality. Rights as a woman are still a threat that endangers men. Men are afraid of losing their role if the rights of all women are fulfilled, even though this assumption is just an empty assumption that has no basis whatsoever. Women whose rights are not fulfilled will have hatred towards men who threaten their rights. As for one of the quotes in this novel that shows gender injustice in terms of marriage that makes pure

marriage turn into something that deserves to be considered.

“My uncle, Sheikh Mahmoud, is a virtuous man. He has a big pension and no children, and he’s been on his his own since his wife died last year. If he marries firdaus will have a good life with him, and he can find in her an obedient wife, whowill serve him and relieve his loneliness. Firdaus has grown, your holiness, and must be married. It is risky for her to continue without a husband. She is a good girl but the world is full of bastards.” (Nawal El Saadawi 2021, p. 33).

The text above shows differences in economic class, he said if the main character he will get a more decent life through marriage. Women are often connected by marriage in order to get a decent life with a respectable and respected husband. Such marriages are still often encountered today. That alone has made the sacred intention of marriage a contest of good fortune.

2) Oppression or Cruelty

According to Hendri Morgan, the oppression of women has been carried out since the days of hunting and gathering, more precisely in the phase of barbarism. Atthat time men were the ones who worked the most and controlled various means ofproduction such as land. while women are only seen as reproductive machines and take care of the household or the domestic sphere. in public spaces, women tend to be more guarded. Freud's theory about female jealousy of the penis (penis envy) has also drawn some criticism. This theory states that the oppression of women is biologically innate or from birth, where men have penises and women have vaginas. The penis is considered a more important organ than the vagina. According to this theory, the penis is considered a means of controlling sexuality, just as a man can control a woman's body. The result of this thinking is the birth of a culture of female circumcision which in the end causes women to only become "servants" who have no right to the authority of their bodies.

3) Violence

In this novel, there is an interesting incident of violence. When Firdaus' husband hits him with a shoe until his body is swollen and bruised. Firdaus could not stand his husband's treatment and he chose to run away from home and return to his uncle's house, Firdaus' hope of getting help but his uncle only pushed her back. Hisuncle asked Firdaus to return to her husband's house and his uncle's wife also persuaded Firdaus to return to her husband's house.

“on one occasion he hit me all over with his shoe. My face and body became swollen and bruised. So I left the house and went to my uncle. But my uncle toldme that all husbands beat their wives, and my uncle’s wife added that her husband often beat her. I said my uncle was a respected sheikh, well versed in the teachingsof religion, and he, therefore could not possibly be in the habit of beating his wife. She replied that it was precisely men well versed in their religion who beat their wives. The precepts of religion permitted such punishment. A virtuous woman was not supposed to complain about her husband. Her duty was perfect obedience.” (Nawal El Saadawi 2021, p. 39).

The sentence "her duty is perfect obedience" which in my opinion is very disrespectful to women, I can even say it does not humanize and glorify women. In religion it really glorifies women and even has to look after and love women especially mothers and wives. If a husband believes that a wife must obey even though she has been harassed and beaten, women will be afraid in a marriage relationship and also women who are victims of violence will be more afraid to talk about what they have experienced. In everyday life in Indonesia, culture like this is still often encountered. society thinks that if a husband beats his wife to the extent that it means that his wife madea mistake or that his wife is not fulfilling her role as a wife. because of that many victims of violence do not move when they experience it. Every day in newspapers, TV news and

even on the internet we can read cases of violence. This is because husbands are less aware of the rights of a wife and woman.

4) Burden or Role of Women

The assessment made by society about women is still the same, Women are not far from dealing with the household and have the right to obey their husband's requests. Women have a double burden where they become wives, who will work to keep the house clean or all things related to the house. on the other hand women also have to help productivity in social society. women need to work hard to meet their own needs.

"I went to school every day. Once back I swept the house and washed the floor, the dishes and the clothes." (Nawal El Saadawi 2021, p. 39).

Until now there are still many men who think that cleaning the house, cooking and washing is the responsibility of women even though apart from gender both women and men, both can do the job. these jobs do not require a specific gender to complete.

DISCUSSION

Novel is one of the literary works as a form communication between nations which reveal a lot of social phenomena that occur in society, especially in terms of communicating for equate perceptions and opinions. Nawal El Saadawi is driven to push herself in order to finish the book *Woman at Zero Point*. As feminist writers, Nawal El Saadawi frequently emphasizes the bravery and understanding needed to oppose male domination, including the family and society Public. Women must have the courage to stand up and prove themselves able to stand alone without the power of men. Women become weak because they always feel that they can't do anything without help man. The character of Firdaus in the novel *Women at Zero Point* shows courage in conveying that her profession as a prostitute is for the will that can make him get up and ke Firdaus has realized that his profession has been created by men. Men force women to sell their bodies at a certain price, and the wife's body determines who gets paid the least. The women in the book are all prostitutes in some way because Firdaus, a wise lady, would rather be alone and free than an imprisoned bride. Nawal El Saadawi asserts that Firdaus' bravery was helpful in the struggle against oppression, injustice, physical assault, and sexual harassment.

Everyone was greatly impressed by the person's resolve, fortitude, and awareness to effect change. Additionally, it is done to push for women's rights in society and the family so that things can improve from the past. Through the Firdaus figure described in the novel *Women at the Point Zero*, Nawal El Saadawi wants to convey the message that women have the following rights:

1. Reproductive rights, women have human rights in terms of choosing partner and is responsible for the amount, distance and time in having offspring without coercion and obtaining health information.
2. The right to freedom of thought without limiting each individual.
3. Rights are protected, women have the right to be free from all forms of discrimination including sexual life and reproduction.
4. The right to be free from violence, women have the right to protection from exploitation, sexual abuse, torture, and abuse sexual.

CONCLUSION

This novel outlines the role of women in society and explains the existence of women to

this day. The injustice experienced by Firdaus is one of many other cases of justice experienced by women. In the novel we can find a lot of injustice that happens to women, domestic violence, injustice in obtaining education and employment. There is the women's special field of work created by men, as said by Firdaus in the novel, namely prostitutes. On the other hand, Saadawi, through her literary work, wants to convey and comment on several policies that are considered not to respect women's rights.

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