FIRDAUS’ PERSONALITY CHANGE AS A REACTION TO EGYPTIAN SOCIETY AS PORTRAYED IN NAWAL EL SAADAWI’S WOMAN AT POINT ZERO

A SARJANA PENDIDIKAN THESIS

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Faculty of Teachers Training and Education
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Rohandi, Ph.D.
I dedicate this thesis to:

My beloved family,

All of my friends,

and those who are struggling to fight for their right

If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or things.

Albert Einstein
STATEMENT OF WORK'S ORIGINALITY

I honestly declare that this thesis, which I have written, does not contain the work or parts of the work of other people, except those cited in the quotations and the references, as a scientific paper should.

Yogyakarta, August 24, 2012

The Writer

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IMANDA MIKE YODANA
ABSTRACT


This study analyzes the work of Nawal El Saadawi *Woman at Point Zero*. The novel tells the story of Firdaus, an Egyptian woman who lives under the pressure of the rule in her society that places women below men's position. She experiences to be oppressed, abused, and raped by the men around her. She then survives by becoming a prostitute as a means to gain freedom and power.

The goal of the study is to find out how Firdaus' personality changes as a reaction to Egyptian society portrayed in the novel *Woman at Point Zero*. There are two questions formulated as the focus of the study. The first one is how is Firdaus’ personality in the novel described and the second one is how does Firdaus’ personality change as a reaction to Egyptian society and culture portrayed in the novel?

The study applies library study as the method of the study. The primary source in this study is the novel written by Nawal El Saadawi entitled *Woman at Point Zero*. Meanwhile, the secondary sources are the books and articles that contain the theories needed to support the study. Those are theory of character and characterization, theory of psychological approach, theory of personality and personality change, and theory of society. Furthermore, the study applies psychological approach as the approach of the study because the study deals with one’s personality change.

There are two findings can be attained from the analysis. The first finding describes Firdaus’ personality in her early ages. At the beginning of the story Firdaus is described as having submissive, hard-working, smart, dependent, unconfident, and fearful personality. The second finding reveals Firdaus’ personality change as a reaction to her society. Firdaus survives toward oppression from her society by changing her personality to be resistant, brave, autonomous, confident, and determined person. She refuses to follow her cultural rule that obligates every woman to be obedient to men. By being resistant, brave, autonomous, confident, and determined she is able to fight for her right of freedom.

Key words: *Egypt society, personality change, feminism*
ABSTRAK


Sekripsi ini menganalisa sebuah novel karangan Nawal El Saadawi yang berjudul *Woman at Point Zero*. Novel ini menceritakan kehidupan Firdaus, seorang perempuan Mesir yang hidup dibawah tekan dari lingkungannya yang menempatkan perempuan lebih rendah dari laki-laki. Firdaus telah mengalami hidup dibawah tekanan, disiksa, dan dipaksa melayani laki-laki. Dia tidak punya keberanian dan hak untuk memilih kehidupan yang dia inginkan, sampai pada akhirnya dia memilih untuk menjadi seorang pekerja sex agar terbebas dari perlakuan tidak adil terhadap dirinya.

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui perubahan karakter Firdaus sebagai bentuk reaksi terhadap kondisi masyarakat yang tergambar dalam novel *Woman at Point Zero*. Terdapat dua pertanyaan yang digunakan sebagai dasar analisis dalam penelitian ini. Yang pertama adalah bagaimana karakter Firdaus pada awal cerita digambarkan. Dan yang kedua adalah bagaimana perubahan kartakter yang dialami Firdaus sebagai bentuk reaksi terhadap lingkungan masyarakat dan budayanya.

Dalam pelaksanaanya penelitian ini menerapkan metode studi pustaka. Sumber pustaka utama yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah Novel yang berjudul *Woman at Point Zero*, sedangkan sumber pustaka penunjang yang digunakan merupakan buku-buku and artikel yang memuat teori-teori yang diperlukan, diantaranya teori tentang karakterisasi, teori pendekatan psikologi, teori tentang karakter dan perubahan karater, dan teori tentang lingkungan sosial.

Didapat dua hasil penelitian dari analisa yang dilakukan. Hasil yang pertama menerangkan karakter Firdaus di usia mudanya. Di awal cerita Firdaus digambarkan memiliki watak penurut, cerdas, pekerja keras, menggantungkan diri pada orang lain, tidak percaya diri, dan penakut. Hasil yang kedua menyatakan perubahan karakter yang dialami Firdaus sebagai bentuk reaksi terhadap situasi sosial masyarakatnya. Setelah mengalami hidup dibawah tekanan, pelecehan, dan tindakan tidak adil dari masyarakatnya Firdaus bereaksi dengan menjadi orang dengan karakter yang pemberontak, berani, mandiri, percaya diri, dan berpendirian teguh. Firdaus menolak untuk mengikuti peraturan dalam budayanya yang mengharuskan seorang wanita untuk mentaati segala keinginan laki-laki.

*Kata kunci : Mesir, perubahan karakter, feminisme*
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL PAGES</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION PAGE</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATEMENT OF WORK’S ORIGINALITY</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERNYATAAN Persetujuan PUBLIKASI</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Background of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Problem Formulation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Objectives of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Benefits of the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Definition of Terms</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Review of Related Studies</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Review of Related Theories</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Psychological Approach</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Theory of Character in the Novel</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Theory of Characterization</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Theory of Psychology ............................................................ 15
5. Society and Culture ............................................................... 23
C. Theoretical Framework .......................................................... 24

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY
A. Object of the Study ............................................................... 26
B. Approach of the Study ............................................................ 28
C. Method of the Study ............................................................... 29

CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS
A. Firdaus’ Prior Personality ....................................................... 31
   1. Submissive ................................................................. 33
   2. Hard-working .............................................................. 37
   3. Smart ................................................................. 40
   4. Unconfident ............................................................... 42
   5. Fearful ................................................................. 44
   6. Dependent ............................................................... 46
B. Firdaus’ Personality Change as a Reaction to
   Egyptian Society Portrayed in Woman at Point Zero ............... 49
   1. Resistant ............................................................... 51
   2. Brave ................................................................. 55
   3. Autonomous .......................................................... 60
   4. Confident .............................................................. 64
   5. Determined ............................................................ 66
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion .................................................................................... 69

B. Suggestions .................................................................................. 72
   1. Suggestions for Further Researchers ........................................ 72
   2. Suggestions for Teaching Implementation ............................... 73

REFERENCES ......................................................................................... 76

APPENDICES ........................................................................................ 78

Appendix 1 Lesson Plan for Teaching Basic Reading II .................... 79
Appendix 3 Teaching Material ............................................................. 83
Appendix 4 Summary of Woman at Point Zero ................................. 87
Appendix 5 Biography of Nawal El Saadawi .................................... 89
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into five parts. The first part is the background of the study. This part explains the topic of the discussion and the reason of choosing the novel to be analyzed. The second part is the problem formulation which consists of two research questions as the basis of analyzing the novel. The third part is the objectives of the study. This part mentions the purpose of conducting the study. The fourth part is the benefits of the study. It explains the significance of the study for both the reader and the writer. The last part is the definition of terms. It discusses the definition of important terms in the title to avoid misunderstanding.

A. Background of the Study

Literary works, such as prose, poetry, and drama, are the source of pleasure and education. They offer entertainment to the readers through various kinds of stories. The readers will be able to respond to the feeling and emotion within the stories. They can experience different kinds of life which are presented in literary works. Moreover, reading literary works may also make people laugh, curious, wonder, and sometimes feel sad. Such of that feeling will arise when people really go deeply in to the work of literature. Furthermore, literary works are also the source of education. Most of them present sort of teaching through story. The readers will be able to learn from the moral values and knowledge which are presented within them. Besides that, for those who are learning
language, reading and studying literary works will help them develop their language proficiency.

Reading literary works can be both educating and entertaining. As Moody (1971) states:

Literature presents the readers with a wide range of situations and predicaments, which seem to stimulate some kind of emotional response; and also that, on the whole, the writers of literature present those situations in ways which enable the reader to explore and develop their feelings in an appropriate human way (p. 71).

Reading literary works enables readers to recognize different characteristic of people as well as experience the different situations that someone may not experiences in real life. Readers are able to see various ways of thinking of the characters in the work of literature. Moreover, they can also respond to many kinds of problems experienced by the characters in the literary works. In other word, enjoying literary works helps people exploring their feeling and interpretation, which will both entertain and educate them.

Novel is one of literary works that mostly tells the story of human experience in life. It reflects human life and contains many aspects of human life, such as friendship, marriage, betrayal, poverty, authority, and loyalty. Eastment (1965) states that

The novel according to the tradition reading discipline is a fictions account of human life, told in prose or larger scale, as so constructed as to give the reader emotional and intellectual pleasure of a designed quality. The reader’s pleasure can attain neither, its potential intensity, nor its potential harmony until he sees the wholeness raises primarily from the plot which sets forth a single and complete change in the life of a central character of a group of characters. The companion art of characterization has to do with portraying fictional people whose personalities will vivify the plot and engage the reader (p. 5).
Therefore, according to Eastment (1965), a novel is a work of literature in the form of prose, which tells the story of human experience. Engaging in the story in a novel will give the readers intellectual and emotional pleasure.

Van de Laar (1969) states that a novel is a work of art in so far it introduces us into a living world; in some respects resembling the world we live in, but with an individuality of its own” (p.163). By reading novels we will see how the world is. The setting presented in a novel shows us the culture and the society where the characters in the novel live. Novels with different setting will present different culture and society. A novel written by an Egypt author Nawal El Saadawi entitled Woman at Point Zero portrays Egypt society as the setting. Therefore, the readers are able to see the society and culture of Egypt in the novel.

Henkle (1977) elaborates that a novel can portray society, character of people, norms, religions, or even science. It brings the picture of the world into writings. Since a novel always presents society and culture in the setting and plot of the story, readers will be able to obtain knowledge on how people live in different society and cultural situation.

One of famous novels that portrays the society and culture of Egypt is a novel written by Nawal El Saadawi, Woman at Point Zero. The novel tells the story of Firdaus, an Egypt woman who experiences a very dramatic life. It is written based on Firdaus’s true-life story. She faces a sad life because of poverty and harassment she experiences in her life. This novel is a dramatic symbol of female revolt against the norms of Arab worlds. Firdaus, the main character of this novel always becomes a victim of cruel treatments from men. After all the
bad treatments she gets from men in her society, she finally transforms to be a smart, brave, and confident lady who was able to conquer the concept in her society which put women in the second position under men. She brings that ambition in to reality by becoming a successful prostitute who stands above men and kills a pimp. At last she gets a death sentence from the judge.

*Woman at Point Zero* was firstly published in Beirut in 1973. This novel is regarded as famous novel and has been translated to more than twenty languages. Nawal El Saadawi, the author of the novel is a great author who bears many good novels. Most of her novels tell the story of women in Middle East. She delivers her sympathy and critics about the oppression experienced by most women in Middle East trough her novels.

In *Woman at Point Zero*, Firdaus refuses to follow the rule in her society in which woman must always be obedient to man. She portrays the picture of brave and powerful woman who has strong principles to fight against woman exploitation in her society. After her long acquaintance with the unpleasant way of her society in treating woman, she finally decides her own way of life. Differ from other woman Firdaus does not want to live under oppression of men.

Firdaus character’s is he symbol of woman’s aggression toward man’s domination in the society. She chooses not to give up her life as a submissive woman as what the woman in Egypt society should be. However, she chooses to revolt against woman inferiority in her society. Nawal El Saadawi is trying to deliver her criticism toward Egypt society in Firdaus’ character that is portrayed to be independant and brave in her own way.
The writer chooses Nawal El Saadawi’s novel *Woman at Point Zero* as the object of the study because she finds that the novel is very inspiring. It challenges the writer to see a different sort of woman life. Moreover, *Woman at Point Zero* presents a teaching on how a woman is able to survive and uphold her honor, as well as her pride, in the society which put her under oppression. It shows a woman’s courage to live as an uncommon woman who is brave, confident, autonomous, determined, and resistant.

After reading the novel, the writer decides to discuss Firdaus’ personality change in the novel as the basic issues to be analyzed. Besides the issue about feminism, the matter about Firdaus personality change is interested to be analyzed. Moreover, the whole story in the novel shows the evolution of the main character to discover the truth of who she is and what she desires in life. Every passage in Firdaus life has transformed her to have different perspective of life over time. She grows her personality to be a kind of woman she desires. Nawal El Saadawi indicates Firdaus changes through the symbol of birth which is consistently mentioned in the story. Firdaus said, “I was being born a second time” (p.20). Firdaus also realizes the changes she attained in her life. She mentioned, “I became another woman” (p.73). The writer thinks that Firdaus’ personality change will be best discussed as the main discussion in this thesis.

Furthermore, the discussion of this thesis focuses on analyzing Firdaus’ personality change as her reaction against Egyptian society and culture portrayed in the novel. The writer was interested to analyze the society and culture as well as the characterization because they are closely related. Society and culture
situation play significance role in someone’s personality change. It affects on how someone thinks and behaves.

B. Problem Formulation

Based on the background of the study, the writer formulates two research questions to be analyzed. Those questions are presented as follow:

1. How is Firdaus’ personality in the novel described?

2. How does Firdaus’ personality change as a reaction to Egyptian society as portrayed in the novel?

C. Objectives of the Study

This study is aimed to see how one’s personality alters as the form of a rejection toward the system in Egypt society and culture portrayed in the novel, as seen in Firdaus, the main character of Nawal El Saadawi’s Woman at Point Zero. The study firstly describes Firdaus’ former character and then reveals Firdaus’ changed personality after her acquaintance with her society and culture, and eventually the discussion is ended by revealing the influence of society and culture as the party that responsible to Firdaus’ personality change.

D. Benefits of the Study

In analyzing Nawal El Sadawi’s work Woman at Point Zero, the writer wants to attain some advantages. Firstly, this thesis is hopefully useful for the reader to understand more about Nawal El Sadawi’s novel Woman at Point Zero. The reader of this thesis can also be informed about the socio cultural situation in
Egypt and how it influences Egyptians life especially woman’s life as portrayed in
the novel. Furthermore, by reading this thesis the reader will understand how
someone’s personality changes as the revolt against society and culture.
Moreover, the writer hopes that in the future, the readers can make some addition
or correction in order to get better interpretation.

E. Definition of Terms

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

1. Personality

Allport’s as cited by Hurlock (1974) states “Personality is the dynamic
organization within the individual of those psycho-physical systems that
determine his characteristic behavior and thought” (p.7). In this study, personality
means Firdaus qualities in the way of thinking and behaving.

2. Personality Change

The term “change” according to Hurlock (1974) means “to alter” or to
“vary”; it does not necessarily means that the alteration or variation will be
complete. The personality can change in some areas and remain persistent in
others.” She adds that the change is can be for the better and the worse (p.108).
In this study the writer focuses on Firdaus’ personality change as her reaction to
the portrayed society and culture.
3. Society

According to Langland (1984) asserts “the word ‘society’ when used by novelist sometimes refers merely to the high of fashionable class, and also the custom, convention, beliefs, and values, their institution -legal, religious, and cultural” (p.9). Meanwhile, Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language defines society as an organized group of persons, associated together for religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic, or other purpose (p.1351). The term society used in this thesis refers to the society portrayed in the novel Woman at Point Zero.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section is review of related study. It discusses the former study about the novel Woman at Point Zero. The second section is the Review of related theory. It presents the theories which are used in analyzing the novel. The third section is the theoretical framework which explains how the reviewed theories are applied in the study.

A. Review of Related Study

There are three previous studies conducted on the novel Woman at Point Zero. The first study was done by Ong Yoelia in 2004. She studied about Feminism in the novel. Her study was intended to reveal the Egyptian society’s point of view toward woman in the nineteenth century and the feminism which appears in Firdaus’ character. Yoelia’s study concluded that Firdaus, was a brave woman who was very different to other women at that time. She dared to fight for her independence and freedom. She had been succeeded to break the old assumption of patriarchy system.

The second study was a study about Firdaus’ motivation in becoming a prostitute. It was done in 2004 by Rigen Pratitisari. Her study aimed to see the life of a prostitute woman in Egyptian society, which was dominated by man. In her study, she found out that Firdaus’ society paid a big influence in shaping her motivation to be a prostitute. According Pratitisari, prostitution is an expression of freedom in the society where man oppresses woman.
The third study was done by Dewi Maharani Purba in 2006. She studied Firdaus’ motivation in accepting death sentence. She states that Firdaus is a brave-innocent-thought-determinant woman who denies the oppression toward woman. She concluded her study by mentioning that Firdaus was motivated to accept death sentence because she wanted to show a protest against unfair treatments toward woman. Besides that, she felt that she was not accepted by her society.

The Forth study was a comparative study conducted by Risa Pareka in 2008. She compared the work of Paulo Coelho's *Eleven Minutes* and Nawal El Saadawi’s *Woman at Point Zero*. She compared the motivation of the main character in both novels, Maria and Firdaus in becoming a prostitute. According to Riesa, Firdaus was motivated to become a prostitute because she attempted to fulfill the psychological needs, belonging needs, secure needs, and esteem needs. Prostitution is a profession that can make Firdaus secure from man.

While in this study entitled *Firdaus’ Personality Change as a Reaction to Egyptian Society as Portrayed in Nawal El Saadawi’s Woman at Point Zero*, the writer analyzes the novel *Woman at Point Zero* in the point of view of the alteration of Firdaus’ personality as a form of rejection against Egyptian society which are presented in the novel. The writer focuses on Firdaus’ personality which alters along the influences of her society.
B. Review of Related Theories

This part contains the explanation about psychological approach, theory of character and characterization, theory of psychology, and theory of society and culture. Theory of character explains the definition of character and types of characters. Furthermore, theory of characterization gives explanation about the definition of characterization and the way of characterization. Theory of psychology explains personality change. And the last, theory of society and culture explains the definition of society and culture and their relation toward personality change.

1. Psychological Approach

To analyze a novel, at least an approach must be applied to avoid subjectivity in the study. The approach that is used to analyze a novel is called critical approach. This study applies psychological approach in its analysis. It is because personality change is the part of psychological study.

Willbern (1989) as cited by Atkins in Contemporary Literary Theory explains that psychological approach or psychoanalysis was proposed by Freud as a theory of human development. It deals with human origins of psyche, family, society, and culture (pp. 158-159). The approach can be used to identify the pattern of human personality and behavior. Through this approach, the character’s thought, personality and behavior can be analyzed.

This study uses Psychological approach in analyzing the novel. This approach is considered appropriate to be applied because it provides the essential theory to identify Firdaus’ character and personality as well as her personality
change. Moreover, the approach enables the writer to explore Firdaus’ thought and behavior that promote the discussion of personality change.

2. Theory of Character in the Novel

a. Definition

Character in a novel is sometimes defined as the figure or person in the story. Barnet (1988) states that, character has two meanings. They are a figure in a literary works and personality that is attributed to the mental and moral qualities of a figure (p.77). Therefore, character can be said as the figure itself or the figure’s character such as personality, traits, and characteristics.

In addition, Holman and Hormon (1986) note that character is a complicated term that includes the idea of the moral condition of the human personality, the presence of moral virtue, and the simpler concept of human presentation as the creature in art (p. 81). Moreover, Holman and Harmon (1986) argue that characters can be divided in to protagonist and antagonist based on their role played in the story. Protagonist character is always opposed by the antagonist character (p.27). However, the protagonist character is a leading figure in the importance of the play who attract more interest and sympathy from the reader. Moreover, Abrams (1993) conveys that characters are the persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work whom the readers can interpret their qualities through their dialogue and action (p.23).
b. Types of Character

Foster (1974) divides character into two categories. They are; flat and round characters. Flat character is static and does not develop, while round character is complex and represents many traits and qualities. Round character is not easy to identify since its character is dynamic and always changes.

In addition, Holman and Harmon (1986) propose another theory of character. They divide character into static and dynamic. Static character is the one who changes a little or does not change at all. The character remains still from the beginning until the end of the story. Dynamic character is the one who changes very often. The experiences and actions that are faced by the character encourage him and her to change.

Furthermore, based on the prominent and function, Henkle (1977) divides character into major and secondary character. Major character is the one who get the attention from the readers and other characters. Meanwhile, the secondary character is the one who perform limited functions (p. 87).

3. Theory of Characterization

In analyzing a character, theory of characterization is needed. The theory helps to discover the characteristics of the characters presented in the story. It also gives a guidance for the writer to define the personality of the main character by paying attention on his or her behavior, speech, and thought.
a. Definition

Rohrberger and Woods (1971) define characterization as the process by which an author creates the character to be a certain type of people (p. 180). Moreover, Holman and Harmon (1986) believe that characterization is the process of creating an unreal person in a story. Although the characters are unreal, they appear to be real in the readers’ mind (pp. 81-82).

Characterization helps the author to communicate and guide the readers to interpret and understand more about the character in the story. Murphy (1972) states that characterization is the way the author conveys the characters and personalities naturally so that the readers understand the character well (p. 161).

b. Methods of Characterization

Rohrberger and Woods (1971) propose two ways of characterization. Those are the direct means and the dramatic means. The direct means are the description of the character’s physical appearance, while the dramatic means are the description of the character from the way he or she behaves and speaks (p.20).

Furthermore, Murphy (1972) explains the ways the author uses to create a character. According to him, there are nine ways to determine the characteristic of a character (pp.165-173). The first way is personal description in which character can be seen from the way the author describe the character’s appearance, such as the body, face, hair, completions and so on. Besides, character can be seen also from the description of the character’s style, including clothes.
Furthermore, the second step to the forth step are as follow. The second is characters as seen by other. In this way, the author shows the character’s characteristics through other characters’ opinion. The third is Speech. It can be in the form of dialogue or monolog. The utterances and speech conveyed by the character in the novel show the character’s ideas about something. The forth is Past life. Through a character’s past experiences, the readers are given some clues that may shape a character’s characteristics.

The fifth is conversation of other. Character may also be presented through conversation of others and what other characters say about certain character. It means the readers can analyze the character through what others think of him or her.

The sixth is reaction. Here, the reader can analyze the character by seeing how he or she react to various situation and events he or she faced. The next is direct comment. In this way the author may directly show a person’s character by giving direct comment or description about the character that he creates. Number eight is Thoughts. The author may describe the character through what a character is thinking about certain things or cases. And the last is mannerism. The reader can see the character from the character’s habit, or models of behavior illustrated in the novel.

4. **Theory of Psychology**

Character and personality are things that are not separated, since someone’s personality will shape his or her character. Someone’s character and personality belong to the object of psychological study. Therefore, theory of
psychology can be used in analyzing the problems in this thesis. The following part consists of theory of personality and personality change.

a. **Personality and Character**

Hurlock (1974) asserts that the word personality comes from Latin word persona which means “mask” (p.6). In addition, Alport as quoted in Hurlock (1974), gives the definition of personality as “The dynamic organization within the individual of those psycho-physical system that determine his characteristic behavior and thought” (p.7). Hurlock (1974) adds that character relates to behavior that is regulated by personal effort and will when used in connection with personality (p.8).

According to Hurlock (1974), in *Personality Development*, human life consists of two aspects: individual and social aspects. The individual aspect concerns with physical changes and individual’s personality development. Individual’s personality development is usually influenced by two factors, which are individual’s early experience within her family and the important events that happened outside home or the social aspect (pp. 19-20). Furthermore, Hurlock (1974) explains that personality is determined by physical, intellectual, emotional, social, sex, educational, and family.

Physical determinant is related to how the physical look influences on personality. It influences the personality directly and indirectly. Directly, the body influences personality by determining what people can and cannot do. Whereas, indirectly, a person adjustment to live is influenced by the way he perceives his body in relation to the bodies of others, his ideal, as well as culturally standards,
and by the evaluation of his physical abilities and disabilities by others (Hurlock, 1974: 143)

Intellectual determinant related to the person’s ability to meet and solve the problem. How he uses his intellectual will determine how successful his adjustment will be (Hurlock, 1974: 173). Meanwhile, emotional determinants relate emotion to the direct and indirect effect of emotion to the personality shaping. The direct effect comes from physical and mental disturbance, while the indirect effect comes from the reaction of members of social group toward the person (Hurlock, 1974: 201).

Social determinants are the factors that come from the social group in which a person belong to. The social group expects every person who belongs or wants to belong to the group to confront to its standards (Hurlock, 1974: 232).

Another factor that determines a person’s personality is sex determinants. According to Hurlock (1974) Sexuality has effects on personality directly and indirectly. The direct effect effects come from the sex hormones that influence the growth rate of the individual, the body formation and functioning, and the quality of behavior. The indirect effect is the large measure responsible for the personality differences between the sexes (pp.292-293).

Educational factor according to Hurlock (1974) also determines a person’s personality. It is because school provides the person’s first real opportunity to appraise himself and his abilities realistically, free from parental help or bias (p.322).
The other important determinant of a person’s personality is family determinants since the relationship between the individual and the members of his family unquestionably rank first (Hurlock, 1974:149). She also adds that family gives influences on personality development directly by molding and communication. Parents transmit attitudes and values by telling their children how they should feel and behave in different situations. Besides, family indirectly influences personality by identification.

b. Theories of Personality Change

Hurlock (1974) in her book *Personality Development* stated that an individual’s personality pattern is the product of learning during the course of social relationship with people both within and outside his home. Furthermore, she describes that there are three major factors, which determine the development of one personality pattern. The first is the individual’s heredity endowment, the second is the early experiences within one’s family, and the third is important events outside one’s home environment. Thus one’s personality pattern is not the product of learning exclusively or hereditary exclusively. However, it comes from an interaction of the two, in other word, behavior learned in childhood may later be changed by direct training or altering one’s environment (p. 19).

According to Allport (1970), as cited in Hurlock’s *Personality Development* (1974), personality development is a stage in growth of constantly changing and involving process within an individual. The process becomes more complex, in the patterning of one’s self-concept, habits, attitudes, emotion states, sentiments, and motives. Further, Allport says that the personality development
will determine his or her uniqueness in speech, in reaction to people and things, in mannerism, in fantasy and in other ways directed toward the specific goal to adjust his or her environment (p. 165).

Furthermore, according to Allport, (1970) in his book *Pattern and Growth in Personality*, from all determinants that possible to determine a person’s personality, environments seem to take the biggest contribution. Environments give more complex contributions to one’s personality. Allport acquired the situation and the role as determinant factors to determine a person personality. Each factor has its own contribution in forming one’s personality.

Hurlock (1974) classifies changes in the personality pattern into three major categories. First, some changes are for better and some are for the worse. Second, some are quantitative and some are qualitative. Then, some occur slowly and some rapidly. The changes of personality pattern are:

1) Better versus worse

Personality changes for the better and for the worse reflect the kind of life adjustment in the individuals that are made at the time. In normal people, personality changes for the worse frequently occur at the puberty and at the middle age. When found especially for the worse, these changes should be recognized as danger signals.

2) Quantitative versus qualitative

In qualitative changes, traits that already present are reinforced, strengthened, or weakened. A person who is shy, self-conscious, and self-effacing situations may be less so in the presence of intimate friends than the presence of
strangers or those whom he regards as his superiors, but his behavior is consistent. Quantitative changes may produce the impression that the person has changed his/her personality patterns.

3) Slow versus rapid changes

Changes are regarded as slow if they are barely perceptible, while rapid changes are readily apparent to all. Normally, personality changes are slow and gradual. Rapid changes at any age are danger signals. Changes of short duration are usually due to some artificial stimulation, which temporarily causes the person to forget his real-concept and see himself, as he would like to be.

Furthermore, Hurlock (1972) explains that changes in personality do not occur of their own accord. Usually they are the result of multiple revisions in the thoughts and feelings related to the person’s concept of self (p.124). According to Hurlock, there are some conditions responsible for the personality change. Those conditions are:

1) Physical change

Physical changes may come from maturation and decline or from illness, organic and gradual disturbances, injuries, or some other condition resulting from the person’s life pattern but unrelated to the normal change in the body structure.

2) Change in environment

Either change in the physical or the social environment may produce change in the person’s self-concept and, in turn, in his characteristic behavior.
Change in environment does not guarantee an improvement in personality. It very often has the opposite effect. To have favorable effect on the personality pattern, changes in environment must do four things. First, they must improve the status of the person and, by doing so enable them to feel more secure and adequate. Second, the changes must enable the person to be more equilibrium with his environment in the sense that the environment meets his needs at that time. Third, the change must enable him to come closer to his ideal. Fourth, broader social experience with people in different values and ideas must help the person see himself more realistically and revise his goal and aspirations in keeping with his abilities.

3) Change in significant people

When the significant people in an individual’s life change, and when he tries to adapt his pattern of behavior and his attitudes, beliefs, values, and aspiration to theirs, change in his personality pattern are inevitable.

4) Change in social pressures

Everyone normally has a strong desire to be accepted by those who are significant to him, he tries to change any personality trait that will militate against his being accepted. Strong social pressures to conform to a socially approved personality pattern thus encourage changes in certain aspects of personality.

Thomson as cited by Hurlock in Personality Development emphasizes,

Only rarely, does there occur a maverick, one whose life experience somehow made him a rebel, rather than a conformist. But even when his degree of deviation is not permitted to be unlimited. Beyond a certain point, society forbids his deviation, and few can survive that degree of disapproval (p.126).
Therefore, some people change their personality trait to the socially approved personality. However, there are also some people who resist to change their personality against their social personality pattern.

5) Change in role

Role changes result in status changes within the group. If role change in more favorable status, there will be change for the better in the person’s self-concept. How well the role fits the person’s needs will influence the effect whether the new role is favorable or unfavorable for the person.

6) Strong motivation

When the motivation to improve the personality pattern is strong enough, changes can be effected. Ordinary people are most strongly motivated to change which they believe will improve their social relationships and earn greater social acceptance. People who are categorized as “popular” have less motivation to try to change his personality than those “unpopular” people.

7) Change in self concept

Since the self-concept is the core of the personality pattern and, as such, determines the kind of adjustment the person will make, a change in the self-concept will bring about a change in the entire personality pattern. Moreover, Hurlock explains that changing one’s self-concept requires tremendous self-insight. This means that a person must be able and willing to see himself as he actually is, not as he would like to be as others perceive him.
5. Society and Culture

People cannot be separated from their society and culture. Lonner and Malpas (1994) mention that an individual is shaped by both nature that is related to biological transition and culture. Thus, culture is one of the components that influence someone’s personality.

Moreover, Heine (2008) explains that Culture is the source of norms which regulates people’s way of thinking and behavior. Therefore, it stands as the standard of behaving in the society. People will behave in accordance with it. However, Firdaus in Woman at Point Zero has different way of thinking toward the idea proposed by her society and culture. She behaves in different way. She develops as a distinctive woman compared to the other women in her society.

As mentioned before, society and culture are factors which influence a person’s character development. Martin and Stendler (1953) state “Every child grows in a particular society. Thus, child will learn emotions, beliefs, values, and goals of his or her society. He or she then will share interests, a way of life, territory with which he or she lives” (p.149). Further, they state that society provides framework within which we develop as human being.

Society requires the subordinator of the interest of individual to those of entire group in certain specified area. Each individual must accept certain restraints which society imposes upon its member. Society transmits cultural patterns to its group members. Those include the standards of behavior without which it would be impossible for any society either to function or to survive.
Martin and Stendler (1953) believe that society has certain cultural life. Culture represents the ways of thinking and behaving in a society. Culture refers to the total way of life of people which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (p. 154)

Further, Langland (1984) stresses that society in the novel does not depend on points of absolute fidelity to an outside world in details of costume, setting, and locality because a novel’s society does not aim at faithful mirror of any concrete existent thing. (p.5). Therefore, society depict in the novel does not always represent the real society happened in the certain place.

C. Theoretical Framework

There are some theories that are applied in this study to be able to answer the questions formulated in the problem formulation. The first one is the theory of critical approach which contains five theories. However, this study is focused only on the psychological approach. Through this approach, the writer is able to analyze the character’s thought, personality and behavior in order to identify Firdaus’ personality and the change.

The second is theory of character and characterization. By understanding the theory of character and characterization the writer attains better understanding of the character’s personality, way of thinking, and her change in the story. The theory of character is used to analyze the role of the main character in the novel. Moreover, the theory of characterization is used to analyze the characteristic of Firdaus in the novel.
Furthermore, in this study the writer used the psychological theory proposed by Hurlock which explain about personality and the factors influencing personality change. The theory of personality is used to analyze Firdaus’ personality. The first one, the writers analyzes Firdaus’ personality in her early age, and then the writer analyzes the change of Firdaus’ personality that is seen as the result of her reaction to her society. The writer uses the theory of society and culture as the basic theory of the role of society and culture to one’s personality change.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of three parts. The first part is the object of the study. It explains about the novel and the focus of the analysis. The second part is dealing with the approach used in conducting the study. Moreover, the last part talks about the procedure that is applied in the study.

A. Object of the Study

This study analyzes the work of Nawal El Saadawi Woman at Point Zero as the object of the study. It is a Feminist novel that presents the setting of Egypt society. It was firstly published in Arabic as Emra'a enda noktat el sifr in 1979. Moreover, in 1983 the book was then published in English by Zed Books Ltd. under the translation of Sherif Hetata, Saadawi’s husband.

The novel used in this study is the one published in 2007. It was published by Zed Books Ltd. The book consists of 114 pages. It is divided into three chapters. The book also includes information about the author, the praise for the book, foreword, and author’s preface. The book was written based on the acquaintance of Nawal El Saadawi with a woman prisoner, called Firdaus in Qatar Jail. Further, this novel tells the life story of Firdaus who received a death sentence for murdering a pimp. Nawal El Saadawi tells Firdaus story from her unfortunate childhood to her last day in jail before the death sentence.
There are some characters in Woman at Point Zero. The writer of the novel Nawal el Saadawi contributes herself as the narrator in the novel. She is the woman doctor whom the main character shares her story to. The main character in the novel is Firdaus. She is a prostitute who experiences a very dramatic life and finally receives death sentence for killing a pimp. The other characters are Firdaus’ father, Firdaus’ uncle, Sheikh Mahmud, Bayoumi, Sharifa, Ibrahim, and a pimp. The setting of the novel is in 1970s and the story takes place is in Egypt. The novel portrays Egyptian life and culture and also presents some information about the picture of woman life in Egypt. Moreover, the novel emphasizes a criticism toward woman exploitation happened in Egypt in that era. It is depicted through Firdaus character who dares to revolt the unfair treatment toward woman. The story describes her struggles to achieve her self-determination, as she develops to be brave, autonomous, determined, and confident.

Firdaus is a young Egyptian girl who comes from a poor peasant family. Since her childhood, Firdaus has worked hard to help her parents. However, she does not get enough affection in her family. She never gets the touch of love from her parents. Moreover, living in a patriarchal society makes Firdaus stands lower than man. In her childhood, she experiences clitoridectomy as a part of her cultural rule. This procedure later becomes a traumatic event for her throughout her life. In addition, Firdaus has come in to contact with sexual abuse since she is very young.

After the death of her parents Firdaus moves to Cairo with her uncle. She goes to school until secondary school level. However, school does not bring better
luck for her. After her graduation, she is forced to get married to an old Sheik who treats her dreadfully. She finally escapes from her husband house and meets the next man who firstly offers her help, but finally sells her as a prostitute. Firdaus then meet Sharifa a woman prostitute who introduces her to the real prostitution world. It brings her to the life as a prostitute. In prostitution, Firdaus finds her value and honor. She feels prostitution is the best way to gain a better living in her society. She uses prostitution to take revenge toward every oppression, pain, and unfair treatment she experienced. Her acquaintance with unfair treatment, abuses, and rape has changed her to be a brave-determined woman who is confidence, and autonomous.

It is stated that Woman at Point Zero is a powerful Egyptian novel relaying the life story of a woman awaiting death row in a Cairo prison for murdering a pimp. Her crime is one she confesses to with no shame. Moreover, New York Times Book Review states that” Nawal El Saadawi writes with directness and passion, transforming the systematic brutalization of peasants and of women in to powerful allegory.”

B. Approach of the Study

In order to be able to answer the question in the problem formulation, an approach need to be applied in this study. In this study, the writer uses psychological approach because personality change is closely related to psychological field. By using the psychological approach the writer is able to analyze the characteristic of the main character in Woman at Point Zero, such as her way of thinking, her behavior, and her appearance. Furthermore, through
psychological approach the writer can analyze the change in Firdaus’ personality as her reaction to her society. From that reason the writer applies psychological approach in this study.

Willbern (1989) as cited by Atkins in *Contemporary Literary Theory* explains psychological approach or psychoanalysis that is proposed by Freud as a theory of human development. It deals with human origins of psyche, family, society, and culture. (pp. 158-159). The approach can be used to identify the pattern of human personality and behavior. Through this approach, the character’s thought, personality and behavior can be analyzed. Moreover, this approach enables the writer to relate the change in personality to the society and culture situation where the story takes place. Therefore, Psychological approach is applied in this study to analyze Firdaus thought, personality, and behavior and their relation with the society depicted in the novel.

C. *Method of The Study*

This study is a library research. Therefore, the data in this study was gathered from books, journals, encyclopedias, and articles. The primary source of the data is the novel *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal el Saadawi. Meanwhile, the secondary sources are some books and articles, which support the discussion of this study. Those books present the theories about literature, society and culture, and personality change.

Furthermore, the writer employed some steps in completing this study. The first step is reading the novel. Firstly, for the very beginning the writer read the novel *Woman at Point Zero* without pausing. After reading the novel the
writer determined the topic which was going to be the focus in analyzing the novel. The writer was interested to discuss the change of the main character’s personality as a reaction to Egyptian society portrayed in the novel.

The next step was formulating the questions underlying the study. Based on the topic of the study, the writer formulated two research questions. The first question is how is Firdaus’ personality in the novel described? The second question is how does Firdaus’ personality change as a reaction to Egyptian society as portrayed in the novel?

After formulating the problems, the step was continued to the analysis. In this process, the writer reread the novel to find the data as the evidences in order to be able to answer the questions formulated in the problem formulation. The writer also searched for some supporting theories by reading some literature books as well as psychological books and books about society and culture. Moreover, some articles and journals from the internet also help the writer to give additional information related to the study.

After the analysis, the writer continued to the last step, which was concluding the result of the analysis. Moreover, the writer also provided the teaching materials related to this study in the appendices.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis of the novel by answering the research problems formulated in the problem formulation. The first one is how Firdaus’ personality is described in the novel. The second one is how does Firdaus’ personality change as a reaction of Egyptian society in Nawal El Saadawi’s *Woman at Point Zero*. Therefore, the analysis is divided into two parts. The first part is the discussion of Firdaus’ personality and the second part is the discussion of Firdaus’ personality change as a reaction to Egyptian society as portrayed in the novel.

A. Firdaus’ Former Personality

Firdaus is the major character in *Woman at Point Zero*. According to Henkle (1977) major character is the one who gets the fullest attention from the readers (p.92). Firdaus’ character in the novel is the main focus of the story. She is the one who dominates the story. It can be proved by her existence in every scene of the novel. Moreover, all parts of the novel tell her story of life. The readers pay attention to her life story that she told to Nawal EL Saadawi as the author as well as the narrator of the story.

Foster (1974) explains there are two types of character in the novel. They are flat and round character. Further, Foster (1974) mentions that round character is complex and represents many traits and qualities. Therefore, Firdaus’ character can be categorized into round character. It is because her character contains many...
different traits. Besides that, her character is complex and changes over time. The change of her character becomes the focus of analysis in this chapter.

Furthermore, Firdaus’ character can also be considered as a dynamic character. Based on Holman and Harmon (1986) dynamic character is the one who changes very often. The experiences and actions that are faced by the character encourage him or her to change. Firdaus in Woman at Point Zero is depicted in to a character, that is unique compared to the other women character in the novel. She gets the ambition to be different. She experiences a lot of change in her personality after encountering troubles and obstacles in her life. Firdaus does not remain the same, but she experiences change in personality. Therefore, Firdaus character can be categorized in to dynamic character.

In order to describe Firdaus’ characteristics and elaborate Firdaus’ personality in detail the writer uses the nine ways of describing character proposed by Murphy, (1972) in his book Understanding Unseen: An Introduction to English Poetry and The English Novel for The Overseas Students. Those ways are personal description, characters as seen by another, speech, past life, conversation of others, reactions, direct comment, thought and the last one is mannerism (173). However, not all the steps are followed. The writer uses only some of them that are considered appropriate to follow. The description of Firdaus’ personality based on her basic traits is presented in the following part.

In order to be able to show Firdaus’ personality change, the discussion on her former characters in her childhood is needed. The writer uses the description
to find out the changes that occurs in Firdaus’ personality at the end. Firdaus’ former personality can be seen as follow.

1. Submissive

Firdaus was born in a poor peasant family, so she most of the time fills her day by helping her parents with the farming land, livestock, as well as the house work. Firdaus describes her family condition in a narration as follow, “My father, a poor peasant farmer, who could neither read nor write, knew very few things in life. How to grow crops, how to sell buffalo poisoned by his enemy before it died” (p.10). Firdaus’ father is not only financially-handicapped, but also lack of education. Therefore, he tends to force his children to work hard to help him in his work.

Firdaus is a submissive daughter. She always follows what her parents order to her. She completes every order from her parents without complaining. Firdaus’ obedient character is something common in her society. A daughter is always prepared and taught to understand woman’ role in the society which is to be obedient and silent. A mother will train her daughter how to do the house work as well as how to behave and a daughter will follow her mother instruction without complaining. It can be seen from the narration below.

On my head I carried a heavy earthware jar, full of water. Under its weight my neck would sometimes jerk backward, or to the left or to the right. I had to exert myself to maintain it balanced on my head, and keep it from falling. I kept my legs moving in the way my mother taught me, so that my neck remained upright (p.11).

In her childhood, Firdaus sees how her mother was very compliant to her father. She respects him totally and puts him before anything including her children. Firdaus said, “And instead of staying by my side to keep me warm, my
mother used to abandon me alone and go to my father to keep him warm’’ (p.16).

From that situation, Firdaus learns that a woman must be obedient toward men.

Becoming an obedient daughter is a rule in Firdaus society. Therefore, Firdaus was born with a trait to be an obedient daughter. Her parents’ word is an unquestioned command for her. Thus, if a daughter behaves improperly the parents will give punishment for her. When Firdaus asks her mother about how her mom has given birth to her, Firdaus’ mother brings a woman who then practices genital mutilation to Firdaus.

So one day I asked my mother about him. How was it that she had given birth to me without a father? First she beat me. Then she brought a woman who was carrying a small knife or maybe razor blade. They cut off a piece of flesh from between my thighs (p.12).

The submissive trait is shown from the way Firdaus accepts the genital mutilation without trying to defend herself from it. Firdaus is powerless to deny the genital mutilation that her mother does to her. The process of genital mutilation that Firdaus experienced is a form of violation toward her right as a woman. It results on a life-long trauma for her.

Firdaus’ culture rules women to obey what fathers, husbands, or man in general. Therefore, women hardly complain. As what women in general grow, in her young age Firdaus is a submissive person. Firdaus has no courage to complain. She even feels so fearful to ask for food when she was hungry. She keeps silent and stay move less without complaining her hunger. “I was so hungry that I could not cry. I sat in front of him watching he ate, my eyes flowing his hand from the moment his fingers plunged in to the bowl until it rose in to the air, and carried the food in to his mouth” (p.18). Firdaus lives in the habit of being
acceptance although things happen unfairly to her. She witnesses how her parents never put her as the priority and how her mother always put her father before everything. She keeps silent in despair.

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 meal. My mother would hide his food at the bottom of one of the holes in the oven. He would sitting alone while we watched him (p.18).

Young Firdaus was a very plain girl. She did not understand about ripe or sexual harassment. Those cases were something taboo to be discussed in the family. Nobody told her that man must not touch her in improper way. It results on the sexual abuses done by people around her.

A little boy called Mohammadain used to pinch me under water and follow me in to the small shelter made of maize stalks. He would make me lie down beneath a pile of straw, and lift up my galebaya. We played ‘bride and bride groom’. From some part in my body, where exactly I did not know, would come a sensation of sharp pleasure. Later I would close my eyes and feel with my hand for the exact spot. The moment I touched it, I would realize that I had felt the sensation before (p.12).

Firdaus does nothing when her playmate, Mohammadain, treats her improperly. Her ignorance makes her keep silent toward the wrong treatment she gets from the man that only wants to take benefit from her.

Since her young age, Firdaus becomes the victim of the brutality of men’s desire. She gets lack of caring and affection from her parents. There is no one protects her from man’s abuse. She also fails to protect herself from sexual harassment done by her uncle whom she respects and admires more than her parents.

The heat of the oven was full on my face, singeing the edge of my hair. My galebaya often slipped up my thighs, but I paid no attention until the moment when I would glimpse my uncle’s hand moving slowly from
behind the book he was reading to touch my leg. The next moment I could feel it travelling up my thigh with a cautious, stealthy, trembling movement. Every time there was the sound of a footstep at the entrance of our house, his hand would withdraw quickly. But whenever everything around us lapsed into silence broken only every now and then by the snap of dry twigs between my fingers as I fed the oven, and the sound of his regular breathing reaching me from behind his book so that I could not tell whether he was snoring quietly in his sleep or wide awake and panting, his hand would continue to press against my thigh with a grasping, almost brutal insistence (p.13).

After the death of her parents Firdaus lives her new life with her uncle in Cairo. She goes to school and becomes very good students. She is smart and brilliant. Moreover, she manages to graduate as the second best student in her secondary school. She can do much with her competent to achieve her dream to be a doctor or politician. However, being a submissive woman, Firdaus gives up her dream to study in the university by following her uncles’ order to marry an old Sheikh called Sheikh Mahmoud. It is stated in the following statement, “The day came when I departed from my uncle’s house and went to live with sheikh Mahmoud. Now I slept on a comfortable bed instead of the wooden couch” (p.44).

Getting married with a respectable and wealthy sheikh never makes Firdaus life better. In contrary, it is the starting point of her sorrow. In her marriage, submissive Firdaus must follow all the rules set by Sheik Mahmoud. The culture in Firdaus society rules women to be obedient to her husband. The evidence can be seen from Firdaus’ aunt who says, “A virtuous woman was not supposed to complain about her husband. Her duty was perfect obedience” (p.47). Firdaus does serve her husband well. However, Sheikh Mahmoud treats her more like servant than a wife. He often beats her for a small mistake that may not be able to be considered as mistake. It can be proved by the following statement,
“On one occasion he hit me all over with his shoe. My face and body became swollen and bruised” (p.46).

Fidaus experiences the true suffering in her marriage. She suffers both physical and mentally. She feels valueless and death under the perfect obedience toward her husband. She says, “I surrendered my face to his face and my body to his body, passively, without any resistance, without a movement, as though life has been drained out of it, like a piece of death wood or old neglected furniture left to stand where it is, or a pair shoes forgotten under chair” (p.47). Firdaus feels desperate to live with a husband whom she never loves and treats her just like a property.

Firdaus’ suffering during her marriage finally arises a strong desire from within her to escape. She cannot stand the brutal treatment from her husband. Firdaus starts to move on her own feet. She leaves the idea of being submissive woman behind. It can be seen from this statement, “One day he hit me with his heavy stick until the blood ran from my nose and ears. So, I left, but this time I did not go to my uncle’s house” (p.47). Through the way of analyzing Firdaus’ speech, past life and thought, it can be concluded that Firdaus is a submissive person at the beginning.

2. Hard working

Firdaus is a hardworking person. In her childhood, she used to help her parents to work in the field or in the kitchen. She said, “I worked in the field, and worked in the house” (p.63). She never complains to work hard. She (Firdaus’
mother) usually made me carry a load of manure on my head and take it to the field (p.12).

Firdaus used to work the whole day, from the early morning. She does not have much time for enjoying her childhood as other children. She rarely goes for playing with friends or studying with them. She has been accustomed to do the heavy works since her childhood.

Before the sun had started to appear in the sky, she would nudge me in the shoulder with her fist so that I would awaken, pick up the earthware jar and go off to fill it with water. Once back, I would sweep under the animal and make rows of dung cakes which I left in the sun to dry (p.12).

Unlike other children in her neighborhood, Firdaus was quite unlucky. Since she is poor, she often fails to fulfill her need. Firdaus used to work very hard to get what she wants. It can be seen from her dialogue with her father when she ask for some money for candy, “Do you ask for piastre, the first thing in the morning? Go and clear under the animals and load the ass and take her to the fields. At the end of the day, I shall give you a piaster” (p.69).

Firdaus’ hard working trait can be seen from her being very diligent. She is accustomed to do the household well. It is seen clearly, when Firdaus lives with her uncle. She serves her uncle very well and takes care of the daily housework skillfully. She stated, “Once back I would sweep and clean the house, wash my uncles’ clothes, make his bed, and tidy his books. He bought me a heavy iron which I would heat on the kerosine stove, and use to launder his kaftan and turban” (p.20). Her hard work and continuous practice has made her in to an adroit person.
In her school years, Firdaus has made a high achievement for grasping the second best position in the final exam. This achievement is the result of her continuous hard work during her study in the secondary school. She always studies very hard. It is seen from her statement, “I would finish studying my lesson hours before the last night bell was rang” (p.26). Moreover, she often uses her spare time to read in the library.

So I discovered that the school had a library. A neglected room in the back yard, with its shelves falling to pieces, and books cover in dust. I used to wipe off the dust with a yellow cloth, sit on a broken chair under the light of a feeble lamp, and read. (p.26).

Consistently Firdaus shows her hard working trait when she works as a staff in an office. She is considered as one of the best employees who are respected by other employees. She states, “I liked my job despite everything” (p.83). Firdaus hard work in the office can also be seen from her conversation to Ibrahim, her work mate and the man she falls in love with. She shows how she never has a rest in her life. She says, “Rest! I have never known what it means to rest in my life (p.88).” What Firdaus says has cover all of her struggle and hard work in her life.

Hard working is Firdaus’ trait which does not change until the end of the story. In the time when Firdaus works as a prostitute, she also shows her hard work in giving her service to her customers. She arranges her schedule and manages her business well. Through Firdaus speech and thought, it can be seen that Firdaus is hard working person.
3. Smart

Firdaus was born as a smart woman. She was smart. She also loves studying. For her learning and studying is a pleasure. It is not a burden, but something that she loves to do. Firdaus’ uncle used to teach her read and write. Firdaus mentions, “… When I was still a child and had not learned to read or write. My uncle would put a chalk pencil between my fingers and make me write on a slate” (p. 14).

For Firdaus, education is something she always dreams on. She wants to attend the school and become an educated woman.

‘What will you do in Cairo, Firdaus?’
And I would replay: ‘I will go to El Azhar and study like you.’
Then he would laugh and explain that El Azhar was only for men. And I would cry, and hold on to his hand, as the train started to move (p.14).

Becoming an educated woman in Firdaus society in that era is something uncommon. Woman’s role is to become an obedient house wife, so education is not suggested for a woman. However, Firdaus does not give up pursuing her dream for going to school. She proves it by her willingness to practice reading and writing with her uncle.

School is where the smart Firdaus can develop herself. She feels school is the only way to lead her chasing her dream. She succeeds to prove that she has done well at school trough her achievement. She explains how she gets a fabulous achievement at school, “When the result of the final examination was announced, I was told that I had come out second in the school and seventh in the
countrywide” (p.32). Her achievement is the result of her continuous hard work and brilliant mind.

To be different as the other women, Firdaus is able to criticize the social and politic situation in her society. She prefers to read the books about politics rather than the books about love stories. From the books she reads, she finds out the situation of her society. She also learns about the outside worlds. Reading politics books surely extends her knowledge and arises her critical thinking.

I develop to love books, for with every book I learned something new. ... I got to know about the Persians, the Turks and the Arabs. I read about the crimes committed by kings and rulers, about wars, peoples, revolutions, and the lives of revolutionaries. I read love stories and love poems. But, I preferred books written about rulers (p.26).

Firdaus is a smart woman indeed. However, her intelligence is sunk behind her powerless body and mind. Firdaus has no guidance or protection from people around her. She is also lack of love and affection. It results on her failure to actualize her expertise well. Firdaus faces many obstacles when she tries to find a job with her secondary school certificate. It is because she entrusts other people to find her one rather than she does it by herself. She buries her willingness and capacity to find a job in the fear of outside world and her inconfidence.

Bayoumi who realizes the situation takes the benefits from Firdaus’ trust to him. He treats Firdaus very well, so that she does not realize his bad intention. However, Firdaus is smart woman. She finally understands the situation; she realizes that thing has gone wrong. Therefore, she complains the situation to Bayoumi. She exclaims, “I cannot continue to live in your house”, I stammered. ‘
I’m a woman, you’re a man, and people are talking. Besides, you promised I’d stay only until you found me a job” (p.52).

Knowing that Bayoumi has deceived her Firdaus attempts to escape from him. She is finally able to escape by the help of Bayoumi’s neighbor. Firdaus keeps learning to understand every situation she faced. Her miserable experience with Bayoumi has taught her to be able to defend herself from the people who want to take benefit of her. From Firdaus’ speech, reaction, and past life it can be concludes that Firdaus is a smart woman.

4. Unconfident

Young Firdaus is very unconfident with her physical look. She feels that she is dull and ugly. She thinks that her look, which resembles her mother and father, is unattractive.

I stood in front of the mirror staring at my face. Who am I? Firdaus, that is how they call me. The big round nose I got from my father, and the thin-lipped mouth from my mother. A sinking feeling went through my body. I neither liked the look of my nose, nor the shape of my mouth (p.18).

Firdaus hates her look because there is no one tells her that she is beautiful. She feels unworthy and neglected. No one pays attention on her. Therefore, Firdaus feels doubtful of herself and her existence.

Firdaus hates to face herself on the mirror. It shows how she cannot take the agony of her past life that is very sad. Looking at herself means looking at her sad life. It is the life with no caring from her father and mother.

I was filled with a deep hatred for the mirror. From that moment, I never looked in to it again. Even when I stood in front of it, I was not seeing myself but only combing my hair, or wiping my face, or adjusting the collar of my dress (p.20).
Poverty and lack of love from her family can be the factor that make young Firdaus very unconfident. She is not sure about herself and the worse is that she feels that she is dull. She does not know herself well.

... as I walked along the country road, wondering about myself, as the questions went round in my mind. Who was I? Who was my father? Was I going to spend my life sweeping the dung out from under the animal s, carrying manure on my head, kneading dough, and baking bread? (p.14).

Firdaus often worries about her life. She is afraid about the future and she wants to be someone else. Frequently, she imagines herself to be someone else.

I looked around almost in surprise, as though I had not been born here, but had suddenly dropped from the skies, or emerged from somewhere deep down in the earth, to find myself in a place where i did not belong, in a home which was not mine, born from a father who was not my father, and from a mother who was not my mother (p.15).

In her childhood, Firdaus never has a chance to make any decision. She follows what her parents want to happen on her. She is also lack of experience about the outside world. All she knows is just the field and the house. This situation has made her to doubt of herself. As the result, she becomes an unconfident person. She has no confidence to actualize her competence.

When Firdaus has graduated from the secondary school and granted her secondary school certificate, she does not know what to do. In addition, she has no confidence to apply for job. She keeps waiting for her uncle to find her one. However, rather than finding a job for his niece, Firdaus’ uncle decides to marry her with his wife’s uncle.

Firdaus seems to be the burden for her uncle’s family. It is seen from what her aunt says to her uncle, “So, what we do with her then?” (p.37). Additionally,
she is not able to ensure her uncle’s wife that she can be a good company for her in the house. She seems to have an unharmonious relationship with her uncle’s wife. It is because Firdaus fails to actualize herself in the house. She is not confident enough to get closer to the uncle’s wife and to the children.

‘She helps you with the house and the children.’
‘We have the servant girl, and I cook. We don’t need her (p.36).’
‘She will not be able to replace Saadia. ... But the girl in every movement is slow and heavy. She’s cold-blooded and couldn’t care less (p.37).’

Firdaus becomes an unconfident person because her lack of love and support from her family and people around her. From Firdaus’ speech, thought, and her character seen by other, Firdaus appears to be an unconfident person at the beginning.

5. Fearful

In the beginning, Firdaus has a great fear in her mind. In a country with a patriarchy system, a woman is put under man’s power. Therefore, women tend to pay over respect to men. To make it worse, they live under men’s regulation. This situation results on a tendency that women are fearful to decide their life. The same thing happens to Firdaus, she has no courage to decide her life. She tends to follow whatever her uncle wants her to do. When she is in the secondary school, she has the dream to be a leader, but it fades away when she realizes that the society will not accept her since she is a woman.

Sometimes, I imagined that I would become a doctor, or an engineer, or a lawyer, or a judge. And one day the whole school went out on the streets to join the a big demonstration against the government. Suddenly I found myself riding high up on the shoulders of the girls, “Down the government!” ... I kept imagining myself as a great leader or head of state (p.25).
Firdaus’ fear toward the rules in her society that does not allow a woman to stay higher than man has put off her dreams to live as what she wants. It discourages her to actualize herself. Therefore, she fails to use her aptitude, intelligence, and all of her potential to gain her dream.

Furthermore, Firdaus also often feels fearful toward the outside world. She feels afraid to walk in the crowd. She shows her fear when she go out from her uncle’s house for the first time after she graduates from high school. She has growth her courage to start to move on to find job at the beginning. However, at the last she goes back to her uncle’s house with deep fear toward the crowd and the threat that she observes on the street.

When night feel I had not yet found a place where I could spend the long hours until morning. I felt something deep inside of me screaming in panic. I was now worn out with fatigue, my stomach racked with hunger. I rested my back against a wall and stood for a while looking around me. I could see the wide expanse of street before me like the sea. There I was, just a pebble which someone had tossed in to its water, rolling around with the crowds that rode in busses and cars, or walked the street, with unseeing eyes, incapable in noticing anything or anyone. Each minute a thousand of eyes passed in front of me, but for them I remained non-existent (p. 43).

Firdaus has the tendency to have over fear toward herself. This situation is the result of her past life. She is not sure about herself. At the beginning of her life, she feels that her life is not hers. She cannot do anything with it. She is afraid to see her future. She has huge dream, but she has no courage to make it. It can be seen from her fear to the two eyes that she always meets whenever she tries to face the outside world.

In the dark I suddenly perceive two eyes, or rather felt them, moving toward me very slowly, closer and closer. They dropped their gaze with slow intent down to my shoes, rested there for a moment, then gradually
started to climb up my legs, to my thighs, my belly, my breasts, my neck and finally came to a atop, fastening themselves steadily in my eyes, with the same cold intent (p.43).

Firdaus has created a creature for her fear. She feels the danger always follows her everywhere she goes.

Firdaus also shows her fear to make a decision when Bayoumi, the man that gives her a hand when she escapes from her husband’s house, offers her to choose between tamarine or orange. She has no habit on making a decision in her life before. She used to follow other people’s direction. The habit of being a submissive person has created such a fear in Firdaus mind to make a decision.

The next evident which shows Firdaus fear is the scene when Firdaus tries to escape from Bayoumi’s flat. She does not want the woman who helps her call a police. This kind of fear is the result of the combination between the disbelieve feeling toward the law in her country and the fear to face more complicated problem.

Firdaus also has the fear to be considered as an unrespectable woman. Firstly, Firdaus realizes that her profession as a prostitute is unrespectable profession. She shows the fear of being a low woman by quit working as a prostitute and applying for a job in a company. From Firdaus’ thought, speech, and past life, it can be proved that Firdaus is a fearful person.

6. Dependent

Formerly, Firdaus is a dependant person. Her dependency can be seen from the way she decides her life. When her father and her mother pass away she depends her life to her uncle. He gives her a living by supporting all her financial
needs. The evident is seen from her speech, “He (Firdaus’ uncle) taught me the alphabet, and after my father died he sent me to elementary school. Later, when my mother died, he took me with him to Cairo” (p.19).

In fact, Firdaus is an adroit person. She is able to handle all the housework very well in her young age. In page 20 she tells that she cooks and washes dishes for her uncle and she also prepares all her uncle’s need. However, Firdaus can do nothing when she gets a sexual harassment from her uncle. She has neither courage nor power to fight against her uncle’s bed behavior.

I was trembling all over, seized with a feeling I could not explain, that my uncle’s great long fingers would draw close to me after a little while, and cautiously lift the eiderdown under which I lay. Then his lips would touch my face and press down on my mouth, and his trembling fingers would feel their way slowly upwards over my thighs (p.21).

After Firdaus finishes her secondary school, Firdaus still depends her life to her uncle’s family. She said, “I knew that I was now back in my uncle’s house. The woman who lived with him was his wife, and the children who ran around the house were their children” (p36). She cannot find a job for herself with her secondary school certificate. She only waits for her uncle to find her a job. The conversation between Firdaus’ uncle and his wife shows how Firdaus becomes the burden of the family.

‘It’s not easy to find work these days when all you have is a secondary school certificate.’
‘What can she do then?’
‘Nothing. These secondary school don’t teach them anything. I should have sent her to a commercial school.’

‘She can stay with us until I find her a job.’
‘That could be for years. The house is small and life is expensive’ (p.36).
Furthermore, Firdaus lets her uncle marry her to an old Sheikh. She does not reject her uncle’s decision. She relies her choice on her uncle’s hands. She lets his uncle to choose a bride for her. Firdaus asserts, “The day came when I departed from my uncle’s house and went to live with Sheikh Mahmoud” (p.44). Firdaus’ never wants to give in her life by marrying an old Sheikh. However, as a woman she needs to obey her parents’ decision to marry her to the one her parents choose for her.

Firdaus’ dependency to a man can also be seen from her relationship to Bayoumi. She depends her living to him after escaping from her husband. Moreover, she trusts a man very easily. It can be seen from her speech when she meets Bayoumi, “He told me he lived in two rooms and that I could stay in one of them until I found work” (p.50). She entrusts him to find her a job with her secondary school certificate. During her stay in Bayoumi’s house Firdaus serves him every day by working with the housework. She keeps staying in the house and going to the market without trying to go out for finding a job by herself.

Furthermore, Firdaus still depends herself on other people after escaping from Bayoumi’s house. Having a bad experience with Bayoumi has not made Firdaus learn enough. Once again, she easily trusts someone who offers her a help. The one who offers Firdaus help to live in her house is Sharifa a woman she meets in the bank of Nile after she run away from Bayoumi’s house. She accepts Sharifa’ offer and depends her live to Sharifa who is in fact a pimp who wants to take advantage from Firdaus. The evident can be seen as follow,
... and the next moment I stepped into a spotless apartment with carpeted floors, and a spacious terrace overlooking the Nile. She took me to the bathroom, showed me how to turn the hot and cold water tap on and off, so I could have a bath, and gave me some of her clothes (p.56).

Behind her good intention to help Firdaus, Sharifa, in fact, tries to take advantage from Firdaus. She makes Firdaus realize her value that Firdaus never learns before. She said to Firdaus, “A man does not know a woman’s value, Firdaus. She is the one who determines her value. The higher you value yourself, the more they he will realize what you are really worth” (p.58). Firdaus’ ignorance of Sharifa’s intention has made her snared in to Sharifa’s trap. She is pleased to know that man will value her and she has a quite high value. As Sharifa says, “You are younger than I am and more cultured, and nobody should be able to come near you without paying twice as much as what is paid to me” (p.59). Firdaus then becomes a prostitute in Sharifa’s hands. She keeps depending herself to other people until she finally learns that those people just take advantage from her weakness. From Firdaus’ speech, past life, and character seen by other Firdaus can be characterized as a dependent person.

B. Firdaus’ Personality Change as a Reaction to Egyptian Society Portrayed in Woman at Point Zero

Firdaus experiences changes in personality. She changes to be different person at the end of the story. Hurlock (1974) in her book Personality Development mentions that personality pattern can change in some areas and remain persistent in others (p.108). Therefore, there are some patterns are changing in Firdaus personality, and some others are remaining the same.
Furthermore, Hurlock also explains that change is not synonymous with “improvement.” It can either for the better or for the worse (p.108). The change in Firdaus’ personality can be categorized as the change for the better. The development gives her satisfaction because she finally finds her peace of mind.

According to Lonner and Malpas (1994) an individual is shaped by both nature that is related to biological transition and culture. Thus, culture is one of the components that influence someone’s personality. Egypt society and culture as portrayed in the novel has played a big role in Firdaus personality change. Living in Egypt society has brought Firdaus to experience hardship in life. Furthermore, Egypt culture has limited her role in her society because of the fact that she is a female citizen.

This part explains how Firdaus’ personality change as a reaction toward Egypt society and culture depicted in the novel. Therefore, the society and culture discussed in this part is not the situation in reality. As Langland (1984) said that society in the novel does not depend on points of absolute fidelity to an outside world in details of costume, setting, and locality because a novel’s society does not aim at faithful mirror of any concrete existent thing (p.5).

The novel portrayed Egypt society in 1970s. It shows how most of the people in Egypt are strict to the cultural practice. They practice patriarchy system in the society. It can be seen from the social rules in which man has the authority in many aspect. A man is considered as the one to be followed and respected. Therefore, it has put woman in the second position below man’s position. Man has higher status and more worthy than a woman does. It can be seen through this
evident, “When one of his female children died, my father would eat his supper, my mother would wash his legs, and then he would go to sleep, ... When the child that died was a boy, he would beat my mother, then have his supper and lie down to sleep” (p.17). Because Firdaus is a woman, her society does not give her many options in her life. Firdaus is married to an old but rich Sheikh by her uncle with one hundred pounds dowry as the exchange. As a wife, Firdaus receives so much suffering because her husband used to beat her for ridiculous reason. As a woman employee, Firdaus needs to protect herself from the boss’ and male colleagues’ abuses. Firdaus experiences being oppressed and taken advantage in every role she comes with.

Firdaus has experienced so much suffering because her society put her her in the second position under man. She is oppressed, tortured, and raped by men around her. Her past life, which is full of pain and misery, has changed her self-concept. It motivates her to change. The change in Firdaus personality can be seen as follow.

1. Resistant

From a submissive person Firdaus changes to be a resistant person. Being resistant for a woman in Firdaus’ society is something uncommon. A woman is ruled to be obedient to man. However, life has changed a submissive Firdaus to be a resistant person. She used to follow what other people want her to do. However, every time she only finds suffering. She had got married to a man who had been chosen by her uncle. It does not result on happiness, in contrary she lives like a slave in her husband’s house.
Patriarchy system in Firdaus’ society has created a common rule that a woman must respect her husband and devote her whole life for him. Moreover, she has to follow every order given by her husband. In front of her husband, Firdaus feels she was only a property with no right nor power.

I surrendered my face to his face and my body to his body, passively, without any resistance, without a movement, as though life has drained out of it, like a piece of dead wood or old neglected furniture lift to stand where it is, or a pair of shoes forgotten under a chair (p.47).

Firdaus has become an obedient wife. However, she still receives bad treatments from her husband. She used to be beaten and slapped for a small mistake. Moreover, Sheikh Mahmoud never gives her any space to enjoy her life. She stays in the house for the whole day doing the housework. Firdaus is injured physically and mentally during her marriage with Sheikh Mahmoud.

On one occasion he hit me all over with his shoe. My face and body became swollen and bruised. So I left the house and went to my uncle. But my uncle’ told me that all husbands beat their wives, and my uncle’s wife added that her husband often beats her (p.46).

The idea of being obedient as what her uncle told her does not result good for her. in contrary, it causes sorrow in Firdaus life.

The rough treatments from Sheikh Mahmoud are the results of the concept of patriarchy that considers a wife as a property owned by the husband that can be treated as what a husband wants. That kind of treatment results on the physically and mentally injured. Firdaus states, “One day he hit me with his heavy stick until blood ran from my nose and ears. So I left, but this time I did not go to my uncle’s house. I walked through the streets with swollen eyes and bruised face” (p. 47). Firdaus cannot carry on living under oppression of her husband.
Therefore, she flees from his husband house. She rejects to keep being obedient since, it will only give her pain.

Escaping from her husband house makes Firdaus grows stronger. However, she still experiences living under man’s power when she lives with Bayoumi. He treats her better than her husband does. However, the same as other men, he only takes benefits from Firdaus’ existence. He does not really want to help. At the end, he sells Firdaus to his friends by forcing her to sleep with them.

Becoming acceptance person and obedient woman does not give Firdaus happiness. She slowly learns that being obedient is not good for her. To be submissive person is not what she wants. Hence, she grows to be sure of herself. She dares to choose the life that she wants. She does not let other people to rule her life anymore. From the habit to say yes and becoming an acceptance person Firdaus slowly learns to say no and comes to the habit of rejecting every unwanted offer.

A man came up to me and whispered. I look him straight in the eye and said ‘No.’ Another man came up to me and muttered something in a secretive voice which could barely be heard, I examined him carefully from head to toes and said, ‘No (p.73).

Now, Firdaus has learnt about pride and honor. She rejects every offer that she thinks will not please her. Firdaus has uniqueness as a prostitute. Instead of becoming low-level prostitute, Firdaus chooses to be the high-level one. It can be proved through Firdaus’ speech, “A prostitute always says yes, and then names her price. If she says no she ceases to be prostitute. I was not a prostitute in the full sense of the word, so from time to time I said no. As a result my price kept going up” (p.97). She is different to other prostitutes. She has the culture and the
intelligence. She takes prostitution as the mean to prove that she has the value and freedom. Every man who needs her favor will respect her and treat her well.

Firdaus’ decision to become a prostitute is a form of rebel to her society. She chooses to be a resistant person as a reaction toward the unfair treatment from men around her. She experiences abuse in every role she has taken. As a daughter she has to obey all of her parents commands, and she is married to an old sheikh for one hundred pounds dowry. As a wife, she is mistreated by her husband who beat her every day. As an employee, she witnesses how the boss treated women employees just like prostitutes. Moreover, she is deceived and betrayed by a man she loves. She finally chooses prostitution as a mean to release from oppression. She states, “A successful prostitute was better than a misled saint. All women are victims of deception” (p.64). She hates men’s treatment that brings women in to sorrow. She explains,

Men impose deception on women and punish them for being deceived, force them down to the lowest level and punish them for falling so low, bind them in marriage and then chastise them with menial service for life, or insults, or blows (p.94).

Therefore, Firdaus comes in to a thought that prostitution is a right way for her to gain freedom. She has no husband who oppresses and abuses her and there is no boss who offers promotion as the exchange for her body. She is free to choose to whom she will give her service.

As a prostitute, Firdaus shows her resistance by behaving in passive in her service. She does not react to her guess treatment. She gives only her outer shell and never put her feeling in to her job. She states, “To protect my deeper inner self from men, I offer them only an outer shell. I kept my heart and soul, and let
my body play its role, its passive, inert, unfeeling role. I learnt to resist by being passive, to keep myself whole by offering nothing” (p.93). She does not let anybody has possession on her whole self. She keeps her pride in front of her guests. She says in her mind, “I was telling the man he could have my body, he could have a dead body, but he would never be able to make me react, or tremble, or feel either pleasure or pain” (p.93). Moreover, as a prostitute Firdaus resists to work under any pimp who promise her protection. She does not want to work for other people, nor depend her life to anybody. She chooses to do things in her own way.

Firdaus resistance has made her stronger. She has the power to choose. However, for her society she is a threat. Prostitute is considered as immoral deed in the society. It breaks the social low and violates the low of religion. As she grows to be resistant she becomes a stubborn person. She refuses to send an appeal for release to the president.

‘there’s hope for your release if you send an appeal to the President asking him to pardon you for the crime you have committed’
‘But I don’t want o be released, ‘ I said, and I want no pardon for my crime. For what you call my crime was no crime’ (p.110).

Firdaus resists to ask for help from anybody, since she thinks that she has done right to fight for her freedom. From Firdaus’ past life, speech, and thought it can be seen that Firdaus is a resistant person.

2. Brave

From a fearful woman Firdaus grows to be a brave woman. She grows her courage to decide her own life. She used to follow what men instruct her to do.
She has no courage to refuse even though the decision is painful for her. However, realizing that living under man’s power is painful, she starts to fight for the mistreatment that men do to her.

After getting married with Sheik Mahmoud who is very bad tempered and stingy, Firdaus seems to live in a hell on the earth. She is more like a servant rather than a wife in her house. She gets physical abuse almost every day from her husband. Therefore, she fosters herself to get rid of the situation. She grows her courage to go out from her husband’s house.

One day he hit me with his heavy stick until blood ran from my nose and ears. So, I left, but this time I did not go to my uncle’s house. I walked through the streets with swollen eyes, and a bruised face, but no one pay attention to me (p.47).

Under the pressure and abuse from her husband, Firdaus grows to be stronger physically and mentally. She gets used to the physical harassment done to her. Therefore, her heart grows tougher. She motives herself to have a better living by escaping from her cruel husband. She tries to overcome her fear toward the outside world. She is able to get rid from her fear to the two eyes that she says always follow and watch her wherever she goes. She is finally able to defeat her fear when she manages to go out from her husband house.

Furthermore, Firdaus shows her bravery to ask for her right from Bayoumi. After several times lives with Bayoumi in his flat, Firdaus realizes about her real intention, which is looking for job with her secondary school certificate. She says, “I have a secondary school certificate, and I want to work” (p.52). She does not want to rely her life on Bayoumi forever. She is awakened from the easy life that Bayoumi offers. She states, “But I must work. I can’t carry
on like this.” She understands that she should not live with a man who is not her husband nor her relatives.

I cannot continue to live in your house’, I stammered. ‘I’m a woman, and you’re a man, and people are talking. Besides, you promised I’d stay only until you found me a job. ... ‘you’re busy all day in the coffee-house, and you haven’t even tried to find me job. I’m going out now to look for one (p.52).

Firdaus then has the bravery to take action. She has the courage to take a risk and come in to conflict with Bayoumi. She knows that her comfort life in Bayoumi’s house is not real. It is not the kind of life that she wants.

Firdaus’ transformation in to a brave woman is the result of her strong motivation to fight against the oppression and exploitation from the people around her. To be a brave woman who fights for her right is Firdaus’ way to react against her society. She needs to be brave, to be able to protect herself from men’s oppression and abuse. Moreover, She chooses to be brave rather than gives in to be tortured in her obedience.

One of Firdaus brave decisions is her decision to choose to be prostitute. She realizes that by doing so she has opposed her society. However, she thinks it is the best way she can take to protect herself from continuous exploitation that she experiences. As a prostitute, Firdaus shows her bravery by rejecting an important politician from foreign state who asks for her service. She was forced by so many ways in order to accept the man’s offer, but she keeps refusing him. Firdaus wants to show that she cannot be owned by anybody, including the important person from any states. She says, “One day a very important personality from a foreign state heard about me. He arranged things in such a way that he
could look me over without my noticing. Immediately after he sent for me, but I refused to go” (p.97). Firdaus has the power over herself because she dares to resist against every offer that teases her dignity.

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Furthermore, Firdaus used to think that money is something forbidden for her. She never has money of her own. People around her, starting from her parents, uncle, husband, and Sharifa never allows her to hand any money as her own. Eventually, after receiving the 10-pounds note from a man who takes her from the street, Firdaus realizes that she has the right of money. She begins to
think about her right of money. She learns that she is able to earn money by her own. She is now brave enough to ask for her right.

From that day onwards, I ceased to bend my head or to look away. I walked on the streets with my head held high, and my eyes looking straight ahead. I looked people in the eyes, and if I saw someone count his money, I fixed it with unwinking gaze (p.73)

Moreover, Firdaus notices that money helps her to be stronger. It has power over the society. She can do anything with money. Being financially secure with large sum of money has been one of the factor that changes Firdaus to be a brave woman. The proof can be seen as follow

On one occasion they put me in prison because I turn down one of these important men. So I hired a big lawyer, for a very big sum of money. Shortly after I was released from gaol without charges. The court decided I was an honorable woman. Now, I had learnt that honour required large sum of money to protect it ... (p.99).

Money helps Firdaus to gain the power over the society.

Firdaus grows to be fearless. She can only trust herself and do things for herself. Hence, she does things not in accordance with the rules in the society. She believes that she can be the master for herself. She reacts very boldly every time a man tries to take advantage from her. It can be seen from her conversation to the pimp,

‘Every prostitute has a pimp to protect her from other pimps and from police. That’s what I am going to do.’
‘But I can protect myself.’ I said.
‘There isn’t a woman on earth who can protect herself.’
‘I don’t want your protection (p.100).’

Firdaus refuses to work for other people. She does not to be enslaved by anybody.

However, Marzouk, the pimp is too dangerous for Firdaus. It is not easy for her
get rid of his threat. She finally dares to kill him for he wants to put her under his authority.

I continued to look straight at him without blinking. I knew I hated him as only a woman can hate a man, as only a slave can hate his master... I raised my hands even higher than he had done, and brought it down violently on his face. The whites of his eyes went red. His hands started to reach for the knife he carried in his pocket, but my hand was quicker than his. I raised the knife and buried it deep in his neck and then thrust it deep into his chest, pull it out of his chest and plunged it deep into his belly. I stuck the knife into almost every part of his body (p.104).

Firdaus has shown her bravery by fighting for her freedom. She fears nothing. At last she faces her dead sentence for killing a pimp bravely.

In accordance to Hurlock’s theory in personality change, Firdaus’ alteration to be a brave person is the result of her strong motivation to get rid from her abusive society. Hurlock states, “When the motivation to improve the personality pattern is strong enough, changes can be effected” (p.127). Firdaus who used to be fearful motivates herself to release from cruel treatments she receives from men around her. She grows her courage to express her rejection toward unfair practice for woman in her society by becoming brave woman. From Firdaus’ past life, thought, and speech, it can be seen that Firdaus has changed to be a brave person.

3. Autonomous

Formerly Firdaus used to be a dependent person, but she changes to be independent at the end. She used to live under other people’s authority. She depends her life to other people, starting from her uncle, her husband, Bayoumi, and Sharifa. She did not have the authority over her own life at the beginning.
Firdaus dependency is normal in her society. Man is the decision maker and the one who has the authority to decide. Therefore, Firdaus lives in the habit of being dependent. She felt powerless about her own life. She let other people to control her life. She let her uncle to marry her with Sheikh Mahmout who is stingy and disgusting in her mind. Moreover, she came in to Bayoumi’s control after she escaped from her husband’s house and then depended her life on Sharifa after she got rid from Bayoumi. It has been long time learning for Firdaus until she finally manages to control her life by her own.

Being powerless in her society, Firdaus very often gets lost. She does not know what to do and where to go. Therefore, she was easily deceived and taken advantage by people around her. She becomes the victim of her society that considers woman inferior. She experiences so much suffering when she lives under other people’s power. She was sold behind the term of marriage and beat by her husband. She was raped by Bayoumi and his cronies. Moreover, she was enslaved to be a prostitute by Sharifa in the very sweet way. Eventually, Firdaus learns that she has been enslaved and taken advantage throughout her life. She, therefore, grows power within her to fight for her independency.

She starts her autonomous life after escaping from Sharifa who has changed her in to a woman prostitute. One of her customer who is called Fawzy has opened her mind that Sharifa is not her savior, but the one who has sold her as a prostitute. Being aware of what is happening Firdaus chooses to leave Sharifa and lives her own life. She says, “I was walking through the cold, wearing a thin almost transparent dress, and yet I did not feel it. I was surrounded by darkness on
all sides, with nowhere to go, but I was no longer afraid” (p.65). She fears nothing and starts to trust herself. She does not need to make subservient to anybody. Her body and her life is hers. “I started to examine the finger of my hands. The fingers were mine, they had not changed” (p.66). Firdaus begins to realize that her body and her soul belong to her, and she is the one who determine her own life.

Furthermore, Firdaus’ independency is her freedom to do things in her own way. She has power over herself and finds the right to live in freedom within her. She does not let other people to bother her life. She is able to control her whole life. She trusts and believes only herself, and she becomes the master of her own life. It is not a common in Egypt society at that time for a woman to own freedom, because as a woman she needs to obey men as the controllers, as seen in Marzouk speech, “ How can you be a master? A woman on her own cannot be a master” (p.104). However, Firdaus denies the rule in her society that put woman under man’s power. She decides not to be a slave for anybody. To gain her freedom from man she chooses a profession as a prostitute. In prostitution, she finds herself having control over the men who come for her favor. She says, “ Because I was intelligent I preferred to be a free prostitute, rather than an enslaved wife. Every time I gave my body I charged the highest price” (p.99).

Firdaus is able to be independent by becoming a prostitute. She is no longer tortured since the men who come to her respect her and agree to pay her in high amount of money for her service. She is free to choose her costumer and free to decide whether she is going to give her service or not. She is able to do everything she wants. Firdaus states,
How many were the years of my life that went by before my body, and myself become really mine, to do with them as I wished? How many were the years of my life that were lost before I tore my body and myself away from the people who held me on their grasp since the very first day? Now I could decide on the food I wanted to eat, the house I preferred to live in ... (p.74).

Firdaus then gets in to financially and personally independent. She can live well in a nice apartment and have people who serve her everyday while she keeps working as a prostitute.

A quarter of century had passed, for I was twenty-five years old when I first started to have a clean apartment of my own, overlooking the main street, engage a cook who prepared the food I ordered, and employ someone to arrange for my appointments at the hours which suited me, and in accordance with the term which I considered acceptable (p.74).

From prostitution Firdaus is able to make her living. She does not depend on other people’s favor anymore. She can do everything she desires freely because she has the power and money. However, this situation has made Firdaus rely her life on money. She believes that money can buy anything in her society including pride and honour.

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, even every profession is paid a salary. The more respectable the profession, the higher the salary, and a person’s price goes up as he climbs the social ladder. One day when I donates some money to a charitable association, the newspapers published pictures of me and sang my praises as the model of a citizen with a sense of civic responsibility. And so from then on, whenever I needed a dose of honour of fame, I had only to draw some money from the bank (p.100).

At last, Firdaus is able to get rid from poverty that she has experienced since her childhood. Her money has transformed her from powerless person in to a person who has power in her society.
Firdaus transformation as an autonomous person is considered as a slow change in personality according to Hurlock’s theory. It is the result of multiple revision in her thought and feeling. Her change to be autonomous in relation with Hurlock’s theory is the result of change in role. Firdaus experiences change in role from a daughter, to a wife, to be a mistress, and finally she transforms to be independent as a prostitute. Her role as a prostitute enables her to have power over men. Moreover, she takes prostitution as her weapon to react to her society with its unfair practice toward her and place woman in the inferior position under men’s power.

4. Confident

From a very unconfident person Firdaus grows to be a confident person. She starts to believe that she is worthy. It has taken quite long time for her to berries herself in the wrong self-concept. She thought that she was unworthy ugly and miserable. She never realizes the values within her until she met Sharifa, a woman prostitute who takes Firdaus with her after she run from Bayoumi.

Behind her bad intention on Firdaus, Sharifa has helped Firdaus to see the value she buries within her. Sharifa tells Firdaus how to deals with men who always take her as their property. Sharifa then becomes a significant person for Firdaus since that moment. She learns the value and pride from her. Moreover, Sharifa has changed Firdaus physical look. She puts some make up on her and dresses her with perfect gown.

When I opened my eyes and looked in to the mirror I realized that now I was being born again with new body, smooth and tender as a rose petal. My clothes were no longer rough and dirty, but soft and clean. ... I turn
around and saw her. She was standing close by watching me, her eyes radiating a strong, green light, the color of the trees, and the sky, and the color of the Nile (p.57).

In Sharifa’s figure Firdaus sees a figure that she wants to be. A woman who has beauty, strength, and determination. She admires her charm, so she easily follows Sharifa’s way of life. Firdaus tries to adapt to Sharifa’s attitude, behavior, and beliefs. In line with Hurlock’s theory that change in significant people foster change in someone’s personality, Sharifa’s influence in Firdaus life has fostered her to change to be more confident person.

I became a young novice in Sharifa’s hands. She opens my eyes to life, to even in my past, in my childhood, which had reminded hidden in my mind. She probed with a searching light revealing obscure areas of myself, unseen features of my face and body, making me become aware of them, understand them, see them for the first time (p.58).

Moreover, Firdaus starts to realize her value. She gains a good self-esteem within her. She feels comfort to see her physical look. She realizes that she has the right of her own body. Moreover, she starts to have a positive thought on herself.

I discovered that I had black eyes, with a sparkle that attracted other eyes like a magnet, and that my nose was neither big, nor rounded, but full and smooth with the fullness of strong passion which could turn to lust. My body was slender, my tights tense, alive with muscle, ready at any moment to grow even more taut (p.58).

Furthermore, her confidence grows more extensively when she starts to learn to make decision. Firdaus no longer wants to count on Sharifa after she knows that Sharifa has in fact, only taken her as a money machine. She decides to run from Sharifa. She trust herself that she is capable to live without the help of anybody else. It can be seen from her speech, “I was surrounded by darkness on all sides, with nowhere to go, but I was no longer afraid. Nothing in the street was
capable of scaring me any longer, and the coldest wind could no longer bite in to my body” (p.65).

The life as a prostitute has grown Firdaus’ confidence higher. She is no longer fear anything. She has the confidence to speak with people, and look people in the eyes. She becomes very sure about the value of her body and soul. She is then able to price her body highly whenever men come to her for her service. She says, “I become a very successful prostitute. I was paid the highest price, and even men of great importance competed for my favors” (p.97). From time to time she grows more trust on herself. She believes that she can do anything she wants in her life. She says, “The word impossible does not exist for me” (p.104).

Firdaus’ transformation to be a confident person is the result of some conditions. The first one is change in significant person. In this case, Sharifa brings quite much influence on Firdaus’ change to be confident. She reveals the hidden values within Firdaus. Moreover, Sharifa has changed Firdaus physically. She gives Firdaus some make up and covers her with the best dress that she becomes beautiful indeed. Sharifa’s teaching about the value of woman and the new outlook Firdaus possesses has created positive self-esteem within Firdaus. Firdaus finally becomes confident person who has trust on herself.

5. Determined

At the beginning, Firdaus used to doubt of her future and her goal in her life. Her society does not give her much choice since a woman tends to stay at home and serve her man. However, after her long acquaintance with unpleasant
experience in her life, she is finally able to find the goal of her life. She desires freedom in her life. She refused to be enslaved by anyone. She wants to be the only master in her life. She says, “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 rulers” (p.9).

Firdaus experience of being oppressed and abused by every man she gets to now has arises her hatred toward men. She has a strong desires to fight against every unfair treatment that men address to her. She refuses to give in her life being enslaved by men. The evident can be seen from Firdaus’ statement,

I become aware of the fact that I hated men, but for long years had hidden this secret carefully. The men I hated the most of all are those who tried to give me advice, or told me that they wanted to rescue me from the life I was leading. I used to hate them more than the others because they thought they were better than I was and could help me change my life (p.96).

The fact that Firdaus hates men in general has made her having no trust to men. She refuses to let them play role in her life. Every time she lets them come in to her life, she receives pain and suffering because they always take benefit of her and control her life. Her pain and suffering has arise her revenge toward men. It can be seen from her speech,

However, every single man I did get to know filled me with 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. And because I am a prostitute, I hid my fear under layer my make-up (p.10).

The bitter past she experienced strengthens Firdaus’ desire to live in her freedom. Her dream is the freedom in her life. She wants to be the master of her body and soul. She is doing so through the way she values herself highly. After
her long time learning about men’s treatment, at the end she refuses to disgrace her body to men. It can be proved from the following statements,

Throughout those three years not once did a top executive or higher official so much as touch me. I had no wish to humiliate my body at low price, especially after I had become accustomed to being paid very highly for whatever services I rendered (p.82).

Firdaus never lets anybody control her life since she has decided to live in freedom. She refuses any offers that intend to tie her on someone’s power. She strikes against anybody who tries to hassle her freedom. It is proved from her final decision of killing the pimp who wants her to become his prostitute. Furthermore, Firdaus shows her determination to live with no more help from anybody by rejecting an offers from the police officer to send an appeal to the president for asking him pardon of the crime that she has committed. It can be seen as follow,

They would like to discover that there is after all something which I desire, or fear, or hope for. Then they know they can enslaved me once more. There’s hope for you to release if you send an appeal to the President asking him to pardon you for the crime you committed.

“But, I don’t want to be released,” I said, ‘and I want no pardon for my crime. For what you call my crime was no crime.” (p.110).

At last, it can be concluded that Firdaus has a strong determination to hold up her desire in her life that is to live in freedom. She grows strong because she learns that nobody is able to protect her, but herself. In accordance with Hurlock’s theory, Firdaus’ determined personality grows as the result of her strong motivation to live as the master for her life. She promises herself not to give in her life as a servant to anybody.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter consists of two parts. The first part is the conclusion of the analysis. It presents the answers of the research questions formulated in chapter one. The second part is the suggestions. It presents the suggestions for the future researchers and suggestions for teaching-learning activity using the novel.

A. Conclusions

This part presents the conclusion obtained from the analysis in chapter four. There are two main points that can be concluded from the analysis. The first one is Firdaus’ personality in her early ages. The second one deals with the change of Firdaus’ personality change as a reaction to Egyptian society portrayed in *Woman at Point Zero*

Based on the analysis in chapter four it can be concluded that Firdaus is the main character in the novel. It is because she dominates the story and plays the biggest role in the story. Moreover, based on Foster’s explanation Firdaus can be categorized in to round character because she presents many traits and her character is changing over time. Furthermore, Firdaus’ character can also be recognized as dynamic character based on Holman and Harmon’s discussion. It is because Firdaus’ character does not remain the same from the beginning to the end of the story.
Firdaus’ personality in the novel can be seen from the analysis of her character using the nine ways of characterization proposed by Murphy. The analysis in chapter four has come into two main conclusions. The first one is Firdaus’ early personality and the second one is Firdaus’ personality change as a reaction against Egypt society and culture portrayed in the novel.

Based on the analysis of Firdaus’ early character, it can be concluded that in the beginning Firdaus is submissive, smart, hard-working, unconfident, fearful, and dependent. Firdaus is a submissive person in the beginning. She never complains and always follows her parents and uncle’s orders. She is very obedient, so she never complains any order. Even though Firdaus is submissive, she is actually a smart person. It can be seen from her achievement at school and from her way of thinking in dealing with problems. Moreover, Firdaus is always eager to learn new things. Firdaus is also a hard-working person. She shows her hard work in her being very diligent. She always attempts to do the best thing in everything. However, Firdaus appears as an unconfident person in the beginning. It can be seen from the way she perceives herself. She often doubts herself. Besides unconfident, Firdaus is also a fearful person. She is afraid to do what she wants. She has no courage to make any efforts for gaining her dream. She often scares to complain and refuse others’ command, although it causes bad effects for herself. Furthermore, Firdaus can also be concluded as a dependent person. She rely her life on many people before she finally stands on her own feed and becomes autonomous.
The analysis also concludes that Firdaus experiences change in personality. She appears having different personality at the end of the story. However, there are two characters which do not change from Firdaus. Until the end of the story Firdaus is depicted as smart and hard-working person. However, there are some qualities that change within her. She changes to be a resistant, brave, autonomous, confident, and determined person.

At the beginning, Firdaus was a very submissive person. It is the result of the rule in her society that demands every woman to be obedient to man. However, her being submissive does not give her any benefit. She remains unhappy because almost every man she encounters with takes benefits from her submissiveness. After all the suffering she undergoes, she eventually develops to be a resistant person. She is able to say “no” and has the bravery to reject man’s order.

Firdaus also changes to be a brave person. From a fearful person, Firdaus changes to be a brave person. She is no longer afraid to declare what she wants in her life. She has the courage to speak and act for the things she wants. Moreover, she is brave enough to protect and defend herself.

Furthermore, from a dependent person Firdaus grows to be autonomous. She used to depend her living to other people starting from her uncle, her husband, Bayoumi, and the last one Sharifa. However, at the end she is capable to be autonomous. She becomes mentally and financially independent. She no longer depends her life on other people anymore. She is also able to effort her own living.
Firdaus also grows to be confident person. Previously she was unconfident with her physical look. She was also not sure about her capacity and competency. At the end she develops her confidence. She realizes the values within her. She grows positive self-concepts within her after a woman pimp, called Sharifa keep showing her the value of her body.

Moreover, Firdaus develops to be a determined person. She used to be inconsistent and easily to be deceived, but at the end she becomes very determined. She maintains her basic principal in her life to be the only master in her life by refusing to be controlled and enslaved by other people.

Firdus’ personality change to be resistant, brave, autonomous, confident, and determined is the form of her reaction to her society and culture that considers her inferior than man. Firdaus’ change in her personality is her way to reacts to the oppressions and abuses she received from men.

B. Suggestions

This part is divided into two sections. The first one is the suggestion for future research using the novel Woman at Point Zero, and the second one is the suggestion of teaching using literary works, in this case is the novel Woman at Point Zero.

1. Suggestions for Future Researcher

Woman at Point Zero presents a very brave and powerful story as a means of criticism in the Arab world that places woman under man’s power. The novel is worth to read. It is a feminist novel that tells the story of an Egypt woman who
experiences abused, rape, and oppressed by men in her society. She survives by choosing prostitution as her way to be free from men’s oppression. She fights for her freedom and honor throughout her life. Firdaus’ life struggles contain many aspects that is interesting to be discussed. This study takes Firdaus’ personality change as the basic issues to be analyzed. Future researchers may be able to analyze the meaning of the title of the novel because, because it presents a mystery behind. It will be challenging also to find out the meaning of happiness or love for the main character.

2. Suggestions for Teaching Basic Reading II Using Nawal El Saadawi’s *Woman at Point Zero*

Literary works are considered as the source of knowledge. Readers are able to gain knowledge by reading literary works such as novel. Therefore, using literary word as a teaching and learning material is very beneficial. It encourages the students’ language acquisition. It provides memorable contexts for the students to learn new vocabularies and structures. Besides that, it helps the students to have the ability to interpret the language they read. The students will be able to improve their kill in inferring meaning of the language. Moreover, through literary works the students can observe the social issues and conflicts faced by the characters presented in the story. They can discuss how the characters should solve their problems. Furthermore, using literary work as a teaching material is a good way to introduce cultural background of a certain place presented as the setting of the novel. The students will be aware of the social, political, and historical events that are presented in the story.
In this section the writer wants to recommend the novel *Woman at Point Zero* as the material to teach Basic Reading II in semester II of English Language Study Program. There are three major activities in teaching Basic Reading II. The first activity is pre-reading activity. The teacher provides the students some questions to guide the students to the topic of the reading material. This activity is important to foster students' interest in reading the given passage. The second activity is called while-reading activity. It is the time for the students to read and comprehend the passage given. The last activity is post-reading activity. The teacher provides some questions related to the passage to check the students' reading comprehension.

The procedures of teaching basic reading II are presented as follow:

a. The teacher opens the class and greets the students.
b. The teacher divides the students into groups that consist of three students.
c. The teacher distributes the handout consisted of pre-reading questions and reading material.
d. The students discuss the pre-reading question in group.
e. Each group presents the result of the discussion to the class.
f. The students go back working individually and start to read the passage given.
g. The students are asked to skim the passage.
h. The students are instructed to take a look at the comprehension question and answer the questions given.
i. The students are to make inferences of the story in order to be able to answer each question given.

j. The teacher discusses the question together with the students.

k. The students share the value they get from reading the passage.
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SOURCE FROM THE INTERNET

http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/pointzero/summary.html retrieved on August 22nd at 7.22 p.m.

http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/pointzero/characters.html retrieved on July 21st at 6. 10 p.m.

LESSON PLAN FOR TEACHING BASIC READING II

1. Subject: Basic Reading II
2. Meeting: 1 meeting
3. Topic: Reading literary text taken from the novel Woman at Point Zero
4. Semester: II of English Language Education Study Program
5. Time allocation: 2 x 50 minutes

I. Competence Standard

At the end of the course, the students are able to apply basic reading strategies to understand the story and expand their reading competence.

II. Basic Competence

At the end of the course, the students are able to:

1. Scan specific information in the story.
2. Answer the comprehension questions about the story by making inferences.
3. Gain values from the story.

III. Material and Media

Material: Passage taken from the novel Woman at Point Zero

Media: Handout and dictionary
IV. Teaching Learning Activities

1. Pre-reading activities
   a. The students are divided into groups consisted of three students
   b. The teacher distributes the handout to the students
   c. The students discuss the pre-reading question in group. The questions are as follow
      1) What do you know about prostitution?
      2) In your opinion what are the reason of a women deciding to be a prostitute?
      3) Can we say that prostitute is a respected profession?
   d. Each group presents the result of the discussion to the whole class

2. While-reading activities
   a. The students work individually to skim the passage given
   b. The students answer the comprehension questions given.
   c. The students scan the passage to check the answer of the questions given.
      The questions are as follow
      1) What is the story about?
      2) Where does the story take place?
      3) Who are the characters in the story?
      4) Who is the main character in the story and what is his or her profession?
      5) What kind of person is the main character (describe the personality of the main character)?
6) Why does the main character refuse to send an appeal to the president?

7) How does the story ends?

d. The students continue working with the next question section. The Form of the question is stating whether the statement is true or false. The question is as follow

1) [ ] Firdaus is a princess who comes from respectable family

2) [ ] Firdaus has killed a prince for she has a revenge on him

3) [ ] The court gives Firdaus dead sentence for the crime she has committed.

4) [ ] Firdaus hates every man she knows.

5) [ ] Women in Firdaus society have lower position than men.

e. The students uses the dictionary to find out the synonym of some vocabularies in the passage. Those vocabularies are:

1) arched
2) catered
3) seductive
4) protruding
5) resist
6) snatched
7) enigma
8) starving
9) savage
10) triumphed

f. The students reveal the value they get from the story.
3. Post-reading activities

The teacher discusses the answer of the passage with the whole class. Afterward the teacher asks the values that the students get in the story. It can be about the students’ opinion about prostitution and issues about woman life in Middle East. Moreover, the teacher also asks the difficulties the students face in reading the passage.

V. Sources

TEACHING MATERIAL

I. Answer these following questions in group of three!

1. What do you know about prostitution?

2. In your opinion what are the reason of a women deciding to be a prostitute?

3. Can we say that prostitute is a respected profession?

II. Read the passage taken from the novel Woman at Point Zero, and answer these questions!

1. What is the story about?

2. Where does the story take place?

3. Who are the characters in the story?
4. Who is the main character and what is his or her profession? Give the evident!

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

5. What kind of person is the main character (describe the personality of the main character)?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

6. Why does the main character refuse to send an appeal to the president?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

7. What can we infer from Firdaus’ speech, “But with each man I ever knew, I was always overcome by a strong desire to lift my arm high up over my head and bring my hand smashing down on his face” (p.111).

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
8. How does the story end?


III. State whether the statement is true (T) or false (F) according to the information you find in the passage! Mention the evidents!

1. [ ] Firdaus is a princess who comes from respectable family.

2. [ ] Firdaus has killed a prince for she has a revenge on him.

3. [ ] The court gives Firdaus dead sentence for the crime she committed.

4. [ ] Firdaus hates every man she knows.

5. [ ] Women in Firdaus society have lower position than men.

IV. Use your dictionary to find out the synonym of these words taken from the passage.

1. Arched = __________________

2. Catered = __________________

3. Seductive = __________________

4. Protruding = __________________

5. Resist = __________________

6. Snatched = __________________

7. Enigma = __________________

8. Starving = __________________

9. Savage = __________________

10. Triuphed = __________________
V. Share what values you get from the story!

____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

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

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

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

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

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

Firdaus leaves the company and becomes a prostitute again. She is very expensive and very popular. Many powerful men come to her, and she turns some of them away to prove that she has power over her own body, and because she despises them. Ibrahim comes to her, and she realizes he never loved her; rather, he just wanted free sex. A pimp tries to take over Firdaus’s life, and for a little while, she lets him. Then they fight and she kills him. Shortly after that, Firdaus meets an Arab prince who takes her home and offers her $3,000. She sleeps with him, rips up the money, and slaps him. Terrified, the man calls the police. They come and arrest Firdaus. Firdaus is tried and sentenced to death.

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

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Nawal El Saadawi

by Jennifer McBride

Nawal El Saadawi is a leading Egyptian feminist, sociologist, medical doctor and militant writer on Arab women's problems. She is one of the most widely translated contemporary Egyptian writers, with her work available in twelve languages.

Nawal El Saadawi was born in 1931 in Kafr Tahla, a small village outside of Cairo. El Saadawi was raised in a large household with eight brothers and sisters. Her family was relatively traditional, El Saadawi was "circumcised" at the age of six, and yet somewhat progressive, El Saadawi's father insisted that all of his children be educated. El Saadawi describes her mother as "a potential revolutionary whose ambition was buried in her marriage." Her mother died when she was 25, and her father shortly thereafter, both unable to witness the incredible accomplishments their daughter went on to make.

Despite limitation imposed by both religious and colonial oppression on rural women, El Saadawi attended the University of Cairo and graduated in 1955 with a degree in psychiatry. After completing her education, El Saadawi practiced psychiatry and eventually rose to become Egypt's Director of Public Health. El Saadawi met her husband, Sherif Hetata, also a doctor, while working in the Ministry of Health, where the two shared an office together. Hetata shared El Saadawi's leftist views, himself having been imprisoned for 13 years for his participation in a left-wing opposition party.

Since she began to write over 25 years ago, El Saadawi's books (27 in all) have concentrated on women, particularly Arab women, their sexuality and legal status. From the start, her writings were considered controversial and dangerous for the society, and were banished in Egypt. As a result, El Saadawi was forced to publish her works in Beirut, Lebanon. In 1972, her first work of non-fiction, *Women and Sex*, which as the title suggests, dealt with the highly taboo subject of women and sexuality, and also the sensitive subjects of politics and religion. This publication evoked the anger of highly placed political and theological authorities,
and the Ministry of Health was pressured into dismissing her. Under similar pressures she lost her post as Chief Editor of a health journal and as Assistant General Secretary in the Medical Association in Egypt.

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

In 1977, she published her most famous work, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, which covered a host of topics relative to Arab women such as aggression against female children and female genital mutilation, prostitution, sexual relationships, marriage and divorce and Islamic fundamentalism.

From 1979-180 El Saadawi was the United Nations Advisor for the Women's Program in Africa (ECA) and the Middle East (ECWA).

Later in 1980, as a culmination of the long war she had fought for Egyptian women's social and intellectual freedom, an activity that had closed all avenues of official jobs to her, she was imprisoned under the Sadat regime, for alleged "crimes against the state." El Saadawi stated "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." In spite of her imprisonment, El Saadawi continued to fight against oppression. El Saadawi formed the Arab Women's Solidarity Association in 1981. The AWSA was the first legal, independent feminist organization in Egypt. The organization has 500 members locally and more than 2,000 internationally. The Association holds international conferences and seminars, publishes a magazine and has started income-generating projects for women in rural areas. The AWSA was banned in 1991 after criticizing US involvement in the Gulf War, which El Saadawi felt should have been solved among the Arabs.

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

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

Even after her release from prison, El Saadawi's life was threatened by those who opposed her work, mainly Islamic fundamentalists, and armed guards were stationed outside her house in Giza for several years until she left the country to be a visiting professor at North American universities. El Saadawi was the writer in residence at Duke University's Asian and African Languages Department from 1993-1996. She also taught at Washington State University in Seattle.

El Saadawi continues to devote her time to being a writer, journalist and worldwide speaker on women's issues. Her current project is writing her autobiography, laboring over it for 10 hours a day.