



Analysis of Characters and Characteristics in The Novel "Perempuan di Titik Nol" By Nawal El Saadawi Using A Feminism Approach

**Umi Narimawati, Titin Nurhayatin, Rani Siti Fitriani*

Universitas Pasundan, Indonesia

*Correspondence: E-mail: umiarie@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the characters and characterization in the novel "Women at Zero Point" by Nawal El Saadawi using a feminist approach. This novel depicts women's struggle in facing oppression, violence and gender injustice in a patriarchal society. A feminist approach is used to analyze how the female characters in this novel face these problems and struggle to find freedom. This analysis uses a literature review method by referring to the novel "Perempuan di Titik Nol" and relevant feminist literature studies. Focus is given to the main character, Firdaus, as well as other female characters in this novel. The results of the analysis show that the female characters in this novel face oppression and violence carried out by the patriarchal system. Firdaus, as the main character, faces various forms of sexual exploitation, domestic violence, and objectification by the surrounding community. However, this novel also highlights women's solidarity as a source of strength and support in their struggle against gender injustice. A feminist approach helps in seeing how the author criticizes patriarchal norms that limit women. Firdaus and other female characters challenge narrow social expectations and attempt to shape their identities outside these constraints. In conclusion, This analysis confirms that the novel "Women at Point Zero" is a reflection of women's struggle to seek freedom and overcome gender injustice in a patriarchal society. Women's solidarity and criticism of patriarchal norms are important themes in this novel, inviting readers to consider the role and influence of patriarchy in women's lives.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted/Received 17 Jan 2023

First revised 21 April 2023

Accepted 11 June 2023

Publication date 1 Oct 2023

Keyword:

Women at Zero Point; Nawal El Saadawi; Feminism; Characters; Characterization; Oppression; Gender Injustice

1. INTRODUCTION

The novel "Women at Point Zero" by Nawal El Saadawi is a literary work that has great meaning and influence in the context of women's struggle in a patriarchal society. (Maulida, 2019). In this novel, Saadawi depicts the stories of women who face various forms of oppression, violence and gender injustice that they face in everyday life. This novel is a witness to women's struggle against social norms that limit their freedom and rights.

In this analysis, a feminist approach is used to analyze the characters and characterizations in the novel "Women at Point Zero". This approach helps us understand how the female characters in this novel face gender problems experienced in a society dominated by patriarchy. By looking at how the author uses these characters to depict the complexity of women's experiences, as well as their struggle and resistance to gender oppression and injustice (Nurhayatin et al., 2018).

The novel *Women at Zero Point* was written by Nawal el-Saadawi, a writer from Egypt. The novel, with the original title *Women at Point Zero*, was written in Arabic which was then translated into Indonesian and published by the Indonesian Obor Foundation. The PDTN novel tells the story of the life of the character Firdaus who becomes a prostitute because of the influence of those closest to her who led her to become a prostitute. Saadawi, a feminist and human rights activist, used her writing as a means to express dissatisfaction with the social conditions that restricted women in Egyptian society at that time. This novel presents complex and deep female characters, depicting the reality of women's lives which are filled with struggle and sacrifice (Rokhmansyah, 2017).

In the context of feminism, character analysis and characterization in this novel play an important role in understanding the dynamics of gender power that exist in society (Albaruddin et al., 2022; Anisa et al., 2022). The female characters in this novel provide insight into women's experiences in facing gender oppression and injustice. They reflect various aspects of women's lives, ranging from domestic violence, sexual exploitation, to restrictions on women's rights in a patriarchal society.

In this analysis, we explore the journey of the main character, Firdaus, and other female characters in this novel. Firdaus is a woman who has faced various forms of oppression and violence throughout her life (Marwinda, 2019). By seeing how Firdaus' struggle reflects the experiences of many women in a patriarchal society. Apart from that, other female characters, such as Sharifa and female prisoners in prison, also provide important views about women's solidarity and the common struggle in seeking freedom.

Through a feminist approach, and identifying how the female characters in this novel form their own identities outside the boundaries set by society. This can be seen in how they fight against narrow social expectations and try to create space for freedom and independence. Apart from that, we also consider how the author uses male characters in this novel to describe the patriarchal forces that influence women's lives in society.

By analyzing the characters and characterizations in the novel "Women at Zero Point" using a feminist approach, we gain a deeper understanding of the representation of women in literary works and the importance of fighting gender oppression and injustice. This analysis also gives us awareness of women's solidarity in their struggle to achieve freedom and equality in a patriarchal society.

In this article, we discuss in detail the analysis of characters and characterization in the novel "Women at Zero Point" with a feminist approach. By exploring the journeys of female characters, the dynamics of gender relations, and their struggle in seeking freedom and liberation from gender oppression. This analysis can provide deeper insight into women's struggles and the importance of fighting gender injustice in society.

2. METHODS

In analyzing the characters and characterizations in the novel "Women at Point Zero" by Nawal El Saadawi using a feminist approach, several methods are used to explore a deeper understanding of the representation of women in this literary work. The methods used include literature review, textual analysis, and feminist studies.

First, the literature review method was used to collect relevant data and information regarding the novel "Perempuan di Titik Zero" and other works by Nawal El Saadawi. Sources used include editions of the novel, previous research articles, literary studies, and related feminist studies. Through literature review, we can gain a deep understanding of the novel's context, the author's background, and the themes raised in the work.

Second, textual analysis is used to examine the novel text in detail. We will see how the author develops female characters, dialogue, monologues, and interactions between characters. In this analysis, focus is given to the depiction of female characters, their lives, and the conflicts and struggles they face in a patriarchal society. By examining the text closely, we can identify the author's use of language, symbols, and writing style to convey a feminist message. According to (Nurhayatin et al., 2018; Nurhayatin & others, 2018) that correct and consistent spelling is an integral part of effective written communication.

Third, feminist studies provide the theoretical basis for this analysis. A feminist approach helps us understand and criticize the dynamics of gender power in this novel. Feminist theory provides a critical perspective on gender injustice, oppression and exclusion of women in society. In feminist studies, we will pay attention to the concepts of gender equality, patriarchy, sexism, and the social construction of women in society. Using this theoretical framework, we can see how the novel reflects or challenges social norms that limit women.

Through a combination of literature review methods, textual analysis, and feminist studies, this analysis will provide a comprehensive understanding of the characters and characterizations in the novel "Women at Point Zero". This method helps us explore the feminist message conveyed by the author, as well as see the struggle of women in seeking freedom, justice and equality in a patriarchal society.

By using this method, we can gain deeper insight into the representation of women in literary works and the importance of a critical understanding of gender roles in society. This analysis also contributes to feminist studies and literary studies by expanding understanding of women's struggle to achieve gender liberation and justice.

In this article, the analysis of characters and characterization in the novel "Perempuan di Titik Zero" will be carried out using literature review, textual analysis and feminist studies methods. Through this combination of methods, it is hoped that this analysis can provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the representation of women in novels, as well as seeing their struggle against oppression and gender injustice in a patriarchal society.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The novel "Women at Point Zero" by Nawal El Saadawi has strong and complex characters, and shows interesting characterizations in the context of a feminist approach. The following are the results of the analysis of the characters and characterizations in the novel using a feminist approach:

1. Firdaus: Firdaus, as the main character in the novel "Women at Zero Point" by Nawal El Saadawi, has a very important role in depicting women's struggle in seeking identity and freedom in a patriarchal society (Ambarwati, 2009). As a woman, Firdaus experienced

various forms of oppression and rape throughout her life. Through her characters, the author sharply describes the existing gender injustice and the system that impoverishes women.

Firdaus displays courage in challenging norms that limit women. She refuses to be a victim in an environment that demeans women. Through her courage, Firdaus teaches readers the importance of fighting gender injustice and fighting for the dignity of women.

The author also highlights Firdaus' strength and ingenuity in surviving amidst all difficulties. Even though he is trapped in the role assigned by society, Firdaus still shows strength and ingenuity in fighting the limitations imposed on him. Firdaus' character is a real example of how women can find the strength within themselves to fight oppression and gain the freedom they desire.

Through analysis using a feminist approach, we can see how important feminist awareness is in facing gender injustice and fighting systems that impoverish women. Other characters in this novel, such as Rifaat and Siti, also show the importance of women's solidarity in achieving gender equality.

Overall, the novel "Women at Zero Point" provides a strong depiction of women's experiences in a patriarchal society. Through the character Firdaus, the author sharply criticizes gender injustice and systems that harm women. This novel also emphasizes the importance of feminist awareness and women's solidarity in facing oppression and achieving true gender equality.

2. Rifaat: Rifaat, in the novel "Women at Zero Point" by Nawal El Saadawi, is a feminist character who plays an important role in Firdaus' life journey (Azizah, 2019). She is an inspiring figure and provides a new view of the power of women in achieving social change and emancipation.

Rifaat is a clear example that feminism is a collective struggle. She understands that women must unite and work together to fight gender injustice. Rifaat not only helped Firdaus personally, but also invited her to look at women's struggles more broadly and empower them.

Through the character Rifaat, the author highlights the importance of women's solidarity in achieving gender equality. Rifaat is a figure who provides support, understanding and inspiration to Firdaus. She introduced Firdaus to the concept of feminism and provided a new view of the power of women that can change the world.

Rifaat also shows that feminism is not only about individual struggle, but also collective struggle. She taught Firdaus that to achieve significant social change, women must unite, share experiences, and work together to fight gender injustice.

With the character Rifaat, this novel emphasizes that feminist awareness and women's solidarity are important in fighting oppression and achieving true gender equality. Rifaat became a symbol of the strength of women fighting for their rights in a patriarchal society.

3. Madame: Madame, in the novel "Women at Zero Point" by Nawal El Saadawi, is a prostitute who has a significant influence on Firdaus (Hearty, 2015). Madame's characterization illustrates the complexity of women who are trapped in roles determined by society.

Although Madame is in a degrading position in social terms, she shows strength and ingenuity in surviving. Madame represents women who are on the edge of society, who are forced to take difficult paths to earn a living and survive.

Madame's courage and ingenuity in facing her life's difficulties shows that although women are considered inferior by society, they have the potential and resources to survive and take control of their lives. Madame is not only a figure who has an influence on Firdaus, but also conveys the message that women have the ability to overcome stigma and fight for a better life.

In the characterization of Madame, the author highlights the complexity and diversity of women's experiences who are trapped in roles that have been determined by society. Despite being looked down upon, Madame shows courage and resilience in facing challenges and pursuing a better life.

Through the character of Madame, the author encourages readers to see that all women have unique stories and that they have the potential to overcome obstacles and achieve the life they desire. Madame became a symbol of women fighting against oppression and showed that women's strength and ingenuity cannot be ignored, despite their demeaning position in the social hierarchy.

4. Siti: Siti, as Firdaus' friend in the novel "Women at Zero Point" by Nawal El Saadawi, is a figure who experiences similar suffering as Firdaus (Mufidah, 2018). However, Siti's presence in this story symbolizes solidarity between women in facing gender injustice.

Siti represents support and sisterhood between women. Through their friendship, the author illustrates that women's struggles do not have to be done individually. Solidarity between women is an important key in gaining freedom and dignity.

In the face of the same oppression and suffering, Siti provided emotional and moral support to Firdaus. They listen to each other, understand each other, and strengthen each other. Siti's presence is a source of strength for Firdaus, because they both have similar experiences and understand the struggles they face.

In the context of feminism, Siti's presence emphasizes that women's struggles do not stand alone. Women's solidarity is a strong foundation in fighting gender injustice. Through the relationship that exists between Firdaus and Siti, the author invites readers to understand the importance of support between women and collective strength in achieving freedom and dignity.

By symbolizing women's solidarity, Siti reinforces the message that individual struggle is not enough. Together, women can form an unshakable force against systems that impoverish and degrade them.

Throughout the novel, Nawal El Saadawi presents female characters who dare to challenge the social norms that limit them. They reflect the importance of feminist consciousness and the power of women to change unjust conditions. The author also criticizes the patriarchal system that causes women's suffering and emphasizes the importance of collective struggle to achieve gender equality.

The feminist approach in this analysis provides a deep understanding of women's experiences in the novel "Women at Zero Point". This illustrates how women are faced with injustice, oppression, and their efforts to achieve freedom and dignity in a patriarchal society.

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion from the analysis of characters and characterization in the novel "Women at Point Zero" by Nawal El Saadawi using a feminist approach is that this novel depicts women's struggle to seek freedom and gain dignity in a patriarchal society. The main character, Firdaus, becomes a symbol of women's struggle in facing the norms that limit them. Through the characterization of Firdaus, the author criticizes gender injustice and a system

that impoverishes women. Firdaus refuses to be a victim and dares to challenge norms that limit women, showing the importance of feminist awareness in facing gender injustice. The existence of the figures Rifaat and Siti as women who support Firdaus' struggle shows the importance of women's solidarity in achieving gender equality. This novel also presents the character of Madame as an example of the complexity of the characterization of women who are trapped in roles determined by society, but still show strength and ingenuity in surviving. With a feminist approach, this analysis provides a deep understanding of women's experiences in a patriarchal society, and underlines the importance of feminist awareness and women's solidarity in changing unjust conditions.

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

7. REFERENCES

- Albaruddin, A., Hidayati, P.P., & Setiawan. (2022). Objective critical analysis oriented on the plot and characters in our novel ordinary people by andrea hirata. *Didactics: Scientific Journal of PGSD STKIP Subang*, 8(2), 1247–1269.
- Ambarwati, A. (2009). Feminist Perspective In The Novel Women At Point Zero Translation Of The Novel ImraâAtunâInda Nuqtah Al-Shifr By Nawal El-SaâDawi And Woman With Turban Necklace By Abidah El-Khalieqy. *Muwazah*, 1(1).
- Anisa, R., Hidayati, P.P., & Rustandi, A. (2022). Analysis Of Character Speak Acts And Characteristics In The Novel Thank You Love By Adi Rustandi And Its Relevance As Teaching Material In High School. *Didactics: PGSD STKIP Subang Scientific Journal*, 8(2), 1770–1780.
- Hearty, F. (2015). *Gender Justice: Muslim Feminist Perspectives In Middle Eastern Literature*. Indonesian Obor Library Foundation.
- Azizah, I.N. (2019). *Literature, Feminism, And Hiv: Existentialist Feminist Study Of The Film Asma Amr M. Salama*. Thesis. Faculty Of Adab And Humanities Uin Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Retrieved from: <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/45894>
- Marwinda, K. (2019). Oppression Of Women In The Novels Women At Zero Point And Midah The Cutie With Gold Teeth: Comparative Literary Study. *Grammatical: Scientific Journal Of Linguistics And Literature*, 7(2), 126–136.
- Maulida, U. (2019). Feminism In The Novel Women At Zero Point By Nawal El-Saadawi. *Dirasah: Journal of Islamic Basic Thought And Education*, 2(2), 11–23.
- Mufidah, B.N. (2018). *Nawal El Saadawi's Concept Of Feminism Perspective*. Thesis. UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Retrieved from: <http://digilib.uinsa.ac.id/22488/>
- Nurhayatin, T., Inggriyani, F., & Ahmad, A. (2018). Analysis of the effectiveness of using sentences in the scientific writing of elementary school teacher education students. *JPSD (Primary School Education Journal)*, 4(1), 102–114.
- Nurhayatin, T., Supian & Dindin. (2018). *Analysis of the use of spelling in the scientific writing of FKIP UNPAS students*. Retrieved from: <https://repository.unpas.ac.id/34029/>
- Rokhmansyah, A. (2017). Comparison Of The Main Character's Views On The Prostitute Profession In The Novel Women At Zero Point And The Novel God, Let Me Be A Prostitute! *Calls: Journal Of Culture, Arts, Literature, And Linguistics*, 2(2), 53–60.