

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is a reflection of a society and plays a role important in history. This statement also supported by Albrecht (1954: 425) in his journal entitled *The Relationship of Literature and Society*. He stated that in most theories of the relationship between literature and society reflection, influence, and social control are implied. Literature interpreted as reflecting norms and values, as revealing the ethos of the culture, the processes of class struggle, and certain types of social "facts."

Based on its form, literature divides into 3 types. They are poems, prose, and drama. Related to this statement, Aristoteles in Teeuw's Book (2015:85) defined literature in some criteria. The first one is a manner of poetic representation where the literature presented through the form of characters and the dialogues of characters. In this first criterion, we can find it easily in the prose. The second one is the manner of poetic representation in "I" of the lyric in the poem. The last criterion is a manner of poetic representation that only spoken by the characters in a drama.

Based on the modern theory, Wellek and Warren (2014:277) stated that prose divides into several types. They are sage, fairy tale, short story, and novel. Based on the time of its made, fairy tale and sage included the old literature, whereas, short story and novel included in modern literature. This research will focus on the novel. The novel studied in this research is also part of the bibliography

that written based on true events. The researcher held a study in Nawal El-Saadawi Novel entitled *Women at Point Zero*.

Nawal El-Saadawi is an Egyptian activist, writer, and psychiatrist. She is popular for her bravery to speak up about gender inequality, women's rights, and women in Islam. She has written many books and one of her best works is *Women at Point Zero*. This novel originally written in Arabic by the year in 1983; the novel was translated and published in London by Zed Book. The story inside of this novel mainly talks about gender inequality, oppression that happens to women by a patriarchal society, and a struggle against patriarchy. Besides, the background of this novel is in Muslim country and for the fact, it indicates the readers' who also come from the Muslim country might relate well with the story.

Being born and raises in this beloved country, Indonesia makes me familiar with the patriarchal way of living. In Indonesia, where culture and religion are heavily involved in daily life, it is quite hard not to notice gender inequality and patriarchy still exist in almost every single culture. Society treats men and women differently and even though globalization took place, we can still find out the evidence of misogynic traits in our society. As example the objectification of women: many Indonesian still view females as fragile creatures and belong to 'the kitchen'. This sort of perspective has been rooting in our society for years. The idea leads so many people to treat women not equally because they believe that women cannot do many things as men. Regarding that there are many of people who think it is legal to do anything towards women for example sexual harassment as they think that women are weak, useless, and unable to fight back.

In philosophy, the philosophers also depicted women in negative perceptions. Aristotle is one of the Philosophers that claim women as inferior creature. In his book called *Generation of Animals*, he mentioned, “*Women were lack of Virtues*”. He reflected women as intellectually, physically, and morally inferior to men. He judged women as the property of men and claimed that women’s role in society is for reproduction and serving men in the household, he saw men domination of women as something normal. His notion about biological essentialism (reproductive function) indicated as an attempt to placing women in a household.

Things that the researcher has mentioned above related to the novel entitled *Women at Point Zero*. The reason why the researcher chose this novel is that the novel is still relevant to nowadays society. It is about how the patriarchal oppress women and our society considered it as something common. Besides, this novel also has a background in a country with a majority of Muslims as well as Indonesia. Another thing that strengthens the researcher to choose this novel is because the novel based on true events, which makes it easier for anyone to understand and relate the things that happened in it.

Related to the patriarchal oppression there has been an article that discussed about it. The previous study is entitled *Analyzing the Potrayal of Patriarchal Oppression towards the female characters in J.K. Rowlings’s The Casual Vacancy: A Reflective Post-Feminist Critics*. It wrote by Nurliana Fitri and Erni Suparti in 2016. Therefore, the researcher interested about the patriarchal oppression with

different novel. Through that article, the researcher interested to analyze patriarchal oppression reflected through the main character.

The researcher hopes this study might be able to open people's minds that women are also human beings and treat them equally. Here are examples of the patriarchy system that reflected in the novel. Especially, the position of women is controlling under men. These dialogues are between Firdaus's uncle and his wife.

'Supposing she refuses?'

'Why should she refuse him?... besides she has inherited nothing, and has no income of her own. We will never find a better husband for her than Sheikh Mahmoud'

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

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

'How much?'

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

'If he pays a hundred pound then Allah will indeed have been generous to us and I would not be greedy to ask for more.'

'I will start with two hundred. You know he is a man who can argue for hours over five milliners and kill himself over a piaster.'

'If he pays one hundred pounds that will be sufficient blessing from Allah. I will be able to pay my debt and buy some underwear as well as a dress or two for her' (Page 37).

The patriarchal society that reflected through the novel motivated the researcher to do research to find out more how the patriarchal oppression toward women works. Oppression is the inequitable use of authority, physical force to prevent others from being free or equal (Rich, 1976: 270). The researcher hopes

this study will be helpful to the readers', society in the future, and open up women's minds toward the patriarchy system in society.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Women at Point Zero is a semi-fiction novel by Nawal El-Saadawi that has been existing for about 45 years and the issue that being discussed is still relevant with current situation in particular places throughout the world. It is about the issue of gender inequality and patriarchal society. Nevertheless, there are not much of people knowing this form oppression nor aware with it.

Therefore, according to the existing fact, the researcher tries to find out how patriarchal oppression reflected through the main character as well as to know several types of patriarchal oppression by implementing Young's theory of Oppression that divided oppression into small criteria such cultural Imperialism, exploitation, marginalization, and so on.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

To make the study well organized, this study will only focusses on patriarchal oppression towards the main character in novel. Hence, the researcher can analyze the novel in depth.

1.4 Research Question

How does the main character reflect patriarchal oppression based on Young's theory?

1.5 Objective of the Study

There are several goals that the researcher wants reach. The researcher wants to know how the main character describes in Novel as well as to find out how the patriarchal oppression reflected by implementing Young's theory. Through these things, the researcher will be able to delve deeper into patriarchal oppression in society.

Despite that, the researcher also hopes this study would acknowledge people about patriarchal society, oppression, and gender inequality. So that there will be no more discrepancy between men and women. In line with that, it also hopes that this study might increase awareness of oppression and make people more respectful to women as an equal human being in this universe.

1.6 Significances of the Study

Through this research, the researcher expects that the result of the study will contribute and will be useful for English Department of Universitas Pasundan, literature readers' & library research, local society, and to every single woman in Indonesia. The researcher will divide the significance into theoretically and practically:

A. Theoretically

1. This research expected to acknowledge people about patriarchy, patriarchal society, and oppression.
2. This research provided to increase an awareness of oppression towards women.

3. This research purposely to change people mindset of gender inequality.

B. Practically

1. The researcher hopes this research can be used as the reference for further research.
2. The study expects to contribute to the larger body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies on *Women at Point Zero* of Nawal El Saadawi.