



RESEARCH PAPER

Exploitation of Women in Arab Patriarchal Society in Saadawi's *God Dies by the Nile*: A Marxist Feminist Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Marxist feminists highlight the role of capitalist class and patriarchy in the victimization of women. Owing to patriarchal society, women have been subjected to social oppression. The fixed and fixated gender roles and misinterpretation of religious commandments are used to build a male dominated society where women can be subdued by men. The supremacy of males in a society has caused major issues in the form of harassment and exploitation. The novel *God Dies by the Nile* written by Egyptian novelist Nawal El Saadawi presents the true picture of patriarchal Arab society and asserts that how religion and different institutions are misused to subjugate women. The focal point of the research is to break down the routes of political, social and religious institutions and the way male-dominating society controls the social structure to define corridors of power. Another aim is to analyze the Arabic female peasants and the prevailing male capitalist system where lower class females are forced for labor and are exploited by ruling class of male capitalist. The researchers have taken Heidi Hartmann's ideas of patriarchy and class system from her work *The unhappy marriage of Marxism and Feminism* and Liza Macdonald ideas of suppression of women and class oppression from her work *Feminism and Socialism: Putting the Pieces Together*.

Keywords: Capitalist System, Egyptian Women, Feminism, Patriarchy, Women's Oppression

Introduction

This research area unveils the ways a patriarchal society works along capitalist class system to exploit and suppress women as presented in Nawal El Saadawi's novel *God Dies by Nile* (1985/ 2007). The present study aims at the textual study from the perspective of Marxist Feminism that shows women are victimized by class and patriarchy; women are oppressed by economic dependence and gender conflict as well. Nawal El Saadawi, an acknowledged Egyptian feminist and novelist, gives voice to female circumstances in Arab Muslim world. Her fiction is tagged as resistance literature written by a third world woman. Saadawi's text under study *God Dies by the Nile* presents a very clear picture of the patriarchal set up and how it marginalizes women. This novel is also an example of her suffering during her writing career. The publishers censored it because the title was metaphorically referring to the death of God. Sadaawi (1990) wrote that she wanted to write openly about the idea of "religion, sex, God, authority, the state" (p. 403) but under the pressure of patriarchal structure, the publishers censored the work.

The novel *God Dies by the Nile* (2007) narrates the lives and struggles of the people especially of Zakeya and her family residing in a village named Kafr El Teen. They fight against a vicious village mayor but they suffer at the hands of his puppets including Sheikh Zahran – the Chief of the Guard, Haj Ismail – the village barber, and Sheikh Hamzawi – Imam of the village. When the narrative opens, the reader is introduced to Zakeya and her family

who belongs to poor peasant class living a low life in a village which is ruled by the Mayor – the symbol of elite and ruling class. Four years ago, the only son of Zakeya had been sent to fight at Suez and he never came back. Zakeya lives with her brother, Kafrawi and his two daughters. They were living a peaceful life until the Mayor calls for Nefissa and their bad days started. They did not know that she will be molested and raped by him. When Nefissa gets pregnant, everyone start talking about it and the Mayor feels trouble. In order to hide his sin, he makes a plan. He accuses Kafrawi that he killed an innocent villager named, Elawu, saying that he is the man who is responsible for illegitimate child. Thus, Kafrawi is arrested and the mayor saved his position. Nefissa gives birth to the baby, abandons him and runs away and never comes back. After Nefissa, the Mayor rested his eyes on her younger sister, Zeinab who was also raped by the Mayor and the tyrannizing circle started again. Zakeya was so much affected by these incidents that she murdered the mayor; was arrested and jailed. Similarly, there is another important character in the novel, named Fatheya. She is a tough and daring girl who is forced to marry the Imam of the village against her will. After marriage, she came to know about the reality of her husband as an impotent man. She feels alone and deserted and she longs for a child, so that she could have some hope in her life. When she finds the illegitimate child of Nefissa, she takes him up and makes him her own son. But this was a step unaccepted by the society in which she lived. As a result, she is stoned to death.

According to Marxist-Feminist ideology, women are not only subjugated to oppression by the patriarchy but also at the same, different institutions work together to humiliate women and suppress their voice and rights. For Marxist Feminists, women are victims of both class and male centric society. Holmstrom (2002) characterizes Marxist Feminist liberation as an endeavor "to comprehend women's subordination in a sound and methodical way that coordinates class and sex, and different parts of character, for example, race/ethnicity or sexual introduction, with the point of utilizing this examination to help free women" (p. 38). At the end of the day, Marxist feminists consider class to be fundamental to women's lives and a few parts of ladies' lives in the family are financial while the others are social and ideological. Mitchell (2000) contends that any adjustment in the status of ladies ought to be joined by the thrashing of free enterprise and in addition male centric society through social and ideological means separately. "The Marxist progressive must connection arms with the Freudian Psychoanalyst keeping in mind the end goal to impact ladies' full and last freedom" (p. 412). She proposes that we should utilize Marxist procedures to topple private enterprise and psychoanalytic techniques to oust man centric society. Marxist Feminists like Nancy Holmstrom, Juliet Mitchell talk about different dimensions of Marxist feminism. Hartmann (1979) explicates Nawal El-Saadawi's Marxist feminists perspectives fixating on inimitable reasons for women's mistreatment, "the man centric class framework which shows itself universally as world private enterprise and dominion, and broadly in the medieval and entrepreneur classes of the underdeveloped nations" (p. 91).

Literature Review

The primary goal of this study is to look at and discover the ways through which women are subjugated and dehumanized in a male dominated society as depicted in Sadaawi's novel, *God Dies by the Nile*. Subsequently, it is significant to provide a brief overview of the general condition of women in other Middle East countries. By reviewing some studies in this area, this research presents previous researches which deal with the issues presented in the selected work. There are other writers and critics who hold diverse views and who conducted studies on the respected novel in different dimensions. Rice and Waugh (2001) elucidate that Marxist feminism is also "rooted in the political discourses of modernity" (p. 143).

In the *Origins of Family, Private property and the State* (2021), Engels refers to patriarchy as a form of the family whose essential features were the assimilation of

bondsmen, and power is the authority given to the paternal head of the family. Similar ideas could be found in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) by Marx and Engels. They are of the view that the prevalent industry now in the current modern age has converted this little workshop of the master of patriarchy into a huge factory of the industrial capitalist order. Patriarchy is not a mere socio-political problem; rather it is indicative of the social link of the domestic production relations.

Under the influence of patriarchy, the women of Middle East enjoy very limited rights and freedom. At every stage of their lives, they face different problems created by traditional and patriarchal customs. Afghanistan is one of the countries where women face subjugation at primary as well as secondary level. Women in Afghanistan have been subjected to the repercussions to gender disparity for ages. The literature of Afghanistan also shows the plight of women and how they suffer at the hands of men. Zam Kazemiyan (2012) in his thesis, *A Thousand Splendid Suns: Rhetorical Vision of Afghan Women*, examined the plight of women inside their houses ruled by patriarchy during several invasions in Afghanistan. The issue of gender equity is shown through the characters of Mariam and Laila. The protagonist, Laila, shows how women are deprived of their rights, and how women are tamed by men owing to their economic dependence on them. Laila was not allowed to go to school and at every stage of her life her choices were oppressed just since she belongs to the female gender. This suppressed environment transformed her into a rebel and throughout her life she struggle hard to free herself from this brutal system of patriarchy. In the novel, it is shown that how women face different problems. They lack freedom, identity, they have no personal space, they are victim of forced marriages, and they are tortured at every stage of their lives.

In his article "The Murder of Aziz Khan: A Marxist Perspective", Muhammad Ayub Jajja (2012) talks about the condition and situation of the society as presented by Zulfiqar Ghose in his novel *The Murder of Aziz Khan* (1967). It is about the story of lower class as well as of women. It shows that how lower class and women are exploited by the upper class and landlord due to the social and economic gap. The picture of society portrayed in this novel shows that how upper-class suppresses lower-class and women are always a victim to be exploited by men. In this work, researcher talks about the basic Marxist claim that the economic base of a society makes the shape of its superstructure and ideology. Those who are in power can do whatever they want by using their wealth. The character of Razia shows a weird behavior just because of social taboos and she suffers from restlessness throughout her life even though she is the wife of a landlord. She symbolizes the lives of all those women who are victims of patriarchy, and who cannot get themselves free from the shackles of socio-economic system where they seldom feel free to live their lives on their own.

Nurridin Farah also talks about the status of women in traditional societies and how they suffer to maintain patriarchal and Islamic values in *From a Crooked Rib* (2006). Mixon (1987) in "The social and political status of women in the novels of Nuruddin Farah" discusses the condition of female in a Somalian society. Her dissertation portrays the life of Ebla who is a simple yet courageous girl, a youthful itinerant pastoralist from the Ogaden who looks for self-assurance through her battles to split far from her customary society which respects ladies as no superior to anything Adam's "crooked rib" and follows up on her disdain of the part that she should play as a lady in Somali culture, with its subordination, helplessness, and steady dismal work. She starts struggling against the chains of patriarchy and dreaming to seek equality but with the passage of time she comes to know that in a male dominated society she can never get a place equal to that of men. At the end, she asks so many existential questions. She makes so many questions on religion. She questions the working of society. She concludes that this world needs equilibrium and we can get this state if we are kind to each other and we respect each other personal' space.

In "Engendering War in Hanan Al Shaykh's 'The Story of Zahra'", Shihada (2008) talks about the condition and oppression of women in patriarchal Lebanese society. She

finds that in the novels of Al-Shaykh, the protagonists are not the subjects rather they act like objects. Objects in the hands of patriarchy where they are treated as second-class citizens, inferior individuals, powerless both socially and economically. Such circumstances make them so befuddled and submissive that they stop arguing and rising voice for their rights, rather they allow themselves to be controlled by men in every aspect. There are few cases, where they try to show some independence, or try to ask for a position in a male-dominated society, but they are even reluctant and confused at that time. In *The story of Zahra* (1994), the author Hanan Al Shaykh painstakingly describes the miserable situations that entrench women within the contemporary Islamic world. Zahra begins a procedure of self-mutilation, an image of her dismissal of her general public and its traditions. With her nails, Zahra deliberately distorts her face until the point when the blood begins to overflow from her pimples to such degree that it has turned into her tenacity behind getting up early every morning. At the end, she gets pregnant by a spinner and when she informs him about the pregnancy, he denies and steps back. The story takes a turn when he gets sweet and promise to marry her but within few seconds he shoots Zahra and her body lay there in the street while blood was draining from her body. Fwangyil (2012) in her thesis, *An Analysis of Female Oppression in Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero and God dies by the Nile* analyses the resistance of women in patriarchal societies. From infancy to adulthood, women face different kinds of oppression in every field of life.

Issaka (2010) in *The Situation of the Women in Patriarchal African Society: A Study of Nawal El Saadawi's God Dies by The Nile* deals with the condition of women in patriarchal African societies. The content of the novel clearly manifests that women are subjected to hold inferior position in the traditional society. The study discovers that even though women are treated inferior in the society, the Islamic societies cleverly misrepresent Islam in order to subjugate and impede the development of women. Further, the study concludes that patriarchy described as a cultural impediment in *God Dies by the Nile* and *Woman at Point Zero* manifests as a system framed by the socio-political, economic and cultural elements held together by class dynamics. The critical review of the two texts by Nawal El Saadawi clearly shows that nowhere in the Qu'ran it is stated that women are inferior to men. This research is addressing the concept that even though women have a low position in patriarchal society, but in Islamic societies the percepts of religion are being manipulated in order to oppress and control women.

Research Methodology

The researchers' qualitative analysis is drawn on views of Marxist feminist theorists like Liza Macdonald (1997) and Heidi Hartmann (1976 & 1979). According to Heidi Hartmann (1976), patriarchy is all about knowing the ways to control women's capacity to access the "resources and their sexuality" (p. 138). Labor market is supporting and retaining this hierarchal control. The idea of low wages is actually the reason which forces women to be dependent on men for their survival. Women want to be secured financially and they find the tool of marriage a best weapon for it. Now after marriage, another binary pops up. Women are forced to do domestic works because they are made to believe that they are performing their duty, and thus in this way men benefit from high wages and at the same time control the lives of women. In *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism*, Hartmann (1979) asserts that although "Marxism and feminism are (considered) one" (p. 2) but the integration of Feminism and Marxism is not sufficient enough because they give more importance to Capitalist struggle and ignore Feminist struggle. Marxism is something which provides egalitarian picture of the society but is actually sex-blind. If we compare the characteristics of radical feminism and capitalist society, it is evident that both of these look down upon women, something inferior and dependent on men. She asserts that in order to know and acknowledge the present situation of women, the strengths of both Marxism and feminism should be utilised. Women should be free from the patriarchal as well as capitalistic shackles of the society.

From a Marxist feminist point of view, family is considered as a unit whose patriarchal organization leaves no room for women's autonomy and independence. Mitchell (2000) criticizes it as the means to reproduce 'external relationships which dominate the society' and an assumed refuge "from society which becomes a reflection of it" (pp.146-47). In *Feminism and Socialism: Putting the Pieces Together*, Macdonald (1997) states that the institution of family is a weapon used against women. Family is responsible for the oppression of women. Because it is believed those women are made for homes and they have no place in social production. They do not have any independent position. Their productive role is not determined by the society but by the family to which they belong. They are subordinate to the man of the family, either brother, father or husband. It is this economic dependence which makes them secondary individuals and ranked them inferior in society.

Analysis and Discussion

The essence of this study is to analyze the text of the selected novel *God Dies by the Nile* in the light of Marxist Feminist views. The main argument of this research is that women are victims of patriarchy and capitalist class system. This system is fortified by politics, religion and traditional customs. This analysis aims to reveal the dark sides of the patriarchy where women being powerless are subjugated and raped, even men are degraded if they fail to support the order of patriarchy. The title of the novel is a metaphor for both patriarchy and religion. It manifests the ways to show the power of ruling class and how this power is used to manipulate religion and to use it against women to oppress them. El Saadawi says that it is not possible "to keep sex separated from politics". It is a kind of trilogy which "comprises politics, religion, and sex" as they are the most sensitive issues in society (p. 4). Moreover, in *God Dies by the Nile*, it is portrayed that the Mayor of Kafr El-Teen is a symbol of the patriarchy. Such people who live in patriarchal set up consider themselves to be at the top of world so much so that they "don't know the word impossible". They are so arrogant that "they walk over the earth like gods" (p. 54). Through the character of Zakeya, the helplessness of women is depicted. She symbolizes how women can be maltreated at the hands of such people. Within this perspective Gordon (1996) argues that "women typically face more disadvantages and exploitation than men do". They face poverty and under-development and their role is confined "by patriarchal attitudes and practices" which privilege men "from the level of the family up to the state" (p. 7).

Marx (1972) writes that "mode of production" and "material life" are related to social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence; rather it is their economic, social and material existence that determines their consciousness" (pp. 20-21). Thus, it is evident that the ideology of the upper or ruling class is manifested in the minds of the downtrodden class including both women and men. Zakeya, Kafrawi, and his two children represent the lower and suffering class. They toil and sweat just for their survival. Without this hard work, they are likely to die of hunger. Their lives revolve around the land and their minds are fully occupied with their work. Therefore, when she is summoned stating, if Nefissa works as a maid in the house of the Mayor, she will be paid and her family would be taken care of too. They are so crushed by the tyranny of poverty that they perceive this idea as a panacea for their sufferings. The fact is that lower class is oppressed in society and women are doubly oppressed by both society and their family men. This is exemplified in the behavior of Nefissa when she says that she works in her father's house and she works in fields all day. She resisted going to the Mayor's house. She keeps crying and lamenting as she hides herself (p. 21). Unfortunately, she has no right to make a decision about her life and is forced to work at the Mayor's house. She is persuaded by Sheikh Zahran to accept the offer. The way Sheikh Zahran persuaded her shows the mentality of the men of the society. In a capitalist society, where women are forced to do work simply because to earn and get rid of the hunger shows the way, how women are doubly oppressed by the society as well as the class system.

Greenblatt (1995) says that beliefs of the people tend to control to their mindset. It is for this purpose that Kafrawi thinks that the Mayor is someone in authority and he can not be disobeyed; consequently, Nefissa is sent to the Mayor's house. Nefissa's departure from her home is very tragic. It becomes a symbolic scene to emphasize how she is forced into child labor. Her agony and anguish are conveyed to the reader through the teary eyes of the donkey. The facial gestures of donkey are expressive of her agony as the donkey suddenly "brayed in a long, drawn-out gasping lament" (p. 6). Throughout the novel, it is shown that patriarchy is an oppressive system. It is, however, clear that without its ideology, patriarchy is valueless. For the survival and maintenance of the power of patriarchy, the ideology of it should be instilled in the minds of the members of society. This ideology is made by the ones in power, and the ones who control the institutions of society. They use different weapons to inject this ideology in the minds of people. In the novel, this force is used through the lower class people like Kafrawi and Masoud who are reminded at every point of their lives that their patriarchal authority and manhood are at stake if they do not use their force to control the lives of their daughters and have them married where the Mayor wants. For instance, when both Kafrawi and Masoud show their helplessness that they can not make their daughters agree to the proposals, and ask what they should do as their daughters refuse to obey. Sheikh Zahran becomes furious and instigates them by challenging their manhood. "Why can't you do anything? Don't you know how to make the women of your house behave? Don't you have the guts to beat them? Beat them. That's how you tame women" (p. 21). He urges them to use their power, and even asks them to beat their daughters. Therefore, one may argue that in patriarchy; even the victim plays the significant role of the victimizer. The lower-class men are victimized by the oppressive class system of society, but when it comes to women, they become victimizer themselves.

Gramsci (1971) argues that patriarchy is "a repressive system" that can be sustained through the "force of coercion" (p.12). The oppressed learns to neglect their being and accept the views of the oppressor. The institutions like religion, politics and customs strengthen patriarchy to maintain the male dominance and control of women's lives. The Imam of the mosque, Sheikh Hamzawi, represents the religious oppressive ideology and shows how men use it to empower their will. The cultural traditions are symbolized through the character of local healer, Haj Ismail and the coercive power of the politics is personified by the Head of the Village Guard, Sheikh Zahran. The most important point about patriarchy is that the moral standards for men and women are not alike. Society expects different things from women as compared to men. For El Saadawi (1980), the whole society presents a gender conflict as "the sexual experience in the life of a man is a source of pride and a symbol of virility, whereas sexual experience in the life of women is a source of shame and a symbol of degradation" (p. 31). This sexual arrogance allows men to dominate women and remind them at every stage of their life that they are inferior and secondary human beings.

El-Saadawi seeks to inspect the multiple dimensions of patriarchy and how it works to suppress women. A very important institution which is the backbone of patriarchy is religion. Religious ideology plays an important role in the lives of people. They do not question anything about it and this is what allows the patriarchal power to mould the ideology according to their own benefits. In *God Dies by the Nile*, Sheikh Hamzawi, the Imam of the mosque, is referred to as Man of God and people listen to him. He is empowered to change the mentality of people by giving references from religion; however, it is very ironical that most of the time he says things which are only in favor of men. Throughout the novel, he talks about the submissiveness of women and how they should live their lives, ignoring the fact that religion also says things for men. The marriage of Sheikh Hamzawi and Fatheya is an example of it. As he holds a position of religious leader in the village, he is allowed to force her for marriage. He is "responsible for upholding the teachings of Allah, and keeping the morals and piety of the village intact" (p. 30). He sends Haj Ismail to ask for Fatheya's hand in marriage, but she refuses. The refusal makes him furious and he sends him again with the suggestions to beat her, only then she will listen to him. Masoud beats her and after that marries her off to the respected Imam of the village, overlooking the true

teachings of religion. Sheikh Hamzawi is impotent yet he believes that Allah can make him do what he wants, as he thought so high of himself, in order to hide his sexual impotency. As a man who knows everything about religion and who believes that he is superior to others, all that matters to him is how he should manipulate the verses to marry a girl forcefully. Man in patriarchal societies maintains what Mary Ellmann in *Thinking about Women* (1968) refers to as "Phallic Criticism" which presents women as inferior and secondary. They can be good only as a wife or a mother. Other than these two positions, they have nothing else to achieve. They are given the name and identity by the men to whom they belong. It can be assumed that in patriarchal societies, men like Hamzawi see the sacred institution of marriage as a trade of possessions for those who have wherewithal to afford it. It means that people who are wealthy can pay money to the girl's father if they want to marry one. Hamzawi is obsessed with his virility, and for him manhood is all about asserting his power. Saadawi (1997) in *The Nawal El Saadawi Reader* says that her grandmother stepped out of the house on two occasions. The first occasion was when she went to "her husband's house" after marriage as she had to leave her father's house and, the second occasion was when she had "to be buried". On both occasions, she was greatly taken care of the fact that none of her body part should have remained "uncovered" (p. 87).

It is noteworthy that just like the system of patriarchy, moral values are also man-made for their own advantages. Just like the ideology, these values are imposed by the ruling class on the lower class, especially on women. The upper class suppresses the lower class, depriving them of their rights and making their minds the way they want. Similarly, women are also considered inferior to men and they are treated like the lower class. In case of women, men act like the upper class and they make the morality of the society in order to maintain the patriarchal order. These moral values are used to serve certain economic and political interests and to retain the power system. To put it differently, the historical conquer of the female sex, for Engels has begun during advent of civilization. Economic and political dimensions shape the moral values of a society. The ruling class set the economic standards and hence political and moral too. According to Saadawi (1997), "We cannot look at the cultural gap without looking at the economic gap" (p.135) and the gap between sexes is related to this economic and social gap.

The class gap gives way to a terrible psychological effect on the mental consciousness of the poor working class. Owing to this class difference, people like Sheikh Zahran act like puppets. They want to be a part of the upper class; thus, they become hypocrites and start doing things for their masters. They are always there to serve them and show compliance. Furthermore, Sheikh Hamzawi talks about the Mayor's domineering power. He says that the Mayor is the one who rules the village and the daily bread of all the people of the village is in his hands and if he gets angry or displeased with anyone, he can deprive them of it. At the same time, he can take the land back from the peasants, while land is everything for them (p.106). Talking about the significance of the land for poor farmers Fanon (1963) says, "For them the most essential value is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity"(p. 34). Sex is used as a metaphor to show the disastrous and humiliating effects of the patriarchal class system. The people of the upper class, men in power, use their power to suppress women and molest them sexually. It is used as one of the instruments of power always used against women in any form including material, physical and religious one. It is evident that people in power can do anything to women. They are allowed to sexually assault women because at the end of the day, no one is going to judge them. Jaber (2011) argues that "gender oppression" is synonymous with "class oppression" because it is also in the best interest "of capital and the ruling class" (p. 101).

It is important to note that this novel presents an awful picture of how poor servant women are dominated by the upper class men. The poor women are kept employed by the upper class people at low wages, which in turns, helps those men to repeatedly assault them

sexually as well as psychologically. The masters of these women act cruelly, and their every act conveys the message that the lives of their employees are under their control. It is pathetic in the sense that on the one hand, they pay low salaries to the peasant women, and on the other hand, they manipulate their lives. The most horrible fact is that even their sons are allowed to do whatever they want to do with the peasant girls. Following the steps of his father, Tariq, mayor's son, also roams around harassing and sexually abusing female servants in his home. His mother is truly aware of everything and she feels so miserable about it. She feels as if men are only born to use their power to humiliate female.

Furthermore, *God Dies by the Nile* unveils a social world and shows how difficult it is for women to live in a patriarchal society based on class and gender. They have the burden of honor and modesty to take care of. No matter how much submissive and obedient they are, they still face criticism. For instance, the Mayor's wife is able to see the insincerity of the patriarchal ideology when her own son talks about sexual immorality, but forgets his own deeds and blames girls for this. He targets girls by calling them whores and utters how they are polluting the village environment with their decadent acts. He is blind to his own acts as well as that of his father how they are molesting women and seeking sexual pleasures from these puppets. He is following the footsteps of his father, indulging in bad deeds and using his power to subjugate others. His mother observes everything, but she always remains quiet. Within this perspective, Jaber (2001) argues that women are oppressed by two kinds of patriarchy. One is a sort of "private patriarchy" that is practiced through domestic relations within the setup of family and home. The second one is the "public patriarchy" which is projected through the state-institutions and the state-religion which are the politicized versions of Islam (p.101). Susan Brownmiller in *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975) considers rape as the instrument to be used by men to force a woman to have sexual intercourse against her will, thus making her mere an object for the satisfaction of man. To compare this thought with that of Heidi Hartman in *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism* (1979), where she states that rape of a women actually endorse this idea that she is the property of a man. Just like the capital power wants to control his workers, similarly, men want to control the women to manifest their power. In a nutshell, capitalism and patriarchy are nothing but two sides of the same coin.

The most powerful and rebellious resistance is shown by Zakeya. The life story of Zakeya is just like other peasant women who face different types of problems while living in a male-dominated society. But she never complains, not even once. The reader always finds her silent and depressed. She is busy in chores and not showing any gesture of pain. The rape of Nefissa and Zeinab and the imprisonment of her brother Kafrawi are so excruciating and shocking for her that these incidents left her in bewilderment. Till the happening of these incidents, readers are not aware of her past, dark and gloomy past, which always lurks within her. But even after all these suffering and hardships we see that Zakeya is a strong woman; she is an embodiment of peasant discrimination and a symbol of female obstinacy. She has lost two of her two daughters to the Mayor's sexual lust. Her feelings and mental suffering could be felt by everyone. At start, she is not aware of the role of Mayor and how he is destroying the peace of their lives but with each passing day and tormenting incident she starts realizing the position of mayor and how he is using it. She decides to kill the Mayor, and end the oppression of women. Her act shows that she does not want other poor people to suffer, like her family did. She strikes the head of the mayor and it symbolically shows that she attacks at the head of patriarchy. She uses her weapon, the weapon of a peasant, which she always used to sow seeds. After that, she is arrested and imprisoned but she is not guilty of her act rather we can see the peace in her words. It seems as if she has gained peace after a long battle, a battle where she won. She submits herself to the will of Allah. As she refers to her son, she feels satisfied upon the idea that God is protecting him. That is why she is contended to bury him "on the bank of the Nile" (Saadawi, 2007, p.138)

In a nutshell, Zakeya's action shows that when women are severely confined and oppressed then the internal anger of the women let them fight against the suppressing patriarchal system. It also alludes that the path to liberation and freedom is not easy. It is difficult and thick with thorns. They have to face so many evils and bear so much pain. It is not easy to free themselves from the shackles of a society which is accustomed to class hierarchy and gender discrimination.

Conclusion

To conclude, in *God Dies by the Nile*, patriarchy comes out as a system which is consolidated by political, economic, social, cultural, and psychological manifestations bound together to shape the class system and to prevail oppression and tyranny. The suffering of the female characters, Zakeya, Zeinab, Nefissa and Fatheya in the above discussed novel, is all because of such oppressive and male dominated system. The survival of the suppressing patriarchal class ideologies depend on the religion to instill the ideology and to get it implemented in the society. This is the reason that the institution of the religion is manipulated by the man in power, the Mayor. The impact of such horrendous ideology has been manifested through double moral standards, rape, sexual humiliation, psychological torture, physical violence and illegitimate children. The murder of the Mayor shows the restoration of the sense of freedom and self-respect of Zakeya and at the same time, it shows the murder of the patriarchy. Within this context, Fanon (2011) comments, "This violence represents the absolute line of action" (p. 67). Moreover, the study finds that the forged, impolite, misinformed and erroneous assumptions that are associated with Islam are not correct. The study shows that how different characters associate the false teachings of mistreatment and subjugation of women, to Islam, in order to authenticate their views.

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