



**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JEAN RHYS'S
AND NAWAL EL SAADAWI'S NOVELS FROM
FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES OF BELL HOOKS
AND KAREN HORNEY**

**2022
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ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Hussein Mohammed Abdulridha AL-GBURI titled “A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JEAN RHYS’S AND NAWAL EL SAADAWI’S NOVELS FROM FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES OF BELL HOOKS AND KAREN HORNEY” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazila HEIDARZADEGAN

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This thesis is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of English Language and Literature as a Master’s thesis. July,06,2022

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Director of the Institute of Graduate Programs

DECLARATION

As a consequence, I confirm that this work is the results of my efforts, and that all data in it was acquired and presented in accordance with the institute's academic standards and ethical norms. In addition, I declare that any non-original statements, findings, or materials have been verbatim attributed and cited. Any detection that violates the aforementioned declaration will have moral and legal ramifications for me.

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Signature:

FOREWORD

First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Asst. Prof. Dr Nazila Heidarzadegan for providing constructive comments and academic guidance, as well as believing in me and assisting me during my studies.

I am also grateful to all of my esteemed professors in English Language and Literature Department of Karabük University for enlightening me with their vast knowledge and valuable contributions.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to my devoted parents, who have always encouraged me to accomplish this research.

DEDICATION

- I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family without whom I could not finish this job.
- I particularly thank my parents for their unconditional support through my whole life.
- I also thank my dear supervisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Nazila Heidarzadegan whose constant help and efforts provided me with inspiration to write this thesis.

ABSTRACT

Women's oppression is a global problem not restricted to a certain country. Female writers, like many activists, have been constantly working to achieve gender equality through their writings by creating a number of heroines whose struggles in patriarchal societies symbolize their subjugation. Among these authors are Jean Rhys and Nawal El Saadawi whose works and heroines might be comparable despite coming from two different countries with different rules and traditions. This study analyzes Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) and *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), along with El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* (1975) and *The Fall of the Imam* (1987) in the light of feminist theories of bell hooks and Karen Horney. bell hooks's perspectives demonstrate that sexism is the most leading type of suppression, and the aim of such writers as Rhys and El Saadawi have been to eradicate sexist oppression by portraying some of the most severe challenges undergone by women. Horney's theories of basic anxiety and self-actualization also reveal that constructing a free and independent identity is problematic, if not impossible, for the heroines of these works. Likewise, differences between men and women are not because of their biology but due to the society and culture in which they live.

Keywords: Basic Anxiety; bell hooks; Intersectionality; Karen Horney; Sexism; Self-actualization

ÖZ

Kadınların ezilmesi belli bir ülkeyle sınırlı olmayan küresel bir sorundur. Kadın yazarlar, pek çok aktivist gibi, ataerkil toplumlardaki mücadeleleri boyun eğdirilmelerini simgeleyen bir dizi kadın kahraman yaratarak, yazıları aracılığıyla sürekli olarak cinsiyet eşitliğini sağlamaya çalışıyorlar. Bu yazarlar arasında, farklı kural ve geleneklere sahip iki farklı ülkeden gelmelerine rağmen eserleri ve kadın kahramanları karşılaştırılabilir olan Jean Rhys ve Nawal El Saadawi vardır. Bu çalışma Rhys'in *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) ve *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) ile El Saadawi'nin *Woman at Point Zero* (1975) ve *The Fall of the Imam* (1987) filmlerini feminist çan kancaları ve Karen Horney teorileri ışığında analiz etmektedir. Bell Hooks'un bakış açıları, cinsiyetçiliğin en önde gelen baskı türü olduğunu gösteriyor ve Rhys ve El Saadawi gibi yazarların amacı, kadınların maruz kaldığı en ciddi zorluklardan bazılarını tasvir ederek cinsiyetçi baskıyı ortadan kaldırmaktır. Horney'nin temel kaygı ve kendini gerçekleştirme teorileri, bu eserlerin kadın kahramanları için özgür ve bağımsız bir kimlik inşa etmenin imkansız değilse de sorunlu olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Benzer şekilde, cinsiyet farklılıkları da biyolojiden ziyade bireylerin yaşadığı çevre ve kültürden kaynaklanmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Temel Kaygı; Bell Hooks; Kesişimsellik; Karen Horney; Cinsiyetçilik; Kendini Gerçekleştirme

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ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ

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SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

The subject of the thesis is a comparative study of Jean Rhys's and Nawal El Saadawi's novels from the feminist perspectives of bell hooks and Karen Horney in order to find their similarities regarding such themes as the predicaments of women who suffer from racial and sexual domination.

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The current study uses a feminist technique to examine a number of works by two female novelists, Jean Rhys and Nawal El Saadawi. Rhys and El Saadawi are from different cultures across the globe; thus, comparing their works is intended to evaluate how similar or different they are in the ways they represent feminist issues. *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) and *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) by Rhys, and *Woman at Point Zero* (1975) and *The Fall of the Imam* (1987) by El Saadawi were chosen as the thesis's subjects of analysis.

The significance of this study is that it attempts to find the similarities between Jean Rhys and Nawal El Saadawi as two authors who set their writings in different contexts with such themes as the dilemmas of the women who suffer from racial domination and sexual assault. bell hooks and Karen Horney are selected because of their substantial role in revealing the reality behind women's subjugation from different aspects.

bell hooks is chosen because of her emphasis on the 'intersectionality of race, capitalism, and gender' and what she has described as these three factors to cause and prolong women's subjugation and class domination (hooks, 2000b, p. 65). In addition, as one of the first female psychiatrists, Karen Horney is obsessed with the role of cultures and communities worldwide in encouraging women to be reliant on men for their affection, status, affluence, and security. She also indicated that in a society, women were assumed as objects of appeal and prettiness, which made their desire for self-actualization more impossible (Paris, 1999, p. 157-166).

Since the works will be studied in the thesis belong to Western and Arab communities, benefitting from the theories of the previously cited feminists can

disclose how similar and different female characters are in these novels regarding the social and psychological aspects of women's subjugation.

Finally, it should be added that the most significant goal that this thesis intends to attain is an in-depth analysis of a number of novels as feminist resources whose writers depicted women's condition. Therefore, the study is significant because it compares the main female characters in these novels by analyzing their attempts to achieve their objectives in life. What the study discusses through the mentioned theories will play an imperative role in knowing about the novels' psychoanalytical and postcolonial facets, their ideology regarding race, gender, and the authors' method of writing back to the center of power. Ultimately, it is found that the problems which the heroines of Rhys and El Saadawi experience are universal. This is the reason why El Saadawi remarks:

The oppression of women, the exploitation and social pressures to which they are exposed, are not characteristic of Arab or Middle Eastern societies, or countries of the 'Third World' alone. They constitute an integral part of the political, economic and cultural system, preponderant in most of the world — whether that system is backward and feudal in nature, or a modern industrial society that has been submitted to the far-reaching influence of a scientific and technological revolution (El Saadawi, 2010, p. 2).

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

In order to explore these novels, this study will benefit from the theories of bell hooks, an American feminist, and Karen Horney, a German psychoanalyst. The reason behind choosing these two intellectuals is that applying their theories will enable the researcher to analyze the role of socio-cultural and psychological factors in women's subjugation and deprivation of self-actualization as the highest level of a woman's psychological development.

The conceptions of these two theoreticians would help reveal how the female characters in the previously mentioned novels have certain goals in mind. Still, they oscillate between whether or not to achieve them, representing their ideal self and real self. In other words, it is going to be concluded that establishing a distinct identity seems hard and even impossible for these novels' female characters. Also, it will be stated that differences between men and women are rooted in society and culture rather than in biology.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH/RESEARCH PROBLEM

The novels of Rhys and El Saadawi are the subject of analysis by so many critics through different approaches. However, there is a gap between the studies about the comparative investigation of these two authors' novels, mainly the issue of self-actualization and self-awareness, which are instigated by many features like basic anxiety.

Thus, this thesis is going to be the first research in this regard by probing into the situation of two different cultures' women, their difficulties, anxieties, and mental anguish while trying to develop a distinct identity. Likewise, it will be stated that although Rhys belonged to the Caribbean island of Dominica and El Saadawi is an Egyptian writer, their writings are assumed as resistance to male authority.

Rhys's and El Saadawi's female characters can be claimed to be subjugated by their patriarchal society, which deprives them of having an independent identity. Hence, it is important to see if they reach an awareness of subjugation and, if yes, how this awareness will lead to their identity formation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Feminism has provided critics and researchers with a helpful methodology to scrutinize those literary works that revolve around women's repressive conditions in patriarchal societies. Feminism can also be employed in the analysis of different works by different worldwide authors whose purpose has been to disclose women's oppression in male dominant societies. There can be found plenty of writers who have been obsessed with this issue despite belonging to different cultures.

Applying the feminist approach to the analysis of literary works aims at forming and setting equal civil, political, financial, and societal rights for women. Depending on its cultural or political goals, feminism is viewed as a movement to attain equality for women in various areas. Although it is believed that there is a remarkable difference between the status of women in Eastern and Western societies, analysis of world literature shows that they both face oppression to varying degrees and in different ways. For instance, the limitations of Western women have been mainly due to social issues. In contrast, the most important factors leading to Eastern women's oppression have been because of their conventional societies.

Overall, culture plays an important role in imposing such restrictions on women worldwide, whose misery has always been the focus of many literary works like those of Jean Rhys and Nawal El Saadawi. Both these writers have portrayed women who are trying hard to make their way in a cruel society that has isolated them even from the nearest ones. Besides, both writers are regarded as two renowned female writers whose writings generally revolve around bottled-up and suppress women.

It can be claimed that through their writings, Rhys and El Saadawi attempted to reflect many autobiographical truths. This chapter will provide a brief introduction to Rhys and El Saadawi in order to learn more about their commonalities. Also, the feminist theories of bell hooks and Karen Horney will be discussed in detail. To put it another way, in order to focus on the psychological and social oppression of female characters in the previously mentioned novels based on the theories of bell hooks and Karen Horney, a background of the novels is required; also, a detailed account of hooks's and Horney's theories will be presented.

1.1. Feminism

Feminism is considered an appealing theory in the realm of literature since it offers new perspectives for a better understanding of literary works. What led to feminism was women's being restricted at home. In medieval Europe, women were deprived of the right to have any possessions, study, or participate in the social sphere. Even in the early 20th century, women's right to vote was overlooked. Also, married women could not have any control over their own children without their husbands' authorization.

Although feminism is not a new approach, it was at the end of the 20th century that European and American feminists started to cooperate with the embryonic feminist activities of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. According to Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of their Own*, there are three phases of women's writing: "the 'feminine' phase where women writers imitated the art created by ideal male authors, the 'feminist' phase in which women writers started challenging those male models, and the 'female' phase where women started advocating their own perspectives" (Showalter, 1991, pp. 125–28.). Jean Rhys has unquestionably earned a spot in the final phase. She reflects not only the specific conditions, suffering, and thoughts of a woman who cannot break free from the male's dominance but also the will and power of a woman to break free from the patriarchal society's negative impact and build her own identity and character (Showalter, 1991, pp. 125–28.).

A feminist approach in literary works seeks to develop identical civic, political, financial, and societal privileges for women. Depending on its cultural or political goals, feminism is measured as a movement that aims at attaining equality for women in varied fields. In *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*, bell hooks has stated that it is a movement to stop sexist domination (hooks, 1984, p. 57). Feminist criticism of literary works has undergone lots of changes. It is proven that researchers in this field have remarkably altered their attitudes to be in harmony with the social, political, and religious tendencies and circumstances. Peter Barry (2002) has described the changes in feminist criticism over the years by saying that the feminist literary criticism that exists now is the direct consequence of the women's movement of the 1960s, which was, in significant ways, literary from the beginning since it grasped the implication of

the descriptions of women spread by literature, and saw it was necessary to fight against them and doubt their power and their consistency (Barry, 2002, p. 121).

Barry has also stated that feminist criticism in the 1970s was more about revealing what might be labeled as the practices of patriarchy. Then, in the 1980s, feminist criticism became more heterogeneous and changed its emphasis from discussing male accounts of the world to probing into the essence of the female viewpoint and forming a novel principle of women's writing by revising the history of literature (Ibid, p. 122).

Women are the 'second sex', according to Simon de Beauvoir, one of the world's most prominent feminists, because their existence is only meaningful in relation to men. She also stated that women are just as talented and capable of making decisions as men and that they may therefore empower themselves (De Beauvoir, 1949, p. xv). She claimed that man is thought of as the self, whereas a woman is thought of as the Other. As a result, it can be deduced that humankind is masculine and that man is the one who can define woman 'as related to him' rather than 'as herself' (Ibid, pp. xv-xxix).

Women have always had a subordinate function regarding males throughout history, consigned to the condition of the 'Other,' which is based on the man's ontological action. Women have been imprisoned as enslaved people inside the circle of obligations set by the superior sex. In contrast, men could transcend and dominate their surroundings, always stretching the sphere of their physical and intellectual achievements. Women have faced discrimination throughout history, not just in terms of education and financial freedom but also in a masculine worldview that reduced them to virtual silence and submission. Undoubtedly, portraying women as angels, queens, prostitutes, dutiful homemakers, and mothers in male literature was essential for maintaining these gender beliefs. On the other side, women authors have only recently begun to portray an accurate picture of dominating women and evaluate events from their perspective.

At present, feminism is not restricted to women's political or social situation, and it also includes their psychological status. Beginning in the 1960s, feminists acknowledged that the field of psychology had overlooked the study of women and gender. Since that time, much has been different in psychology because feminist

psychology has progressed, and the emphasis on the psychology of women and gender has been more. Moreover, Tyson (2006) has discussed a number of ideas associated with the feminist theory. He has stated that feminism can be different from one area to another and from one theorist to another (Tyson, 2006, p.22).

Arab feminism has had an extended and disconcerted history. What is called 'feminism' in Arab countries is a multifaceted concept which is often referred to as a hybrid notion that, one way or another, suggests foreign interference. The imperative charge from the Arab world against feminism is that it is still another instance of the 'West' interfering in the undertakings of the 'East.' So, as well as having to cope with the characteristic barriers to the setting up of groups and movements for upgrading women's situations, secular liberals, in addition to Islamist women's groups, have had to guard themselves against the accusations that they are working according to Western representations which are inappropriate for Arab women (Valassopoulos, 2008, p. 13).

Feminism, as well as other ideologies and movements, must be included in any realistic consideration of the application of an intellectual or political philosophy in a non-Western setting. Marxism is the most evident of these. While many Middle Easterners, particularly neo-traditionalists, dismiss Marxism as alien and irrelevant, the majority of those who dispute the application of feminism, both inside and outside the area, have no issues relating notions like class, imperialism, capitalism, and exploitation to Middle Eastern civilizations (Malti-Douglas, 2018, p. 16).

Tyson (2006) has also declared that many feminists label their field as feminism to highlight the diversity of viewpoints of its advocates and propose ways of thinking that clash with the old inclination to believe there is just one top attitude. According to Tyson, Karen Horney and bell hooks are amongst the most distinguished feminists who inspect the ways in which literature strengthens or challenges the economic, political, social, and psychological suppression of women. This is why as the selected theoreticians of this thesis, the succeeding parts are devoted to introducing them (Tyson, 2006, p. 83).

1.1.1. bell hooks

Gloria Jean Watkins (1952-2021), well-known as bell hooks is an American writer, feminist, and social activist who inspected the relations between race, gender, and class. Hooks started writing her long preliminary book, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, published in 1981 when she was only 19 years old. Then, she studied English literature at Stanford University, B.A., 1973, the University of Wisconsin, M.A., 1976, and the University of California, Santa Cruz, Ph.D., 1983. In the 1980s, hooks formed a group to support black women who were called the Sisters of the Yam. Later she used this title in one of her books (1993).

Bell hooks chose not to uppercase her name in order to maintain the public's attention on her work. However, over her decades at the vanguard of Black feminist literature, the punctuation she used became a source of continual fascination. Hooks sought to find a way to memorialize her maternal great-grandmother while also separating herself from her work from the start. She used her great-grandmother's name in hundreds of publications, but did not capitalize it. She told the audience at Rollins College in 2013 that she always put her name in lowercase because she did not want people to focus on 'who I am' but rather on her works.

The reason that has led to her reputation is chiefly because of publishing *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984) in which she presented a revolutionary review of the prevailing feminist dissertations at that time. She remarked that whereas feminist philosophers all believed in being repressed due to such factors as sex, they would overlook the difficulties of other women.

According to what has been written in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, hooks (1984) has presented a novel definition of feminism. She has said that feminism does not merely suggest trying to achieve equal rights for women. Still, a movement struggles to terminate sexist subjugation and manipulation without ignoring other systems of domination, including racism, classism, imperialism, and others that are highly interconnected (hooks, 1984, p. 31).

Biana (2020) has also stated that hooks's view of interconnected systems of subjugation is closely linked with 'intersectionality' as a significant notion in modern feminism. When someone refers to himself or herself as a feminist, they must not overlook referring to intersectionality (Biana, 2020, p. 14). Hooks has declared that

feminism will deviate from its main goals without an appropriate definition. She has clarified that the central problem of the feminist discourse was the failure to reach an agreed definition or consensus on what feminism is, so it has been lacked points of unification and a sound foundation upon which to build theory or engage in the comprehensive and meaningful practical application without an agreed-upon definitions (hooks, 1984, p. 17).

Hooks rejected the traditional definition of feminism which was merely limited to white Bourgeois women. Thus, feminism, for this feminist, was supposed to embrace more than only the dilemmas of white Bourgeois women by including all those who are subjugated, differentiated, and bottled up. To sum it up, hooks was searching for a movement that could dismiss sexist domination. Hence, according to this definition, the movement is undoubtedly not about being against men but about the problem of sexism. This issue helps us recall that all of us, women and men, “have been socialized from birth on to accept sexist thought and action” (hooks, 2000b, p. viii).

By saying so, it can be inferred that she suggests more than only a transformation since she seeks a revolution. This is what is necessary in order to make a difference and change. As hooks has declared, the philosophical structures of the future feminist struggle must be based on eradicating the causes of sexism, the cultural basis, and other causes of mass oppression. No feminist reforms will be effective without eradicating these types (hooks, 1984, p. 31).

This kind of feminism signifies a universal actualization of the self that can ultimately lead to a worldwide political reform. It not only intends to change the present arrangement so that women benefit from more rights but also seeks to convert the system in order to finish prejudice against women (Biana, 2020, p. 17).

She has acknowledged that sexism is the most dominant sort of repression. Thus, feminism is supposed to continue struggling to exterminate sexist oppression since it is the origin of other classifications of oppression like racist suppression. Racism and class structure are observed as being instigated by sexism. Thus, there is supposition that the extermination of sexism as the oldest form of subjugation is essential before focusing on racism or classism (hooks, 1984, p. 35).

Just like hooks, who has played an important role in the development of feminism, Horney is regarded as a significant critic whose revolutionary theories brought about remarkable changes in the way women are treated all over the world. She developed one of the most famous theories of neurosis. What makes her important in this study is her belief that if we truly understand ourselves, we can realize our capacity and attain what we desire within sensible confines. In the following section, her theories will be discussed in detail.

1.1.2. Karen Horney

As a German psychoanalyst (1885-1952), Karen Horney's theories probed into some Freudian opinions. After Horney chose psychoanalysis and studied neurology, she initiated her psychiatric research in Berlin in 1919. Then, she turned into a key theoretician at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute. Here Horney attained her position as one of the major psychoanalysts in Europe (Garrison, 1981, pp. 674-675). She is also regarded as the founder of feminist psychology and differed from Freud about intrinsic differences in the psychology of men and women. She attributed these distinctions to social and cultural values and not biology.

According to Garrison (1981), the most serious organized discussion over the psychology of women happened between 1920s and the mid-1930s. The clash was of substantial prominence in psychoanalytic groups of that era and showed Horney as a principal opponent. In answer to Horney's criticism of his theory of female development, Freud primarily defined his attitude more discreetly and was required to support it. Horney's criticism was a brave act that led to the development of the psychoanalytic theory (Garrison, 1981, pp. 673-674). In her reply to Freud, Horney declared that the culture in which psychoanalysis was recognized gave the Freudian theory a male partiality. Freud's approach towards women was just a manly imaginary.

Horney was initially involved in the discussion over female psychology in 1922 in her response to Karl Abraham's article, *Manifestations of the Female Castration Complex*. Her writings can be categorized into three stages. She wrote some essays between 1923 and 1935 in which she endeavored to analyze Freud's viewpoints on feminine psychology while conserving the identical framework. These essays were

generally unobserved during her lifetime, but since 1967 Horney has been comprehensively documented as the first well-known psychoanalytic feminist.

She established novel philosophies by questioning such fundamental ideologies of psychoanalysis as the libido system. In *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (1937) and *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (1939), she replaced biology with culture. She was concerned with human relations when describing the backgrounds of neuroses, and she became a model in which she studied behavior with respect to its current implication. At last, in her last book, *Neurosis and Human Growth* (1950), Horney used an organized method in order to elucidate the collaborative and intrapsychic methodologies of defense that people nurture as a means to cope with the hindrance of their psychological necessities.

According to Schacter, Gilbert, and Wagner (2009), Horney developed various views from Freud. She would attribute the differences between men and women to their psychology, and she found these differences in society and culture rather than biology (Schacter et al., 2009, p. 24). Horney (1935) In her essay titled *The Problem of Feminine Masochism*, she intended to show that cultures and civilizations worldwide have forced women to depend on men for affection, position, richness, and safety. Horney acknowledged that a tendency to satisfy, conciliate and overrate men has ascended in society. This issue has resulted in women being mainly regarded as objects of lure and attractiveness (Horney, 1935, p.35).

Feminist psychology, hence, signifies a type of psychology that lays its focus chiefly on the 'social structures and gender' (Unger & Crawford, 1992, p. 32). Self-actualization and basic anxiety are some of her fundamental notions. She could argue about a woman's dilemma between her real and ideal self and the prominence of culture in a feminist analysis of texts. Gleitman (1992) has defined the term 'self-actualization' as the yearning for self-contentment, particularly the tendency for the human being to be realized in what potentially she or he is. This potentiality might be described as the tendency to get more and more what the person is, to get everything that is satisfactory and suitable for everyone (Gleitman, 1992, p. 2). This concept is considered the top level of mental evolution, where human beings' potential is completely acknowledged after achieving central physical needs.

Self-actualization was first used to refer to the purpose of understanding one's full competence as the inclination to actualize itself as entirely as conceivable is “the basic drive ... the drive of self-actualization” (Modell, 1993, p. 44). Yet, there is a hypothesis that people mostly do not totally actualize their true selves or imperative potentials; there is a real self (Horney, 1950, p. 36). Also, Maslow (1955) has defined this notion as follows:

Self-actualization is sometimes viewed as a final or ultimate condition of things, a distant goal, rather than a dynamic process throughout one's life... If we define growth as the numerous processes that lead a person to ultimate self-actualization, it is more consistent with the observable fact that it occurs throughout one's life (Maslow, 1955, p. 9).

As a notion that Horney first recognized and applied, basic anxiety is amongst the most central theories of neurosis, Horney supposed that basic anxiety is rooted in a number of features like straight or incidental dominion, triviality, shifting behavior, lack of esteem for the child's wishes, lack of real control, opposite viewpoints, too much appreciation or its absence, lack of consistent affability, too much or too little responsibility, over-protection, remoteness from other children, preconception, discernment, unfulfilled potentials and antagonistic atmosphere (Horney, 1950, p. 102).

Karen Horney focused on the aspect that most people are exposed to, which is the psychological aspect of self-realization and the basic anxiety, which many heroines of the selected novels suffered because of these two things resulting from the dominance of men against women. The next section will present Rhys's and EL Saadawi's life and how their miserable life were reflected in the heroines of their novels.

1.2. Jean Rhys

Jean Rhys (1890-1979) was a British author who was born and raised in the Caribbean island of Dominica. She was sent to England in order to continue her education at the age of 16. Her father was a doctor, and her mother was a member of Dominican Creole of Scots ancestry. In England, her classmates derided her down to her originality and accent. Her teachers also believed that she could never learn to speak English properly, and this is why they recommended her father take Rhys away.

However, in 1924 and after meeting Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939) in Paris, Rhys began writing short stories under his support. Ford realized that her being an outcast provided Rhys with an exclusive viewpoint which gained his admiration.

In *Smile Please: An Unfinished Autobiography*, Rhys (1979) assumed that when she left her native country for England, she would leave everything about the West Indies behind, including her youth and everything linked with the past. She claims one of her favorites was a coral brooch that was crushed while traveling to England with her aunt. She was unconcerned about it. She took it off and laid it aside without feeling bad. She also forgot about her mother and father, as well as the West Indies (Rhys, 1979, p. 76).

However, her memories of the West Indies influenced and inspired her for the rest of her life. It can be claimed that identity played an important role for this writer and her heroines. She wanted to show her extensive obsession with the difficulty of identity formation for women, especially Creole ones. For example, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is regarded as a revised prequel to *Jane Eyre*. It has both Mr. Rochester, her business visionary husband and jailor, and Antoinette 'Bertha' Mason, the West Indian secret in the loft. Rhys's initial compositions give fruitful ground to women's activist and postcolonial thoughts, showing choked out ladies who disdain, and sever to, British men and the sexual and economic power they employ (Pulda, 2011, p. 160).

Rhys altered Brontë's time border by changing it to a year following the enslaved people's Emancipation instead of the decade of 1798–1808, which is described in *Jane Eyre* (Raiskin, 1999, p. 31). Rhys had a keen sense of the hidden model in life's natural ingredients, but she also saw herself as a collection of experiences, both in her self-image and in letters and sections of her own syntheses. Her composing mantras were active constancy, determination, and clarity. Selectivity does not exclude anything important, and dependability does not imply thorough exposure. She mentioned a clause in her will prohibiting anybody from thinking about her, and she expected to ensure that all thought was focused on the work (Savory, 1998, p. 65).

According to Fernald (2013), feminists have been concerned with the importance of the women's tale to oppose patriarchy since the publication of *A*

Vindication of the Rights of Woman (Fernald, 2013, p. 231). This is additionally valid for Jean Rhys, whose compositions portrayed obstructions among people, white and individuals of color, and England and the West Indies. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a story about a woman who has lost her gender and cultural identity as a result of colonization. Because her anger toward colonialism is a type of denial, discussing it elucidates how personal identity is shaped in connection to gender, cultural identity, and colonialism.

Men utilize monstrous to impose authority and oppress the other class since they regard themselves as having power over women. This is a crucial topic since Rhys presents her female character as lesser as they become more entangled independent ties (Lakbash, 2014, p. 17). Furthermore, Brandmark (1986) has endorsed this viewpoint, stating that, while Rhys's protagonists are generally passive victims of men, their inaction might be considered a form of insurrection. Females who are unable to improve their social conditions negate themselves (Brandmark, 1986, p. 21). Many critics believe that while this author's heroines may differ in terms of their names, ages, and places of residence, they are all representations of the same 'psychological type.' This issue is so prominent that if the novels are read in order of their internal sequence, one can find one chronological plot (Mellown, 1972, p. 460).

Some other critics find that a deeper analysis of Rhys's regular heroines discloses that along with her palpable inactiveness, she establishes many particular indications of schizophrenia-like penurious effect, indifference, fanatical thought, and behavior together with the powerlessness to take real initiative, a sense of the illusoriness of both the world and self and a sense of separation from the body (Abel, 1979, p. 156).

1.3. Nawal El Saadawi

Nawal El Saadawi (1931-2021) is an Egyptian novelist, feminist activist, doctor, and psychoanalyst. She started writing because the pleasure of writing to her was more than any other sort of pleasure in the world. In other words, she considered writing an indispensable part of her life. She believed that she could live without a man but not without writing (El Saadawi, 2010, p. 8). Despite having open-minded parents, her Muslim family followed the customary exercise of clitoridectomy on their daughters. El Saadawi was also forced to experience this agonizing practice when she

was only six years old. This occasion which was a disturbing incident is reflected in her book *El Wajh El Ary Lilma'ra El Arabeya* (1977), translated as *The Hidden Face of Eve*.

After finishing her secondary school, El Saadawi registered at the University of Cairo to be a doctor and graduated in 1955. The same year, she married a doctor, Ahmed Helmy, and gave birth to her daughter. However, their marriage was unsuccessful, and they divorced in 1956. Soon later, El Saadawi was forced to marry Rashad Bey, who did not approve of El Saadawi's burgeoning feminism or her vocation. El Saadawi and Bey also divorced, and subsequently, El Saadawi moved to New York in order to go to Columbia University. She married for the third time Dr. Sherif Hetata, and then they went back to Egypt together. During this time, she did significant studies concerning women's psychology, and most of these researches were based on her work with the prisoners at Qanatir women's jail.

El Saadawi has published so many books about women in Islamic societies. What has made this Egyptian writer an apt choice in this study is her writing vocation devoted to discussing women's political and sexual rights. El Saadawi is a woman who has truthfully dedicated her entire life to uttering women's rights. She has faced the harshest treatments in this regard and has had to go to prison for her opinions. El Saadawi has attempted to communicate her beliefs worldwide concerning some of the most subtle subjects such as circumcision, incest, and sexuality.

In 1968 she established *Health Magazine*; however, she had to leave her job since Egyptian authorities did not approve of her religious and political ideology. El Saadawi was imprisoned in 1981, and during her sentence, she wrote *Memoirs from the Women's Prison* (1984). Just like Rhys, El Saadawi also used her experiences in her writings. El Saadawi's novels, short stories, and true-life writings are mostly about the status of Arab women.

El Saadawi's fame as an Egyptian feminist activist and writer has been due to her clear discussion of political matters. Even during her childhood, El Saadawi would ask many argumentative questions because she could not take any restrictions and settlements which might restrain her independence. In *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* (1984), she referred to herself as a little girl who raised brave questions to humiliate others. She would surprise her father by asking why only women wear covers and was

reprimanded by her teacher when she questioned why God is male, not female. She also asked her society why all the religious and political leaders were men and women were not permitted to be imams or leaders (Alqahtani, 2017, p. 19).

The patriarchal approach is an all-encompassing means for El Saadawi, and she incorporates linguistic, socio-cultural, and mental systems into her writing. She concurs with Simone de Beauvoir that a woman is not born, and she goes on to say that gender has no inherent nature. El Saadawi demands women's rights to bodily integrity. She asserts that many immigrants suffer from female genital cutting each year in the United States. Women from many cultures now cut away their bodily parts, even if not always the clitoris; in both cases, women commit psychological and physical ectopy.

Despite her contentious status, El Saadawi is still regarded as one of Egypt's most compelling and honest fiction and nonfiction writers. Even though her novels are perhaps not 'refined' sufficiently to be viewed as the most important works of literature, her themes are both radical and challenging. This Arab writer's writings on female genital mutilation, prostitution, psychosis, and women having to resort to murder to survive have primarily led to this fame (Grace, 2004, p. 82).

Jane Hiddleston (2010) also admits El Saadawi's importance in the realm of Arab feminism: "El Saadawi calls for a necessary movement from the local to the global and though she alludes to the importance of maintaining a sense of feminine diversity, she stresses the need for a unity created over and above particular differences" (Hiddleston, 2010, p. 185). It can be claimed that this Egyptian writer devoted most of her life to supporting the idea of gender parity. El Saadawi is regarded as an activist and the only one in Egypt who is bold enough to discuss the association between women's sexual subjugation and social and political repression. In other words, what has led to her being exclusive is that she courageously attempts to achieve women's rights and modify the condition and demonstration of the Arabic woman in the world (Suwaed, 2017, p. 233).

El Saadawi's writings are mostly novels, research, and educated academic papers which revolve around the coercion and manipulation of the Arabic women, predominantly routine procedures that have been obligatory for women in rural Egypt. The importance of rural Egypt lies in its depending on such issues as religious conviction, customs, and the government. Her writings are mostly about these issues.

El Saadawi typifies the second wave of feminism which has attempted to depict and decrease the limitations and social restrictions that surround Arab women.

El Saadawi has been selected as one of the current study's analysis subjects because her works still have an incredible influence on Arab women who have understood their right to equality and try hard to alter the situation. El Saadawi's struggles to overcome women's mistreatment and gender discernment at home, in the family, in society, at work, and in the realm of politics have made her an impressive figure. She has always believed that a woman's right to be an independent person physically, emotionally, and financially should not be overlooked.

Moreover, El Saadawi's attempts to portray women's oppression in her works are in accordance with what Horney (1993, p. 68) has stated if women release their thoughts from the male manner of thinking, almost all the glitches of the feminine mindset will disappear.

Most of the previous studies dealt with various factors of persecution and deprivation of women's rights. Therefore, the next section will present previous studies on what they focused and what makes the current study differ from the previous ones.

1.4. Review of Related Literature

The significance of this part lies in the fact that although Rhys's and El Saadawi's novels have been the subject of so many studies, no study can be found in which they were analyzed and compared with each other through the theories of hooks and Horney. Rhys's and El Saadawi's works stand out in feminism. The significance of this study resides in the investigation of Rhys's social base and her knowledge of how society, its orientation, class, separation, and religion shape her personality. In this sense, this thesis examines many parts of Rhys's work that have been missed, including the interconnected frontier diagram of race and direction.

Most studies demonstrate similarities between reality and fiction based on the similarity to occurrences in Rhys's own life. Any study of Rhys would be incomplete without a close examination of her biography. In *Jean Rhys: Life and Work* (1990), Angier followed Rhys throughout her life by studying her psychological changes

through her stories, books, the unfinished novel *Smile Please*, biography. Angier (1990) believed that Rhys was entirely reliant on men to endure throughout her life. Her primary aim was actually to obtain acceptance and affection in the environment in which she lived in order to establish her identity and psychological stability (Angier, 1990, p.74)

Rhys's work was somewhat progressive, as seen in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Voyage in the Dark*. She was simultaneously conventional, exploring her own age, mood, and changes practically by accident. Rhys's psychological desires are expressed through her sincere entanglements and moods, as well as feelings of love and rejection, hatred, vengeance, inevitability, and dread.

In *Jean Rhys* (1998), Savory draws on Rhys's biography as well, highlighting his ethnicity, religious education, and social status in her works. Savory (1998, p.80) emphasizes the strong bonding between Rhys's existence and Anna's predicament in England in *voyage in the dark*. Ledent (2018), in much later research entitled *Exotic Madness in Caribbean Literature: From Marginalization to Empowerment and Indigenization*, comes to the same conclusion, claiming that Rhys uses her life to avoid her psychological distress. As a result, the interconnectedness of Rhys's personal experiences informs much of her writing, making them enlightening to read (Ledent, 2018, p.45).

Other studies which have also played a significant role in understanding Rhys's works are related to psychoanalytical researches, especially for exposing the writer's characters' various states of mind and connections. In *Territories of the Psyche: The Fiction of Jean Rhys* (2005), Simpson uses psychoanalytical ideas from Klein, Riviere, Winnicott, and others in her lengthy examination of Rhys's works in order to investigate the complex circumstances of psychic experience, the rich layers of sensations within the person, represented in both the words she picks with such care and the silences that reverberate so profoundly in one Rhys tale after another (Simpson, 2005, p.21) .

Duffy's *Recalling Anna, Reclaiming Trauma: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Jean Rhys's Voyage in the Dark* (2015) also focuses on the element of the Oedipus complex that consumes Anna in *Voyage in the Dark*. Any relationship between a young woman and an older guy, according to Freud, is the result of her wish to relies

infantile tenderness, which serves as a psychological barrier to protecting her current self from unusual men. This is the foundation upon which the relationship between Anna and Walter is built (Duffy, 2015, p. 33).

A number of other researchers have focused on the mother-daughter bond; for example, in *Whiteness and Trauma: The Mother-Daughter Knot in the Fiction of Jean Rhys, Jamaica Kincaid and Toni Morrison* (2004), Victoria Burrows claims that Anna desires to be black, “I have always wanted to be black” (Burrows, 2004, p. 27), this statement refers to her desire to be adored by her mother, who is fond of black children. Her literature reveals many intriguing aspects thanks to the psychological concept, which allows connections and emotions to be clarified and comprehended.

Reading Rhys’s works from a feminist postcolonial viewpoint is the most common technique of investigation. Her works are about a marginal lady who is abandoned by her society. According to Nebeker’s *Jean Rhys, Woman in Passage: A Critical Study of the Novels of Jean Rhys* (1981, p. ix), Rhys’s protagonists cannot transcend stereotypes as ordinary victims in a patriarchal, male-dominated world, continually searching for identity and attempting to assert their viewpoint. They are frequently shown as women who are separated from their ideal selves somehow.

As stated in *The Politics of Form: Jean Rhys's Social Vision in Voyage in the Dark and Wide Sargasso Sea* (1982) by Emery, the Rhysian woman's fractured perception and speech represent the modern experience of otherness, patriarchy, and displacement. In the same way that other modernist authors such as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Dorothy Richardson were interested in explaining the inner selves of their characters, Rhys was motivated to describe the inner selves of her protagonists. Moore (1990) also argues in *Review of Speaking of Gender, by E. Showalter* that in a male-controlled society, the Rhysian woman is always portrayed as a passive victim, with the self-victimization of a woman drifting through the years of bourgeois society (Moore, 1990, p. 93).

According to Cunningham’s *Get on or Get Out: Failure and Negative Femininity in Jean Rhys's Voyage in the Dark* (2013), Rhys depicted how women in the socio-economic class sacrificed their bodies and sexuality in order to earn enough money to live. Some critics blame Anna for her separation from Walter and attribute it to her lack of awareness of how these characteristics contribute to a distorted view of

British colonialism, male-dominated society, and Victorian individualistic views (Cunningham, 2013, p.29).

For Kingsley (2015), *Voyage in the Dark* emphasizes the role of the female body as the bearer of disappointments. Her move to England was a disappointment. The loss of her virginity and thus an unwanted pregnancy embodies oppressive masculinity towards women and thus leads to the end of Anna's life (Kingsley, 2015, p.41), according to Farrell (2010), Antoinette's imprisonment in a dark room represents the social domination that women face in a male-dominated culture and the feeling of alienation in the place in which she lives. Thus, the heroine rejects all this oppression and resorts to suicide. This scene reveals weakness and collapse when she sees death as the last means of freedom, as with many oppressed women (Farrell, 2010, p.36).

In *The Mad Women in Our Attics: Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea's Treatment of Feminism* (2012), Mericle reviewed on rebellious themes for women in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, studying whether they were somewhat rebellious or bound to their way of life. The examination used explicit models from the two authors, made by Brönte's intellectuals and Rhys's period and current scholars. The texts are comparable together because each one gives a new feminine point of view. Bronte's depiction of Rhys's temperament as a savage, shamefully repressed by society, stands out clearly from Rhys's portrayal of Antoinette as a savage unbridled woman whose ferocity drives her extermination, looking at everything. The two works cover similar but particular misogynic themes such as independence, respect, and power.

Funk (2011) is an English writer of Dominican descent. He has published research on Jean Rhys, illustrating the challenges in her works *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and *Voyage in the Dark*. He analyzed the Constraints experienced by the novels' heroines and look at the frameworks of photography used by Rhys in her novel concerning the real-life events experienced by women and the social systems with which they deal, based primarily on the ideas of intersectionality and rethinking (Funk, 2011, p.18).

Shaffer's *A Companion to the British and Irish Novel* (1945-2000), which will significantly help this study, is a comprehensive overview of the British and Irish

novel between World War II and the turn of the millennium. This book has provided readings of such core novels as Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*. In *A Study of Displacement in Jean Rhys's Novel Wide Sargasso Sea* (2014), Kaur et al. stated that *Wide Sargasso Sea* based upon the experiences of the madwoman in *Jean Eyre*, revolves particularly around the story of her life before the madness. Besides, this study's writers have attempted to discuss the main reasons for the feelings of displacement faced by Rochester as her Western husband during his vacation in the Caribbean. The other important point of this article is its attempt to understand to what extent this condition may lead to Antoinette's subjugation. The significance of this study is chiefly due to its focus on Rochester's wife as the real victim of the story (Kaur et al., 2014, p.42).

According to Simpson (2005.), what makes Jean Rhys famous is mostly her obsession with issues such as gender, nationality, race, and class (Simpson, 2005, p.41), however, there remains a gap that this book has tried to fill concerning the investigation of Rhys's novels through those theories that revolve around the outlooks of modern psychoanalysis. Thus, because this thesis intends to examine the psychological effects of women's repression, this book can be extensively helpful.

Territories of the Psyche: The Fiction of Jean Rhys (2007) is a review of Simpson's book with the same title. In this review, Su (2007) has mentioned that Simpson analyzes Rhys's novels through the theoretical perspective of psychoanalysis since she has had some experiences that many literary critics have not (Su, 2007, p.17). Simpson's investigation of *Voyage in the Dark* causes her to find the theme of 'abandonment' through Rhys's work. Cathleen Maslen's *Ferocious Things: Jean Rhys and the Politics of Women's Melancholia* (2009) has investigated women's misery as the most recurring theme in Rhys's writings. Maslen has been obsessed with Rhys's representation of women's psychic agony by focusing on their sexual, cultural, and ethnic displacement (Maslen, 2009, p.28).

The Worlding of Jean Rhys (1999) is another study that revolves around Rhys's universal viewpoints. As the writer of this book, Thomas (1999, p. 35) probes into Rhys's identity as a woman who was a white Creole. What makes this study significant is his offering political assessment of Rhys's novels, short stories, and memoirs. Mardorossian's *Shutting up the Subaltern: Silences, Stereotypes, and Double*

Entendre in Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea (1999,) analyze *Wide Sargasso Sea's* expression of such issues as race and gender. Mardrossian has studied the basically overlooked difference between 'narration and focalization' in the text. Then the result is that the novel does not appropriate blackness in the service of the Euro-Creole subject constitution (Mardrossian, 1999, p.63).

Similar to Rhys, El Saadawi has been the focus of many studies. For instance, *Men, Women, and God: Nawal El Saadawi and Arab Feminist Poetics* (Malti-Douglas, 2018) is a pivotal analysis of El Saadawi as one of the most significant feminists and controversial writers in the Arab world. Malti-Douglas (2018) has declared that El Saadawi's novels cannot be examined without paying attention to the role of Islamic and Arabic context. In other words, what leads to this book's importance here is its analysis of the historical context in El Saadawi's novels. Other similarly essential books in understanding El Saadawi's novels include *Intersections: Gender, Nation, and Community in Arab Women's Novels* by Majaj et al. (2002), and *Arab Women's Lives Retold: Exploring Identity Through Writing* (2007) by Golley.

Nawal El Saadawi's novel *Woman at Point Zero* (1975) is one of his most notable works. The story of a female detainee in Qanatir Prison, where El Saadawi met her, is told in this novel. The novel is the first-person perspective of Firdaus the killer who agreed to tell the story of her life before her execution. The novel explores themes of women and their place in a patriarchal society. The investigation into such issues of women and their condition in a male-dominated world is the motivation behind why this work was chosen to be highlighted in the current study. This story intends to portray women as murderers and captive victims of a male-dominated society.

In addition to the books mentioned, *Awra and Arab Feminism: Sexual Violence and Representational Crisis in Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero* (Ball, 2012) aim to discuss El Saadawi's concerns about the portrayal of some openly and conversationally recondite bad behaviors while foregrounding the wider representative predicament that stirs sexual subjugation in Arab feminist and literary context. In *Imprisonment, Freedom, and Literary Opacity in the Work of Nawal El Saadawi and Assia Djebar* (2010), Hiddleston is also concerned with El Saadawi's works. By comparing them with the writings of Djebar, he declares that both El Saadawi and

Djebar are similar because of using their writing to achieve women's freedom from various forms of captivity (Hiddleston, 2010, p.65).

The Hysteria Suffered by the Main Character of Nawal El-Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero (Mahmudah, 2018) revolves around two major issues. First, what sorts of hysteria did the main character in *Woman at Point Zero* suffer from? And what are the main reasons for this hysteria? In order to answer these questions, the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud has been used. The results of this thesis show that there is a psychological uproar in the character of Firdaus, which is referred to as hysteria with anxiety, fear, agony, and weakness.

Tugume (2021) explains the violence between a man and a woman in *Woman at Point Zero*. He indicates that Ferdous's use of brutality is to free herself from the bondage of men. Ferdous kills the Marzouk, which is a reaction to the accumulation of oppression, persecution, and sadness, so the desire to get rid of all these and obtain absolute freedom. Accordingly, when she was sentenced to death by an Egyptian authority court, she realized that she would not live and showed no fear of death. She treated her passion for autonomy and nobility in death in contrast to her culture, which probably does not accept what she did. In his article, he clarified that the male-dominated general arrangement of the rules censures Firdaus and severely judges her for keeping her under the authority of a patriarchal society (Tugume, 2021, p.47).

Thampy (2021) in *Nawal El Saadawi: Attaining Catharsis through Trauma Narration in Woman at Point Zero* focuses on the amount of pressure facing Firdaus in the novel *A Woman at Zero Point* and Egyptian women in general in Islamic societies that impose restrictions only on women and overlook men under Islamic frameworks and misinterpretations attributed to the Islamic religion. Firdaus faced the persecution of society by executing her, giving a message to the Egyptian society, illustrating that death is freer than imprisonment in a ruthless society (Thampy, 2021, p. 39).

Al- Zubeidi and Saleh (2019) critically evaluate the selected works based on El Saadawi's description of the guiding work seen through the speculative lens of Judith Butler. The female heroines in El Saadawi's work are late in the confrontation due to their peaceful surrender to the truth of the oppression imposed on them and trying to live in a pitiful world. El Saadawi offers a solution for women oppressed by a male-led

power to set the trend by reducing male-dominated and censored occupations (Al-Zubeidi & Saleh, 2019, p.61).

In Fwangyil's *Cradle to Grave: An Analysis of Female Oppression in Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero*, (2012) it is argued that men at different phases of life oppress women. Female oppression is profoundly embedded in the societies' culture, which guarantees the male-controlled mechanism. This circumstance makes it difficult for women to search for ways through which they free themselves. This article is based on the idea that masculine structures lead to women's slavery. Thus, this study inspects the kind of oppression women experience from their lives' early stages to adulthood, as depicted in Nawal El Sadaawi's *Woman at Point Zero* (Fwangyil, 2012, p.33).

The Fall of the Imam (1987) gives an eastern view of the societal evolution of the trend that resulted in the long-term persecution of people. The story depicts a misalignment of attitude in strict discourse and the oppression of women, as well as how religion is socially constructed. Anti-religious cultural perceptions portrayed arbitrary restrictions toward poor women. The misuse of religion is one of the bold topics that Nawal al-Saadawi focused on in *the Fall of the Imam*.

Irfan, Samid, and Khan (2013) indicated that the heroine, Bint Allah, in the novel *The Fall of the Imam*, is a symbol of freedom demanded by Eastern women oppressed by societies that use religion to satisfy their lusts and cover up their actions that are not accepted by religion. Bint Allah and her mother were the main victims of the sexual oppression of the same man, and he is Imam who represents the righteousness of God and applies the provisions of God in society. Imam was not only satisfied with persecution, but he was the one who issued the legal ruling on stoning Bint Allah's mother. Irfan has made it clear that most of the rulers who proclaim religion, desire it for their strangeness and material requirements are armed with the support of society (Irfan et al., 2013, p.40).

In *Feminine Psychology* (1993), Horney discusses the issue of femininity. The most important subjects that she refers to involve frigidity, the problem of the monogamous ideal, womanly clashes, the suspicion between the sexes, feminine masochism, and the neurotic need for love. In *Where We Stand: Class Matters* (2000a), hooks present a detailed account of how our predicaments of class and race are connected and how we can overcome them. Also, in *Feminism is for Everybody*:

Passionate Politics (2000b), bell hooks has provided her audience with a comprehensive account of feminism and such topics as equality, reciprocated respect, and impartiality. hooks has also employed her research on the most demanding issues that any feminist may undergo, including violence, race, and class (hooks, 2000b, p.67).

In spite of all these studies, and although many other different approaches have examined the works of Rhys and El Saadawi, there remains a gap regarding a detailed analysis of them side by side through the theories of hooks and Horney. This gap is going to be filled in the next chapter. To sum up, it should be stated that the present chapter, which is a brief background of the current study, started with introducing Jean Rhys and Nawal El Saadawi. Then feminism was discussed briefly because the two theoreticians in the current study are both feminists and have their specific outlines. It was stated that bell hooks has referred to sexism as the central sort of suppression. Therefore feminism is assumed to continue its attempts to decimate sexist coercion as it is the source of other forms of women's subjugation. Then Karen Horney was introduced. As the founder of feminist psychology, this German theoretician would relate the differences between men and women to culture and society, not their biology. It was also mentioned that some of Horney's most significant ideas are related to the concept of basic anxiety, the desire for self-actualization, and the struggle between one's real and ideal self. It can be concluded that Horney's groundbreaking suggestion of the real self indicates the productive power inside human beings behind their psychological development.

2. A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF JEAN RHYS'S SELECTED NOVELS

Jean Rhys has long been at the center of discussions about British Caribbean, modernist, and postcolonial feminist writings (Savory, 1998, p.12). Rhys was a Caribbean author, and this issue played an important role in her novels. Rhys received an entirely English and French literary education as a British colonial subject. She was one of the most important Caribbean authors who realized this compulsory education's psychological and political impacts. In an early story, 'Again the Antilles', Rhys analyzed the multifaceted association between race and culture and the business of the constitution of selfhood in colonial society (Raikin, 1991, p. 53).

The phrases 'Caribbean' and 'West Indian,' which are sometimes used interchangeably, refer to the Caribbean Sea island states as well as areas on the continents of South and Central America (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 31). Using the word 'West Indies' became more common in the 1950s, when the writings of such literary figures as Samuel Selvon, John Edgar Colwell Hearne, V.S. Naipaul, and George Lamming started to be published in the United Kingdom (Ramchand, 1970, p. 81). Regarding the importance of novels, it is declared the work of the West Indian author has little to do with English critical appraisals.

Through its historical record, the discovery of the novel as a vehicle for analyzing and articulating the realities of West Indian society by West Indians is a significant milestone (Lamming, 1992, pp. 37- 41). In the 1930s, with the establishment of a true West Indian cultural movement, authors like Rhys developed a new social, cultural, and literary consciousness in the West Indies that would eventually result in the evolution of West Indies Literature in the 1950s (Sewell, 2007, p. 67). Similarly, the manifestation of such themes as an exile, searching for a true home and identity, resistance, durability, and isolation has made Rhys's novels present a powerful subject for research. Such novels as *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* show how human beings, specifically women, are mistreated in a way that emphasizes their unimportance.

Besides, the prominence of narratives and particularly autobiographies in restoring self-identity is clarified by Giddens. He believes that a person's identity is defined by their ability to keep a certain narrative going, rather than their behavior or

important though, it is the reactions of others. An individual's biography must constantly incorporate events from the outside world and sort them into the self's ongoing 'story' (Giddens, 1991, p. 54).

To sum up, being a Caribbean individual influenced Rhys's life to a great extent. Works like Rhys explain the overlaps and discontinuities in the personal and societal formation of identity in heterogeneity. Still, they also help us grasp the creative potential of autobiography as a literary style (Paquet, 2002, p.3). In other words, it is inferred that Rhys's novels present the theme of identity crisis in Caribbean settings.

She was from the Caribbean island that is considered the first colony of England, but she also experienced a lot of harsh clashes due to being a woman. The reason for choosing *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* is that as two illustrious novels of Rhys with her Caribbean legacy, they represent such themes as expulsion, conflict, endurance, segregation, independence, and power; also, they show Rhys's concern with the search for meaning and identity.

This is why most of the novels written by Rhys include female protagonists whose lives are full of difficulties. For example, *Voyage in the Dark*, published in 1934, revolves around the story of a young girl named Anna Morgan as a chorus girl in a touring company in South sea. She has lost her father; therefore, she has been brought from her home in the West Indies by Hester as her stepmother. In South sea, she gets to know Walter Jeffries, an older man. They again meet each other in London, and Walter supports her money-wise.

Later, she falls in love with him, and their relationship continues until October 1913, when Walter leaves her. Anna becomes heartbroken and starts her relationships with different men. In March 1914, three months pregnant, she asks Walter for money in order to get rid of the unborn child. She almost dies from the painful abortion, but in the last part of the novel, it turns out that the doctor who visits her promises her friend Laurie that She will be all right (Rhys, 1934, p. 159).

The second novel that will be discussed in this chapter is *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Rhys's response to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), in which she has told the story of Mr. Rochester's marriage from the perspective of his mad wife Antoinette Cosway who is a Creole heiress. Antoinette's story is told from when she was a young

girl in Jamaica, and this story continues to her unfortunate marriage to Mr. Rochester, who calls her Bertha and tells everyone that she is mad. Then he takes her to England and imprisons her in his house. Antoinette is repressed by the oppressive patriarchal society in which she feels neither like a European nor like a Jamaican.

As stated earlier, this chapter intends to analyze these two novels from the perspectives of Karen Horney and bell hooks. Thus, the following parts will be devoted to discussing *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* and finding out how Horney's or hooks's theories help reveal Rhys's feminist viewpoints. The feminist theory is a useful framework to analyze because it has been viewed as one of the most remarkable progress in the realm of literature. The reason is its competence to provide the researchers with countless options for examining the forms and content of literature from writers of different parts.

The other reason is that most characteristics researchers use to characterize the Caribbean social orders, whether on the islands or the mainland, are the same ones that researchers use to characterize the region: fracture, precariousness, corresponding segregation, up rootedness, social heterogeneity, need for historiography and verifiable coherence, possibility, impermanence and so on.

2.1. Analysis of Rhys's Selected Novels in the Light of Karen Horney's Feminist Perspective

According to Simpson (2005, p. 12), Rhys did not trust psychoanalysis. In spite of the requirement for an alternative to any severely Freudian paradigm when referring to her presentations of psychological states, psychoanalysis still provides the most influential hypothetical model up to the present time for analyzing the intricacies of emotive life as these are conveyed in literature along with life.

As a result, this part analyzes Rhys's fiction in the light of the theories and concepts of basic anxiety and self-actualization by Karen Horney. In *Feminine Psychology* (1993) which consists of fifteen essays, Horney discusses some ground-breaking approaches to investigating women's issues. One of the points which Horney researched was about the origins of people's neuroses or obsessive anxiety. She could

figure out that this problem happens due to basic anxiety, which occurs when people feel distressed, lonely, or abandoned (Horney, 1993, p.65).

However, what is distressing is their attempt to attain these desires obsessively. A number of neurotic needs that were stated by Horney include the desire for supremacy, respect, love, and over-dependence on one's partner. Concerning these needs, Maslow established the famous hierarchy of needs model. According to him, this hierarchy involves five groups of objectives or desires. The first set is related to the fulfillment of physical requirements; the second classification is related to protection. The third needs are associated with affection, friendship, and reception. The fourth set embraces the wish for confidence, self-worth, and self-assurance. Finally, there are some needs for self-actualization and contentment with one's abilities (Maslow, 1965, p. 308).

Also, in her other book (1942), Horney defined her idea of neurosis happening as a result of going to extremes while dealing with basic anxiety. This issue will lead to the desire to be loved and wanted. This is the case with Antoinette and Anna as Rhys's heroines. In fact, what is the same about these heroines is that they feel desperate and lonely and are both suffering from discrimination in a masculine society. The feeling of segregation is, to a great extent, psychological and damages these characters' psyche. Like other humans beings, Antoinette and Anna have ambitions and aspirations which will be fulfilled by self-actualization. However, a damaged psyche acts like a barrier that does not allow them to reach the self-actualization that is the source of their happiness (Horney, 1942, p. 44).

The heroines in Rhys's novels are mostly some marginal women who are banished both socially and sexually. They are exiled from their native Caribbean is why they are considered strangers and intruders in the mannish zone. Their disjointed acuties and voices represent the modern connotation of banishment. Like many modern literary works, Rhys's fiction seems to depict a forcefully subjective rather than societal vision (Emery, 1982, p. 418). Like many other Rhys's heroines, Anna and Antoinette live in exile from their true home in the West Indies. One of the most important, shared points about the main female characters in these novels is that they give in to abusive marriages because they have to sacrifice themselves. Whatever they have to sustain the social identity they need desperately.

Rochester seems to be initially fascinated by Antoinette's prettiness and wealth. Still, very soon, he starts to develop a feeling of hatred towards both his wife and her homeland since her race makes her look like an outsider. Rochester exhibits a typical colonial attitude; he believes the island is alluring and dangerous. He feels threatened by his desire to marry his Creole wife and her black maid Amelie and blames his violation of colonial taboos on the seductive atmosphere of the tropical island. His colonial desire creates anxiety as it contrasts with the fear of racial mixing and contamination. Karen Horney points out that anxiety and fear happen to people when they feel there is control over them, which is embodied by Rochester's fear of staying in Antoinette's country.

Therefore, he wants to be the dominant one on his wife. Moreover, he feels threatened by the vibrant colors and scents of the island and its strange, mysterious beauty, not because she is a threat to him, but because he fears what he does not know and understand. He blames her for losing control and overtaking the island. For this reason, he decides to return to England, a familiar, safe place that he controls. His fear of contamination and losing control of the tempting island makes him see the place as his enemy. He tells Antoinette:

But the feeling of something unknown and hostile was powerful. I feel a stranger very much here,' I said. I feel that this place is my enemy and on your side.' You are quite mistaken,' she said. It is not for you and not for me. It has nothing to do with either of us. That is why you are afraid of it because it is something else. I found that out long ago when I was a child. I loved it because I had nothing else to love, but it is as indifferent as this God you call on so often (Rhys, 1966, p. 91).

The marriage of Rochester and Antoinette is like a relationship between a master and a slave. Rochester acts like an enslaver who takes her wife to England, where he imprisons her in an attic. The fragmented perceptions and unattainable fantasies of protagonists denied a place in the empire system, a system based on sex and gender structured in distinct private and public realms, confront the struggles of imperialism and cultural servitude in Jean Rhys's novels (Emery, 1982, p. 429).

The female protagonist in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is confused and lost. There seems to be a perceptible break between Antoinette and Rochester despite living together. The antagonism between Antoinette and Rochester stands for the antagonism between England as the colonial power and the West Indies as the colony. It is impossible to

unite them as a different system forms each. Arguing about whether the colony is hostile or indifferent reflects the animistic qualities that create uncanny experiences on the island. Unaware of her feelings of alienation and marginality, Rochester mistakenly believes that since Antoinette is born in the Caribbean, the place is sympathetic to her, threatening his control as a colonizer over both Antoinette and the island. This issue results in his feelings of hate and alienation in the West Indies.

In one part of the novel, Rochester expresses his disgust towards Jamaica, its people, and Antoinette herself. He expresses his despising of its people, laughter and tears, flattery and jealousy, arrogance and deception. He also shows his hatred for the place and home, despising its beauty, charm, callousness, and brutality, which were a part of its charm. Above all else, he despised Antoinette because she was an integrated part of that beauty. He could not tolerate her in general because she was surrounded by magic and beauty. She had left him dry, and he would remain thirsty and aching for what he had lost for the rest of his life (Rhys, 1966, p. 103).

Rochester does not feel that the Caribbean landscape is animistic. He also feels very uncomfortable in the Caribbean, the house they live in after their marriage. The first time he sees it, he feels that the house seems to shrink from the forest behind it and crane eagerly out to the distant sea. It was more awkward than ugly, a little sad as if it knew it could not last. These words are significant because they reflect Rochester's uncanny fear of the surrounding elements of nature to the point that he believes the house itself is similarly cowering from the huge forest. Moreover, the house can foretell that it is not going to last, a foreshadowing of the tragic fate of Antoinette, who is going to be taken to England against her will (Mardorossian, 1999, p. 67).

To Rochester, Antoinette represents a stranger who is inferior to him. When he understands his loneliness and disability to comprehend and control this Creole woman accurately, he starts ruining her identity (Pollanen, 2012, p. 12). When Rochester enters Antoinette's life, she has both wisdom and goodness. And Rochester's inability to take good care of her feelings is exemplified by Rhys as an example of masculine meanness towards women. She is poorly rejected when she decides to depend on his affection (Porter, 1976, p. 543).

Even when Antoinette was a child, she could not be confident about her true identity, “It was as if a door opened, and I was somewhere else as I stared at the red and yellow blossoms in the light, thinking about nothing. I'm no longer myself” (Rhys, 1966, p. 28). It has been noticed that even when Antoinette was a child, people used to laugh at her family and the sarcasm of their appearance “I never gave an odd negro a glance. They despised us and referred to us as white bugs” (Rhys, 1966, p. 13).

Moreover, losing her mother, Annette, who died of the sorrow of her son's loss, makes Antoinette struggle to overcome a psychological predicament. By losing her mother's care and love, Antoinette feels insecure and extensively helpless in her childhood. Even before her mother died, the relationship between Antoinette and her mother was not that close. She loved her mother, but her mother would ignore her daughter's need for attention and affection. Just like Antoinette, Rhys had a cold and judgmental mother.

As a child, Antoinette is often lonely and feels insecure owing to love dispossession amongst her family and community. Ross asserts that the self has four components, including “the Material Self, the Social Self, the Spiritual Self, and the Pure Ego” (Ross, 1979, p. 302). The Material Self includes the features of soul, body, clothes, and family. This assertion by Ross demonstrates the profound effect that the absence of a good mother and daughter relationship has on the development of one's self.

This makes her distressed and excessively close to anyone who can satisfy her emotional needs. This issue stimulates some feelings of refuge and confidence, particularly due to being neglected by her mother, who is not close with her daughter. Therefore, she is attached to Christophine as her nurse who takes care of Antoinette, and by protecting her, she becomes more powerful to develop her own identity.

All these points cause Antoinette to suffer from basic anxiety as a feeling of being destitute and abandoned in an antagonistic world. As asserted by Horney, Antoinette's basic anxiety has its roots in her helplessness, reliance on her parents, and being ignored by them. The feeling of insecurity continues in her adulthood, too, because her gender and race repress her all the time.

What was mentioned about Antoinette's basic anxiety is in accordance with what Horney has declared that basic anxiety starts from the relationship between a

parent and a child. When this socially shaped anxiety appears, the child grows behavior approaches in reaction to parental behavior as a means to deal with the supplementary sentiments of dependence and anxiety. Suppose any one of the child's behavioral policies becomes fixed in his/her personality. In that case, it is called a neurotic need, which protects oneself against this feeling of anxiety (Hornstein, 1992, pp. 254-263).

The anxiety in Antoinette makes her need love and support. Thus, she tries hard to satisfy the expectations of others. Also, she needs a partner, especially because she suffers from the fear of being deserted. Antoinette thinks that having a partner will end-all of her life's plights. This is why she marries Rochester, who is completely a stranger. Antoinette's struggling for a fixed place and identity causes her to have an arranged marriage which is again rooted in her sense of anxiety.

Horney does not accept the notion that women are only recognized and appreciated as people because of their children and families. She was opposed to Victorian ideas about the nature of a marriage partnership. This is why she insisted that women have a precise realization of themselves to realize their capacity and achieve what they wish. However, Antoinette is going to lose her sense of self when she marries Rochester because he represses her in order to have total control over her because of her basic anxiety. Rochester as an English man, wishes to possess her: "If she too says it, or weeps, I'll take her in my arms, my lunatic. She's mad but mine, mine" (Rhys, 1966, p. 99). In fact, by doing so, he wants to stop her from self-actualization and to flourish her real self since he knows that her real self has the capability for progress, delight, and determination.

Antoinette is a Creole girl, and as it is known, colonialism led to the development of Creole people who are of mixed races. This mixture has led the identity to be viewed as a principal concern for West Indians like Rhys because they found themselves between two cultures. Also, even their enduring practice of the English mode of life could not provide them with the full reception and approval by them. Antoinette becomes more and more anxious in her pursuit of getting a fixed and socially accepted identity.

Rhys herself did not know where she exactly belonged to. As a result, her themes of estrangement and homelessness are candidly reproduced in almost all her

West Indian creole heroines who are deprived of a true and stable identity. In the Caribbean, one of the novel's functions is to serve as a kind of social history. By alluding to the inner lives of men and women who were never considered to be important enough for their ideas and emotions to be documented by the British, authors like Rhys became one of the essential social historians.

Repression drives Antoinette mad, and she is confined by her husband to a room forever. Antoinette's conflict of reason and emotion leads her to tension and basic anxiety, and then madness. She struggles to balance being an English girl and at the same time being a Creole girl. Also, she is trying to be a human being with rights, enjoying her freedoms, and fulfilling herself, which is characterized by caring and good treatment by her husband. Still, the patriarchal system has stripped her of self-realization, and she has become subject to domination and dependence (Haque, 2016, p.54). Madness is Antoinette's way to reach self-actualization and express her ideal self, ultimately bringing about her destruction. In other words, through madness, she can fulfill her desires and capacities. When Rochester calls his wife Bertha, she says:

Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name... I loved this place and you have made it into a place I hate... I used to think that if everything else went out of my life I would still have this, and now you have spoilt it... I hate it now like I hate you and before I die I will show you how much I hate you (Rhys, 1966, p. 94).

The above quotation shows that Antoinette is little by little trying to attain a sort of realization and awareness of her need for an autonomous self. In her novels, Rhys has portrayed a society in which her heroines are not even allowed to disclose their real selves; thus, they have to attempt hard in order to please and accomplish their ideal selves, and madness is Antoinette's method to fulfill her yearning for her ideal self.

In spite of all the conflicts that threaten to destroy her identity as a white Creole woman, Antoinette ultimately establishes a confident sense of self at the end of the novel. She thus frees herself from the obstructive norms and harsh denunciation by others. Rhys has employed a range of periodic imageries in order to show Antoinette's inner fights and changes that eventually permit her to express herself. As it has been noted that the liberation that Antoinette sought occurred towards the end of the story; yet, liberty could only be obtained by disappearing and getting rid of all the

incarcerations which she endured. She is freeing herself when she thinks of burning down Thornfield House (El Quardi, 2013, p. 37).

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rochester attempts to make Antoinette a savage as a black girl and at the same time an obedient white girl, which causes her to act furious, leading Rochester to believe that Antoinette is insane and put her in a dark chamber. Surprisingly, Antoinette accepts the choice. This demonstrates how exhausted she is in her hunt for her actual identity. This search has tortured Antoinette her entire life, and she now needs peace of mind. However, this approach proves to be rather unpleasant. She isolates herself from all outside stimuli in order to confront her inner self. She is not even provided a mirror to look in her reflection. Her brother, Richard, does not recognize her demonstrates Antoinette's state of mind.

The topic of identity is linked to the novel's recurring imagery of mirrors. When Antoinette looks in the mirror, she attempts to know her actual identity better. On the other hand, Mirrors might display a skewed representation of the genuine self. The mirror would have reflected Antoinette a schizophrenic vision of herself that did not define her. However, there may be a parallel between the mirror picture and Antoinette's dream towards the end of the story. Antoinette believes that every time she looks in the mirror, she wishes the best. She walks along a 'dark path' in her dream with a candle in her hand. Perhaps she still believes she will be able to transcend the darkness she has been thrust into and have the best life: "The flame flickered, and I thought it was out, so there must have been a draught. But I sheltered it with my palm, and it lit up again to guide me along the dark path" (Rhys, 1966, p. 32).

According to Horney, self-actualization is a shared objective between all people because this notion of 'self' forms the dominant spirit of human beings (Horney, 1942, p. 153). Horney has also said that if people have the right understanding of themselves, they are able to realize their capability and reach what they desire. Maslow has commented that the real self is biologically 'given' because we have an indispensable internal nature that is inherent, agreed upon, and prearranged. In this nature, we all have potentials, aptitudes, functional apparatus, bodily equilibriums, prenatal and biological wounds, and disturbances to the neonates (Maslow, 1965, p. 307).

As a result, human beings will develop two perspectives of themselves: the 'real self,' which represents who and what they are in reality, and the 'ideal self,' which represents the sort of person they believe they should be. The real self is capable of development and being happy; nevertheless, it also has some weak points. The ideal self helps the real self to evolve its capability and achieve self-actualization. Self-actualization signifies a desire for Antoinette, which could result in her comprehending her competencies. Self-actualization plays a crucial role in her life because it makes her enthused enough to accomplish her goals. However, Antoinette's self-actualization happens through madness because some of her most basic needs are not satisfied.

This contrasts with what Maslow says that self-actualization cannot usually be achieved until other requirements of Maslow's arrangement of requirements are fulfilled. Maslow believes that people have subordinate order desires that have to be satisfied before high order desires can be fulfilled. They involve five main groups of desires: bodily needs, well-being, belongingness, approval, and self-realization (Maslow, 1955, p. 27).

Rhys focuses the whole novel in *Wide Sargasso Sea* on Antoinette's desire for her true self, which she struggles to find through her chaotic life. Europe and civilization, white skin, patriarchy, and masculinity are on all sides. On the other hand, there are the Caribbean's wild passions, matriarchy, and femininity. These competing forces collide within Antoinette's head, resulting in inner complexity and anxieties. Because Antoinette's consciousness is poised between these two realms, it ultimately belongs to neither. The tragedy of *Wide Sargasso Sea* depicts the sea as being so vast between the Caribbean and Europe that Antoinette becomes imprisoned in the center of it, unable to traverse it and thus belonging to neither.

Anna is also lonely, especially after her father dies. When her stepmother quits supporting her, she feels even more alone. The novel writing style reflects the clash between Anna's two halves and the ongoing loss of her more true self. *Voyage in the Dark* is written in the first person. When Anna recalls the past, the style alters to recommend her subdued interior life (Abel, 1979, p. 159).

Anna's needs and desire to be adored are exacerbated at this point. She tries to attain this desire by having numerous relationships with different men who cannot satisfy this requirement. Moving to England plays an important role in Anna's feeling

of loneliness since she always feels like an outcast, and this is why she cannot get accustomed to this new setting and may suffer from basic anxiety. Even at the time of her departure from her homeland, she is extremely sad:

It was when I looked back from the boat and saw the lights of the town bobbing up and down that was the first time I really knew I was going. Uncle Bob said well you're off now and I turned my head so that nobody would see me crying--it ran down my face and splashed into the sea like the rain was splashing--Adieu sweetheart adieu-- And I watched the lights heaving up and down (Rhys, 1934, p. 32).

Throughout the novel, she seems to have a problem getting adjusted to her new setting. Anna is unable to think of England as her home. Still, she does not try to go back to her own country; this is why she is stuck:

It was almost like being born again. The colors were different, the smells different, the feeling things gave you right down inside yourself was different. Not just the difference between heat, cold; light, darkness; purple, grey. But a difference in the way I was frightened and the way I was happy (Rhys, 1934, p. 3).

These needs are called neurotic needs. The third need signifies the need for social acknowledgment, respect, and attention. Those like Anna who have this need suffer from the fear of weakness and desertion, the phenomena that Horney has referred to as 'basic anxiety'. Such people as Anna thus tend to display a need for love and support from others. They may also seek out a partner as somebody to depend on.

Basic anxiety and neurosis could be the consequence of a range of causes, including Uselessness, untrustworthy behavior, a lack of regard for the individual's discrete requirements, a lack of genuine supervision, disliking viewpoints, too much or too little appreciation, or the absence of it, a lack of tried and true cherish, being forced to take sides in parental disputes, too much or too little obligation, over-protection, isolation from other children, bias, insight (Horney, 1993, p. 42).

Most of the stated points are experienced to some extent by Anna. For example, due to the society that she is living in, she continuously suffers from prejudice and discernment. A lack of warmth and compassion is also perceptible in her boyfriend and stepmother's behavior. This coldness upsets her so much that she compares it with a cold which she feels, "with the same sort of hurt that the cold gave her in her chest" (Rhys, 1934, p. 15). Anna, a young chorus girl born in the British colony of Dominica, is now wandering in London. Her stepmother misjudges her, is in a brawl with alcohol,

and ultimately starts an affair with Walter, on whom she is financially dependent. In her dreams, she mourns her deceased father and remembers her Dominican house's plant and insect life.

Walter, as an important character, definitely plays a significant role in Anna's subjugation. One of the reasons why she got into a relationship with Walter was for the sake of earning money and forgetting about her solitude. In fact, her feeling anxious in a new society has such an extremely negative effect on her self-image that she decides to achieve prosperity and use it as a means to forget about her being a stranger. Actually, Anna suffers from feelings of submissiveness because of her race and due to being lowered in England. For example, in one part of the novel, she is having an interior monologue about her desire for pretty clothes so that she is respected:

About clothes, it's awful. Everything makes you want pretty clothes like hell. People laugh at girls who are badly dressed. Jaw, jaw, jaw.... Beautifully dressed woman. As if it isn't enough that you want to be beautiful, that you want to have pretty clothes, that you want it like hell. As if that isn't enough. But no, it's jaw, jaw and sneer, sneer all the time ... You look at your hideous underclothes and you think, 'All right, I'll do anything for good clothes. Anything-- anything for clothes (Rhys, 1934, p. 25).

However, this relationship with Walter makes her memories signify more sexual humiliation than power. Furthermore, as Anna's lover, who looks like a father, Walter legitimates his sexual manipulation by his role as an adviser and her financial porter. But Hester provides as little security for Anna as Rhys's own mother. The parentless, particularly fatherless, young women in most of the stories by Rhys yearn for the safety of 'belonging' that is denied them.

According to Maslow, self-actualization is the uppermost level of one's mental growth where the 'actualization' of thorough personal capability is attained. This occurs typically after fundamental physical and ego desires have been pleased. Consequently, Anna needs such men as Walter in order to attain this level. In other words, self-actualization motivates Anna to bring about her desires (Maslow, 1955, p.54)

Horney believed that self-actualization could be approached from two main viewpoints: the rational consequence of early progress and the commencement of a novel one. It is likely to have an extensive effect on the supplementary growth since there is no more significant phase than leaving the real self. But the chief motive for its

radical effect is another implication of this phase. The dynamism which determines self-actualization is changed to the goal of satisfying the idealized self. This change signifies no more and no less than a change in the path of the person's entire life and progress (Horney, 1950, p. 24).

In order to achieve self-actualization, the basic requirements such as food, house, affection, and security have to be satisfied. When people like Anna have a different life from their imaginations, they are less likely to be gratified. Still, one issue that prevents her from self-realization is her repression by men. Unlike Freud, Horney believed that self-realization is possible for everyone, even women. She stated that the belief that females are youthful and emotive, unable to take responsibility and freedom is the work of the male propensity to reduce their self-esteem.

As Horney has always insisted, society is extremely responsible for women's oppression. This is why instead of portraying a good and decent female protagonist, Rhys has presented a woman whose limitation by society leads her to prostitution. Anna wishes to keep her baby, but she is homeless and unemployed, and there is no family to support her. Hence, she has few choices, and when her only friend forces her to abort the baby, she cannot disagree. Eventually, Anna tells the reader that she doesn't intend to live like this.

Extreme feelings of weakness and solitude in an unfriendly environment need the perseverance to dismiss this inevitable unease. Horney discussed three movements that are considered as neurotic efforts to resolve the basic anxiety. One can move toward people by seeing them as friendly and caring. This leads to a strong desire for love and protection. One can move against people by seeing others as coarse and unfeeling human beings, and this issue will result in strong requests for authority and misuse of others. A person can also move away from people by thinking of oneself as autonomous, producing strong desires for confidentiality and autonomy.

Antoinette and Anna both feel weak and lonely at some time in their lives; thus, they move toward others, particularly other men, to be supported. The main reason is that authority is dispersed unequally in Rhys's fiction, and men are mostly noticed to have money and, accordingly, the ability to control women or reject them. The women, on the contrary, are financially immobilized and are represented only as girls or wives with unimportant jobs, looking for a refuge. For Rhys's heroines, it is significant to

find a man in order to be economically successful and passionately satisfied. Thus, women's reliance on men is a hindrance since it prevents them from achieving self-realization.

Men in Rhys's novels are regularly older than such females as Antoinette and Anna; hence, they resemble their fathers mainly due to their power and financial capabilities. These are the men who determine society's standards, and women have to obey these morals. Those who have problems with these principles have little provision. It is observed that monetary needs make emotional dependency and a resulting loss of self-assurance that underpins the essential financial reliance. Rhys's heroines like Antoinette and Anna are trapped between their desire for maintenance and their wish to have a feeling of individuality.

However, women like Antoinette and Anna seek in order to be supported. However, they soon move away from those people because of fulfilling their desire to actualize their true selves. Besides, it was noticed that Antoinette's and Anna's struggles to achieve self-realization and identity are among the key features of the novels. Their struggles make them encounter internal and external clashes that they have to endure to preserve their identity as two white Creole women.

What is expected in both these characters and Rhys's other heroines is that they think of the world as an antagonistic place, which is why they suffer from segregation or disconnection from those around them. They are, in fact, impotent to start an actual interaction with others. They all may experience the times during which they are distanced from their own bodies and true selves; thus, they look like strangers who have lost interest in the world which is highly gloomy and yield to preoccupations that drag them toward boring, infertile arrangements from which all happiness has been taken (Abel, 1979, p. 159).

2.2. Analysis of Rhys's Selected Novels in the Light of bell hooks's Feminist Perspective

Although bell hooks is an African-American feminist, her theories also apply to the analysis of white writers' literature. What is very important concerning this feminist is her emphasis on the relation between race, capitalism, and gender and how

they can lead to subjugation. Anna and Antoinette, or Bertha, as the central characters of Rhys's novels are to a less or more extent mistreated by men.

It has been remarked that many novels by Rhys all have hints of Rhys's own life and involve estranged female leading roles. Jean Rhys, who was born in Dominica, a small island in the West Indies, would feel sidelined due to several issues. One reason was that she lived in a multicultural community that was discernible by its resentment toward the persistent imperialist attendance, and she was white. Also, she was raised in a late-Victorian culture formed by sturdily mannish principles while she was a female.

Most importantly, she felt lonely inside her own family; she attached just slightly to her disheartened father and was both afraid of and estranged from her retaliatory, unattainable mother. According to hooks, a dominant principle of the modern feminist movement has been the claim that all females are repressed (hooks, 1984, p. 5), and this is what can be noticed about Rhys's female characters.

It is easy to dismiss Rhys's female heroines as passive victims. But this inactivity, which the reader finds so distressing, is also a form of insurrection. Her heroines deny themselves because they lack the power to change them in a world where women without family or money have few options. They reject the bourgeois code, the dismal middle, as well as self-definition and a normal existence, and Rhys is most preoccupied with the soul, particularly the female soul.

After the publication of *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), critics' attention initially focused mainly on aspects of ethnicity, slavery, colonialism, and feminist readings, which set the double oppression of the protagonist. It is essential to highlight the subtle intersection of race and gender that often aligns with the economic aspects of class differences. This work takes a closer look at how the boundaries of the self are culturally defined and constructed. It is important to look at heroes in their cultural context because the perception of bodies, language, and psyche occurs through contact with the social environment. To date, no work deals with the real and nostalgic losses of the protagonist and combines them with the notion of dismal symmetry in order to analyze psychological propensity.

Wide Sargasso Sea has often been read as a text that indulges in binary oppositions while exposing the hegemonic Western mindset. Concepts such as culture, civilization, knowledge, Christianity, and masculinity are linked in juxtaposed categories such as nature, wilderness, imagination, and obeah and femininity. There is no doubt that all of these terms and classifications are negotiated in Rhys's text, but it is more illuminating with pure juxtaposition and negation (Howells, 1991, p.78).

Wide Sargasso Sea depicted the period following freedom when the Jamaican slave society became a colony. The formerly enslaved people formed the dispossessed pastoral proletariat, and the white Creoles inhabited the other social pole of the class (Mardorossian, 1999, p. 88). Antoinette, the central character in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, is Creole, and her race plays an important role in her oppression by Rochester. Although her family once had some enslaved people, Rochester from England thinks of himself as superior to Antoinette because she is a Creole.

In Jamaica, the black people would regard her as a hybrid person, and in England, the British colonizers, like her husband, view her as a stranger or a recluse. Quite possibly, the main idea in postcolonial studies is hybridity (blending), which alludes to the hybridity of societies and their blended ness, or even 'pollution.' 'Hybridity,' as noted by Ashcroft et al. (2013), alludes to the rise of novel transcultural structures in the contact zone made by colonization. Hybridization is the uniting or cross-fertilization of two species to produce a third, 'half breed' (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 118).

When writing this novel, Rhys primarily experienced discouraging difficulties, but it is obvious why she was attracted to a character like Bertha Mason. She considered Brontë's downgraded character as resembling her former central characters. Using this character, she could thus take a significant step in announcing her own visualization and challenging Brontë's privilege as the literary predecessor.

Wide Sargasso Sea's protagonist, like Anna Morgan, is a subject invaded by the wants of others. What she and they both oppose is the life-denying hypocrisy of social formations. Like Rhys's previous heroines, Antoinette lives in a paranoid-schizoid awareness: her things are either good or awful, and ambiguity toward others or herself is inconceivable (Simpson, 2005, p. 113).

Antoinette's race as a Creole which makes her the blended result of Caribbean dark and European white races is viewed as a vital aspect of her character since she goes through bunches of struggles concerning her personality. In spite of the fact that Antoinette and her family live among the dark culture in Jamaica, they continuously face acumen and absence of regard by the African American population since Britain's Emancipation Act liberated pilgrim slaves. The lack of concerted effort between the white Creoles and the dark working people stymied the possibility of forming an alliance.

It could have been possible for British European culture to make a more radical commitment to the trajectory of Creolization if the white Creole tip top had not degraded itself by degrading its workers. As it happened, white attachment to Jamaica remained underneath and manifested itself. A widening of the gap between pilgrims and metropolitans, provincials and Creoles, and the upper class and the general public in the development of social polarity (Brathwaite, 1974, p. 24).

Antoinette's approaching across bunches of difficulties causes her to comprehend that she is restricted by social, racial, and orientation issues. While battling hard to feel free, she faces numerous challenges at various seasons of her life. These struggles, in this way, prevent her real self-appreciation from creating. Most peruses can notice the outrageous impact social associations have on Antoinette from the absolute first expressions of her story, 'They say.' Antoinette features the contemplations of society's 'critical they' and addresses her craving for an autonomous character that can be free of others' coordinated ideas concerning her Creole childhood.

This makes Antoinette get stuck between two cultures, and as it is noticed, she is unable to get used to anyone. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette, who is also the mad Bertha of *Jane Eyre*, can be viewed as an alive reflection of Rochester's indignity and guilt that he can neither do away with nor overlook; thus, he imprisons her in a room in order to be out of sight. As a part of 'the colonial nouveaux riches,' she is supposed to be inferior to England's fine old families (Porter, 1976, p. 546). This is why she may suffer from an identity crisis, too. In other words, the matter of displacement is observed as a chief point that results in the crisis of identity in Antoinette and Anna as Rhys's protagonists.

This means that when they face two or more different cultures, the result will be a deep conflict. The disintegration of this character's identity to society, class, and gender leads to her subjugation and relegation. Antoinette's personality is molded by various elements, including her race and identity (Creole), gender (woman), a colonial background, and altering class and status. These components or elements add to the comprehension of Antoinette's character, first to the making of her personality and afterward to the course of her character annihilation.

It can be noticed that both novels of Rhys revolve around oppressed women in social, cultural, and financial aspects who are struggling hard to develop an identity for themselves. These excluded women have been estranged from their own societies and are in search of a stable identity. Such people as Antoinette are forced to follow the so-called immaculate Western observations, which results in their calamitous downfall. Rhys has intended to present the impacts of the hegemonic Eurocentric discourse on the psyche of her protagonist, whose indecisiveness and problems are chiefly the result of such viewpoints.

Rhys's revision of Brontë not only benefits the Caribbean but also removes Rochester from his powerful zone and expresses his capability for meanness. Antoinette is shown as an oppressed woman not only due to her gender but also because of her race and colonialism, which lead to her mental estrangement. Race, as mentioned, is very significant in the heroines' hybridity. Racial difference is the cause of supposing the Creole as the Other. Those like Antoinette find themselves in a society where the British are superior to the Creole, thus having access to more benefits and prosperity. The difference leads to crossing the line between the two races by Antoinette. Racial discrimination leads to differences in social status, too (Savory, 1998, p. 133).

Rochester looks down on Antoinette as a non-English Creole girl to make her feel humiliated and despised by her race to be subservient to him and his laws. So Rochester shakes her confidence and deprives her of her original identity. The husband distances himself more and more from Antoinette in order to stabilize his English identity. This is due to the increasing loss of ontological security in the new cultural environment. He accuses her of promiscuity and declares her non-European and ultimately even insane. These doubts about Antoinette's more autonomous, 'pure,' and

ethnically homogeneous identity are nurtured by their half-brother, Daniel Cosway/Boyd, who despises Antoinette - but also her imperialist husband - for her Eurocentric ideology.

Although Christophine strives to free her protégé, Antoinette, from her unhappy marriage, this Antoinette cannot free herself from a white, European wife's desired self-image since only such a woman has access to a subject position within the hegemonic discourse. Antoinette breaks at the discrepancy that the normative race and gender discourses represent concerning the reality of her life and is thrown down by the various types of losses of her attachment figures. Antoinette's unfortunate and gloomy marriage highlights her identity crisis since her husband is trying endlessly to disregard her and her own sense of individuality.

Rochester has taken all his wife's possessions after marrying her. Then, he has referred to her as Bertha. And ultimately, he is the one who decides about her destiny and locks her in a room. Rochester's strategy shows his authority and his wife's oddness. Many critics point out Rochester's male desire for domination. Rochester hates Antoinette because he cannot understand her. He cannot understand her explosive manners, and he feels afraid of her sexuality, a sexuality that both attracts and repels him because it is not of the kind he is used to: "She'll loosen her black hair, giggle, entice, and flatter a wild girl. She won't care who she's in love with. She'll wail and weep and abuse herself in ways that no reasonable woman could do" (Rhys, 1966, p. 5).

Rochester represents the Victorian patriarchal society which used to think that women "if they do not behave like angels, they must be monsters" (Orlando, 2003, p. 13). He attempts, therefore, to impose his view of Antoinette onto her to exert control and repress her using renaming her Bertha. "Renaming her is how Rochester exerts his masculine power over his wife" (Rhys, 1966, p. 7). The term 'Creole' signifies a particular sort of language used by a colonized or slave group. In other words, Creole infers slavery. Thus it can be suggested that the term 'Creole' is used to talk about a particular kind of language, race, or culture. It has also meant that a creole may have mixed or hybrid identities (Holm, 2004, p. 6).

Thus, a key issue that has disintegrated Antoinette's identity is her race. Being a white Creole implies she is of mixed Black and European descent. After the

Emancipation Act of 1833, Britain banned slavery in all its colonies, and the repressed abhorrence among blacks and whites was augmented. Accordingly, Antoinette's childhood is teemed with racial ferocity, discernment, anxiety, deficiency, and terror. The crisis that Antoinette has been experiencing regarding her true identity started through her black childhood friend named Tia. Tia showed Antoinette that she was not popular with the locals. Thus, she calls Antoinette a 'white nigger' who does not belong to any precise race:

A white cockroach, that's me, that's what they (the blacks) call all of us! We are here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave Traders. I have heard English women call us white niggers... I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all (Rhys, 1966, p. 64).

All these glitches impacted her desire to foster her own character or self-administering self and, lastly, prompted the specific obliteration of her character. In *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*, hooks has written that men benefit a lot from patriarchy and the supposition that they are more privileged than women they should dominate (2000b, p. ix). Rochester's feeling of superiority, both as a man and as a person from England, makes him mistreat his Creole wife in different ways. He has even an affair with Amélie as his wife's 'little half-caste servant' (Rhys, 1966, p. 55).

This event makes Rochester and Antoinette argue, leading to Antoinette's mental disorder. What encouraged Rhys to write this novel is, as remarked by Smith, that she believed that *Jane Eyre* presented just 'the English side' of the story (Smith, 1997, p. xvi). So, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, she decided to provide the readers with the story of a bottled-up Creole female by narrating it from a different viewpoint.

As it was already declared, Rochester's sleeping with his wife's servant plays an imperative role in the upcoming events like Antoinette's mental breakdown. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys has been obsessed with the downgraded circumstances of women in the male-dominated society of the colonized lands. She has also probed into such issues as colonialism, race, political coercion, and psychological disorder. Despite the fact that this study focuses mostly on Antoinette, who is white, female concerns are not that remarkable in this novel; in fact, the requirement for sexual freedom and financial authorization and the fight against the mental agony of racism and sexism can be felt in it through the character of Amélie.

Rhys was born in Dominica, one of the Windward Islands in the Caribbean, and her childhood overlapped with the final years of British colonialism. When she was sixteen, she moved to England and went to school there. Jean Rhys left her hometown for England and other parts of Europe, where she underwent an unambiguously female estrangement and sexual susceptibility (Emery, 1968, p. 3).

It can be concluded that although colonialism had ended, its effects on Rhys could be noticed to a great extent. So, she would reflect upon her experiences in her novels because, as stated in *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, women of all races are even more miserable than before. Thus, it is crucial to stop being silent, talk about class, and accept where women stand (hooks, 2000a, p. viii).

Voyage in the Dark is also the reflection of Rhys's childhood in the Caribbean island of Dominica and her maturity in Europe. This novel depicts the truth about how women and particularly the needy ones like Anna, are maltreated. *Voyage in the Dark* represents how Anna struggles against the endless burden from others to work as a prostitute. Anna is surrounded by people who abuse her to fulfill their own sexual or financial desires.

As Anna tries to fit into a culture that exploits her impoverished status, Jean Rhys's work highlights the interconnections of gender, class, and race. Rhys was a lady of several cultures: Caribbean, English, and white Creole. Some of these oppositions and contradictions may be found in her works. Her literary style, as well as how she depicted race, ethnicity, class, sex, and nationality, underscored her contribution and position in Caribbean literature and culture.

Her works are simultaneously traditional and avant-garde, colonial and anti-colonial. These disparities in attitude reveal her unwillingness to be entirely rational and her proclivity for ambiguity, as well as her ambivalence about wanting to belong to and be autonomous from any of the cultures. *Voyage in the Dark* becomes virtually autobiographical due to this little glimpse into Rhys's existence. Anna, like Rhys, is engulfed in a vortex of rejection and sadness caused by her sense of otherness. Her nationality, gender, and social status perplex her as much as they perplex others.

The structure of the novel depicts how Anna descends more into her abyss of anguish and loss. Rhys depicts the nexus of gender oppression, economic hardship, and ethnic disorientation. This is bolstered by her background, which had its share of

heartbreaks, but Anna's childhood memories appear more joyous compared to the drab and chilly England of her youth. Rhys portrays a young woman who is stuck in a foreign nation with few resources other than her youth and attractiveness.

Anna's England is chilly, dark, and commerce-driven where class matters. Anna is not immature, and her observations of others are frequently true. Still, her demands for financial and emotional security, affection, and a sense of belonging are preyed upon by the conditions of gender and economy. She has no friends, men mistreat her, and even ladies appear to conspire to make her life a living hell. This seclusion can be partly traced to her inability to view England as her home. When only enmity rules both 'we' and 'them,' assimilation is unviable and unrealistic. When the novel starts, we see Anna as an actress in London. Rhys has described the noticeable dissimilarities between London and Anna's own hometown, which make her feel like a stranger in London.

The circumstances exacerbate Anna's misery she discovers herself in. She is expected to pretend to be someone other than herself. She likes the variety of odors and colors, but in England, everything appears to be the same - dismal grey colors, rows of tiny dwellings with chimneys shaped like funnels for fake steamers, and smoke the same color as the sky. Anne's persistent need for love and comfort is exemplified by her constant search for warmth and security. This state of confusion is linked to a meeting with the other. Anna's allegiance to her homeland is betrayed by choosing between the two. How could she say no to a location she recalls fondly? The colonial mentality compels Anna to appreciate the English way of life. Yet, the contrast between Caribbean thinking and the English worldview is too disorienting for Anna to accept fully.

She cannot overcome the anxiety and bewilderment that her new English surroundings require of her, and others around her - landladies, friends, and lovers - cannot accept her differences. They are bewildered by her, just as she is confused by the routine of everything being precisely the same and dreads the cold. She is known as 'the Hottentot,' and many of her admirers see her as chilly as ice. Her exterior self-strives to adopt Englishness, but her inner self hides even farther into the infantile peace of her Caribbean roots.

This is why Anna suffers from a clashed sense of identity. In *Voyage in the Dark*, Anna wishes to be supported and have a stable living place. Throughout the entire novel, she feels insecure. Hence, Anna is unquestionably a symbol of the Caribbean dilemma. Similarly, the matter of race was really interesting for Anna as she was growing up in the Caribbean. It was even more thought-provoking that Anna would think of black people as better than white people by declaring, “I desired to be a black person. I've always wished to be a black person. Being black makes me feel warm and happy but being white makes me feel chilly and unhappy” (Rhys, 1934, p. 27).

When Hester, as her stepmother, avoids supporting her, she decides to start her relationships with different men so that they can support her. She feels different and disadvantaged compared to the English people, and this issue stimulates her to envisage being well-to-do. However, her race provides her with only a limited number of jobs, and she has to work as a chorus girl when she meets Walter Jeffries, an older man of a high class who looks after her in return for sex. At one point, Anna is talking about her helplessness when Walter pays her money in order to have sex with her:

What are you doing? I intended to ask. Instead of saying, “Don't do that,” I walked up to him and said, “All right, if you want - anything you want, however you want.” I kissed his hand, and he kissed me back. [...] I was instantly unhappy and completely disoriented. “How could I have done that? I said (Rhys, 1934, pp. 33-34).

She is so powerless that she acts like a slave who kisses her master's hands. This issue highlights Anna's weakness in supporting herself and men's superiority. And what highlights this weakness even more, is not only her gender but also her race and the fact that she belongs to a colonized setting. Just as she cannot adjust to the new country, she has many problems with her associations with British men. Anna sees herself as a victim of the British gender and class structure and its racial prejudices.

In *Voyage in the Dark*, Rhys demonstrates that Anna Morgan is aware of the norms of life, but she is unable to change them. Anna hides her yearning for love and her longing for identity behind a mask of feminine characteristics, even if it means making concessions and physical sacrifices. Regrettably, Anna's worth as a human being is determined by her social position, income, and race. When we conceive of otherness in binary terms, all-or-nothing, it encourages us to think that one yardstick is more important than another (Kloepfer, 1985, p. 26).

Anna falls even deeper since she lacks a self-identity to which she can not cling. She was on the lookout for her long-lost soul, and she began to think England was lovely. However, as soon as she lets Walter's hand, she loses everything. She attempts to get back to her family and her home, but she is unwanted there and loses her identity. As a result, her journey into the unknown continues, becoming darker with each passing day. She is compelled to become a bad girl, attempting to find passion and identity with every guy she meets. She entirely loses herself in the seek for her own identity. Her lack of identity in the world forces her to abort her unborn kid since she cannot grant individuality to another. Her abortion is one of the many problems that she has got. She is poor and according to hooks, poor women would often search for unlawful abortions (hooks, 2000b, p. 26).

She loses her last shred of identity after aborting her unborn kid. Anna is on the point of death in the darkroom in *Voyage in the Dark*. She has hallucinations of her family, mother, and uncle, similar to Antoinette's dream, and attempts frantically to hold to the prospect of reconnecting with them. She strives to resume her search for an identity all over again while being emotionally battered to death: "...The ray of light came in again under the door like the last thrust of remembering before everything is blotted out. I lay and watched it and thought about starting all over again. And about being new and fresh...And about starting all over again, all over again..." (Rhys, 1934, p. 22).

Regarding the importance of racial oppression, hooks has declared that by rejecting the general view that the emphasis of the feminist movement should be the social equivalence of the sexes and highlighting eliminating the cultural root of group subjugation, our own examination would necessitate an investigation of all features of women's political authenticity. This would imply that race and class subjugation would be identified as feminist matters with as much significance as sexism (hooks, 1984, p. 25).

Rhys has shown a female heroine who is in agony due to a political system of imperial rule. Rhys has portrayed a picture of the socio-political and white mythology as bourgeois and imperialist culture in the West. The men in *Voyage in the Dark* all fit the idea of 'phallogocentric' since they continually exploit and irreverence ladies.

For example, Walter tells Anna, “You looked awfully pathetic when you were choosing those horrible stockings so anxiously” (Rhys, 1934, p. 20). This statement shows Walter’s attempts to reduce Anna’s self-respect. Anna is maltreated not only by men but also by Hester, whose English race allows her to abuse Anna and take her properties. Ultimately, Anna finds herself on a perplexing, lonely, and disorienting adventure in *Voyage in the Dark*. Her existence is devoid of structure and meaning, and her ‘journey’ takes the form of a downward spiral towards prostitution and degradation. There is a distinct sense that throughout her ‘performance,’ Anna, having lost her natural rhythm for life, is spiraling out of control.

The heroines of Rhys’s fiction are mostly passive and exemplify ‘a born loser’ whose lack of power is apparent in their physical complexion, too. When Walter Jeffries leaves Anna, she is so depressed that she describes herself as if she is drowning; this feeling signifies her weakness and dependence on a much older man who does nothing other than exploiting her:

It was like letting go and falling back into water and seeing yourself grinning up through the water, your face like a mask, and seeing the bubbles coming up as if you were trying to speak from under the water. And how do you know what it’s like to try to speak from under water when you’re drowned? ‘And I’ve met a lot of them who were monkeys too,’ he said (Rhys, 1934, p. 98).

Rhys emphasizes the difficulties when a marginalized woman is forced to live in two civilizations that are not just different but also antagonistic, as in ‘us’ versus ‘them.’ The writer presents several examples of conflicting ideals and conventions throughout the story. Anna’s exclusion results from the dominant colonial worldview, which takes advantage of her differences. Both parties miss out on the depth and vibrancy of each culture by relegating her to the margins and asking her to absorb ideas that are foreign to her inner psychology. As Rhys shows, when a person’s reaction to otherness is total, it has fatal consequences. She emphasizes the need to treat others with respect, regardless of their gender, class, or nationality.

Anna Morgan’s narrative is about overcoming distances and understanding, about thinking about otherness or alterity in terms that aren’t absolute. Closed-mindedness and a refusal to see past others’ differences are challenges and caution that Rhys highlights. Rhys, via her protagonist, delivers a glimpse of hope so that women may start all over again.

According to theorists bell hooks and Karen Horney, Jean Rhys's heroines were under the influence of patriarchal oppression and sexual control, and the two heroines, Antoinette and Anne, suffered from basic anxiety and a loss of self-confidence, which led them to take death as a means to freedom and rid out of male dominated.

3. A FEMINISTIC ANALYSIS OF NAWAL EL SAADAWI'S SELECTED NOVELS

Women worldwide undergo inequality and discernment, mostly due to their gender. Beauvoir has referred to gender discrimination as regularly happening in most societies. More prominently, literature as a field that inspects such inequalities combines unreal and real in order to generate provocative writings like those of Nawal El Saadawi. Gender inequalities are of high significance in the Arab world. This is why such a writer as El Saadawi has been highly preoccupied with depicting discriminations in her literature.

El Saadawi is regarded as one of the most noticeable feminists in the Arab world, and her writings have inspired many Arab women. Many young Arab women are intensely motivated by her bold and provocative discussions in which she protects women's rights. Additionally, for Western critics, El Saadawi is viewed as a courageous feminist who would defy the masculine dominion in Egyptian society. Concerning El Saadawi's demonstration of social issues, Leila Ahmed has remarked that no one else locally has tended to male-centric standards as straightforwardly, aptly, and uncompromisingly as she has (Ahmed, 1981, p. 750).

Numerous scholars, like Saiti and Salti, have remarked that through the years, El Saadawi has probed into language, style, philosophies, and diverse genres in writing her novels, consequently contributing much to Arabic literature in general. Still, despite this investigation, her steadfast devotion to women's origins in the Arab world is very significant. It is thus not astounding to declare that although the main characters in El Saadawi's novels may vary in their social class, circumstances, educational level, and nurture, they are all females who have been troubled in some way by a male-controlled society that tries to make women immobilized (Saiti & Salti, 1994, p. 154).

Some other critics believe that the translations of El Saadawi's work are extensively popular in the West, and this is why she has been condemned for writing for the West. According to many Arab detractors, El Saadawi's popularity in the West stems from her support for women's rights and her ability to tell western readers what they want to hear. Drosihn has claimed that El Saadawi is entangled in Western discourses in *Woman at Point Zero*, as seen by her reproduction of Orientalist

categorization, which feeds into Western impulses of both superiority and fear of the Middle East, particularly Islam (Drosihn, 2014, p. 37).

As the first novel that will be investigated in this chapter, *Woman at Point Zero* (1975) is chiefly about the circumstances of a number of Egyptian women, including Firdaus, who is also the main character. When Firdaus agrees to relate her tale, she makes her act of resistance. She challenges part of the public record of societal opposition to Egypt's authoritarian governmental systems and patriarchal hierarchies.

El Saadawi wrote *Woman at Point Zero* according to a true story when she got to know Firdaus in prison. Firdaus was imprisoned due to murder, and she was sentenced to death. The fact that Firdaus did not attempt at all in order to stay alive encouraged El Saadawi to write about her life which was filled with miseries she had to suffer because of men and society. It can be inferred that, like many other women, Firdaus was also sick with her patriarchal society, which is why she would think of death as a mere release.

The Fall of the Imam (1987), another important novel by El Saadawi, narrates a story that happens in an unknown country. It has two major characters; the first one is The Imam, the duplicitous leader of the country who is also full of hate and mean towards anybody more privileged than him. The other important character is Bint Allah, a beautiful illicit orphan. The story revolves around two horrible proceedings.

The first event is the stoning and defacement of a woman and the second event is the homicide of the Imam himself and the chaos caused by this incident in the country. This novel depends on veritable occasions. As El Saadawi expressed in the introduction to *The Fall of the Imam*, the plot depends on her life experience in Egypt and the Middle East in general.

Like the previous chapter, the current chapter is going to present a feminist analysis of *Woman at Point Zero* and *The Fall of the Imam* in the light of the viewpoints of Horney and hooks. In other words, this chapter seeks to view such a female writer as El Saadawi from a new standpoint and discover her contributions to literary history. Besides, benefitting from feminist criticism helps to establish the significance of El Saadawi's writing in a male-dominated world.

3.1. Analysis of El Saadawi's Selected Novels in the Light of Karen Horney's Feminist Perspective

Woman at Point Zero is the story of a woman who is imprisoned and will be executed because she has killed a man. However, the doctor working there says it is hard for him to accept that she has murdered someone. This woman, her name is Firdaus, is not even ready to talk with anybody, and just one day before her execution, she agrees to see El Saadawi. When she starts her life story, suffering from patriarchy is clear from the very beginning of her life.

She says that her family was poor, and her mother was regularly mishandled by her father. He also beat Firdaus most often. When she was a child, she used to play with a boy called Mohammadain. They used to play a game named 'bride and bridegroom,' which gave Firdaus sexual pleasure. However, her mother did clitoridectomy on her, after which Firdaus could no longer play with Mohammadain or feel sexual pleasure.

Firdaus' loss reflects the loss of the Egyptian woman highlighting the social drama that the female nobility faces. According to tradition, they are mutilated to preserve their virginity till they marry. Thus, Dione describes it, "Female circumcision was instituted because of the value given to virginity and abstention since sexual intercourse was not allowed before marriage" (Dione, 2016, p. 160).

Many Arabic countries, which are mostly divided into tribes, emphasize kinship and familial relationships. Female virginity is elevated to a matter of life and death because honor is a virtue shared by all social units. "While female virginity and chastity are valued in all communities to differing degrees, they have been linked with Arab and Muslim cultures through popular portrayals as cultural standards" (Suad, 2006, p. 457).

Extramarital sexual encounters are frowned upon in ancient Egyptian society. Their most sensitive organ, their genital structure, must be cut off to safeguard women from any seduction. In Somalia, where female mutilation is rampant, Somalian society likewise affects masculine perceptions (Mokhtar, 1981, p. 31). Her parents died when she grew up, and she went to her uncle's house in Cairo. She could go to school there,

but after her uncle's marriage, she was sent to a boarding school. After graduation, she was supposed to marry a much older man, Sheikh Mahmoud.

Her uncle's wife is disgusted by her presence in her husband's home and wants to marry her to Sheikh Mahmoud, an older man with a large pension who lives alone. The young lady, she claims, is not such a lovely lass with a large nose. Firdaus, she continues to believe, is a poor lassie with no inherited wealth. As a result, she doesn't have a choice and would happily marry a deformed-faced older man: "This is her best chance to get married. Do not forget what a nose she has. It's big and ugly like a tin mug. Besides, she has inherited nothing, and has no income of her own. We will never find a better husband for her than Sheikh Mahmoud" (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 38).

Firdaus' aunt and uncle both sell her body and devise a scheme to negotiate and benefit from the former's marriage to the elderly man: "I will be able to afford my bills and buy some undergarments, as well as clothing" (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 38). Firdaus slips out of her uncle's house, knowing her family's schedule, to wander the night of sadness and anxiety on the streets. Despite her attempts to free herself, Firdaus' kin sold her to gain themselves a large dowry (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 38).

Firdaus roams the streets like a lost woman who does not know where to go and to whom to seek refuge. Her miserable condition, as she is subjected to the worst kinds of beatings and brutality, does not provoke the pity of passers-by. On the other hand, she is afraid of young people who look at her body. She has the struggle to continue walking to face the people who are trying to get her or return to her uncle's house and accepting fate and marrying a man is the same as her uncle's age, and she has no feelings for him. The image of injustice, oppression, and persecution is manifested in Firdaus, which depicts the situation of Egyptian women in particular and Arab women in general by patriarchal oppression.

When challenged with a world of violence and pitilessness, Firdaus retreats to her uncle's house, choosing the everyday abuse she endures there to the barbarism of the outside world. Her relatives take advantage of the rare opportunity to coerce her into a marriage to an elderly guy. In Arab societies, the narrator brings up the problem of early marriage. Indeed, the Egyptian long-established society is a male-dominated culture structured by Islamic norms, in which women are denied their voices and forced to conform to men's preferences. Their bodies are seen as so enticing that they

must be concealed. For morality and decency, their lovely and exciting voices must be suppressed or turned down (Abaza, 2002, p. 42).

The fate of women is determined only when they marry and enjoy a better life in the name of their husbands. Otherwise, a woman does not have any entity or opinion heard without the husband's permission. This is legislated by traditional Arab societies that conceal the value of women and define them in the name of men. The female body is set to obey the wishes of its processors, the ones for whom femininity is an open book in which a man may propose to have access to it in whatever manner he wants, in line with Islamic rules. Men are given the power to give sex a social significance and to stand in their humanity when it appears like a widget in their hands (Duderija, 2017, p.16).

Nawal AL Saadawi portrays Firdaus so that she epitomizes the all-misfortune female figures in Arabic civilizations. She is denied entrance to the field of humanity if she is left to herself, and she is thus unwelcome in social interactions, networks of rights, and responsibilities. Any spoken social announcement by women is considered disrespectful, and the reprimand is frequently harsh.

Woman at Point Zero explores topics of female oppression, feminine identity, and the conflict between masculinity and femininity. *Woman at Point Zero* illustrates female oppression via the heroine Firdaus and her quest to outshine masculine dominance. Female aloofness from dogmatic principles might result in physical, moral severe punishment. Firdaus, unable to bear her joblessness and entire reliance on a guy who looks after her, expresses her desire to be released from her shackles and engage in a money-generating activity. When she is financially empowered, this means liberation from man's control in many ways. In return, this matter constitutes rebellion and danger to male domination, so the man resorts to using violence and directing insults, "How dare you raise your voice when you're speaking to me, you street walker, you low woman? His hand was big and strong, and it was the heaviest slap I had ever received on my face [...] he hit me with his fist in the belly so hard that I lost consciousness immediately" (El Saadawi , 1975, pp. 52-53).

Sheikh Mahmoud beats Firdaus, just like her own father. Perhaps being beaten by men is a common occurrence, for when Firdaus went to her uncle's house after her husband battered her, her uncle claimed all spouses would do it, and then he brought

her back home immediately. Her spouse forbids her from eating the next day, claiming that because her family has abandoned her and considers her a burden, he is the only one who can put up with her and feed her—yet she avoids him for obvious reasons, later, he pounced on her like a maniac, the hole in his swelling leaking foul-smelling pus droplets. “This time, I didn't turn my face or my nose away; instead, I passively offered my face to his face and my body to his body, without any resistance, without a reaction, as if my life had been drained out of him” (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 45).

Living with such an old man and being expected to devote all her energy to do the household chores all by herself made Firdaus extremely tired and disappointed while she was very young. The luxurious house she is living in now is not enough to get her soul free. She needs to do all the housework and be a good wife who obeys her husband willingly. The housework is not the only reason for her suffering; it is the way the old man treats her. The age difference between her and her husband and her family's refusal to get her back led her to think of escaping home:

But no sooner had I stretched out my body on it, resting from the exhaustion of cooking, washing, and cleaning the enormous house with its rooms full of furniture than Sheikh Mahmoud was by my side. He had reached the age of sixty, whilst I had not yet reached the age of nineteen (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 43).

Thus, Firdaus decided to escape from home, and it was at this time, that she met another man named Bayoumi, who was at first very nice, but after some time, he started torturing her by locking her at home. Bayoumi would also beat her constantly and even harder. He confined Firdaus in a room so that his friends could also have sex with Firdaus:

In fact I never even left the bedroom. Day and night I lay on the bed, crucified, and every hour a man would come in. There were so many of them. I could not understand where they could possibly have come from. For they were all married, all educated, all carrying swollen leather bags, swollen leather wallets in their pockets. They dug their long nails into my flesh and I would close my lips tightly trying to stifle any expression of pain, to hold back a scream (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 57).

Firdaus is forced into a prostitute by Bayoumi. He sends her certain clients without her permission. Her body belongs to him as long as she stays indoors in the man's house and is nourished by him. Her primary endpoint is to free men from their lustful urges, while Firdaus remains obedient and loyal to her master's commands. In Arabic civilization, sex appears for males as a power relationship and masculinity

versus women. Sexuality then goes by the strongest philosophy, highlighting a societal stratification that pits women against boss males (Mahmood, 2006, p.8).

To deny the vulnerability and dehumanization of women, a dichotomized society rings the patriarchal bell. The narrator paints a severe picture of Egyptian society via Firdaus' wanderings, with a flighty-centered portrayal of males who, at worst, foster and perpetuate a love-hate relationship with women. Women are disempowered by the latter using short-term techniques that objectify them to incarnate the weak sex.

Ultimately, Firdaus decided to run away and while feeling desperate, she met Sharifa who was a prostitute and taught Firdaus how to turn into a prestigious prostitute. Firdaus falls prey to Sharifa's vicious heart, who introduces her to the prostitute trade. Sharifa's capitalist perspective places a price on the female sex and assigns it a commercial worth, "No one can touch me unless they pay a very high price, she says to Firdaus. You are younger and more cultured than I am, and no one should be able to approach you without paying twice as much as I do" (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 59).

Sharifa conforms to a societal framework that does not allow women any opportunity for maneuvering. She fights for a sliver of hope and manages to stay alive by whatever means necessary. Her body becomes a theater where she attracts guys in order to steal their money. Her sexuality enables Sharifa to escape from a miserable life. Given that a male "does not know a woman's value," it is up to women to tailor their libidinal actions to improve their state (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 58).

In a male-dominated culture, women fall behind and rely on authoritarian male dominance to survive. They are seen as "the male personae's dark aspect." As a result, the female sex is described as a void, a 'whole'. El Saadawi's protagonist appreciates that position, which is her sole means of life, in order to emphasize her humanity. The protagonist in *Woman at Point Zero* seduces guys from fields of life. Her appearance and enticing forms effectively endow her with the ability to be an unrelenting heartbreaker. Police officers, pimps, trade unionists, princes, teachers, pensioners, men and women, all and sundry, Firdaus' body is transformed into the focus of masculine sexuality. She then balances power and overthrows the sexist and sadistic societal

structure that she matures in. "The word impossible does not exist for me" (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 104).

Her 'Self' is cast in the role of a commentator who, by discussing her venal companions, concurrently addresses the reader and thereby assumes her uniqueness to symbolize the feminine majority. Furthermore, Firdaus' decision to become a prostitute is a clear rejection of living in a married institution under the control of a man. 'At the very least, my body is mine.' Women's bodies are my capital, and I do not combine a job with love. I don't want to be a slave to anyone. To private her sex and manage and direct her sexuality, the heroine shifts from feminine and traditional submissiveness to the patriarchal system. She avoids social entanglements by dressing up in her method of independence in order to climb the social ladder and atop her pipe dreams to the affluent few. She elevates her social level to that of respectable nobles as a prostitute. She describes how she goes about doing things:

I preferred to be a free prostitute, rather than an enslaved wife. Every time I gave my body I charged the highest price. I could employ any number of servants to wash my clothes, hire a lawyer no matter how expensive to defend my honor, pay a doctor for an abortion, buy a journalist to publish my picture and write something about me in the newspaper. Everybody has a price, and every profession is paid a salary. The more respectable the profession, the higher the salary, and a person's price goes up as he climb the social ladder (El Saadawi, 1975, pp. 99-100).

One day Firdaus found that there was an argument between Sharifa and Fawzy as another prostitute over who would get to keep her; so she escaped again and decided to work on her own, but one night, Di'aa, one of her regulars, told her that she was not decent which shattered Firdaus, and made her start working as an office assistant. In the office, Firdaus was so determined not to give in to men's will and live a moral life that everyone would think of her as a highly respected worker, the word got around that I was an honorable lady, a highly recognized official, and that I was the most respectable and well-regarded of all the female authorities in the organization. It was also said that none of the men had been able to shatter my pride and that no high-ranking official could force me to bend or lower my head to the ground.

There, she saw Ibrahim and fell in love with him but very soon, she understood that Ibrahim intended to marry her boss's daughter. Consequently, Firdaus start her job as a prostitute again. At first, she thought that this job could release her from men's

control, but she realized very soon that it was a mistake since, this time, a pimp was the cause of her suffering:

I thought I had escaped from men but the man who came this time practiced a well-known male profession. He was a pimp. I thought I could buy him off with a sum of money, the way I did with the police. But he refused the money and insisted on sharing my earnings. I went to the police only to discover that he had more connections than I. Then I had recourse to legal proceedings, I found out that the law punishes women like me, but turns a blind eye to what men do (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 92).

As noticed, the law makes a distinction between men and women when enforcing its rules. She eventually murdered the pimp because she realized he was dangerous. He had a lot of prostitutes under his control, and she was one of them. He was a high-ranking official with a great deal of power and influence. She understood she was nothing more than a body machine, working 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so that many guys from other professions might get highly wealthy at her expense. She was not even the mistress of the mansion she had paid for with her money. had friends from all areas of life, and he lavished his money on them. He had a doctor friend who could help him if one of the prostitutes became pregnant and needed an abortion, a cop friend who protected him from raids, and a judge friend who used his knowledge and position to keep him out of trouble and release any of the prostitutes who found themselves in goal so that they could keep working (Ibid, p. 93).

Shortly after that, she slept with an Arab Prince; she slapped him in the face with his money which made him scared, and he called the police. As noticed, El Saadawi is regarded as a writer who adopted women in her novels as the victims of patriarchy to show her objective in overthrowing the widespread repression in her country. *The Fall of the Imam*, one of her most important novels, is about an authoritative Imam in a village in Egypt who is callously exploiting the poor women of the village. *The Fall of the Imam* is actually about Bint Allah, a young orphan girl.

She claims that she is the daughter of an influential Imam who raped her mother and that this has enraged the Imam to the point that he has sentenced Bint Allah to death for adultery. The major subject here is patriarchy and men's freedom to exploit women, as noted previously. Since she was a young student, this Egyptian author has stated that she has wanted to write *The Fall of the Imam*:

It has given me no rest during the last ten years. The figures kept staring at me when I was awake and even when I was sleeping. They were constantly there,

observing me everywhere I went, whether in my own country or overseas. They were present when I met Iranian Shahbani Shiraz, who told me about her 'little child' being raped by her jailers (El Saadawi, 1987, p. 4).

El Saadawi depended extensively on the subject of religion in *The Fall of the Imam* since religious devotion is very significant in Bint Allah's pursuit of the real meaning of life and understanding of her real self; it also regulates the development of her worldview and motivates her to satisfy her need for self-actualization. Religion is, in fact, an ideal that many people wish to have, and God is the symbol of this ideal that helps people form their lives according to new values. However, a corrupt leader may postpone reaching this ideal because one's context and society play an important role in developing his/her religious beliefs. This is why a person like Bint Allah depends upon the conventional bases of her own life and outlooks while looking for her true self.

El Saadawi would permit her female characters to speak for themselves, to try not to be abused by male-centric. In a general public where "standardized or gendered religion" segregates them and male-controlled societies control them for their orientation, the heroines who come from upsetting conditions attempt to foster their own characters. El Saadawi means for Firdaus and Bint Allah to make the most of any chance to legitimize themselves. This Egyptian creator urges her champions to follow an elective way to break liberated from cultural imperatives and male-centric severe persecution. El Saadawi can build another view of legitimate ladies with this approval.

According to Horney, anxiety in the concept of psychology is a state of an intense vague fear that dominates the human being and causes a lot of distress and pain. The anxious personality always expects evil and pessimism, doubts everything surrounding them, and worries about the individual's identity crisis (Horney, 1942, p. 10). The identity crisis in the novel *The Fall of the Imam* is the concern of Bint Allah about the truth of her identity. This concern results from her status as an illegitimate daughter, which leads to the existence of continuous questions since her childhood about the reality of her father. This case leads to the emergence of concern about her status and identity, "I wondered when I was a child, I wondered why the skin of kings was always white and the skin of enslaved people black? My skin was brown, so am I a descendant of enslaved people?" (El Saadawi, 1987, p. 21).

She said that when her age was six years old. Karen Horney explained that one

of the characteristics of this stage is that the child needs love, tenderness, attention, and social recognition to develop self. If he does not meet these needs, the person becomes anxious, which is nervous anxiety (Horney, 1942, p. 61). Bint Allah was living in a country where the system of Islamic rulings was applied, and they punished the adulterer by stoning her to death. Bint Allah's mother was punished by stoning because the community believed she had committed adultery because she had an illegitimate daughter, meaning that Bint Allah was born out of wedlock. The civil government punished her in front of the community on the day of Eid al-Adha. Bint Allah was in child when she saw her mother's tragic death:

She was tied up with ropes. They made a circle around her. They raced, shooting and hitting the target. The midpoint is above the sign of Satan. The first winner has a medal of honor and a small palace next to the palace of the imam and nymphs. The ground under her is cold. The smell of dirt in her nose. She was tied to the ground. Her chest is exposed. Knees and arms open. In her ears, the sound of drums. Children's laughter and balloons. Searching the children's faces in search of her daughter. She waved her hand in a weak voice and said Bint Allah comes here (El Saadawi, 1987, p. 16).

This punishment caused a painful experience for Bint Allah because she saw her mother's death in front of her eyes, and at that time, she was a child. Psychologists say that a traumatic experience is an exceptional event outside the human capacity called post-traumatic stress disorder. Karen Horney notes that post-traumatic stress disorder is a form of neurotic anxiety disorder caused by the conflict between the love instinct and loss represented by the loss of her mother. This anxiety leads to the emergence of changes in behavioral patterns.

Bint Allah lived under the social consequences and became ostracized by the society, which viewed her as a stigma and called her by various nicknames, including the illegal girl. Society's persecution of her through distortion and discrimination led to the emergence of depression and insecurity within her. This feeling is driven by nervous anxiety. Karen Horney explains basic anxiety is the lack of self-confidence and the unknown future represented by identity (Horney, 1942, p. 36).

In her youth, Bint Allah becomes a prostitute due to the circumstances of life and the lack of society's acceptance of her. Bint Allah meets Imam at the famous pub in the city to satisfy his sexual desires. After practicing sex, Imam knew that Bint Allah was his daughter, so he confessed to her that he had raped her mother in her youth. Bint Allah was shocked by the news that Imam is responsible for destroying her

life and her mother's life and the main source of all the anxiety she feels. She took a pistol under the pillow and shot Imam, her father, thus killing all the anxiety she felt in the past.

The killing of Imam by Bint Allah is a form of aggressive reaction as a result of the hidden anxiety that has been burying it for a long time, and revenge for its mother is the removal of all aspects of anxiety within her by removing the imam. Bint Allah lived under the social consequences and became ostracized by society, which viewed her as a stigma and called her various nicknames, including the illegal girl. Society's persecution of her through distortion and discrimination led to the emergence of depression and insecurity within her. This feeling is driven by nervous anxiety. Karen Horney explains basic anxiety is the lack of self-confidence and the unknown future represented by identity.

The above discussion proves Horney's theory that the discrimination between men and women is mostly rooted in society and culture. El Saadawi has shown her opposition to the assertion that the capabilities of such women as Firdaus and Bint Allah are biologically lesser. She shows that only their status inside the religious and male-controlled society of Arab countries deprives them of supremacy and movement. Her protagonists establish a ground-breaking soul that exceeds the lower social station of women and creates a new identity like a prostitute and murderess in order to defy the current viewpoints regarding women.

El Saadawi devised a set of strategies that enabled her to challenge the restrictive patriarchal culture and transform an Arab woman's inferior social standing to attain her purpose. Prostitution and murder can be considered the most persistent techniques in El Saadawi's writings since they can defy male supremacy. For example, in most Arab countries, men can have as many affairs as they wish, while women cannot and are supposed to lose their virginity only to their husbands. Therefore, prostitution helps El Saadawi challenge the old ideologies held by Arab societies; as Firdaus says:

The life of a woman is usually bleak. A prostitute, on the other hand, has things a bit easier. I convinced myself that I had made this decision of my own will. The fact that I refused their heroic attempts to save me, insisting on being a prostitute, demonstrated that this was my decision and that I had some freedom, if only the freedom to live in better circumstances than other women (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 97).

Horney defined the real self into every person as that dominant internal power shared in all individuals and still exclusive in each, which is the profound basis of development in harmony with the capacities of one's general and discrete nature (Horney, 1942, p. 17). The same power is found in Firdaus because she is not an ordinary dominated Arab woman. She can take action; for instance, she escapes her marriage and kills her pimp at the end of the novel to defeat her powerlessness. This is why she becomes a prostitute because, in that case, she has complete control over her body.

When people attain what Horney has referred to as the "favorable conditions for growth" (Horney, 1942, p. 18), they grow in accordance with their real selves. According to Horney, many girls like Firdaus and Bint Allah are born in a male-controlled society where they are constrained or bottled up owing to their sex. This restriction leads many women like the female characters in El Saadawi's novels to grow a sense of masculinity complex, which is initially entrenched in such feelings as differentiation between sexes. Horney also proposed that a woman's relations play a significant role in how controlling the complex can be; for example, if her husband or any other man represses a female, she may suffer from detachment. This is why Firdaus and Bint Allah would feel anxious about their own femininity and esteem. In other words, the lack of men's love would cause them to doubt their real selves. Firdaus once says:

It was a sensation I had only felt once before, many years ago. I'd fallen in love with someone who didn't love me. I felt rejected, not just by him, not just by one person among millions that populated the big world, but by every living creature or object on the planet, by the vast world itself (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 94).

Thus, Horney's points are true about Firdaus and Bint Allah as two women suffering from domineering men in their lives. This issue is more noticeable about Firdaus because of her problematic relationships with her father, husband, and other men who slept with her. This is also true about the only man whom she loved. Thus, when one of his clients said she was not reputable, she felt so anxious that she left all her belongings in order to start a respectable job. However, her suffering did not stop.

In addition, Firdaus and Bint Allah are alienated from their real self due to their culture because the damages to one's personality do not occur without a cause and rise inside a context. Therefore, their desire to attain self-realization requires them to

overcome any limitation imposed on them by masculine beliefs, opinions, ideologies, and habits. Firdaus desires her ideal self, which stops her real self from thriving. It also stops her from understanding and using what Horney called constructive forces in order to go towards what would make her life meaningful.

As Horney has said, self-idealization at all times involves overall self-promotion and thus provides the person with the necessary sensation of worth and dominance over others. But it is not at all a blind self-promotion. Each person establishes their idealized image from the resources of their own distinct practices, past imaginations, specific desires, and given abilities. If it were not for the personal character of the image, he would not reach a feeling of distinctiveness and harmony. He idealizes, to start with, his specific 'solution' of his basic struggle: obedience becomes goodness; affection, virtue; fierceness becomes asset, guidance, courage, authority; detachment becomes knowledge, self-reliance, and liberation (1950, p. 22).

In her determination to actualize her ideal self, Firdaus puts all her efforts into getting independent without caring about the cost she will have to pay. Her affairs can be presumed to be her efforts to fulfill this goal. Likewise, Segal (1997) has asserted that the real self is the foundation for constructive development and transformation, and the ideal self is the root for many individuals and structural dysfunction. Three movements, toward, against, and away from people, originate much administration style (Segal, 1997, p. 111).

What can be inferred by Segal's statements is that Firdaus's wish for a real self is so strong that she instead tries to fulfill her desire for an ideal self. This conflict is the reason why she has a problem satisfying her need for self-actualization. Self-actualization is, in fact, the ultimate thing that Firdaus is fighting for because it is through this goal that she can realize the essence of her own individuality and achieve whatever she wishes for in such an antagonistic place. However, she knows that she is destined to die, particularly because she is regarded as a menace to the patriarchal society in which she lives. She asserts that having discovered the truth implies that death is no longer a threat. Death and truth are similar in that facing them both needs a tremendous deal of bravery.

3.2. Analysis of El Saadawi's Selected Novels in the Light of bell hooks's Feminist Perspective

In *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, hooks has defined feminism in a novel way which signifies a movement that does not merely intend to attain equality for men and women of the same class; in fact, it is a movement that aims at the termination of sexist domination and manipulation; and the analysis of El Saadawi's novels shows her attempts to reach such a goal. In this respect, intersectionality assists the readers in attaining a better understanding of how women are repressed.

Thus, by benefiting from hooks's principle of intersectionality, it will be revealed that both El Saadawi's novels depict various interrelated issues that dominate women. In her novels, two main female characters are presented: Firdaus and Bint Allah, who live in the same country. Firdaus and Bint Allah are two Arab women who are distressed by their fight against a patriarchal arrangement in society. The analysis of both El Saadawi's novels shows Arab women's domination and efforts for independence.

They are both the victims of their society which puts men higher than women. They somehow deviate from the norms of this society, and this can be regarded as their attempts to search for a true identity. However, at some points, they get lost. This search for an identity represents a kind of revolution by these two characters. The following excerpt proves this issue when Firdaus sees a photo of one of the guys she despises in the newspaper and declares that "she wants to raise her hand and smash it down on his face, adding that they know they will not be safe as long as I am alive, that I will murder them." My existence implies their demise" (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 62).

Women like Firdaus and Bint Allah are both considered objects to please men. El Saadawi has declared that in spite of:

A parallel and contradictory educational process is ongoing, which seeks to make her an instrument of sex and a mere body that should be adorned and made beautiful in order to attract men and arouse their desire. At the same time, rigid and orthodox teachings deny sex in a girl's life and aim to mold her into an asexual being (1975, p. 46).

However, women have no right to talk about sexual matters, even with the closest family members. For example, when Firdaus was a young girl, she used to play

'bride and bridegroom' with a boy, and this game gave her a sensation of intense pleasure. Yet, she was banned from discussing sexual matters. The very first time when she asked her mother how she gave birth to her without a father, her mother beat her and then had someone circumcise her daughter, which Firdaus describe through the following lines, "My mother brought a woman who was carrying a small knife or maybe a razor blade. They cut off a piece of flesh from between my thighs" (El Saadawi. 1975, p. 13). Clitoridectomy, which is also known as 'Female Genital Mutilation', is a widespread issue in many traditional African societies. It is a customary procedure in which a person, either untrained or a doctor or nurse, cuts off a piece or entire organs of the female genitalia, generally with an uncleaned tool or razor blade. It is variously seen as a feminine rite of passage, a guarantee of a woman's virtue and marriageability, a boost to fertility, or a boost to a man's sexual pleasure (Salami & Irene, 2006, p. 37).

El Saadawi's female protagonists signify the history of some Egyptian girls who have been oppressed by the conventional ethnic customs of the Egyptian society and government. El Saadawi's novels are, to some extent, challenging since they deviate from the ordinary model by including multiple narrators, employing a circular plot arrangement, depending greatly on interior dialogue, and often tumbling between reminiscences and current happenings.

This Egyptian writer's narrators are practically entirely Egyptian females living in Cairo. The narrators, as noticed, are having problems that stem from merely being female in an Islamic society. They struggle against their destinies and are angry at themselves for being feminine, at their families for imposing society's masculine principles on them, and at society itself for founding this subjugation in religious dogma (Giglio, 2007, p. 2).

It has been noted that what we read about El Saadawi's female protagonists signifies the history of some Egyptian girls who have been oppressed by the conventional ethnic customs of the Egyptian society and government. Firdaus is, for instance, subjugated by the political governments of Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat, whose regimes were characterized by the absence of liberty. Gamal Abdel Nasser was, in fact, the president of Egypt from 1952 until he died in 1969, and El

Saadawi published *Woman at Point Zero* for the first time when Anwar Sadat became president (Harlow, 1987, p. 137).

At one point, Firdaus talks about the dishonesty of these two leaders and tells how her father instilled in her the belief that "the ruler's love and Allah's love were the same ones" (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 11). Of course, this is also true in the other novel in which the Imam is regarded as a sacred person by the village's inhabitants. Firdaus used to see the photographs of Arab rulers in newspapers, which show they regularly take part in Friday's prayers while attempting to deceive Allah in the same manner as he tricked the people. When Firdaus turns into a mature woman, she criticizes the oppressive political government for its absence, tyranny, and inequality. She refers to the self-indulgence of the heads of state: "never-ending appetite for money, sex and unlimited power" (El Saadawi, 1975, pp. 26-27), and government.

El Saadawi's compositions reveal physical abuses, whether ethnically indorsed and agreeably achieved, like the act of clitoridectomy, or culturally imperceptible, stealthily committed, and denied manipulations, such as the sexual misuse of children, no author has played a more significant and expressive role than El-Saadawi. In more recent novels, El-Saadawi has also coped with such subjects as prostitution and illegitimacy, as well as the mental exploitation of women.

Firdaus's initial silence when El Saadawi wants to talk to her is meaningful. bell hooks has stated that recognizing the silences, the voices that are not heard, the voices of those injured and/or oppressed folks who do not speak or write, "I instigate thinking about what represses them. I think of persecutory deeds, torture, and terrorism that ruins people's spirits" (hooks, 1989, p. 8). Capitalism also plays an important role in oppressing Firdaus as a woman who is living in a male-controlled society where men control women in diverse aspects, including family, marriage, religion, culture, politics, and economics. For example, Firdaus is maltreated by her boss because he believes that workers are supposed to agree with the financial supremacy of capitalists (Landry, 2007, p. 7).

Women typically experience more drawbacks and abuse in comparison to men. They have to deal with scarcity and are also restricted by patriarchal outlooks and customs, some preceding capitalism and others created during the colonial era. These patriarchal approaches and principles, which please and honor men, continue to

infiltrate the Egyptian societies from the family level up to the country (Gordon, 1996, p. 7).

In other words, the capitalist economic system tends to sponsor a rising class difference, leading many women to be the subject of male-controlled domination. In this respect, El Saadawi links women's coercion and relegation to the fact that the break between the rich and the poor is growing, which is why most women are in anguish more than men. They suffer from the capitalist economic system.

Firdaus was originally a farmer who had to work on the farm, carry weighty pitchers of water, and clean the animals. And after starting to work in a company, Firdaus understands that the employees are classified into two groups: one for more important employees and another for less important ones. There is no equality between the workers, and each group has to follow specific regulations. For example, more important workers can show up whenever they want while the less important employees are checked. Besides, female employees are constantly worried about losing their jobs, so their salary is less than men (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 82).

This issue highlights men's status as capitalists who subjugate women. For Firdaus, finding a proper job is hard, and thus, she has to become a prostitute. In such a conventional society as Firdaus's society, Earning money is difficult for women, as if money was a shameful thing, an object of vice forbidden to her but permitted to others, as if it had been created legal just for them (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 73). Women are most suited to home tasks, such as when Firdaus is requested to help her uncle with his housework.

It appears that the woman's primary tasks in an Arab-Islamic household are to maintain a home, care for her children, and conform to her husband: "He is authorized to exercise his marital power by controlling his wife's activities and forbidding her from revealing herself in public" (Moghadam, 2004, p. 137). "I recall my mother claiming that my grandma had only got out to the street on two occasions, El Sadaawi said"(El Sadaawi, 2010, p. 87). The first occurred when she left her father's home for her husband's home, and the second occurred when she died. No part of her body was visible both times.

These unfair customs against Arab women show that they are a tool to serve in the home, take care of children, and satisfy the desires of their husbands, and they

cannot go out without their husband's permission. This type of arbitrary persecution leads the woman to mental illness and extreme anxiety about facing the outside world because her job is limited only to the home, Female labor was appropriated to serve masculine ends even when Firdaus was a small child. Firdaus, unlike her brother, was enslaved as a youngster in the fields and barn (Gohar, 2016, p. 182).

And when she marries an elderly guy, she is forced to be a housewife who his spouse constantly scrutinizes. As a result, she considers her marriage to this man akin to prostitution, albeit of the lowest type, and she should be an obedient woman to her husband and bear all kinds of insults and beatings from her husband because he is the only one responsible for her body. This issue generates emotion and disorder with behavior and sometimes wrong decisions to eliminate oppression and freedom from patriarchal domination. Sometimes, it reaches killing out of liberation and removing the cover of injustice to see the light, not as known by the killing instinct. As Firdaus did when she killed the pimp, she had no killing instinct but rather a passion for gaining freedom by any means (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 99).

The other example that accentuates men's position as capitalists is the pimp for whom Firdaus works. He is a controlling man and works with other influential people like lawyers who defend him and free confined prostitutes, doctors who do abortions on pregnant prostitutes, and police officers who avoid his imprisonment. This shows the intersectionality of the law, the medical establishments, and patriarchy to harass such women as Firdaus (Balaa, 2018, pp. 241-242).

The Fall of the Imam can also be assumed as El Saadawi's strictest denunciation of religious people, and this is why she condemns the Imam for his corruption. This novel employs open religious allusions in which an Imam teaches people Islamic principles. Nevertheless, Bint Allah, his illegitimate daughter, is the one who is going to be punished while she is utterly innocent. She wishes to declare that she is innocent and has committed no sin. She lives in darkness as a result of her suffering. What seems to be a source of happiness for others is no more than a source of sorrow for her. The following extract shows her viewpoint toward the society of which she is a member:

I do not read the letters of words written on paper, and I dwell in the House of Joy, yet there is a pain in my heart. What you consider day is darkness to me, and what you consider to be happy is misery to me. Pleasure for you is a

source of agony for me, and success for you is a source of loss for me. Your paradise is my misery, and your pride is my humiliation, yet my shame is an honor to you. My reason is lunacy to you, and my craziness becomes the reason for you (El Saadawi, 1987, pp. 174).

El Saadawi's male character in this novel and his religiousness help to understand one of the numerous ways through which women are repressed. This Egyptian writer did not have any problem with Islam but the wrong interpretations of Islam. El Saadawi admired the Prophet Muhammad's populist practices and viewpoints, which supported women's liberties and independence in the home and the public sphere. El Saadawi has also expressed her enthusiasm for the Islamic faith she practices and the Arab culture she has encountered in numerous international arenas.

El Saadawi believed that sexual pleasure in a man's life is a cause of his pride and honor, while the same thing in the life of women is viewed as a source of dishonor and a representation of their immorality. Since men control women, they, in turn, permit for themselves what they prohibit for women. *The Fall of the Imam* can be thus regarded as El Saadawi's criticism of a strictly religious culture in which powerful men like the Imam use religion as a means to oppress and manipulate women. People's blind and illogical faith in this man is due to his being a religious leader. *The Fall of the Imam* was the foundation of a job El Saadawi meant to start regarding religion and its connections with political and social issues.

In *Blasphemy*, Lawton has claimed that women's writings play a significant role in spreading blasphemy in the twentieth century because they defy religious tenets. Lawton points out that this issue is even more noticeable in Islamic cultures and the works of such authors as El Saadawi, whose *The Fall of the Imam* depicts the Imam as a father and rapist as well as the people's pious leader and political oppressor. Lawton believes that El Saadawi attacks the most blessed points and principles in any Islamic culture (Lawton, 1993, p. 140).

Because of the structure of *The Fall of the Imam*, El Saadawi may have had the possibility of constructing her own form of polyphonic account capable of communicating exceedingly intricate philosophical concerns. She gives every one of her characters a time to speak, allowing us to hear their perspectives on various plot aspects. Unfortunately, they all converse in a single language, that of the creator rather than the individual, which ignores their differing socio-mental origins or opposing

philosophical perspectives. Instead of a majority of characters and predeterminations in a single objective world lighted by a solitary objective awareness, what emerges in the book is an assortment of separated people subject to the authorial conversation.

In *The Fall of the Imam*, the Imam's immorality is noticeable from the opening pages while he is leaving a woman's room, "his mouth exhaling an odor of wine and sweat from the bodies of unhappy women" (El Saadawi, 1987, p. 10). Even when he marries, his wife Katie does not love him, and this marriage is just due to the Imam's reputation in society. As noticed here, this novel happens in a culture where a woman is defined by her husband, and in order to have an identity, she sometimes has to forget about love. In other words, marriage in this society is observed as enslavement as the husband is the possessor and the wife is one of his possessions.

Bint Allah's death forms one of the novel's most significant parts, "It was the night of the Big Feast. They hunted me down after chasing me all night. Something hit me in the back" (El Saadawi, 1987, p. 1). In another scene, when the police ask about the identity of her mother, they replied that her mother was stoned to death because she was guilty, "Your mother never knew what loyalty meant, neither to our land nor to Imam Allah. She died an infidel and is burning in hell" (Ibid, p. 170).

Bint Allah cannot accept this and says, "my mother was never a traitor. Before I was born, my father abandoned her and ran away" (Ibid, 1987, p. 171). The members of this society decide to punish her because when they ask her about her father's true identity, she says that he is the Imam, which makes everyone shocked. This is not the only time that she suffers from her patriarchal society. Bint Allah used to be punished in the orphanage, too, and the person who did it was mostly a man:

My turn had come to be punished . . . I felt his thick fingers close tightly over my arm. I closed my eyes and abandoned myself. He was God, and he could take me wherever he wished. I woke from my sleep to find myself lying in bed. There was a feeling of wetness under my body, and over my thigh was something warm and sticky like sweat . . . [I] touched my thigh . . . My finger tips were covered in blood (El Saadawi, 1987, p. 22).

In Nawal El Saadawi's *The Fall of the Imam and the Possibility of a Feminine Writing*, Ingersoll (2001) has written about the brutality in the scene of Bint Allah's death. He also asks this question if the woman in the scene is really Bint Allah or her mother. He then wants to know whether ". . . the object of this brutality [is] any woman whose body is the site of persecution" (Ingersoll, 2001, pp. 23-31).

Religion has an important role in *Woman at Point Zero* as well. To provide an alternative progressive worldview, a women's activist development should introduce a vote-based, opposed to male-centered, and anti-radical program that is Islamically moderate. The narrative portrays a skepticism about religion created by male-centered aims, despite the fact that it is only mentioned briefly in *Woman at Point Zero*. In reality, the deception with which religion is introduced and misinterpreted enslaves women, not Islam. Islam has an almost infinite number of articulations, each taking on a distinct appearance according to the authentic, political, economic, and social circumstances.

As mentioned already, Firdaus was forced to marry a much older man. The Sheikh, as her husband, hated wasting food, and once when he saw leftovers of food in the garbage can, he got so angry that he beat Firdaus, according to whom, “after this incident, he got into the habit of beating me whether he had a reason for it or not” (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 44). Thus, Firdaus tells her uncle about this problem, and he answers that “a virtuous woman [is] not supposed to complain about her husband. Her duty is perfect obedience” (Ibid, p. 44).

This statement shows that men use religion in order to justify women's oppression. However, this is not true, and in fact, men are exploiting religion to legitimize their illegal actions. This is true about other religions as well. Islam is not exceptional in having transformed women into slaves of their men. Judaism and Christianity subjected women to the same fate. The oppression of women exercised by the temple and the church has been even more ferocious than Islam. Changes in the situation resulted from social and economic development and the weakening grip of religion (Mazrui & Abala, 1997, p. 19).

Thus, Firdaus's escape can be assumed as her escape from marriage and the strict traditional roles imposed on women in such a religious context, leading her to become a prostitute. The usage of Islamic discourse is particularly influential because it combines religion and customs, allowing patriarchy and power structures to exploit these two factors in order to oppress women.

Prostitution is not acceptable, but unlike being a housewife, it provides her with the freedom she has always wanted. In *Woman at Point Zero* and many other novels of El Saadawi, we see that she loathes the conformist role of the housewife and views it

as a kind of slavery. She would portray the undesirable image of the woman who obeys the masculine rules:

The world of woman is limited and ugly and diffuses a garlic smell. I did not escape into my small world until my mother dragged me into the kitchen saying that “your fate is bound to marriage. You have to learn cooking, your fate is marriage! marriage! marriage!” That hateful word my mother repeated every day until I denied it. Whenever I listened to it, it always makes me picture a man before me with a big belly full of food inside him (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 10).

Hence, obeying the Imam is not only important in *The Fall of the Imam* but also in *Woman at Point Zero*. Islam undeniably plays a substantial role in *Woman at Point Zero* by mentioning the mosque's Imam, Firdaus's father, her uncle, and the village residents. They are mesmerized by false religious lessons (Gohar, 2016, p. 177).

It is, in fact, the misunderstanding of religion, two facades, and the mix-up between religion, customs, and culture that limit women. In the Arab society and as noticed in both *Woman at Point Zero* and *The Fall of the Imam*, religion is maltreated as an “instrument in the hands of economic and political forces, as an institution by those who rule to keep down those who are ruled” (Ahmed, 1992, pp. 3-4). When Firdaus starts telling her life's story, she recalls her father's attendance in the mosque for prayer every Friday:

I could see people wandering through the twisting pathways, shaking their heads in adoration and agreement with whatever his Holiness the Imam stated. I'd see them nod their heads, rub their hands together, wipe their brows, invoke Allah's name, call on His blessings, repeat His holy phrases in a guttural, calm tone, murmuring and whispering without pause (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 13).

Therefore, many of Firdaus's problems in life are due to society's wrong understanding of religion, including the clitoridectomy, the lack of education, and being forced to get married at a young age. Firdaus and Bint Allah are mostly poor and live in a village. They are repressed due to not only gender but also class and race. For instance, the Imam's white woman seems superior to Arab women. Still, this does not mean she can be equal to her husband, whose gender makes him higher.

bell hooks (1992) declares that the sexual incident between different races can be observed as a way of sexually going beyond the racial division and the rightest means to experience the Other (hooks, 1992, p.63). At some point in these novels, both

the heroines leave the village willingly or unwillingly. This departure plays a crucial role in understanding the surrounding world's cruelty and corruption. Firdaus, who has to leave her uncle's house, faces several men who do not love her, and the only thing they desire is sleeping with her.

Upon leaving her uncle, and while she is walking down the street, she gets aware of the world's cruelty and says, "A new world was opening up in front of my eyes....How was it that I had been blind to its existence all these years? Now it seemed as if a third eye had suddenly been slit open in my head" (El Saadawi, 1975, p. 40). She becomes aware of the difference between the poor and the rich. She sees herself as a person who belongs to the lower class of society.

Thus, class is the other feature that results in women's oppression. Landry argues that class "position determines one's economic resources, which determines one's living standard" (Landry, 2007, p. 6). Firdaus is herself from the working class and is partially repressed. Even though she attempts to improve her social class by getting a diploma and becoming a first-class prostitute, she confesses that although her make-up, clothes, and hair give her the 'upper class' appearance, she still belongs to the lower class. Likewise, class plays a critical role in how other people treat her. Her salary in the office is not too much, so she has to live in a poor place and wait in line for a long time so that she can use the toilets. The importance of class in her oppression is even more obvious when compared with her uncle's wife, whose coming from a high class makes her uncle not beat her and speak mildly to her.

When she decides not to be a prostitute anymore, she starts working as an assistant in an office, where she goes through some other difficulties. She realizes that in order to survive in Arabic culture, she needs men; however, she hates them very much and cannot let them control her life. Ultimately, this hatred makes her kill an imp who tries to be in charge of her life. Bint Allah suffers from similar problems as well. Like Firdaus, she refers to the artificiality in religion and how the village's religious leader's unpretentiousness is fake because it misleads the naïve people.

Bint Allah is living in a strictly religious village, and the religious leader who is supposed to be the symbol of morality is completely crooked. Thus, she is harshly sentenced to death when she claims that she is this leader's illegitimate daughter. No one believes a woman, and this issue strengthens the Imam's status. He is so strong

that, at some points, he is regarded as equal to God. For example, when Bint Allah is asked, “Do you not believe in the Imam, in the nation, and God?” she asks if she has to believe in all three at once, she is told, “Yes. Either belief in all or nothing” (El Saadawi, 1987, p. 174). Bint Allah’s speech makes all men in the trial scared because her wisdom surprises them all, and this issue may be a menace that could lead to questioning their superiority:

They said that she was neither a sorcerer nor insane. They said that she is in perfect control of her thoughts and that everything she says is based on logic. And her rationality became more threatening to them than her insanity, so they determined to put her to death in a faster manner than stoning, so she would not have the chance to say anything further. They also decided that her trial would not be reported in the press and that her file would be permanently closed and buried far below (El Saadawi, 1987, p. 175).

By analyzing El Saadawi’s fiction, it is inferred that she has attempted to decompose the male-controlled arrangement by portraying its gloomy aspect where women are raped and devastated for their gender. What is common amongst all her novels is El Saadawi’s intent to disclose the relationship between the political authority of the dominant class, the subjugation of womankind in rustic Egypt, and the misapplication of religious convictions, “It is impossible to separate religion from the political system in any community, just as it is impossible to keep sex apart from politics. Politics, religion, and sex, as a trio, are the most sensitive of all topics in every community” (Ahmed, 1992, p. 4).

The second and the third chapters of this thesis, as the discussion sections, applied the feminist theories of Karen Horney and bell hooks to the analysis of Jean Rhys’s and Nawal El Saadawi’s selected novels. Comparing these four novels required their analysis, and now it can be stated that all women in the mentioned novels rely on men as their identity and destiny are defined by men. Men play a significant role in determining the heroines’ future and if they can continue their life or not.

By studying novels of a Western author and an Arab writer, it is inferred that women in both contexts go through physical and psychological difficulties due to their patriarchal society. However, religion and traditional conventions as other causes of women’s oppression are more noticeable in El Saadawi’s novels, in which she portrays some Muslim men as pretenders. For example, in *Woman at Point Zero*, Firdaus’s uncle sexually takes advantage of her, and Firdaus’s father is shown as an insincere

man due to pretending to be religious. At the same time, he does some immoral actions like stealing and cheating. Firdaus's husband is also depicted as a devout man who misuses his wife sexually, bodily, and mentally. These men and the Imam in *The Fall of the Imam* are all mistaking Islam and maltreating it to manipulate women.

Analysis of Rhys's novels showed that the main factors which result in women's oppression are gender, class, and race. Her protagonists are, to some extent, the reflection of her own experiences as a Creole novelist. Her writings are best-known for their postcolonial features in which she writes back and challenges the colonizers' viewpoints. Her characters are alienated and treated as an 'Other' or a foreigner. They are colonized due to their race and class and their gender.

El Saadawi's novels are like Rhys's writings dealing with women's sorrow imposed on them by a male-controlled society. El Saadawi's protagonists are mostly the victims of their society, which thinks women are inferior to men whose existence is controlled by men. Likewise, one of the most important and common points between these two writers is the association between femininity and enslavement through their female characters' relationship with men.

The lives of Jane Rhys and Nawal El-Saadawi are, to some extent, similar in terms of injustice and persecution. Nawal El-Saadawi lived a childhood under the patriarchal system and suffered a lot. As a result of this suffering, she abandoned her profession as a doctor and dedicated her life to a feminist writer defending women's rights. Even when she grew up, she was persecuted by society, and they tried to silence her when they imprisoned her for three months, but this did not prevent her from stopping writing. She told the jailer if you imprisoned my body, you would not imprison my pen and that writing was more dangerous than a weapon. After her release from prison, she left her country searching for freedom of opinion and practiced her writing away from society's oppression and domination. She also suffered from searching for her identity.

The same injustice and suffering happened to Jean Rhys when she left her country and moved to England to search for her lost self and compensate for the oppressed childhood of patriarchy. Both writers have reflected their suffering in their novels and portrayed female heroines who are subjected to the worst kinds of oppression. Although the heroines of Nawal El Saadawi are not like the heroes of

Rhys, who are stuck between two different places, they are colonized through misinterpretations of women's roles that resulted from the domination of men.

The persecution began with Antoinette's step-brother in the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, who tempted Rochester with a large sum of money to marry his sister to get rid of his sister's burden after the death of her parents and make her far from him. The same thing happens with Firdaus in *A Woman at Point Zero* when her uncle and aunt decide to sell Firdaus' body and make a plan for equality and profit from Firdaus' marriage to the old Sheikh Mahmoud.

Deciding the fate of Firdaus and Antoinette and marrying them in this way as one aspect of patriarchal persecution made their lives miserable and wobbled into the abyss, searching for possible ways to end the dominant injustice. Also, when Anne lost her father, she felt lonely and lost after her stepmother stopped supporting her financially and took over the money that her father left for her. Likewise, Antoinette needs affection to compensate for her mother's tenderness, so she clings to any man who comes to her to dictate this sentimentality.

Antoinette was afraid of abandonment and being left alone because her mother provided a small amount of safety for her, so she had psychological anxiety and also Anne had experienced the same feeling of abandonment when her stepmother abandoned her, so she was in dire need of love, support and dependence on a partner. The suffering and persecution experienced by the two heroines, Anne and Antoinette, made their lives full of misery, fear of the unknown future, and intense anxiety about being abandoned by others in the future.

After Hester abandons Anne's financial support, Anne becomes a prostitute in order to be able to live and get rid of the pressure of society on her. The same is true about Firdaus when she becomes a prostitute as a result of the patriarchal injustice she faced from her uncle and aunt and forcing her to marry someone she has no feelings for him. So, Firdaus is sexually exploited when she works anywhere. When she worked in a company, she fell in love with a person named Ibrahim, but in the end, Ibrahim used her to raise his position and be promoted at the expense of her body when he presented her as a gift to the boss as an aspect of flattery, so Firdaus realized that Ibrahim was using her for his personal interests, so she left the company and returned to work as a prostitute.

The same is true with Anne when she fell in love with Walter, and the latter, after he had had enough of her, presented her to his cousin to have sex with her. bell hooks points out that the most horrific type of persecution is sexual persecution and its exploitation in the name of love to leave the victim under psychological destruction, distrust of life, and loss of a sense of self, and sometimes leads to suicide.

Karen Horney also clarified that the main anxiety haunts the person even in his unconscious dreams. It is an internal feeling that cannot be controlled. It reflects his image as nightmares or as a form of hope, as happened with Antoinette when she repeated the dream of burning the house and escaping from reality. Her dream is linked to her freedom; on the one hand, it is a nightmare that she wants to get rid of because it reminds her of her anxiety and sadness and strips her of her freedom, and on the other hand, it is considered a means of survival and achieving it in reality, which is like ending all the suffering and injustice that she is going through and getting rid of life completely. The same thing happened to Bint Allah in *The Fall of the Imam*. The heroine had a recurring dream where she saw her mother, who had died by stoning, while she was calling her in different ways:

I did not see God face to face. I imagined that God was my father and my mother was God's wife, and in sleep, I saw my mother standing in the dark night looking at God, and I was standing with my head toward the sky and my eyes filled with light, and her voice was like a whisper, Bint Allah come here (El Saadawi, 1987, p. 51).

This dream is repeated to her, and she tries to ask again and again about her parents. She wants to know the truth about her mother and father who they are because she lives in the orphanage and everyone who lives there does not know his parents, so her greatest instincts are to know the truth about her father, but no one knows the truth because her mother was raped and she was punished, and the one who raped her was left free, unpunished and unknown.

This makes her full of psychological anxiety and turmoil, and she also tries to end this anxiety by taking revenge on him because it is the cause of her current anxiety and fear and also the cause of her mother's death and the other thing. Her mother is an adulteress and represents a disgrace to her, so her life has become doomed to injustice and persecution by society, which prompted her to become a prostitute like the rest of the heroines in the other novels, such as Firdaus and Ann Morgan.

Ann was abandoned by Walter in terms of financially and emotionally, and she became a broken heart and thus descended to be a prostitute. The inevitable end of all heroines is death, for Firdaus killed her oppressed pimps and those who traded in her body, and consequently, she was executed. She did not feel sad at the time of her execution, but rather she felt happy because she would leave the life from which she saw nothing but wrath and brutality.

As for Morgan, the injustice that befell her forced her to abort her child illegally, which led to her death, as well as the injustice of Rochester to Antoinette, which pushed her to fulfill her dream, burning the house, burning herself, salvation from life, and seeing freedom with her death. The fate of the heroines of both authors' novels is death, which was salvation for them from injustice and patriarchal and societal persecution.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important themes of feminist literary works is their expression of women's viewpoints concerning their lives and difficulties. These works exemplify female authors' experiences, perspectives, and voices. Jean Rhys and Nawal El Saadawi are amongst the most famous feminist writers whose novels require us to have a fresh look at the associations between men and women and their roles in society. Besides, applying the feminist literary theory to the analysis of these authors' works will prove that women are treated unequally due to a patriarchal ideology.

In fact, Rhys and El Saadawi have shown that women are, to a great extent, the victims of the patriarchal arrangement amalgamated by politics, religious convictions, and social principles. The unequal treatment of women has diverse forms, and feminist theorists like bell hooks and Karen Horney help us know about different arrangements in this regard. Jean Rhys owes most of her reputation to her portrait of female protagonists who are victimized by a patriarchal society.

Her race and gender play the most important role in this respect. Although her father was English, being raised in Dominica made her suffer from colonial and postcolonial tensions. This is the reason why most of her heroines are estranged in both English and Caribbean contexts and cannot find a fixed and stable identity. A number of critics have evaluated this author's writings as politically being about the power politics of both gender and colonialism.

Rhys's writings mostly focus on masculine maltreatment of women, on women's struggles and being part of this exploitation, on relegated, colonized figures from the Third World, the power politics of colonialism, and class opposition. This is the reason why they are appropriate subjects of analysis by contemporary critics. Likewise, it can be inferred that Rhys reflected her obscurity and nonconformity through her heroines.

Rhys has deftly shown the factors that contribute to a woman's loss of uniqueness and identity in her novels. Women's flexibility is exploited and abused for the demands and pleasures of males. Jean Rhys's female protagonists are detachable from their origins in most of her works. The protagonists of *Anna* and *Antoinette* are disturbed by the lack of a controlled setting or milieu. They are disoriented in a chaotic

environment and frequently observed exploring the streets and tiny alleyways in seeking peace and assistance.

Through her works, Jean Rhys divides women into two types: the 'beautiful' and the 'ugly,' the type that serves a master and the type that resists, as stated by Simone de Beauvoir. Rhys reflects the patriarchal order's predefined gender norms for women. She investigates women's participation in their captivity in the form of romantic dreams of falling in love and submitting themselves to male domination and traditional identifications of women as objects. However, Jean Rhys's defiant voice may be heard as well. She also argues for women who defy conventional constraints and forge their own identities.

Just like Rhys, Nawal El Saadawi has been extensively concerned with females' difficulties in a context in which patriarchy has not only victimized women but also influenced even the religious standards. Although this Egyptian writer's heroines are not like Rhys's protagonists stuck between two different settings, they are colonized by misinterpretations of women's roles resulting from men's superiority. It can also be inferred that El Saadawi underwent the same struggles as her heroines, and by talking about them, she meant to fight against women's victimization.

The opening chapter of this thesis included the theoretical points and discussed the theories of hooks and Horney. First, there was an introduction to Jean Rhys and Nawal El Saadawi. It was mentioned that Rhys's migration to England did not make her forget about her memories of the West Indies, and this issue influenced her in writing most of her novels. Rhys attempted hard to show protagonists that are typically inactive victims of men. Yet, this failure to act is assumed by too many critics as a type of rebellion.

Despite belonging to a different time and place, El Saadawi also portrayed women who are mistreated by men and the patriarchal society they live in. This oppression is obvious from the early years of their lives when they have to undergo the exercise of clitoridectomy as a traditional custom in Egyptian society.

Then, feminism was introduced, and it was said that its application to the analysis of literary works is its capability to provide new outlooks in the better comprehension of literary works. As one of the most well-known feminists, bell hooks has offered a new explanation of feminism by discussing that feminism does not only

implicate attaining equal rights for women because it also attempts to dismiss sexist suppression and exploitation by paying attention to other forms of dominion like racism, classism, and imperialism which are exceedingly interrelated.

Furthermore, it was declared that hooks (2000a) has recommended a constructive depiction of feminism by asserting that it is for everyone and not just about women being against men but also about the way women struggle to attain equality. What causes men to talk about patriarchy is the supposition that they are better than women and they can control, abuse, or oppress women.

Karen Horney, as the other feminist, was also introduced inclusively. The significance of this feminist activist lies in the fact that she ascribed the differences between men and women to society and culture, not biology. This means that if women are treated as inferior to men, it is a society that has to be blamed. Amongst Horney's most distinguished theories, one can refer to basic anxiety and self-actualization, which were initially meant to denote the persistence of understanding one's exclusive competence.

Moreover, regarding the theory of basic anxiety, it was remarked that according to Horney, basic anxiety has its origins in several features like worthlessness, instable behavior, lack of approval for one's wishes, opposite lookouts, absence of love, too much or too little responsibility, over-protection, aloofness from others, prejudice, unsatisfied promises, and hostile atmosphere.

The two chapters analyzed the selected novels of Rhys and El Saadawi in the light of the already mentioned critics' theories. First, a summary of these novels was presented. Next, by applying the viewpoints of Karen Horney to the novels, it was found that the reason the heroines have undergone neuroses is due to basic anxiety and their feeling of being distraught, secluded, or abandoned. All the protagonists in these four novels wish for power, esteem, and affection because they live in a patriarchal society that has deprived them of these basic needs. Thus, they experience neurosis due to going to extremes while coping with basic anxiety, which brings about the longing to be valued and wanted.

Because of being a member of such a masculine society, the female protagonists have all developed two visions of themselves, one as the 'real self' representing who they really are and the 'ideal self' signifying the person they feel that they are supposed to be. Their real self is able to have growth and contentment; the ideal self assists the real self to advance its competence and attain self-actualization. Therefore, they try hard to fulfill this self-actualization in order to fight against what society has imposed upon them.

Then by applying bell hooks's theories, the researcher could find that just as stated by this feminist, the main reason for all the heroines' oppression is more or less due to the role of race, capitalism, and gender. This issue proves that these heroines are regarded as submissive victims of men whose deprivation of the power to change themselves has led them to their own negation and subjection. Both Rhys and El Saadawi have provided their readers with severe criticism of their societies and countries since they believe there is no remedy to transform the situation except that women's realization is appropriately elevated. Their narratives are also supposed to censure capitalism in society and its relation to class and gender.

Besides, it was found that one of the dominant factors that result in women's suppression in the Middle East is the occurrence of patriarchal descriptions of Islam and not Islam itself. This is exactly what can be noticed in El Saadawi's novels. Then, it was stated that El Saadawi has tried to show that femininity means a prearranged fate for an Arab female whose body is assumed as a sign of subordination in the patriarchal Egyptian society.

Unlike men who can decide their future without any restrictions, females have to marry and give birth to children, which is their most important purpose in such a masculine society. This attempt by El Saadawi is discussed in her article "Exile and Resistance," in which she has written about the significance of writing and how it leads to the fulfillment of women's freedom.

El Saadawi claimed that the administrator would furiously inform her that having a pen and paper in her cell was more dangerous than having a gun. She has not stopped writing since then. Writing enabled her to communicate with people in her native nation as well as throughout the world. One of the other important features of El Saadawi is said to be critical of the role of religion as a means to subjugate women.

For example, in *Woman at Point Zero*, we see some supposed pious men as phonies like Firdaus's uncle; he is nice and compassionate, but as a child, Firdaus does not know that this caring and pious man is molesting her. This issue is also noticeable in *The Fall of the Imam*, where El Saadawi's severest admonition of religious leaders is seen.

As a conclusion, it should be stated that analyzing Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, along with El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* and *The Fall of the Imam* in the light of feminist theories of bell hooks and Karen Horney as two of the most distinguished feminists in the world showed that despite the extraordinary difference between the circumstances of women in Eastern and Western societies, analysis of their literature signifies their going through diverse sorts of oppression through different ways. These forms of oppression chiefly originate from the patriarchal society with limitations imposed on women by their male counterparts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Although there are lots of studies regarding the analysis of Rhys's and El Saadawi's novels separately, more detailed research or comparison is required concerning the role of their novels' other characters in finding out the heroines' pursuit of identity and freedom. Also, there can be a more comprehensive examination of the heroines' psychological background by benefitting from the theories of Karen Horney and a number of other important psychologists whose viewpoints help understand more about the authors' purpose in writing these novels.

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