

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

<https://llrjournal.com/index.php/11>

Existential Anxiety and Female Consciousness in *Woman at Point Zero*



Dr. Gulnaz Sattar

Lecturer English, Department of Business Administration, Air University, Multan Campus Email: gulnazsattar@gmail.com

Yusra Kaleem

Lecturer, Department of English (language & literature), University of Lahore Email: Yusra.kaleem @ell.uol.edu.pk

Sadaf Nasir

Lecturer English, Multan College of Nursing, MMDC, Multan Email: sadafnasir03@gmail

Abstract

This study explores existential anxiety and female consciousness in *Woman at Point Zero* through the lens of feminist existentialism. The novel presents the tragic life of Firdaus, a woman subjected to continuous psychological, physical, and social oppression within a patriarchal society. The research investigates how existential suffering shapes Firdaus's consciousness and transforms her from a silenced victim into a self-aware figure of resistance. Drawing upon the existential philosophies of Jean-Paul Sartre and Soren Kierkegaard, along with the feminist existentialism of Simone de Beauvoir, the study analyzes themes of alienation, despair, freedom, identity, and self-realization in the novel. Using qualitative textual analysis and close reading methodology, the article examines Firdaus's psychological experiences from childhood trauma to her final act of defiance. The study argues that existential anxiety in the novel emerges from systemic patriarchal violence, emotional isolation, and the denial of female autonomy. However, this suffering simultaneously becomes a catalyst for the development of female consciousness. Firdaus's rejection of submissive social roles and her acceptance of death ultimately signify existential freedom and resistance against oppressive structures. The article concludes that *Woman at Point Zero* not only critiques patriarchal domination but also portrays the evolution of female consciousness through existential struggle. By combining existential philosophy with feminist literary criticism, this study contributes a deeper psychological and philosophical understanding of women's oppression and resistance in Arab feminist literature.

Keywords: Existential Anxiety, Female Consciousness, Feminist Existentialism, Patriarchal Oppression, Identity Crisis, Resistance.

Introduction

Background of the Study

Literature has historically functioned as a reflection of human existence, portraying the emotional, psychological, and social realities that shape individual lives. Modern literary studies increasingly emphasize the relationship between literature and psychology, particularly in understanding how fictional characters experience trauma, alienation, identity crises, and existential suffering. Within this context, feminist literature occupies a central position because it highlights the struggles of women living under patriarchal systems that deny freedom, individuality, and self-expression. Feminist literary texts often explore how women negotiate social oppression while attempting to construct their identities in societies structured around male dominance. Among the most influential works in Arab feminist literature, *Woman at Point Zero* stands out as a powerful narrative of female suffering, resistance, and existential awakening. Written by Egyptian feminist writer, physician, and social activist Nawal El Saadawi, the novel was first published in Arabic in 1975 and later translated into English. The text is based on the real-life story of a female prisoner whom El Saadawi met during her visit to Qanatir Prison in Egypt. The protagonist, Firdaus, is awaiting execution for murdering a man who attempted to exploit and control her. Through Firdaus's autobiographical narration, the novel reveals the painful realities of a

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

woman's life shaped by poverty, sexual violence, emotional neglect, social exploitation, and patriarchal oppression. The novel exposes the hypocrisy of social institutions that claim to uphold morality while simultaneously enabling the exploitation of women. The significance of *Woman at Point Zero* lies not only in its feminist critique of patriarchal society but also in its deep psychological and existential dimensions. Firdaus's life represents the continuous struggle of an individual seeking meaning, dignity, and identity in a world dominated by violence and inequality. From her childhood experiences of neglect and abuse to her later experiences of forced marriage, prostitution, and emotional betrayal, Firdaus undergoes severe psychological suffering that profoundly shapes her consciousness. Her life becomes a journey marked by fear, alienation, anxiety, despair, and eventual rebellion. These experiences reflect central existential concerns regarding freedom, identity, isolation, and the meaning of existence.

Existentialism, as a philosophical movement, focuses on the individual's confrontation with existence, freedom, suffering, and choice. Existential thinkers argue that human beings live in a world characterized by uncertainty, anxiety, and alienation. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, existence precedes essence, meaning that individuals are not born with fixed identities but must create meaning through their choices and actions. Similarly, Søren Kierkegaard describes anxiety as a fundamental human condition resulting from freedom, uncertainty, and existential awareness. Existential anxiety emerges when individuals recognize the burden of existence and confront feelings of isolation, despair, and meaninglessness. In *Woman at Point Zero*, Firdaus embodies this existential struggle as she attempts to understand her identity and place within an oppressive society.

The novel also strongly resonates with feminist existentialism, particularly the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir, who argues that patriarchal societies reduce women to the status of the "Other." According to Beauvoir, women are denied autonomy and are socially constructed as subordinate beings whose existence is defined in relation to men. This condition deprives women of individuality and freedom, forcing them into roles that suppress their humanity. Firdaus's experiences reflect this existential condition because she is repeatedly treated as an object rather than an autonomous individual. Throughout her life, men attempt to dominate, exploit, and define her identity, reducing her value to her body and sexuality. Her experiences reveal how patriarchal structures contribute to psychological oppression and existential suffering. One of the most significant themes in the novel is existential anxiety. Firdaus experiences continuous fear, emotional emptiness, insecurity, and alienation due to the violence and exploitation she faces throughout her life. Her anxiety is not merely psychological but deeply existential because it emerges from her realization that society denies her humanity and freedom. She struggles to find meaning in relationships, work, and social institutions, only to discover that each structure is built upon exploitation and hypocrisy. Her experiences lead to feelings of despair and isolation, causing her to question the meaning of existence itself. However, this existential suffering gradually contributes to the development of consciousness and self-awareness.

Female consciousness in the novel develops through suffering and resistance. Initially, Firdaus appears passive and submissive because years of oppression have conditioned her to accept abuse as a natural part of life. However, as she becomes increasingly aware of the mechanisms of patriarchal control, she begins to challenge the structures

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

that oppress her. Her experiences with prostitution become particularly important because they reveal the hypocrisy of social morality and the economic dimensions of female exploitation. Firdaus realizes that all women, regardless of social class, are subjected to forms of commodification and domination. This realization marks a turning point in her psychological development because it enables her to recognize her oppression and assert her individuality.

Firdaus's rebellion ultimately becomes an act of existential freedom. Existentialist philosophy emphasizes the importance of individual choice and responsibility, even in oppressive circumstances. Although Firdaus cannot escape the patriarchal society that controls her life, she eventually refuses to submit to its authority. Her final act of violence against her exploiter symbolizes her rejection of oppression and her assertion of autonomy. More importantly, her acceptance of death demonstrates existential courage because she chooses dignity and self-definition over submission and fear. In this sense, Firdaus transforms from a victim into a conscious individual who reclaims control over her existence.

The novel therefore presents existential anxiety not simply as a condition of suffering but also as a catalyst for consciousness and resistance. Firdaus's experiences illustrate how psychological pain can lead to self-awareness and rebellion against oppressive systems. Her existential journey reflects the broader struggles of women living under patriarchal societies where freedom and individuality are systematically denied. By portraying Firdaus's internal conflicts and emotional transformation, El Saadawi challenges traditional representations of women as passive victims and instead presents a complex figure capable of resistance, agency, and existential self-realization.

This study seeks to examine the relationship between existential anxiety and female consciousness in *Woman at Point Zero*. The research explores how Firdaus's psychological suffering contributes to the development of self-awareness and resistance against patriarchal oppression. By applying existentialist and feminist theories, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the novel's psychological and philosophical dimensions. The research argues that existential anxiety functions as both a destructive and transformative force in Firdaus's life, shaping her consciousness and enabling her eventual rebellion against oppressive structures.

Statement of the Problem

Women living within patriarchal societies frequently experience social marginalization, emotional oppression, and psychological suffering that restrict their ability to develop autonomous identities. In many literary works, female characters are portrayed as victims of social structures that deny them freedom, dignity, and individuality. *Woman at Point Zero* presents a powerful representation of such oppression through the life of Firdaus, whose experiences of abuse, exploitation, and alienation create profound psychological and existential crises. Although numerous studies have examined the novel from feminist and socio-political perspectives, limited attention has been paid to the existential dimensions of Firdaus's psychological experience. Most critical studies focus on themes such as patriarchy, gender inequality, prostitution, and social oppression without fully exploring how these experiences produce existential anxiety and contribute to the formation of female consciousness. Firdaus's emotional suffering, fear, despair, and search for

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

identity reflect deeper existential concerns that require critical examination. This study therefore addresses the problem of how existential anxiety shapes female consciousness and resistance in *Woman at Point Zero*. It investigates the relationship between psychological suffering and self-awareness, examining how Firdaus's experiences of oppression lead to existential awakening and rebellion against patriarchal authority. The study also seeks to explore how existential philosophy and feminist existentialism can provide a more comprehensive understanding of women's psychological struggles in patriarchal societies.

Research Objectives

The major objectives of this study are:

To analyze the representation of existential anxiety in *Woman at Point Zero*.

To examine the psychological effects of patriarchal oppression on Firdaus's identity and consciousness.

To explore the development of female consciousness through suffering and resistance.

To investigate the relationship between existential freedom and rebellion in the novel.

To interpret the novel through the theoretical framework of existentialism and feminist existentialism.

To highlight the psychological and philosophical dimensions of women's oppression in Arab feminist literature.

Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

How is existential anxiety represented in *Woman at Point Zero*?

What psychological factors contribute to Firdaus's existential suffering?

How does patriarchal oppression shape Firdaus's identity and consciousness?

In what ways does Firdaus develop self-awareness and resistance?

How does existential anxiety contribute to the formation of female consciousness?

How can existentialist and feminist existentialist theories help explain Firdaus's experiences?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides a psychological and philosophical interpretation of *Woman at Point Zero* that extends beyond traditional feminist analyses. By focusing on existential anxiety and female consciousness, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how psychological suffering influences women's identity formation and resistance within patriarchal societies. The study also contributes to feminist literary criticism by integrating existential philosophy with feminist analysis. While many studies examine the external structures of oppression in the novel, this research highlights the internal psychological struggles experienced by Firdaus. It demonstrates how existential anxiety, alienation, and despair function as important aspects of women's lived experiences under patriarchal domination. Furthermore, the research enriches Arab feminist literary scholarship by exploring existential themes within the context of Middle Eastern women's experiences. The study reveals how El Saadawi combines psychological realism with philosophical inquiry to critique oppressive social systems and portray women's struggle for freedom and selfhood.

Academically, the research may serve as a useful resource for scholars interested in

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

literature, psychology, gender studies, existential philosophy, and feminist criticism. It may also encourage future interdisciplinary studies that combine literary analysis with psychological and philosophical approaches to women's narratives.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology based on textual analysis and close reading. The primary text for analysis is *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi. The research closely examines Firdaus's experiences, thoughts, emotions, and actions in order to understand the existential and psychological dimensions of her character. The study uses interpretive and analytical approaches to examine themes such as anxiety, alienation, fear, despair, identity crisis, freedom, and resistance. Secondary sources including books, journal articles, critical essays, and scholarly studies related to existentialism, feminism, psychology, and Arab feminist literature are also consulted to support the analysis.

The research primarily applies existentialist and feminist existentialist theories to interpret the novel. Concepts developed by Jean-Paul Sartre, Søren Kierkegaard, and Simone de Beauvoir are used to analyze Firdaus's existential suffering and psychological transformation. The methodology allows for an in-depth exploration of how literature represents the relationship between oppression, anxiety, consciousness, and resistance.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in existentialism and feminist existentialism. Existentialism focuses on the human condition, emphasizing freedom, anxiety, alienation, responsibility, and the search for meaning in an uncertain world. Existential thinkers argue that individuals must confront suffering and make choices that define their identities. Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of freedom and self-definition is particularly relevant to this study because Firdaus's journey reflects the struggle to create identity within oppressive social conditions. Sartre's notion that human beings are condemned to freedom highlights the burden of choice and responsibility experienced by individuals confronting existential crises. Similarly, Søren Kierkegaard's ideas regarding anxiety and despair provide insight into Firdaus's emotional suffering. Kierkegaard views anxiety as a condition arising from uncertainty and the individual's confrontation with existence. Firdaus's constant fear, loneliness, and despair reflect this existential condition.

The study also draws upon feminist existentialism, particularly the work of Simone de Beauvoir. Beauvoir argues that women are socially constructed as subordinate beings whose identities are defined through male-centered systems. Her concept of woman as the "Other" is central to understanding Firdaus's experiences of objectification and oppression. Firdaus's struggle for autonomy and selfhood reflects Beauvoir's argument that women must resist patriarchal structures to achieve existential freedom. Through this theoretical framework, the study examines how existential anxiety contributes to the development of female consciousness and resistance in *Woman at Point Zero*.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature surrounding *Woman at Point Zero* has primarily focused on themes of patriarchy, gender oppression, prostitution, female resistance, and social injustice. Scholars have examined the novel as a feminist critique of Arab patriarchal society and as a representation of women's struggle for identity and autonomy. However, despite extensive feminist analyses, relatively limited scholarly attention has been devoted to the existential and psychological dimensions of the text, particularly the relationship between existential anxiety and the development of female consciousness. This chapter reviews previous scholarship related to the novel, existentialism, feminist existentialism, trauma, and psychological oppression in order to establish the theoretical and critical foundation of the present study.

Feminist Readings of *Woman at Point Zero*

Many critics interpret *Woman at Point Zero* as a radical feminist text that exposes the oppression of women within patriarchal structures. Scholars argue that El Saadawi portrays women as victims of social, religious, economic, and sexual exploitation. According to Malti-Douglas (1995), El Saadawi's writings challenge patriarchal ideologies by revealing how women's bodies become sites of control and domination. Firdaus's experiences of abuse, forced marriage, and prostitution illustrate the systematic violence imposed upon women by male-dominated institutions.

Similarly, Moi (2002) argues that feminist literature often highlights women's struggle against systems that reduce them to objects rather than autonomous individuals. In *Woman at Point Zero*, Firdaus's life reflects this condition because men repeatedly attempt to define her identity through their own desires and authority. Her body becomes commodified within social and economic structures that deny her individuality and humanity. Several scholars also emphasize the novel's critique of social hypocrisy. El Saadawi demonstrates that patriarchal societies condemn women involved in prostitution while simultaneously benefiting from systems that exploit female sexuality. According to Badran (1995), Arab feminist literature frequently exposes the contradiction between public morality and private oppression. Firdaus recognizes this hypocrisy when she realizes that respectable men exploit women in ways similar to pimps and criminals. Moreover, researchers such as Smith (2010) argue that Firdaus's eventual rebellion symbolizes feminist resistance against patriarchal authority. Her refusal to submit to male control reflects a rejection of societal expectations imposed upon women. By murdering her exploiter and accepting death without fear, Firdaus asserts her autonomy and dignity in a society that continuously attempts to silence her.

While these feminist studies successfully analyze the socio-political dimensions of oppression in the novel, many of them do not fully examine Firdaus's internal psychological struggles and existential suffering. The present study seeks to extend feminist interpretations by focusing on existential anxiety and consciousness formation.

Existentialism and Existential Anxiety

Existentialism emerged as a philosophical movement concerned with individual existence, freedom, anxiety, alienation, and the search for meaning. Existential philosophers argue that human beings live in a world characterized by uncertainty and

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

isolation, where individuals must create meaning through their choices and actions. Soren Kierkegaard is considered one of the earliest existential thinkers who conceptualized anxiety as a central aspect of human existence. According to Kierkegaard (1980), anxiety arises from freedom and uncertainty because individuals are constantly confronted with possibilities and responsibilities. Anxiety reflects the individual's awareness of existence and the fear associated with making choices. Firdaus's experiences in the novel resonate with Kierkegaard's understanding of anxiety because she lives in continuous fear, insecurity, and emotional instability. Similarly, Jean-Paul Sartre argues that human beings are "condemned to be free" (Sartre, 2007). Sartre believes that individuals are responsible for creating their identities through actions and decisions. However, this freedom also produces anguish because individuals cannot escape responsibility for their choices. Firdaus's life reflects this existential condition as she gradually becomes aware of her oppression and seeks to define herself independently of patriarchal expectations. Existentialist scholars also discuss alienation and meaninglessness as important dimensions of human existence. According to Camus (1955), individuals often experience absurdity when they recognize the lack of inherent meaning in social structures and human relationships. Firdaus's emotional isolation and distrust of social institutions reflect this existential alienation. She discovers that family, marriage, work, and morality are all shaped by systems of exploitation rather than genuine human connection. Furthermore, May (1950) explains that existential anxiety differs from ordinary fear because it involves deeper concerns regarding identity, freedom, death, and existence itself. Firdaus's acceptance of death at the end of the novel demonstrates existential courage because she refuses to compromise her dignity in exchange for survival. Her confrontation with death becomes a form of liberation from social oppression. Although existential philosophy has traditionally focused on universal human experiences, feminist scholars criticize classical existentialism for neglecting gendered forms of oppression. Feminist existentialism therefore becomes important in understanding women's existential struggles within patriarchal societies.

Feminist Existentialism and Female Consciousness

Feminist existentialism combines existential philosophy with feminist concerns regarding women's oppression, identity, and autonomy. The most influential feminist existentialist thinker is Simone de Beauvoir, whose work *The Second Sex* examines how patriarchal societies construct women as inferior beings. According to Beauvoir (2011), woman is socially constructed as the "Other," meaning that women are defined in relation to men rather than as independent individuals. Patriarchal societies deny women subjectivity, freedom, and selfhood by confining them to restrictive social roles. Firdaus's experiences strongly reflect Beauvoir's argument because her identity is constantly shaped and controlled by men throughout her life. Beauvoir further argues that women's oppression leads to alienation because they are denied opportunities for self-realization. Firdaus experiences this alienation in multiple forms, including emotional neglect, sexual exploitation, forced dependency, and social marginalization. Her inability to control her own body and choices contributes to existential anxiety and psychological fragmentation.

Scholars such as Tong (2009) explain that feminist existentialism emphasizes women's struggle for autonomy within oppressive social systems. Women must challenge patriarchal structures in order to achieve authentic existence and freedom.

Firdaus's rebellion can therefore be interpreted as an existential act of self-definition because she refuses to accept the identity imposed upon her by society. Additionally, Butler (1990) argues that gender identities are socially constructed through systems of power and discourse. Firdaus gradually becomes conscious of how patriarchal institutions manipulate and exploit women's identities. This awareness contributes to the development of female consciousness and resistance in the novel.

Female consciousness in feminist literature often develops through suffering and self-awareness. According to hooks (2000), oppressed women frequently achieve consciousness by recognizing the structures responsible for their suffering. Firdaus's psychological transformation occurs when she realizes that exploitation exists across all social institutions, including family, marriage, and labor systems. Her suffering becomes a catalyst for resistance and existential awakening.

Psychological Trauma and Female Oppression

Psychological trauma is another important aspect of *Woman at Point Zero*. Firdaus experiences repeated emotional, physical, and sexual violence that deeply affects her identity and consciousness. Trauma theorists argue that prolonged exposure to violence produces fear, alienation, dissociation, and emotional fragmentation. According to Herman (1992), trauma destroys the individual's sense of safety, trust, and identity. Victims of prolonged abuse often experience emotional numbness, isolation, and psychological disconnection. Firdaus's emotional detachment and inability to trust others reflect these traumatic effects. Her childhood experiences of violence and neglect shape her perception of human relationships as exploitative and dangerous.

Similarly, Caruth (1996) explains that trauma disrupts the individual's understanding of self and reality. Traumatic experiences continue to influence consciousness even after the events have ended. Firdaus's recurring fear and emotional suffering demonstrate the lasting psychological impact of trauma throughout her life. Fanon (1967) also discusses how oppression produces psychological alienation and internalized suffering among marginalized individuals. Although Fanon primarily examines colonial oppression, his ideas regarding dehumanization and psychological fragmentation are relevant to Firdaus's experiences. Patriarchal violence deprives Firdaus of dignity and humanity, causing her to experience existential despair and emotional isolation.

Moreover, scholars studying feminist trauma theory emphasize that women's trauma is often linked to systemic gender violence rather than isolated personal experiences. According to Brown (1995), patriarchal societies normalize violence against women, making trauma an ongoing social condition. Firdaus's suffering reflects this broader structural oppression because violence becomes a routine aspect of her existence. The present study incorporates trauma theory to support the analysis of existential anxiety and female consciousness in the novel. Firdaus's psychological suffering is examined not merely as personal trauma but as a condition shaped by patriarchal systems of domination.

Research Gap

Existing scholarship on *Woman at Point Zero* largely focuses on feminist resistance, patriarchy, prostitution, and gender oppression. While these studies provide valuable insights into the socio-political dimensions of the novel, relatively little attention has

been given to the existential and psychological dimensions of Firdaus's experiences. Few studies examine how existential anxiety contributes to the development of female consciousness and resistance. Additionally, limited research integrates existentialism, feminist existentialism, and trauma theory in analyzing the novel. Most previous analyses focus primarily on external systems of oppression without fully exploring Firdaus's internal psychological struggles, emotional alienation, and existential awakening. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the relationship between existential anxiety and female consciousness in *Woman at Point Zero*. By combining existential philosophy, feminist existentialism, and psychological trauma theory, the research provides a more comprehensive understanding of Firdaus's psychological transformation and resistance against patriarchal oppression.

Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study. The research examines existential anxiety and female consciousness in *Woman at Point Zero* through the perspectives of existentialism, feminist existentialism, and psychological trauma theory. These theoretical approaches provide a comprehensive framework for understanding Firdaus's psychological suffering, identity crisis, alienation, and eventual resistance against patriarchal oppression. The chapter also explains the qualitative research methodology employed in the study, including textual analysis and close reading techniques used to interpret the novel. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the conceptual tools necessary for analyzing the relationship between existential anxiety and female consciousness in the text. Since the novel deals with psychological oppression, fear, isolation, freedom, and rebellion, existential and feminist existentialist theories are particularly relevant for interpreting Firdaus's experiences. Moreover, trauma theory supports the analysis by explaining the psychological effects of prolonged violence and exploitation on female identity and **consciousness**.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is primarily based on existentialism and feminist existentialism. These philosophical approaches examine human existence, freedom, identity, alienation, anxiety, and oppression. The theories are useful in understanding how Firdaus's psychological suffering contributes to the development of female consciousness and resistance in the novel.

Existentialism

Existentialism is a philosophical movement that focuses on individual existence and human freedom. Existential philosophers argue that human beings are responsible for creating meaning in an uncertain and often oppressive world. Existentialism emphasizes concepts such as anxiety, alienation, despair, freedom, responsibility, and authenticity. One of the central principles of existentialism is that existence precedes essence. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, individuals are not born with predetermined identities; instead, they construct their identities through choices and actions. Sartre (2007) argues that human beings are "condemned to be free," meaning that individuals cannot escape responsibility for shaping their existence. This freedom often produces existential anguish because individuals must confront uncertainty and

isolation while making decisions. Firdaus's experiences in the novel strongly reflect Sartrean existential concerns. Throughout her life, she struggles against social systems that attempt to define her identity according to patriarchal expectations. Her psychological suffering emerges from her inability to exercise genuine freedom within oppressive structures. However, as she gradually becomes aware of her condition, she begins to assert her individuality and reject the identities imposed upon her by society.

Another important existential thinker relevant to this study is Søren Kierkegaard, who conceptualizes anxiety as an essential aspect of human existence. Kierkegaard (1980) explains that anxiety arises from uncertainty, freedom, and the individual's awareness of existence. Anxiety is not merely fear of external danger; rather, it is a psychological and existential condition connected to the burden of existence itself. Firdaus's emotional state throughout the novel reflects this existential anxiety. She experiences fear, loneliness, despair, insecurity, and emotional emptiness as a result of continuous oppression and exploitation. Her anxiety becomes more intense as she recognizes the hypocrisy and violence embedded within social institutions such as family, marriage, labor, and religion. This existential suffering shapes her consciousness and contributes to her eventual rebellion.

Existentialism also emphasizes alienation and meaninglessness. Individuals often experience isolation when they realize that society fails to provide genuine meaning or justice. Firdaus experiences profound alienation because she cannot establish authentic relationships within a society based on exploitation and domination. Her emotional detachment from others reflects existential despair and loss of faith in social structures. Additionally, existential philosophers view death as an important aspect of human existence. The awareness of mortality often forces individuals to confront the meaning of life and freedom. Firdaus's acceptance of death at the end of the novel demonstrates existential courage because she chooses dignity and autonomy over submission. Her refusal to fear execution symbolizes her liberation from oppressive structures that once controlled her existence.

Thus, existentialism provides an important framework for understanding Firdaus's psychological suffering, identity crisis, alienation, and struggle for freedom in the novel.

Feminist Existentialism

While existentialism focuses on universal human experiences, feminist existentialism examines how women experience oppression within patriarchal societies. Feminist existentialists argue that women's freedom and individuality are restricted by social systems that define them as subordinate beings. The most influential feminist existentialist thinker is Simone de Beauvoir. In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir (2011) argues that women are socially constructed as the "Other." Men are considered the norm or the dominant subject, while women are treated as secondary beings whose existence is defined in relation to men. This condition deprives women of individuality, autonomy, and existential freedom. Firdaus's experiences strongly illustrate Beauvoir's theory. Throughout her life, male figures attempt to control and define her identity. As a child, she experiences neglect and abuse within her family. Later, her husband treats her as property, while other men exploit her economically and sexually. Society values her only through her body and sexuality rather than recognizing her humanity and individuality.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Beauvoir also argues that patriarchal societies confine women to restrictive social roles that prevent self-realization. Women are expected to remain passive, obedient, and dependent on male authority. Firdaus initially appears trapped within these roles because years of oppression have conditioned her to accept suffering as normal. However, her experiences gradually lead to self-awareness and rebellion.

Feminist existentialism emphasizes the importance of consciousness and resistance in overcoming oppression. Women must recognize the structures responsible for their suffering in order to achieve autonomy and authentic existence. Firdaus's psychological transformation occurs when she realizes that patriarchal society systematically exploits women regardless of social class or moral status. This realization contributes to the development of female consciousness in the novel. Moreover, feminist existentialists argue that freedom is not simply external independence but also psychological self-definition. Firdaus's refusal to submit to patriarchal authority represents an existential assertion of selfhood. Her final act of violence against her exploiter symbolizes her rejection of oppression and her demand for dignity and autonomy.

Therefore, feminist existentialism is highly relevant to this study because it explains how patriarchal systems contribute to women's psychological suffering while also highlighting the possibility of resistance and self-realization.

Psychological Trauma Theory

In addition to existentialism and feminist existentialism, this study incorporates psychological trauma theory to analyze the emotional and psychological consequences of violence in the novel. Trauma theory helps explain how prolonged abuse, exploitation, and fear affect Firdaus's identity and consciousness.

According to Herman (1992), trauma destroys an individual's sense of safety, trust, and selfhood. Victims of repeated violence often experience emotional numbness, fear, dissociation, and psychological fragmentation. Firdaus's experiences of abuse throughout childhood and adulthood deeply affect her emotional development and perception of relationships.

Similarly, Caruth (1996) argues that trauma continues to shape consciousness even after traumatic events have passed. Traumatic experiences disrupt the individual's understanding of reality and identity. Firdaus's recurring feelings of fear, alienation, and despair reflect the lasting psychological impact of trauma.

Trauma theory also emphasizes the relationship between oppression and psychological suffering. Feminist trauma scholars argue that violence against women is often systemic rather than accidental. Firdaus's suffering is not caused by isolated incidents alone but by a patriarchal culture that normalizes exploitation and abuse.

The inclusion of trauma theory strengthens this study because it allows for a deeper understanding of Firdaus's psychological condition and existential anxiety. Her rebellion can therefore be interpreted not only as a political act but also as a psychological response to years of dehumanization and emotional suffering.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology based on textual analysis and close reading. Qualitative research is appropriate because the study focuses on interpreting psychological experiences, existential themes, emotions, and philosophical ideas represented in the literary text.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

The primary source of data is *Woman at Point Zero*. The research closely analyzes Firdaus's narration, dialogues, emotions, thoughts, and actions in order to understand how existential anxiety and female consciousness are represented in the novel.

Secondary sources include scholarly books, journal articles, critical essays, and theoretical writings related to existentialism, feminist existentialism, trauma theory, psychology, and feminist literary criticism. These secondary materials support the interpretation and strengthen the theoretical analysis of the text.

Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research focuses on interpretation, meaning, and subjective experience rather than numerical data. Since this study examines psychological suffering and existential consciousness, qualitative analysis is the most suitable method.

The qualitative method allows the researcher to:

Interpret emotional and psychological experiences in the text.

Analyze symbolic and philosophical meanings.

Examine themes of anxiety, alienation, freedom, and resistance.

Explore the relationship between oppression and consciousness.

Through qualitative analysis, the study investigates how Firdaus's experiences reflect broader existential and feminist concerns regarding identity and autonomy.

Textual Analysis

Textual analysis is used to interpret the language, themes, symbols, and narrative structure of the novel. The study examines how El Saadawi constructs Firdaus's psychological experiences through narration, imagery, and dialogue.

Particular attention is given to:

Expressions of fear and anxiety.

Descriptions of emotional suffering.

Representations of alienation and despair.

Moments of self-awareness and rebellion.

Symbolic representations of freedom and death.

Textual analysis helps reveal the existential and psychological dimensions embedded within the narrative.

Close Reading

Close reading involves detailed examination of specific passages and textual details in order to interpret deeper meanings. This method enables the researcher to analyze Firdaus's emotional and psychological transformation throughout the novel. Close reading is particularly important in identifying:

The development of female consciousness.

Internal conflicts and existential struggles.

Psychological effects of oppression.

Language associated with freedom and resistance.

This method allows the study to move beyond surface-level feminist interpretations and explore the deeper philosophical and psychological implications of the text.

Research Approach

The study adopts an analytical and interpretive research approach. The analytical approach is used to examine existential themes and psychological experiences in the

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

novel, while the interpretive approach helps explain the meanings associated with Firdaus's suffering and rebellion.

The research interprets the text through:

Existential philosophy

Feminist existentialism

Trauma theory

Psychological criticism

This interdisciplinary approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how existential anxiety contributes to the formation of female consciousness in the novel.

Delimitation of the Study

This research is limited to the analysis of existential anxiety and female consciousness in *Woman at Point Zero*. The study primarily focuses on Firdaus's psychological experiences, existential suffering, and development of self-awareness.

Although the novel contains various socio-political themes such as class inequality, prostitution, religion, and economic exploitation, the research specifically concentrates on existential and psychological dimensions related to female identity and resistance.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the theoretical and methodological framework of the study. Existentialism, feminist existentialism, and trauma theory collectively provide the conceptual foundation for analyzing Firdaus's psychological suffering and existential struggle in the novel. The qualitative methodology, including textual analysis and close reading, enables an in-depth examination of existential anxiety, alienation, consciousness, and resistance.

The next chapter will apply these theoretical concepts to analyze existential anxiety in Firdaus's life and examine how psychological suffering contributes to the development of female consciousness in *Woman at Point Zero*.

Existential Anxiety and the Development of Female Consciousness in *Woman at Point Zero*

Introduction

Woman at Point Zero presents the psychological and existential journey of Firdaus, a woman whose life is shaped by oppression, violence, alienation, and emotional suffering. Through Firdaus's experiences, Nawal El Saadawi exposes the destructive effects of patriarchy on female identity and consciousness. The novel illustrates how continuous abuse and dehumanization create existential anxiety, leading Firdaus toward self-awareness and rebellion. This chapter analyzes the representation of existential anxiety and the emergence of female consciousness through the theoretical perspectives of existentialism, feminist existentialism, and trauma theory. The analysis focuses on Firdaus's psychological development from childhood to adulthood. Her experiences reveal how patriarchal oppression contributes to fear, alienation, identity crisis, and despair. However, these experiences also become the foundation for existential awakening and resistance. By applying the theories of Jean-Paul Sartre, Soren Kierkegaard, Simone de Beauvoir, and trauma theorists such as Judith Herman and Cathy Caruth, this chapter examines how existential suffering transforms Firdaus into a conscious and resistant individual.

Childhood Trauma and the Origins of Existential Anxiety

Firdaus's existential anxiety begins in childhood, where she experiences emotional neglect, violence, and fear within her family environment. Her father is presented as a violent and authoritarian figure who physically abuses her mother and treats his family without compassion. Firdaus grows up in an atmosphere characterized by fear and insecurity, which shapes her understanding of human relationships. Early exposure to violence creates emotional trauma that continues to affect her psychological development throughout her life.

According to trauma theorist Herman (1992), childhood abuse destroys the individual's sense of safety and trust, resulting in emotional fragmentation and psychological instability. Firdaus's experiences reflect this condition because she learns from an early age that power is associated with violence and domination. She observes how women are denied dignity and autonomy within patriarchal family structures. This realization contributes to the formation of existential fear and alienation.

Firdaus's circumcision represents another traumatic experience that symbolizes patriarchal control over the female body. The procedure causes both physical pain and psychological confusion, demonstrating society's attempt to suppress female identity and sexuality. Feminist scholars argue that such practices reduce women to passive objects whose bodies are controlled by social and cultural systems (Beauvoir, 2011). Firdaus's trauma therefore reflects broader patriarchal mechanisms that deny women individuality and selfhood.

Soren Kierkegaard explains that anxiety emerges when individuals confront insecurity, uncertainty, and suffering (Kierkegaard, 1980). Firdaus's childhood experiences create a constant state of fear and emotional instability, causing her to experience existential anxiety long before she fully understands its causes. She feels emotionally disconnected from others and struggles to find security or affection within her environment. Her early trauma lays the foundation for later experiences of alienation and despair.

Furthermore, Firdaus's isolation during childhood contributes to the development of existential loneliness. She lacks emotional support and genuine human connection, leading to feelings of emptiness and invisibility. According to existentialist philosophy, alienation occurs when individuals become disconnected from authentic relationships and social belonging (May, 1950). Firdaus's emotional isolation reflects this existential condition because she experiences herself as insignificant within a patriarchal society that values male authority over female humanity.

Thus, childhood trauma becomes the origin of Firdaus's existential suffering. Violence, fear, and emotional neglect create psychological wounds that shape her identity and consciousness throughout the novel.

Marriage and the Intensification of Existential Suffering

Firdaus's forced marriage represents another stage in the intensification of existential anxiety and psychological oppression. After leaving school, she is married to Sheikh Mahmoud, an older man who physically abuses and humiliates her. Instead of providing security or companionship, marriage becomes another institution of patriarchal violence and domination.

Simone de Beauvoir argues that patriarchal societies construct marriage as a system that reinforces women's dependency and subordination (Beauvoir, 2011). Women are

often treated as property whose primary function is to serve male authority. Firdaus's marriage reflects Beauvoir's argument because her husband denies her individuality and autonomy. He treats her body as an object of ownership rather than recognizing her humanity.

The violence Firdaus experiences in marriage intensifies her psychological suffering and emotional alienation. She states that her husband beat her "with a shoe" and insulted her dignity, illustrating the normalization of violence against women in patriarchal cultures (El Saadawi, 2015). These experiences contribute to existential despair because Firdaus realizes that even socially accepted institutions such as marriage are based on domination and exploitation.

According to Jean-Paul Sartre, individuals experience existential anguish when they recognize that social structures limit authentic freedom (Sartre, 2007). Firdaus's marriage deprives her of control over her own existence, causing her to feel trapped within a life defined by suffering and submission. She becomes emotionally detached and psychologically exhausted because her identity is continuously suppressed by patriarchal authority.

Marriage also contributes to Firdaus's loss of selfhood. She no longer exists as an autonomous individual but merely as a subordinate wife expected to obey male power. This condition reflects existential alienation because her authentic identity is denied by oppressive social roles. According to Beauvoir (2011), women experience alienation when society defines them solely through male-centered expectations. Firdaus's emotional emptiness and hopelessness demonstrate this existential condition. Eventually, Firdaus escapes her husband, marking the beginning of her search for independence and self-definition. However, her escape does not eliminate existential anxiety because she soon discovers that exploitation exists beyond marriage as well. Nevertheless, this moment represents an early stage of consciousness development because Firdaus begins to recognize oppression as a systemic condition rather than an isolated personal experience.

Prostitution, Alienation, and the Illusion of Freedom

One of the most significant phases in Firdaus's existential journey occurs when she enters prostitution. Initially, prostitution appears to offer economic independence and personal freedom. Firdaus earns money, controls her clients, and experiences temporary power over men who once dominated her. However, this apparent freedom eventually reveals itself as another form of exploitation and existential alienation.

Firdaus realizes that prostitution differs little from other patriarchal institutions because women continue to be valued primarily through their bodies. Although she gains financial independence, she remains trapped within systems of commodification and objectification. This realization contributes to existential despair because she recognizes that society itself is structured around exploitation.

According to Sartre (2007), existential freedom requires authentic self-definition rather than dependence upon external validation or social systems. Firdaus's experiences demonstrate that economic independence alone cannot eliminate existential suffering because patriarchal structures continue to shape women's identities. Her relationships with men remain transactional and emotionally empty, reinforcing her feelings of alienation and distrust.

The existential absurdity of Firdaus's life becomes increasingly apparent during this phase. Similar to Camus's concept of absurdity, Firdaus recognizes the contradiction

between society's moral claims and its actual practices (Camus, 1955). Respectable men condemn prostitution publicly while privately exploiting women for pleasure and power. Firdaus realizes that hypocrisy governs social morality, causing her to lose faith in institutions and relationships.

Furthermore, Firdaus's emotional detachment reflects psychological trauma and existential isolation. According to Caruth (1996), trauma often produces dissociation and emotional numbness as defense mechanisms against suffering. Firdaus becomes emotionally disconnected from others because genuine trust and intimacy seem impossible within exploitative social structures.

At the same time, prostitution contributes to the development of female consciousness. Firdaus begins to understand the mechanisms through which patriarchal society controls women economically, sexually, and psychologically. She realizes that women across different social classes experience forms of exploitation, whether within marriage, labor, or prostitution. This awareness transforms her understanding of oppression and contributes to her existential awakening.

Thus, prostitution functions paradoxically in the novel. It provides temporary independence while simultaneously exposing the deeper structures of patriarchal domination. Firdaus's existential anxiety intensifies because she realizes that no social institution offers genuine freedom or dignity for women.

Existential Awakening and Female Consciousness

Firdaus's existential suffering eventually leads to the development of female consciousness and psychological rebellion. Through years of oppression, she gradually becomes aware of the social, economic, and patriarchal systems responsible for her suffering. This awareness transforms her from a passive victim into a conscious individual capable of resistance.

According to feminist existentialism, consciousness emerges when women recognize their oppression and challenge the structures that define them as inferior beings (Tong, 2009). Firdaus's psychological transformation reflects this process because she begins to reject patriarchal authority and assert her individuality.

One of the most important aspects of Firdaus's consciousness is her rejection of fear. Throughout her life, fear has controlled her actions and emotions. However, by the end of the novel, she no longer fears men, society, or death itself. This transformation reflects existential courage because Firdaus chooses dignity and autonomy over submission.

Jean-Paul Sartre argues that authentic existence requires individuals to take responsibility for defining themselves through choice and action (Sartre, 2007). Firdaus's refusal to seek forgiveness before execution demonstrates existential authenticity because she refuses to compromise her identity for survival. She rejects society's moral authority and asserts control over her own existence.

Similarly, Beauvoir (2011) argues that women achieve liberation when they resist the identities imposed upon them by patriarchal systems. Firdaus's rebellion symbolizes this liberation because she refuses to remain an object controlled by male power. Her final act of violence against the pimp Marzouk represents the destruction of patriarchal domination and the assertion of selfhood.

Firdaus's acceptance of death is particularly significant from an existential perspective. According to existential philosophy, confronting mortality can lead to authentic self-awareness because individuals recognize the importance of freedom

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

and dignity. Firdaus states that she is no longer afraid because she has discovered the truth about society and herself (El Saadawi, 2015). Death therefore becomes a symbol of existential liberation rather than defeat.

Moreover, Firdaus's narrative itself functions as an act of resistance and consciousness. By telling her story, she exposes the violence and hypocrisy of patriarchal society. Her voice challenges dominant narratives that silence women's suffering and normalize oppression.

Thus, existential anxiety ultimately contributes to the development of female consciousness in the novel. Firdaus's suffering becomes a catalyst for psychological awakening, resistance, and self-realization.

This chapter has analyzed existential anxiety and the development of female consciousness in *Woman at Point Zero* through existentialist, feminist existentialist, and trauma theories. Firdaus's experiences of childhood trauma, marital abuse, prostitution, alienation, and emotional suffering reveal the destructive psychological effects of patriarchal oppression. Through the theories of Jean-Paul Sartre, Søren Kierkegaard, and Simone de Beauvoir, the analysis demonstrates that existential anxiety emerges from the denial of freedom, individuality, and authentic existence. Firdaus's suffering reflects the existential conditions of fear, alienation, despair, and meaninglessness created by oppressive social structures.

However, the chapter also demonstrates that existential suffering contributes to the development of female consciousness and resistance. Firdaus gradually recognizes the mechanisms of patriarchal domination and ultimately rejects the identities imposed upon her by society. Her rebellion and acceptance of death symbolize existential freedom and psychological liberation.

Therefore, *Woman at Point Zero* presents existential anxiety not only as a condition of suffering but also as a transformative force that leads to consciousness, resistance, and self-realization.

Conclusion

Introduction

This study examined existential anxiety and female consciousness in *Woman at Point Zero* through the theoretical perspectives of existentialism, feminist existentialism, and psychological trauma theory. The research explored how Firdaus's experiences of violence, oppression, alienation, and emotional suffering contribute to the development of existential awareness and resistance against patriarchal structures. By analyzing Firdaus's psychological journey from childhood trauma to existential rebellion, the study demonstrated that existential anxiety functions not only as a source of suffering but also as a catalyst for consciousness, autonomy, and self-realization.

The novel reveals the harsh realities faced by women living in patriarchal societies where social institutions such as family, marriage, labor, and morality systematically deny women freedom and individuality. Firdaus's life reflects the destructive psychological consequences of these oppressive systems, including fear, alienation, identity crisis, and emotional fragmentation. However, the novel also portrays the possibility of resistance through existential awakening and female consciousness.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Summary of Major Findings

The study found that existential anxiety is one of the central themes in *Woman at Point Zero*. Firdaus experiences continuous psychological suffering due to violence, emotional neglect, sexual exploitation, and social oppression. Her existential anxiety begins in childhood and intensifies throughout adulthood as she becomes increasingly aware of the hypocrisy and brutality embedded within patriarchal structures.

The analysis revealed that childhood trauma plays a significant role in shaping Firdaus's psychological condition. The violence she witnesses within her family and the emotional neglect she experiences contribute to feelings of insecurity, fear, and alienation. These traumatic experiences create deep psychological wounds that influence her perception of relationships and society throughout her life. Trauma theory helped explain how prolonged abuse produces emotional fragmentation and existential despair.

The study further demonstrated that patriarchal institutions such as marriage function as mechanisms of female oppression and existential imprisonment. Firdaus's forced marriage deprives her of autonomy, dignity, and selfhood, reinforcing her alienation and psychological suffering. The analysis showed that marriage in the novel is not portrayed as a source of security or emotional fulfillment but rather as an extension of patriarchal domination.

Another major finding of the study is that prostitution in the novel represents both temporary empowerment and existential contradiction. Although prostitution initially appears to provide Firdaus with financial independence and social power, she eventually realizes that it is another system of exploitation that commodifies women's bodies. This realization intensifies her existential anxiety because she recognizes that patriarchal domination exists across all social institutions regardless of class or morality.

The research also found that existential suffering contributes to the development of female consciousness in the novel. Through years of oppression and emotional pain, Firdaus gradually becomes aware of the mechanisms responsible for women's exploitation. Her consciousness develops through suffering, self-reflection, and recognition of social hypocrisy. She eventually rejects patriarchal authority and refuses to accept the submissive roles imposed upon her by society.

The study further demonstrated that Firdaus's final rebellion represents existential freedom and self-definition. Influenced by existentialist concepts of autonomy and authenticity, Firdaus chooses dignity over submission and refuses to fear death. Her act of resistance symbolizes psychological liberation from oppressive systems that once controlled her existence. By accepting death without regret, she achieves existential self-awareness and autonomy.

Existentialism and Female Consciousness

This study established that existential philosophy provides an effective framework for understanding Firdaus's psychological struggles and identity formation. The theories of Jean-Paul Sartre and Soren Kierkegaard helped explain how anxiety, alienation, despair, and freedom operate within Firdaus's life.

Kierkegaard's concept of anxiety as a condition arising from uncertainty and existential suffering is reflected throughout Firdaus's experiences. Her constant fear, loneliness, and insecurity demonstrate the psychological burden of living within oppressive structures that deny freedom and dignity. Similarly, Sartre's emphasis on

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

freedom and self-definition becomes significant in understanding Firdaus's rebellion. Although society attempts to define her identity through patriarchal expectations, she ultimately reclaims control over her existence through conscious resistance.

The study also highlighted the importance of feminist existentialism, particularly the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir. Beauvoir's concept of woman as the "Other" is clearly reflected in Firdaus's experiences of objectification and marginalization. Throughout the novel, Firdaus is denied individuality and treated as a subordinate being whose value is determined by male authority. However, her existential awakening allows her to reject this imposed identity and assert her humanity.

The research therefore concludes that female consciousness in the novel emerges through existential suffering. Firdaus's pain, alienation, and trauma become the foundation for psychological awakening and resistance. Rather than remaining a passive victim, she transforms into a conscious individual capable of challenging oppressive structures.

Contribution of the Study

This study contributes to feminist literary criticism by integrating existential philosophy with the analysis of women's oppression and psychological suffering. While previous studies on *Woman at Point Zero* primarily focused on feminism, patriarchy, prostitution, and socio-political oppression, this research emphasized the existential and psychological dimensions of the novel.

The study also contributes to Arab feminist literary scholarship by demonstrating how existential anxiety shapes female identity and consciousness within patriarchal societies. It highlights the importance of examining women's internal psychological experiences alongside external systems of oppression.

Furthermore, the research expands interdisciplinary approaches to literature by combining existentialism, feminist existentialism, and trauma theory. This theoretical combination provides a more comprehensive understanding of how violence and oppression affect female identity, consciousness, and resistance.

The study also contributes to trauma studies by illustrating how prolonged psychological suffering can simultaneously produce emotional destruction and existential awakening. Firdaus's experiences reveal the complex relationship between trauma, identity, and resistance in women's narratives.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study recommends further research on existentialism and psychological suffering in Arab feminist literature. Comparative studies may examine existential anxiety and female consciousness in the works of other feminist writers from the Middle East and South Asia.

Future researchers may also explore:

Psychoanalytic interpretations of *Woman at Point Zero*

Trauma and memory in women's narratives

Existential feminism in postcolonial literature

Female resistance and body politics in Arab fiction

Comparative existential studies between Western and Arab feminist texts

Additionally, interdisciplinary studies combining literature, psychology, philosophy, and gender studies may provide deeper insights into women's experiences of oppression and resistance.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Final Remarks

Woman at Point Zero remains one of the most powerful representations of female suffering and resistance in modern feminist literature. Through Firdaus's story, Nawal El Saadawi exposes the psychological and existential consequences of patriarchal oppression while simultaneously portraying the possibility of consciousness and liberation.

Firdaus's journey from fear and silence to rebellion and existential freedom demonstrates that suffering can become a source of self-awareness and resistance. Although patriarchal society attempts to deny her humanity and individuality, she ultimately asserts her identity through conscious defiance. Her refusal to submit or fear death symbolizes the triumph of existential freedom over oppression.

The novel therefore presents existential anxiety not merely as psychological suffering but as a transformative force that leads to female consciousness, resistance, and self-realization. Through its exploration of oppression, trauma, alienation, and freedom, Woman at Point Zero continues to hold profound relevance in contemporary discussions of gender, identity, and human existence.

References

- Badran, M. (1995). *Feminists, Islam, and nation: Gender and the making of modern Egypt*. Princeton University Press.
- Beauvoir, S. de. (2011). *The second sex* (C. Borde & S. Malovany-Chevallier, Trans.). Vintage Books. (Original work published 1949)
- Beauvoir, S. de. (2011). *The second sex* (C. Borde & S. Malovany-Chevallier, Trans.). Vintage Books.
- Brown, L. S. (1995). *Subversive dialogues: Theory in feminist therapy*. Basic Books.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Camus, A. (1955). *The myth of Sisyphus and other essays* (J. O'Brien, Trans.). Vintage Books.
- Camus, A. (1955). *The myth of Sisyphus and other essays* (J. O'Brien, Trans.). Vintage Books.
- Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- El Saadawi, N. (2015). *Woman at point zero*. Zed Books.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black skin, white masks* (C. L. Markmann, Trans.). Grove Press.
- Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and recovery*. Basic Books.
- Herman, J. L. (1992). *Trauma and recovery*. Basic Books.
- hooks, b. (2000). *Feminist theory: From margin to center* (2nd ed.). Pluto Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1980). *The concept of anxiety* (R. Thomte & A. B. Anderson, Trans.). Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1844)
- Kierkegaard, S. (1980). *The concept of anxiety* (R. Thomte & A. B. Anderson, Trans.). Princeton University Press.
- Multi-Douglas, F. (1995). *Men, women, and God(s): Nawal El Saadawi and Arab feminist poetics*. University of California Press.
- May, R. (1950). *The meaning of anxiety*. Ronald Press.
- May, R. (1950). *The meaning of anxiety*. Ronald Press.
- Moi, T. (2002). *Sexual/textual politics: Feminist literary theory*. Routledge.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

- Sartre, J.-P. (2007). *Existentialism is a humanism* (C. Macomber, Trans.). Yale University Press. (Original work published 1946)
- Sartre, J.-P. (2007). *Existentialism is a humanism* (C. Macomber, Trans.). Yale University Press.
- Smith, S. (2010). Feminist resistance and identity formation in Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*. *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 41(2), 145–162.
- Tong, R. (2009). *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction* (3rd ed.). Westview Press.
- Tong, R. (2009). *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction* (3rd ed.). Westview Press.