

FIRDAUS DEFENSE MECHANISM IN NAWAL EL SAADAWI

WOMAN AT POINT ZERO

THESIS

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University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya



Maya Izzatul Millah

No. Reg. A73215112

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

SUNAN AMPEL STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

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Characters are the whole reason for any story. People become attached to characters as if they are real, moreover for those who have faced similar situations. A story can have only one character (protagonist) and is still a complete story. However, most of stories have many characters, with one being an antagonist, causing conflict for the protagonist.

When the characters felt depressed, anxious, and stress, they try to reduce it by doing defense mechanisms both conscious and unconsciously. Defense mechanism is a form of habit or pattern of a person to escape from feeling anxious, and frustrated.

The main function of this habit is to minimize inner conflict and other uncomfortable feelings. At first, this defense mechanism is needed so that someone can still function in everyday life. The forms of defense mechanisms are learning outcomes and apply both in normal and pathological behavioral functions. Often, they appear together or in various forms.

Therefore, individual needs defense mechanism in his personality to overcome or free himself from anxious feeling. Such as when they faced a danger, everyone will surely defend themselves. Defense mechanism is a form of self-defense when faced with problems that interfere with his ego. This is an individual way to suppress feelings of stress, anxiety, stress or conflicts that occur within themselves.

There are some novels depicting how defense mechanism works such as in the novel *Woman at Point Zero*. Through a novel, we can take an example of

psychological behavior of human, based on Anthony Trollope through the book of John Mullan (80) *How Novels Work* “no novel is anything, for purposes either of comedy or tragedy, unless the reader can sympathise with the characters whose names he finds upon the page”.

The novel is written based on the personal opinion and experience of the author, Nawal El Saadawi, tells about the reality of Egyptian woman, Firdaus. This novel was criticized and rejected in Egypt. The main character who experienced man's oppression starting from her childhood to adulthood. She remains silent being who do not have any choice and right of her own. After certain point, she became rebellious. She struggle gain her freedom that is not given to her. Only then she gets her honour and recognition in the society.

The novel tells Firdaus, who was poor, her mother abused by her father as well as her father did to her. Soon when her all family died, she follows her uncle to Cairo. When her uncle got married, Firdaus sent to a boarding school.

After she finished the secondary school successfully, she is married to an old man who always beats her. When she ran away, then she lives in Bayoumi's flat until his friends come and uses Firdaus sexuality. Firdaus escaped again and met Sharifa who acts as her pimp.

One night, Sharifa's friend comes and Firdaus hears that they fighting over who will get to keep her. So, she runs away again, still a prostitute, but she has her own beautiful home and become wealthy until her friend Di'a tell that she is not a respectable woman. She becomes an employee and falls in love with Ibrahim.

However, she returns to be a prostitute when she knows Ibrahim is engaged with the director's daughter. She becomes popular and expensive prostitute.

One day, a pimp named Marzouk comes. He threatened and urged to share Firdaus earnings. She wanted to run away but he pushed her back until they got into a fight, Firdaus murders him and imprisoned. Though she is waiting to die in prison, she considers herself freer than anyone else in the world. Actually, Firdaus could be free by asking forgiveness from the President, but Firdaus refused to send a request legal relief because she thought she was not a criminal, men were the criminals.

Based on the discussion above, the researcher is interested analyze novel *Woman at Point Zero* using psychoanalysis approach by Sigmund Freud entitled "*Firdaus Defense Mechanism in Nawal El Saadawi Woman at Point Zero*". By using theory of anxiety and defense mechanisms, the researcher may get a depiction of Firdaus effort to resolve her conflicts of life.

B. Statement of Problem

According to the background research, the problems of this research are formulated as follows:

1. What are the anxieties experienced by Firdaus seen in Nawal El Saadawi *Woman at Point Zero*?
2. How does Firdaus defense mechanism confront her anxieties seen in Nawal El Saadawi *Woman at Point Zero*?

C. Objective of Study

According to the formulation of the problems above, the objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To explain the anxieties experienced by Firdaus in Nawal El Saadawi *Woman at Point Zero*.
2. To explain defense mechanism used by Firdaus to confront her anxieties in Nawal El Saadawi *Woman at Point Zero*.

D. Significance of Study

Academically, the researcher hopes that the findings generated from this research will give supportive information to the students, primary to those who use psychoanalysis approach.

Practically, the researcher hopes this research can give the reader depiction in learning literature. So, the reader would not only read the literary work but also interpret it. Also, this research will give an understanding and be a reason for human being, especially women who can get what they want with their ability. Women have the rights to be free without any limitations as long as they do not violate the boundaries of religion and society.

E. Scope and Limitation

In order to focus the analysis, this research has scope and limitation. Nawal El Saadawi *Woman at Point Zero* becomes the scope in this study. This study then limits the concern with the main character and the characterization rather than theme, setting and point of view to answer the statement of problems.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This chapter would like to deliver the theories applied in this thesis. It is useful to give understanding and knowledge on the theories about how it works on the literary work. This thesis applies psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud focused on the anxiety and defense mechanism.

2.1.1 Character and Conflict

Character is an important element in literature. Various characters in the story are made by the creativity of the writer. The author makes characters according to their tastes: for example, profession, status and attitude. Each character has a different part in the story.

Some types of characters in the story is the main character. This character is most presented in the story. He is the most accurate character, both as a subject or object of conflict. Even in certain stories, the main characters are always present in every scene and conflict. Another type is minor characters. This characters appear less frequently than the main characters. Minor characters are important characters in the story after the main character. Without minor characters, the role of the main character will not be perfect. Conflicts cannot be carried out only by the main character. Need other characters to make conflicts more varied (Nurgiyantoro 177).

Conflict is another important part of the story, because interesting conflicts will also determine the level of interest of the reader. Character is also very closely related to conflict, because without conflict, there will be no progress in stories and characters. According to Perrine, conflicts occur between the main characters and other characters with the environment, nature, society or destiny and between a character and himself which can be physical, mental, emotional, or moral resistance (42).

Conflicts that occur on a person can be caused by many things. Conflict does not only occur between one person and another, but also occurs between a person and the social environment or even himself. Because of that argument, conflict is divided into two types, internal conflicts and external conflicts.

2.1.1.1 Internal conflicts

Internal conflict occurs within characters. According to Nurgiyantoro, internal conflict or psychological conflict is a conflict that occurs in the heart or soul of a person or figures in the story (124).

Internal conflict will occur when someone has his own dilemma and he does not know what to do. And Nurgiyantoro stated that, the main internal conflict is usually experienced by the main character or protagonist (126).

2.1.1.2 External conflicts

External conflict is a conflict that comes from outside the character. According to Nurgiyantoro, external conflict is a conflict

between character and something outside of himself, maybe the natural environment or human environment (124). For example, it happens between a husband and his wife, a child and his mother or between friends. Nurgiyantoro states that, the main external conflict is experienced and caused by contradictions between characters, in the form of the main protagonist character and the main antagonist character (126).

2.1.2 Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is a psychological theory developed by Sigmund Freud in the 1900s. He discovered this theory of every patient who suffer neurotic. Neurotic is personality disorder and characterized by a rather dominant anxiety as a form of adjustment because continual pressure, conflict and frustration.

Sigmund Freud was born May 6, 1856, a small town of Freiberg, Moravia. He had six younger sisters and older half-brothers. His family moved to Vienna, where he lived most of his life. There, he attended to medical school for Jewish boy in Vienna. Then, he involved in research under the direction of Ernst Brucke, a physiology professor. His research concentrating on neurophysiology, even creating a special cell-staining technique (Boeree 4).

Freud proposed “structural theory of the mind” and the defense mechanisms. Structural theory of the mind consisted of id, ego, and superego. Id is a totally unconscious region of mind, containing of drive and material later repressed. Id is a genuine personality system, born from birth. From this id the

ego and superego will appear. At birth, the id contains all aspects of psychology that are derived, such as instincts, impulses and drives.

Id operates in an unconscious area, representing subjectivity that has never been realized throughout the ages. Id is closely related to the physical process of obtaining psychic energy used to operate the system from other personality structures. Id operates based on the pleasure principle, which is trying avoid pain. Id is not able to judge or distinguish completely something wrong and moral. This reason then makes the id bring up the ego (Gay 25).

Ego is partially conscious and consists of defense mechanisms and the capacities to count, excuse and plan. Ego develops from the id so that people are able to handle reality. Ego operates according to the reality principle of the effort to obtain satisfaction demanded by the id by preventing the occurrence of new stresses or delaying enjoyment until the object is found to satisfy the needs.

Ego is the executive or executor of personality, which has two main tasks; first, choosing which stimuli you want to respond to and or which instincts will be satisfied according to priority needs. Second, determine when and how those needs are satisfied according to the availability of minimal risk opportunities. The ego actually works to satisfy the id, therefore the ego that does not have its own energy. Ego will get energy from the id.

Superego is the moral and ethical power of personality, which operates using an idealistic principle as opposed to the pleasure principle, id and the realistic principle, ego. The superego develops from the ego, and like the ego, it

does not have its own source of energy. Superego is only a part of consciousness which protects the conscience and beyond that, unconscious feeling of guilty (Freud xxii).

Freud added that perfect humans are who can balance between id, ego and the superego. When these three components experience involved in conflict, then the tensions arise. To release this tension, one must think about situation and condition to release anxiety. It is known as defense mechanism. Freud assumed that without defense mechanisms, someone who experiences conflicts of personality (id, ego and superego) will experience depression.

2.1.2 Anxiety

Anxiety is an important aspect of almost all personality theories. Anxiety as the impact of conflict which is an unavoidable part of life. Anxiety will arise when people are not ready to face threats. Bion defines anxiety as “a sign of emotion” which highlights the concerns with emotional experiences that is likely happened imminently and stresses the unknown nature of it (Emanuel 6).

Nevid defines anxiety as “a condition where the sufferer becomes worried and complains about something bad that is about to happen and has a conscious side like fear, surprised feeling, disability, guilt, and insecurity” (163). Anxiety also has an unconscious and absurd side, like when someone is afraid of something without any reason. Anxiety is an ego function to warn individuals about the possibility of a danger so that an adaptive reaction can be prepared accordingly. Usually the individual's reaction to the threat of displeasure and

destruction that he has not faced is to become anxious or afraid. Anxiety functions as a mechanism that secures the ego because it signals if there is danger and only the ego can produce the feeling of anxiety.

Anxiety is an unpleasant feeling of fear over an anticipated event and usually unfocused as an overreaction to a circumstance that is only observed subjectively as a threat. Anxiety can be right, but when experienced regularly, individual may suffer anxiety disorders. Anxiety is not the same as fear, which is fear response to the real direct threat, while anxiety “a future-oriented mood state in which one is not ready or prepared to attempt to cope with upcoming negatives events” (Barlow 63).

Obviously, anxiety is not only about irrational fear. In many cases, it can be irrational *not* to be anxious. Such as, individual who has just been diagnosed with cancer has the right to be anxious. We can find irrational anxieties in phobias, like the fear of thunder, lizard, spiders and so on (Boeree 9).

Furthermore there are three kinds of anxiety, those are; realistic anxiety, neurotic anxiety and moral anxiety.

2.1.2.1 Realistic Anxiety

This anxiety is rooted in reality. It is the fear of obvious danger in the outside world. This anxiety is the origin of the emergence of neurotic anxiety and moral anxiety. So, it is the feeling of anxious to the real danger in the real life. It is closely related to feeling of fear, but realistic anxiety does not involve a specific object. In contrast, the object of fear is specific (Freud 34).

2.1.2.2 Neurotic Anxiety

This kind of anxiety is very intriguing anxiety for Freud and usually call this anxiety, ordinary and simple. Neurotic anxiety actually is a Latin word for nervous, so this is nervous anxiety. This anxiety arises from unconsciousness that the id will take control and do something that will make him punish. If you ever feel like you are going to lose control, your rationality, your temper even your mind, so it is the feeling of neurotic anxiety (Boeree 7).

2.1.2.3 Moral Anxiety

Moral anxiety arises from the fear of individual's thinking that is not proper with the moral code of society. This anxiety arises when people violate community standards value. Individual who has moral anxiety will have well-developed superego. It is just another word for feeling like shame and guilt if do not have it. This is what we feel when the threat not comes from the outside, the physical world. But from a social world connected to superego (7).

Moral anxiety and neurotic anxiety appear similar, but have a difference principle. The level of ego controls on moral anxiety of individuals are still thinking rationally about the problem, while on people's neurotic anxiety, it will control on a state of distress - sometimes panic so they cannot think clearly.

2.1.3 Defense Mechanisms

Sigmund Freud proposed a set of defense mechanisms. His work focuses on how the ego survives itself against internal events, in particular, impulses that are considered by ego as unacceptable. He emphasized sexual or aggressive

desires will violate the internal standard of the ego, as if that desire directed to someone's parents. In his view, efforts were made by himself to avoid recognizing his own sexual and aggressive desires systematically important in shaping personality.

Modern personality and social psychology have not been generally accepted the view that personality is based on efforts to disguise one's personality sexual and aggressive impulses. Nevertheless, the need for defense the mechanism remains strong enough.

The revisionist idea, proposed by Fenichel (1945), is that the defense mechanism is actually designed for that protect self-esteem. This reformulation is far more suitable current work in social psychology and personality rather than Freud's original work view. Someone can search long and hard through today's research journal without finding much evidence about how human behavior reflects trying to ward off sexual feelings and violence, but proof about efforts to protect abundant self-esteem (Baumeister Dale and Sommer 10).

The ego deal the demand of reality, but when the anxiety becomes overwhelming, the ego must be protect itself. It does by blocking the drive unconsciously and distorting them into agreeable and less threatening form. The methods are known as defense mechanisms (Boeree 7). Defense mechanism are system set that attempts to alter the reality to cope with the anxiety (Henry 187). Its function is to protect the ego and also deny and alter the reality which are too terrible and painful.

2.1.3.1 Denial

This defense mechanism includes the external reality of consciousness. If some situations are too difficult to deal with, the person refuses to experience them. As you can imagine, this is a primitive and dangerous defense - no one ignores reality and escapes for so long! It can operate by itself or, more generally, in combination with other, more refined mechanisms that support it (Boeree 7).

Individual refuses to except external events because it is too threatening; reducing anxiety by refusing to realize or recognize consciously the more unpleasant aspects of the external reality. For example, a child who is convicted of cancer but when he asks the parent, his parents will say if he is just experiencing ordinary pain that can heal just by taking medication. Parents will try to deny the reality that happened so as not to cause anxiety. He will lie to himself as a way to eliminate excessive fear.

2.1.3.2 Displacement

Displacement includes taking out our depression, frustration and impulses on objects or people that are less threatening, not the true subject. As Pressley and McCormick said that this defense mechanism is the expression of anger and anxiety towards other object or people, not to the real object (140).

For example, a student who gets a reprimand from a lecturer for not collecting assignments according to a specified time. This will make students try to divert attention to vent their anger and emotions in psychology either by playing or doing something they like.

2.1.3.3 Repression

It is the process in which ego is threatened by undesirable impulses. The ego moves to the unconscious in the attempt to prevent it from entering consciousness (Boerre 8). It acts to keep information out of consciousness. This defense mechanism also called as "motivated forgetting" by Anna Freud, means not being able to recall a threatening event or situation and person.

A young girl, guilty of her rather strong sexual desires, tends to forget her boyfriend's name, even when trying to introduce her to her relatives! Or an alcoholic cannot remember his suicide attempt, claiming that he must have "fainted." Or someone who almost drowned as a child, but could not remember the event even when people tried to remind him - but he did have fear of open water!

Note that, to be a real example of defense, he must function unconsciously. My brother was afraid of dogs when he was a child, but there was no defense involved: He was bitten by a dog, and really wanted to never repeat that experience! Usually, irrational fears that we call phobias originating from trauma suppression (8).

2.1.3.4 Fantasy

This defense mechanism is the tendency to retreat into fantasy in order to resolve inner and outer conflicts (Vaillant 1). Fantasy may be often experienced by individuals like achieving a goal, how to eliminate the burden of the mind and can avoid themselves against things that are less pleasant which ultimately causes

anxiety and frustration can occur. Individuals will often experience daydream about many things even sometimes the daydream is created more interesting than the reality that is happening

2.1.3.5 Reaction Formation

Reaction formation, which Anna Freud called "believing the opposite," changes an unacceptable impulse into its opposite. Someone will form a reaction when hiding feelings or motives that are actually happening while showing a different expression from the actual expression. Sigmund Freud assumed that the types of human nature and reactions were used by individuals who looked moral but were actually trying to counteract the immorality that was being experienced.

For example, a child, angry with his mother, might be too caring for him and rather dramatically shower him with affection. An abused child can run to abusing parents. Or someone who cannot accept homosexual impulses can claim to hate homosexuality. Perhaps the most common and clearest example of reaction formation is found in children between seven and eleven or more: Most boys will tell you in an uncertain way how disgusting girls are, and girls will tell you by the same power how dirty boys. However, adults who watch their interactions can easily find out what they really are! (Boerre 10.)

2.1.3.6 Projection

Projection involves a tendency to see your own desires that are not acceptable to others. In other words, the wish is still there, but it is not your wish anymore (9). This defense mechanism involves individuals who connect their own

thoughts, feelings, and motives with others. The most common thoughts projected to other minds are thoughts that will cause guilt such as fantasies or thoughts that are aggressive and sexual. For example, you might hate someone, but your superego tells you that such hatred is unacceptable. You can 'solve' problems by believing that they hate you (McLeod).

2.1.3.7 Aggression

Based on Hilgard, Aggression is feeling of anger closely related to tensions and anxieties which can lead to destruction and assault. It can be direct aggression and displaced aggression. Direct aggression is aggression which is expressed directly to someone or object which is a source of frustration. While displaced aggression is when someone experiences frustration but cannot express satisfaction to the source of the frustration because it is unclear. The attacks are sometimes directed at innocent people or looking for 'scapegoat' (Minderop 38).

2.2 Review of Related Studies

This part of chapter attempts to present some related researches to the novel *Woman at Point Zero*. It is done for clarifying the previous related researches to make a comparison to find differences within the same novel analysis. This research with the title *Firdaus defense mechanisms in Nawal El Saadawi Woman at Point Zero* has three related studies which have been done previously.

The first research was conducted by a student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, Ariviani Dewi with her thesis entitled *Standing Against*

Patriarchal Culture in El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero. This study examined El Saadawi's protest in the novel and its effects in the community. Therefore, the aim of the research is to reveal the revolt against patriarchal culture and get to know the response of the reader toward literary work.

Another research conducted by Nita Tifani Manulang, a student of Sanata Dharma University entitled *The Meaning of Three kinds of The Life Journeys as Experienced by Firdaus, The Major Character of Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero*. This research talks about the most possible meaning of the three life journeys of the main character by applying Murphy's theory of characterization.

The third research is a comparison research which was conducted by a student of Sumatra University, Iveraliza Jalaluddin entitled *Oppression of Women as Portrayed in "Celia, A Slave" and "Woman at Point Zero": A Comparative Literature*. This research focuses on how women in the novels are oppressed and find the similarities as well as the differences. Then the analysis found that Firdaus and Celia experienced an individual oppression. They struggle against the institutional oppression done by the prespective law, education and media of each country and also social oppression by the social norms and roles.

In brief, novel *Woman at Point Zero* has been studied by several researchers. Although the previous researches have the same novel, but they have different theory applied which then influence the finding and discussion in the analysis. Therefore, this research entitled *Firdaus Defense Mechanism in Nawal*

CHAPTER III

Firdaus anxieties and defense mechanisms

This chapter will discuss in accordance with the issues raised in this paper. This thesis will analyze and examine more detail about the main character's anxieties which is divided into three types; neurotic anxiety, realistic anxiety and moral anxiety. The second part will analyze about her defense mechanisms to overcome the anxieties; displacement, denial, repression, fantasy, reaction formation, projection and aggression.

3.1 Firdaus Anxiety

3.1.1 Firdaus realistic anxiety

This anxiety is rooted in reality. It is fear of the obvious danger in the outside world. It is the feeling of anxious to the real danger in the real life (Freud 34).

Heon Dung Park explains that “women suffer from psychological anxieties and fears about their sexuality and bodies. These psychological anxieties are instantly linked to memories of horror and pain, bloodshed and submission which the subject suffers” (Abdullah, Yahya, Kaur, Mani 102). Firdaus experienced this while she is circumcised by her mother.

“then she brought woman who was carrying a small knife or maybe a razor blade. They cut off a piece of flesh from between my thighs” (Saadawi 12).

Firdaus condemns her mother when she describes her experience. She describes her feelings after circumcision: “I cried all night. Next morning my

mother did not send me to the field” (12). She also speaks ostensibly when she narrates, “I stay awake at night weeping alone” (17). Thus, Firdaus experienced anxieties after circumcision.

The second realistic anxiety, Firdaus got when she met Bayoumi, the owner of a coffee shop. He seemed to be unlike other men. He let her stay at his flat, gave her food, and he never used to stare at her plate while she ate. In return, she also took good care of him.

Although he seemed to be a gentle man and took care of her. However, the abusive nature of Bayoumi soon revealed when one day Firdaus told him that she wants to make use of her secondary school certificate; she wants to do a job. She was also not willing to stay with him under the same roof because the society would speak badly about them. She was saying all this very calmly and in a low voice, when suddenly Firdaus wish to do a job infuriated Bayoumi. He said, “How dare you raise your voice when you’re speaking to me, you street walker, you low woman?” (Saadawi 52). Hence, for the first time Bayoumi slapped her tight. From then onwards, he locked her up in the room while he went outside. Bayoumi also physically abused and raped her. Even so, he continuously brought other men to do the same with her.

“who are you?’ I said.

‘Bayoumi,’ he answered,

I insisted, ‘you are not Bayoumi. Who are you?’

‘what difference does it make? Bayoumi and I are one.’ Then he asked.
Do you feel pleasure?’

‘what did you say?, I enquired.

‘do you feel pleasure?’ he repeated.

I was afraid to say I felt nothing so I closed my eyes once more and said, ‘Yes’” (Saadawi 53).

The statement above stated that Firdaus fears of the men. Because she was confined alone, she could not escape and asked anyone for help. When they asked about pleasure, Firdaus answered ‘yes’ because of her fear of them. And they do not merely did the rape persecution, the men like Bayoumi and his friends also violates Firdaus mental by yelling she is a bitch and also insulting her mother.

The last realistic anxiety experienced by Firdaus when a pimp threatened her. He wanted to take share of Firdaus’ earnings, to protect her and to marry her. The man’s name is Marzouk, a pimp. With all the courage Firdaus sought to find a way to protect herself from Marzouk’s threat.

Her anxiety was seen when she began asking for help from the police station but she was ignored and find out “that the law punishes women like” Firdaus, “but turns a blind eye to what men do” (Saadawi 101) because the police had better relation with Marzouk. He has many friends from all kinds of professions who will help him get out of all problems and release him if there is a sudden raid as described below;

“He had friends everywhere, in every profession, and on whom he spent his money generously. He has a doctor friend to whom he had recourse if one of his prostitutes became pregnant and needed an abortion, a friend in the police who protected him from raids, a friend in the courts who used his legal knowledge and position to keep him out of trouble and release

From the above statement, the source of Firdaus anxiety is her fear of her father. Fear is a combination of tension and anticipation of unpleasant event. Her father who has dominant role in the family, frequently violence Firdaus and left her hungry and ask for washed his feet.

Firdaus neurotic anxiety comes on the basis of her childhood or can be said her hatred towards her parent, where she herself actually does not want to be born in the midst of that family. She hated her father who always enslaved Firdaus every night, often not feeding her and letting her get cold. She also hated her mother who often sent her to the fields and hid food from the children to be eaten by her father.

“A sinking feeling went through my body. I neither liked the look of my nose, nor the shape of my mouth. I thought my father had died, yet here he was alive in the big, ugly, rounded nose. My mother, too, was dead, but continued to live in the form of this thin-lipped mouth. And here I was unchanged, the same Firdaus, but now clad in a dress, and with shoes on her feet (Saadawi 19-20)”.

From the statement above it is known how she hates her parents. She did not want to see her face that had the same nose as her father and hate her lips that resembled her mother. Because when she was childhood they had given a lot of sadness to her. The thing that sets it apart from them is just the makeup on her face and the clothes she is wearing. Firdaus does not even want to mirror again as seen from the statement below:

“I was filled a deep hatred for the mirror. From that moment I never looked into it again. Even when I stood in front of it, I was not seeing myself but only combing my hair, or wiping my face, or adjusting the

collar of my dress. Then I would pick up my satchel and race off to school (Saadawi 20)”.

The statement above stated that, Firdaus hatred is not limited to his father, but also to her mother. A mother who has taught her how to walk so that her neck stays upright upholds a heavy pot filled with water. Because it is so heavy, sometimes Firdaus neck gasped back, right or left. After filling the water, Firdaus sweeps the cattle cage, then makes flour mixture for bread. Firdaus who does not like to do all the homework, prefers to go to the fields because she can play with her friends.

“I cried all night. Next morning my mother did not send me to the fields. She usually made me carry a load of manure on my head and take it to the fields. I preferred to go to the fields rather than stay in our hut. There I could play with goats, climb over the water-wheel, and swim with the boys in the stream” (Saadawi 12).

The other neurotic anxieties Firdaus felt at the age of only eighteen, Firdaus was forced to marry an old man of sixty years of age. After completing her secondary school, as Firdaus aunt did not want to keep her again at their home, she suggested the idea of marrying her off to her sixty-year-old uncle, Sheikh Mahmoud. Firdaus uncle accepted the proposal because according to him, at such a young age of eighteen, it is not right to let Firdaus live without husband.

Her aunt’s logic for getting her married was that she is ugly due to the “big and ugly like a tin mug” nose she has (Saadawi 38). “Besides, she has inherited nothing, and has no income of her own. We will never find a better husband for her than Sheikh Mahmoud” who will give them a dowry of one or two hundred pounds (Saadawi 38). Moreover, “Girls of her age have already married years ago

and born children. An old but reliable man is surely better than a young man who treats her in a humiliating way, or beats her. You know the young men these days” (Saadawi 38). However, the irony is, the sixty-year-old man himself turned out to be ruthless. Thus at the age of only eighteen, child marriage was thrust upon Firdaus. As she did not want to marry an old man, she even escaped from her uncle’s place in order to get rid of this forced marriage.

“when night fell I had not yet found a place where I could spend the hours until morning. I felt something deep inside of me screaming with panic. I was now worn out with fatigue, my stomach racked with hunger. I rested my back against a wall and stood for a while looking around me” (Saadawi 43).

The above statement shows that Firdaus feeling of anxious because she will be married off. Later on, she returned and agreed to marry the old man. Firdaus remained like an obedient homemaker and satisfied her husband’s desires. However, when she dared to refuse to fulfill his cravings because of his foul smelling swell on the chin, her husband would thrash her. Her husband would hit her mercilessly even for trivial matters as Firdaus says, “he got into the habit of beating me whether he had a reason for it or not. On one occasion he hit me all over with his shoes. My face and body became swollen and bruised” (Saadawi 46).

Even so, just like her father, her husband would also keep an eye on what she ate and how much she ate. She remained like a prisoner in her husband’s house. This is because, being a female, it is Firdaus responsibility to please her husband, and it does not matter whether she wants to do so or not. Moreover, as

From the statement above we can find out how Firdaus faces the fact that a man she loves, does not love herself. Every woman has a soft heart and always wants someone to be by their side and always love themselves, they have a loving attitude, including Firdaus who from a small age received bad treatment. Then when she gets adulthood she wanted someone to love her. Such as when she met Ibrahim she was sure that Ibrahim also loved her, but instead he married another woman and Firdaus could only be quiet and feel disappointed because she was only a woman. Firdaus is aware that she is only woman who cannot do much. So, the neurotic anxiety of Firdaus comes on the basis of her hatred of Ibrahim, a revolutionary man and fear of men, who have more power than women.

“for after all, I’m only a lone woman. And one woman, no matter who she might be, cannot possibly know all the men who have their pictures published in the newspaper. Yes, no matter who she might be cannot get to know all men. But with each of the men I ever knew, I was always overcome by a strong desire to lift my arm high up over my head and bring my hand smashing down on his face. Yet because I was afraid I was never able to lift my hand. Fear made me see this movement as being something very difficult carry out” (Saadawi 111-112).

Besides the realistic anxiety, Firdaus also experience neurotic anxieties when she was faced with Marzouk, a pimp. From the statement below it can be seen that Firdaus no longer wants to be protected. Also on behalf of kindness of herself, Firdaus immediately rejects the desire of Marzouk. Things called Marzouk as protection are no longer acceptable to Firdaus. She prefers to live alone, without a pimp or employer. Moreover, it was said earlier that she was more hateful to the man who said he wanted to protect her. But in fact, he insults and beat her.

3.2 Firdaus Defense Mechanisms

3.2.1 Displacement

The first defense mechanism that Firdaus has to overcome her anxiety is displacement. It is done by switching to another target, not the actual target. This goal is usually safer when compared to the original goal as Firdaus did.

It was explained earlier that Firdaus had hated all the men in her life, ranging from his father, uncle, husband, Bayoumi, Ibrahim and Marzouk. However, because she is a woman, she could only silently see their treatment of her. Even when she was imprisoned, she only returned the hatred by spitting on the picture of the men in the newspaper.

“Each time I picked up a news paper and found the picture of a man who was one of them, I would spit on it. I knew I was only spitting on a piece of newspaper which I needed for covering the kitchen shelves. Nevertheless I spat, and then left the spit where it was to dry” (Saadawi 9).

From the above statement, it can be seen that even though Firdaus is satisfied by killing Marzouk, but her hatred is still in her heart. So that, she threw away her hatred by spitting on pictures of every man in the news paper. This was a form of displacement that Firdaus did in an indirect way against someone she hated, instead against it on a dead object.

Another displacement happened when Firdaus met Bayoumi. He invited Firdaus to his apartment, then Firdaus intended to stay temporarily until she found a job. After a few days, when she planned to find a job, Bayoumi banned her until there was a dispute. Firdaus was locked up and freed with the help from Bayoumi's neighbors. After that she escaped from Bayoumi's flat.

“I ran out of bayoumi’s house into the street. For the street had become the only safe place in which I could seek refuge, and into which I could escape with my whole being. As I ran, I looked back over my shoulder now and again to make sure that Bayoumi was not following me. And every time I found that his face was not visible anywhere, I leapt forwards as fast as I could run (Saadawi 54)”.

The above statement stated that Firdaus freed herself from the conflict with Marzouk. She ran out to the street where she could feel safer. Furthermore, Firdaus used displacement when she knew that she was contested by Sharifa and Fawzi. Therefore Firdaus escaped again.

“I tiptoed back to my room, put on the first dress I could lay my hands on, took my little bag, and hurried down the flights of stairs into the street” (Saadawi 65).

Firdaus escape as stated above shows that, she confronts her conflict with Sharifa and Fawzy by ran out to the street again. Firdaus escaped again but this time in a different way. After she became a prostitute who succeeded with the wealth she had, there was someone who said that she was not a respectable woman. Finally, Firdaus gave up on what he had, for the wealth and apartment she owned. Now with the diploma she has, she starts looking for a job that is considered honorable, so she will be a respectable woman.

“I still had my secondary school certificate, my certificate of merit, and sharp decisive mind determined to find respectable work. I still had two black eyes that looked people straight in the face and were ready to counter the shifty, leering glances thrown at me as I made my way through life. Every time there was an advertisement I applied for the job. I went to all the ministries, departments, and company offices where there might be a vacancy. And finally, by dint of these efforts, I at last found a job with one of the big industrial concerns” (Saadawi 79).

From the above statement above, it can be seen that Firdaus overcame her inner conflict preferring to be an employee than to defend herself as a prostitute to be a respectable woman.

After three years as employee, she realized that a prostitute had been seen as more honorable and valued higher than all the employees she knew. She felt sorry for the other girls who were so innocent to provide their bodies and physical endeavors every night to get food or to get good annual reports, or just to get assurance that they would not be treated arbitrarily and experienced discrimination.

However, if one of the directors invites her to commit obscenity, Firdaus will claim that her price is much higher than the other employees. Firdaus overcomes his moral anxiety by justifying herself even though she is aware of this but she likes to be in the office as an employee. Because then she can meet her female friend.

“but I liked my job despite everything. At work I met my women colleagues. I could talk to them and they could talk to me. My office was better than the room in which I lived. There was no queue outside the office toilets, and no body hurried me when I was inside. The grounds around the office building had a small garden in which I could sit for a while at the end of the day before going home. Sometimes night would fall and I would still be there. In no hurry to return to my dreary room, the dirty back streets and the foul smelling toilets (Saadawi 83)”.

3.2.2 Denial

Denial is an act of refusing to acknowledge the existence of a stimulus that is the cause of anxiety. If the individual rejects the reality, then he will assume if it does not exist or reject unpleasant experiences in order to protect himself.

In this case, Firdaus rejected the fact about her father, who was a poor farmer, could not read and write. This rejection is a form of hatred towards her father. She felt that he was not her father because he did not treat Firdaus well, because no one told her about the father.

Once upon a time Firdaus ventured to reach out her father's dishes but she got a hard hit on his back and fingers. Until then Firdaus asked herself "Who was I? Who was my father?" (Saadawi 15).

The statement above shows that Firdaus refused herself as the daughter of her father. She doubted herself. She also once asked her mother about her identity. However, she does not get a clear answer, instead of being hit up to a part of her body.

"sometimes I could not distinguish which one of them was my father. He resembled them so closely that it was difficult to tell. So one day I asked my mother about him. How was it that she had given birth to me without a father? First she beat me, then she brought woman who was carrying a small knife or maybe a razor blade. They cut off a piece of flesh from between my thighs (Saadawi 12)".

In order to clear her confusion she once asked her mother about it. This example described above shows how Firdaus was punished because she had made a comparison between her father and other men, although she had no intention of meaning it. Otherwise, still she was found guilty by her mother for asking about men. This is absolutely a misconception of her mother.

Firdaus also refused as a child from her father with the desire to follow her uncle. Her uncle is a student who is no longer young. He is much older than Firdaus. when she was still a little girl who had not good at reading or writing, her uncle will tell her holding a chalk and order her to write. Every time her uncle comes home for vacation, she would depend on her uncle *galabeya*, asking him to take her to Cairo. Firdaus wants to be like her uncle studying at Al Azhar. But her uncle explained that Al Azhar was only for men. So, Firdaus returned home with her head bowed with many questions on her head contemplating her fate and himself.

“Back in father’s house I stared at the mud walls like a stranger who has never entered it before. I looked around almost in surprise, as though I had not been born here, but had suddenly dropped from the skies, or emerged from somewhere deep down in the earth, to find myself in a place where I did not belong, in a home which was not mine, born from a father who was not my father, and from a mother who was not my mother. Was it my uncles’s talk of Cairo, and the people who lived there that had changed me? Was I really the daughter of my mother, or was my mother someone else? or I was born the daughter of my mother and later changed into someone else? Or had my mother been transformed into another woman who resembled her so closely that I could not tell the difference? (Saadawi 15)”.

Furthermore Firdaus uses denial defense mechanism on the basis of her hatred of her married uncle. Firdaus, who is now in the dormitory, sees mothers and fathers and other family visiting her friends to spend holidays in their homes. But Firdaus can only look them without the presence of her family who come to visit herself. Then Firdaus denied her frustration and her sense of humor by saying that she liked to be at school where she could play with her friends.

“I loved school. It was full of boys and girls. We played in the courtyard, gasping for breath as we ran from one end of it to the other, or sat splitting sunflower seeds between our teeth in rapid succession, or chewed gum with a loud smacking noise, or bought molass sugar sticks and dry carob, or drank liquorice and tamarind and sugar cane juice; in other words, we went for everything with a deliciously strong flavour” (Saadawi 20).

Firdaus also often spends her time in the library. Her interest in knowledge began to appear when her uncle came on vacation. Firdaus began to learn to read and she was also curious about the books brought by her uncle. Then by reading, Firdaus became aware of the Persians, Turks, Arabs and so on. Also about war, people, revolution, history of revolutionaries, literature, and the biography of the head of the government and their crimes.

“But I came to love school despite everything. There were new books, and new subjects, and girls of my age with whom I used to study. We talked to one another about our lives, exchanges secrets, and revealed our depths to one another. There was nobody to upset things for us except the superintendent who walked around the boarding house on tiptoe, spying on us day and night, listening to what we had to say” (Saadawi 24).

Furthermore, Firdaus uses denial on the basis of her hatred of her uncle who has arranged it with man over the age of 60 years. She hoped she would not marry Sheikh Mahmoud by escaping from her uncle's house. But that was something she had never experienced before. Therefore, she does not know where to go. Firdaus even felt frightened, as if she had been followed by a pair of eyes who were always watching her, as stated below;

“I walked down the street just as I had done many times before, but this time it felt different for I did not have any particular destination. In fact, I had no idea where my steps were leading me” (Saadawi 42).

Another denial is when finally Firdaus could not tolerate her husband torture any more, she escaped from her husband's home and went back to her uncle's house where her uncle and aunt had different opinions than Firdaus. As Firdaus was returned to her husband's place from her uncle's place, Sheikh Mahmoud became even more violent on her. She narrates, "One day he hit me with his heavy stick until the blood ran from my nose and ears" (Saadawi 47). This became so unbearable for her that she left her husband's home for the second time, but this time she did not return to her uncle's place anymore. Rather, she took to the streets where she then came across Bayoumi.

3.2.3 Repression

Repression is a way for someone to restrain the feelings that are being felt, nightmares, inner conflicts, financial problems and other problems that can cause anxiety. Someone will try to repress feelings by talking more about good news than bad news and always emphasizing positive versus negative things.

The conflict that exist in Firdaus herself is an inner conflict about her childhood. She preserves her ego by deliberately removing unwanted thoughts or memories of the past because it is not in accordance with her wishes. This was seen when she spoke with her friend, Wafeya. Firdaus did not say anything about her past. She only talks about the future and the hope she wants to achieve.

"I had a friend called Wafeya. Her bed was next to mine. I would move my bed close up to hers after the lights went out, and we would talk until midnight. She spoke of a cousin with whom she was in love, and who in turned love her, and I spoke of my hopes for the future. There was nothing in my past, or in my childhood, to talk about, and no love or anything of

the sort in the present. If I had something to say, therefore, it could only concern the future. For the future was still mine to paint in the colours I desired. Still mine to decide about freely, and change as I saw fit (Saadawi 24)”.

Furthermore, Firdaus removes unwanted thoughts or memories, that is the will of her uncle to marry Sheikh Mahmoud. She suppressed her anxiety by looking at and assessing the people around her as if she had just seen the world. She was surprised to see a rushed crowd along the road. They walked and others took buses and driving cars ignoring what happened around them. One of them wore clothes with a pale face, full of sadness and worry. There were those who looked behind the window of the car, looked wary and were suspicious. They have broad shoulders and round cheeks.

“I was amazed by the huge number of people filling up the streets anywhere, but even more amazed to see the way they moved around like blind creatures that could neither see themselves, nor anyone else. My amazement became even greater when I suddenly realized that I had become one of them. This realization filled me with a sensation that at first had something most pleasurable about it, but quickly changed like the wonderment of an infant that opens its eyes for the first time to perceive the world around, and yet the very next moment bursts out screaming as it feels itself projected into a new environment where it had never been before (Saadawi 42).

3.2.4 Fantasy

The next defense mechanism is fantasy. Fantasy means run away from reality by gaining pleasure or satisfaction that is imaginative or unreal. Just like Firdaus who imagined to be an engineer or doctor and so on when she does not accept that only the men who can take the role of rulers and other satisfaction jobs.

tells you that such hatred is unacceptable. You can 'solve' problems by believing that they hate you (McLeod).

Firdaus also uses projection on the basis of her hatred of her husband, Sheikh Mahmoud, whose chin has a large swollen cavity with a hole in the middle which sometimes emits colored droplets in the middle. One day, Sheikh Mahmoud hit Firdaus until she escaped to her uncle's house. However, her uncle told her to return to her husband's house by saying that it was indeed the husband's right to beat his wife and even a good wife is the one who would obey her husband's orders.

“on one occasion he hit me all over with his shoe. My face and body became swollen and bruised. So I left the house and went to my uncle. But my uncle told me that all husbands beat their wives, and my uncle's wife added that her husband often beat her. I said my uncle was a respected sheikh, well versed in the teachings of religion, and he, therefore, could not possibly be in the habit of beating his wife. She replied that it was precisely men well versed in their religion who beat their wives. The precepts of religion permitted such punishment. A virtuous woman was not supposed to complain about her husband. Her duty was perfect obedience (Saadawi 45)”.

The above statement shows how Firdaus wants to escape from her husband. He does not want to be on his side anymore. She tried to complain to her uncle but he said that it was something that men usually did. Her escape is a kind of projection defense mechanism where she has a conflict with her husband but bestows it to her uncle with a reason that her uncle will help her. After that she returned to her husband's house. But one day, Sheikh Mahmoud again hit Firdaus with his

heavy stick until blood out from her nose and ears. And finally she escaped from her husband's house.

The other projection defense mechanism Firdaus used when she became an employee of the company for three years back to being a prostitute because of several reasons. This decision is included as negative thing which is something that should not be done because prostitutes are considered not good by the community.

“The time had come for me to shed the last grain of virtue, the last drop of sanctity in my blood. Now I was aware of the reality, of the truth. Now I knew what I wanted. Now there was no room for illusions. A successful prostitute was better than a misled saint. All women are victims of deception. Men impose deception on women and punish them for being deceived, force them down to the lowest level and punish them for falling so low, bind them in marriage and then chastise them with menial service for life, or insults, or blows. Now I realized that the least deluded of all women was the prostitute. That marriage was the system built on the most cruel suffering for women” (Saadawi 94).

Firdaus is an employee but because she knows that the life of prostitution is better, she prefers to be a prostitute. In this case, her ego does not accept, then she produces a better reason. Her reason is because she is hurt by Ibrahim.

Firdaus decision returning to be a prostitute is a bad thing because prostitutes are a dishonorable job in the community. However, even though a prostitute, she donates her wealth to a foundation, so that she is considered better by society.

“One day, when I donated some money to a charitable association. The newspaper published picture of me and sang my praises as the model of a citizen with a sense of civic responsibility. And so from then on, whenever

act, her deeply rooted hatred towards men led her to this action. While killing him, she even wondered why she did not do the same with the other men who oppressed her (Saadawi 104). Then she realized that it was because of the fear that had been within her all the time.

After Firdaus murdered the pimp, she is still living her life as usual, as a prostitute even still takes man's offer. After Firdaus took her payment, because of her resentment towards the man, who thought that Firdaus felt pleasure then she tore the money apart. She admitted her crime in front of the man until he got scared and called the police. The police come, arrest her and Firdaus is sentenced to death.

“the feel of the notes under my fingers was the same as that of the first piastre ever held between them. The movement of my hands as I tore the many to pieces, tore off the veil, the last, remaining veil from before my eyes, to reveal the whole enigma which had puzzled me throughout, the true enigma of my life (Saadawi 107).

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

This chapter will show the conclusion of the analysis in previous chapter. In *Woman at Point Zero* novel, Firdaus as the main character has anxiety psychological problem. In this research, Firdaus gets a realistic anxiety which is painful emotional experience resulting from the external danger, such as fear of a real threat. She has external conflict with almost all characters in the story. Firdaus neurotic anxiety comes from her fear of her father because her father is a figure of feared in the family.

The neurotic anxiety of Firdaus comes from her fear to all men, ranging from father, uncle, husband, Bayoumi, Ibrahim and Marzouk that lead to hatred. The hidden hatred since she was small frustrated herself and felt insecure. However, her superego still encouraged Firdaus to feel moral anxiety, when Fawzy said that she is not a honorable woman. She was anxious about those words and she felt that it was true that a prostitute was not honorable person. So, Firdaus decides to be an employee.

In addition to overcome her anxiety, she used some defense mechanisms. The first defense mechanism is displacement where she used to take the street as a place where she can feel safer. Denial used when she refused the fact about her parents. The next defense mechanism is repression where she preserves her ego by deliberately removing unwanted thoughts or memories of the past because it is

not in accordance with her wishes. This was seen when she spoke with her friend, Wafeya. Firdaus did not say anything about her past, otherwise only talks about the future and the hope she wants to achieve.

Fantasy defense mechanism used when she does not accept that only the men who can take the role of rulers and other satisfaction jobs. Then Firdaus imagined become an engineer or doctor just like the men have to gain pleasure. The strongest defense mechanism is reaction formation in a way to fight the men around Firdaus life. If a man comes, Firdaus will pretend to answer “yes” she gets pleasure while she wants to raise his hand and shift to the face of the man.

She also used aggression defense mechanism because her emotions reached the point where she could no longer hiding, which she finally resisted in a brutal manner by killing Marzouk. She used projection to defend herself for the murder she did. Even though she was imprisoned and sentenced to death but she did not scare and feel guilty, even she concluded that she will only get freedom through her death.

