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THE UNCONSCIOUS AND PATRIARCHY: A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF NAWAL EL SAADAWI'S *GOD DIES BY THE NILE*

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ABSTRACT

He could see her firm rounded buttocks pressing up against the long *gabaleya* from behind,” writes Saadawi of the mayor in her novel, *God Dies by the Nile* (p. 18). The sentence astounds the reader and lets him or her question the extent of rot among male characters in Nawal El Saadawi's society. This and dozen other texts in Saadawi (1985a), *God Dies by the Nile* suggest that there lies more behind the male psyche than the class struggle as many scholars claim. Creative writers, according to Freud, write from a dream world. The so called inspiration, for Freud is the unconscious world that brings out the primordial instincts of the human mind, namely, death and sex instincts. Saadawi (1985a), *God Dies by the Nile* depicts Freudian principles in an amazing manner. This article employs the psychoanalytic criticism to analyse elements of the unconscious and show the relationship between psychic apparatus and patriarchy in Nawal Saadawi's *God Dies by the Nile*. The study will analyse the author's mind and infer her wishes and emotional characteristics.



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1.1 Statement of the Problem

Koseli Y. (2013) analyses the correlation between the heroine's psychological traumas with the author's biography. He notes that Sadawi (1994), *Memoirs of a Woman doctor*, begins with "the return of a female doctor to her childhood by focusing on the psychological trauma that she had experienced as a result of sexual discrimination" (p. 211). Koseli then compares the heroine's experiences with the life of Nawal El Saadawi who observed hardships and inequalities faced by rural women at Kafr Tahla as a young medical doctor. Koseli Y. (2013) concludes, in league with psychoanalytic principles, that a work of art reveals the creative writer's deepest spiritual happenings, personal concerns, fears, repressed aspirations and pains that he or she cannot overcome. The writer therefore 'displaces these repressed desires through writing' (Eagleton, 1990, p. 199). Besides attempting to unearth the writer's personal neuroses and unmet desires and wishes, psychoanalysis attempts to analyse character motivations in works of art. Many Literary writers have written to reveal the role of the unconscious on human behaviour but few can rival Nawal El Saadawi. The author employs her background training in psychiatry to apply concepts of psychoanalysis to motivations of male characters. This article employs Freudian concepts of psychoanalysis to analyze motives of male characters and investigate the relationship between their ID and patriarchy in *God Dies by the Nile*.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Psychoanalysis is derived from Freudian revolutionary psychology in which he developed the notion of the unconscious and others like displacement, fixation, condensation and manifest latent dream content. While expounding on Freudian concept of psychoanalysis, Tyson L. (2006) notes that human beings are driven by desires, fears, needs and conflicts of which they are unaware,' (p.12). Psychological criticism approaches a work of literature as the revelation of its author's mind. Tyson adds that literary works are linked to their author's mental and emotional characteristics (p. 34). Critics therefore explain how a literary work reflects the writer's consciousness and mental world and use what they know of the author's life to explain features of the work. Freud (1900) observes that there is a tight relationship between the creative action and the artist and the neuroses and the role of the unconscious in the artistic creation must be determined. In other words, there is a close relationship between the artist and dreaming and for that reason, the artist is sort of mentally ill.

Freud notes that the unconscious harbours forbidden wishes, desires- often sexual- that are in conflict society's moral standards. The individual represses these unconscious fantasies, which become displaced in dreams and other forms of fantasy. While elaborating on unconscious, Freud invented *psychic apparatus*. In short, psychoanalytic tenets are as follows:

Psychic apparatus: mental structures like ID- the wicked desires, EGO- balances the ID and SUPER EGO. The SUPER EGO is what craves perfection as demanded by society.

Dreams: The unconscious thoughts of the ID force their way to the consciousness through dreams.

Phallogocentric symbolism: since the highest proportion of the unconscious is filled with primordial instincts like sex, man unconsciously makes objects that look like sex organs to express the repressed desires, for example pestle and mortar, spoon and bowl.

Fixation: an obsessive interest of feeling about someone or something.

Displacement; unconscious replacement of something by a mere illusion.

2.0 Introduction

Set in sleepy hamlet, Kafr El Teen, *God Dies by the Nile* is the story of the struggle poor peasants and female characters against an unscrupulous, tyrannical Mayor. The Mayor is a shrewd politician who has infiltrated the people's religion to curve for himself a sort of personality cult of which consequence is abuse of peasant women. As a 'god' he directs sheikh Hamzawi, Haj Ismail and sycophantic, male, villagers to arrange his 'dates' with female candidates for abuse. Given his economic and political position, he goes about his life as a god- sovereign and omnipotent. No one can question his authority, violating and flouting maxims of decency. He is above all the villagers and sometimes tells them, "[t]o me you are all nothing!" (p. 15). Taking advantage of his libidinous natures, he ogles at girls and defiles them. Other male characters follow in his footsteps some forcing girls to marry them, beating women into submission and applying crude forms of circumcision to control their sexuality. The women have neither choice nor power, and those men who marry the girls the Mayor has defiled, like Elwau are murdered. Nonetheless, the female character, Zakeya, has had psychological problems resulting from the Mayor's tyranny and plucks up courage to kill him. Zakeya is embittered by the Mayor's conscription of her only son, Galal into the army, Mayor's arrest and detaining of her brother, Kafrawi, the Mayor's murder of Elwau, her niece's husband and frustration of her niece, Zainab.

The principal characters of this study are the Mayor. He is the main antagonist in the novel and is used to portray the evils of patriarchy, which is justified by religion. His lust for girls depicts him as man of roaring ID. Zakeya is the prime mover and protagonist of the novel. She is the major mouthpiece of Saadawi and harbours bitterness against the patriarchal system embodied in the Mayor. She has a psychological problem as a result of the oppression that stems from the patriarchal system. Sheikh Metwali is yet another character who in spite of his piety commits unspeakable abominations. He exhumes corpses after burial to have sex with thereby depicting the hollowness of patriarchal piety. Kafrawi is another important character in this study. He is Zakeya's brother whose two daughters, Zainab and Neffissa become victims of the Mayor's lust just because he has designs on them and does not want them to marry Zakeya's son, Galal. Sheikh Hamzawi is the cleric in Kafr El Teen who maintains a cordial relationship with the Mayor but finally falls out with him because he has a beautiful wife, Fatheya. The Mayor's henchmen assault him for adopting what they consider an outcast child that presumably invites Allah's wrath by drought. Elwau is yet another character in this study; he is the Kafrawi's son-in-law who flees with Neffisa. The mayor is so infuriated that he sends his henchmen to kill Elwau.

2.1 Psychoanalytic Critique of Saadawi's *God Dies by the Nile*

Saadawi (1985) *God Dies by the Nile* abides by Freudian psychoanalytic principles. It is possible that elements of the unconscious motivate her characters to commit unspeakable acts. Let us begin with Zakeya, the peasant woman who kills the Mayor in the story. The story begins when she is digging her farm: "[n]ow the hoe could be heard thudding out over the neighbouring field with a steady sound and it cut deep into the ground," (p. 3). The hoe and the farm are phallogocentric symbols; the hoe represents the penis and the farm, her female reproductive system. The cutting into the earth is unconscious reference to the sex act. The aggressive cutting is a displacement, shift of energies to digging due to her waning libido. The writer says, "[h]er body no longer stood upright," (p. 3). It could no longer respond to sexual excitement. Unconsciously, Zakeya manifests both the Eros and death instincts in this instance, which in Freudian terms they can either work separately or concurrently. The narrator says:

The blows of her hoe seemed to echo with an anger buried deep down as she lifted it high up in the air and swing it down with all her might into the soil. The blows

resounded with their regular sound like the muffled strokes of the clock. (Saadawi, 1985a, p. 3)

In Freudian terms, Zakeya's digging is sex instinct and the anger is the destructive instinct, which destroys relationships. The Eros enables her to form relationships with Kafrawi, her brother, Galal, her son and Zeinab, her niece. The attraction Zakeya has towards her son and husband is the same, "[s]he could see her son, Galal sleeping beside her. She tried to put her arm around him; he seemed to move out of reach. A hand caught hold of her. She looked around to find her husband fast asleep" (p. 88). Zakeya's dreams and visions exhibit her unconscious. In one dream, she sees a high iron gate coming towards her as if to crush her, and a buffalo also comes as if to walk over her but her mother comes to save her (p. 87). Other nights she dreams standing on a hill, her body falls from high into the river but she swims and reaches the river bank. Then she finds herself at the iron gate. Then she is lying on her mat with her husband Abdel Moneim and her son on the other. The husband hits her pregnant belly and proceeds to have sex with her (p. 88). In Freud's view, sleep is a moment of uproar and chaos when unconscious thoughts of the ID try to force their way into the conscious. They result from conflict and bring up memories the dreamer has forgotten. The dream reveals Zakeya's turbulent relationship with her husband. Whenever she gave birth to a daughter, her husband would beat her. "Every time a son of hers died, he would strike out at her blindly," (p. 89). The instance of the Iron Gate having legs and threatening to trample on her signifies the injustices the Mayor has meted out on her brother, Kafrawi and other members of her extended family. It also foreshadows her conflict with the Mayor later in the novel. The iron gate is a phallogocentric symbol of the Mayor's penis. Zakeya sees the Mayor's libido as the cause of her suffering for he arrested her son, Galal for planning to marry Zeinab.

The Mayor of Kafr El Teen is another character that exhibits Freudian psychic apparatus. He is a man with a roaring ID, which he does not conceal. His elder brother is more successful than he and so displaces it by obsession with sex. As a young boy, his mother said to him, "[y]our brother is better than you are," (p. 14). True to her word, the brother is an influential politician while the Mayor is just a village leader. The writer says, "[t]he moment he had seen his brother's picture in the newspaper, a feeling of inadequacy and depression had come over him... as a child, he would run to the bathroom and vomit all the food in the stomach," (p. 14). He is psychosomatic as a consequence of jealousy, a destructive instinct arising from this sibling rivalry. He tells Haj Ismail, "[c]ompared to me, you people are just nobodies," (p. 15). These words are meant for his brother but he cannot find him to tell him. Even his laughter is just escapism from the inner turmoil he suffers as a result of his brother's success in the family. Furthermore, the Mayor smiles unusually when a beautiful girl is mentioned. He tells Haj Ismail, "[t]he youngest is always tasty," (p. 12). Sex instincts blossom when he looks at Zeinab. Narrator says, "[h]e could see her firm rounded buttocks pressing up against the long *gabaleya* from behind," (p. 18). Sheikh Zahran says that she has a strange taste where women are concerned. 'Once he sets his eyes on a woman, he must have her; come what may', (p. 70). Nonetheless, his Eros works hand in hand with destructive instincts. Her love making with Zeinab is described as follows:

His hands were now sliding on her thighs to her belly as he tried to lift her garment higher. But it was wet and stuck to her flesh. He pulled on it so hard that it split with rending sound. And he tore the remaining fold from around her body. (Saadawi, p. 64)

The tearing of Zeinab's clothes is a violent act that points to his destructive instinct, even as he desires to have sex with her. The two instincts again manifest when he kills Elwau after he flees with Neffisa, a girl with whom he had made love. He is even jealous when

Hamzawi marries Fatheya, a beautiful girl. He schemes and arrests Galal for marrying Zeinab, a girl he had sex with. He has Hamzawi ruffled up for adopting a child claiming that he has brought evil on the land by adopting a bastard, Fatheya is killed while trying to save the baby: "Fatheya's clothes were torn away and her body shone white, and naked like that of a terrible mermaid in moonlit night," (145). The Eros instinct assists him to form relationships with his wife who he lusts after right in the house, he "ogles at her bare thigh beneath the skirt" (p. 51). He also forms relationships with Haj Ismail and Sheikh Hazran, who brings him the girls he lusts after.

There are several phallogocentric symbols associated with the Mayor: at the beginning the narrator says:

He loved Cairo. The lamps shining on the dark surface of the tarmac roads. The coloured lights of the river side casinos reflected in the flowing waters of the Nile. The night clubs thronged with eating and drinking as they sat around the tables, the women dancing, their bodies moving, their perfume and soft laughter going through him. (p. 12)

The casino and night club represent sex, which he is obsessed with. The women dancing and bodies moving is the act of sex to him. The lamps represent his penis and the flowing Nile waters, the female reproductive system. The image of the iron gate associated with him is his penis and roaring appetite for sex; the Mayor is fixated at the genitals.

Apart from the Mayor, sheikh Metwali is the most eccentric character in *God Dies by the Nile*, a man whose ID has trampled on the super ego in spite of his virtuous title. Like the Mayor, he is fixated at the genitals because he roams at night exhume corpses to screw. He would exhume corpses:

And if it was that of a female, he would crawl over it until his face was near the chin. If it was male, he turned it over on its face then crawled over it until the lower part of its belly pressed down on the buttocks from behind. (p. 74)

These sexual perversions are manifestation of the wicked instincts in his unconscious mind. His death instincts manifest in the way he seeks his bed among the dead. The writer says, "[h]e lived among the dead year by year," (p. 73). Apart from having sex with corpses, the Eros enables him to form relationship with women. Women who met him would ask for a blessing. He would stretch out his hand and squeeze any part of their body he wished as saliva flowed down his beard (72). The body language in this instance is very phallogocentric. Stretching out the hand represents his penile erection. The salivating mouth means that he imagines the vaginal orgasm. There is also displacement because he cannot have sex with these women by virtue of his status as sheikh, he opts to bless them but in reality, he fondles them to derive sexual pleasure.

Sheikh Hamzawi is the cleric in Kafr El Teen Mosque. He is a close ally to the Mayor but he arranges for his murder because Hamzawi has a beautiful wife, Fatheya. Although the Mayor claims that Hamzawi is punished for picking an abandoned baby, which is bad omen, the truth is that Fatheya is beautiful and the Mayor wants her to slake his lust for sex. Sheikh Hamzawi stands out as a man with roaring ID. He is quite aggressive towards the opposite sex in spite of his impotence. He admires Fatheya and compels her to marry him against her will. Surprisingly, he does not have the potency to break Fatheya's virginity. The traditionalist, Om Saber, is invited to break her virginity. The writer observes, "Fatheya felt the burning pain left by the woman's finger as it probed up between her thighs looking for blood," (41). The destructive instinct stands out when he advises Haj Ismail and Masoud to beat the bride, Fatheya, to force her into marrying him (p. 40). He also loses temper and hits the adopted child.

Eros is also manifested in ability to forge relationships with those around him for example Haj Ismail, the Mayor, and Fatheya. He teaches her how to pray and recite the Koran. The phallogocentric symbols associated with Sheikh Hamzawi are his dimmed eyesight that signifies infertility or inability to sire children (p. 45). He is in possession of a stick that he uses to tap on the ground as he walks around. It signifies his penis. There is displacement in his life as he has substituted his infertility with fanatic love for religion.

Kafrawi is Zakeya's son and father to Neffisa and Zeinab, beautiful girls who the mayor has designs on. Neffisa rejects the Mayor's advances and marries Elwau who is murdered by the Mayor out of jealousy. The Mayor demands for Zainab to serve him in his house but Kafrawi objects because he needs her for daily chores. Kafrawi is arrested, which infuriates Zakeya bitterly.

Kafrawi is portrayed as a man of roaring Id, for example, the act of suckling the buffalo is phallogocentric in itself. It resembles the act of sex and he goes further to have sex with the buffalo (p. 61). There are tendencies when the sex and death instincts work hand in hand. The narrator says, "[t]he penis slid up into the inner warmth and was lost in great stillness, like an eternity, like death," (p. 61). The eros enables Kafrawi to establish relationships with his daughter, Neffissa. They play around in a phallogocentric manner, "[h]er small hand would play with his whiskers. He opened his mouth, closed his lips over her smooth fingers.' This signifies sex instinct, '[b]ut one day he bit her fingers with his teeth," [p. 60]. Here is the sex instinct turning into destructive instinct.

Kafrawi's dreams depict the death and sex instincts. In his dream he sees the dead body of his mother lying on the ground, which turns into the body of Elwau, the dead son-in-law. The sex instinct in this dream comes in form of Freud's Electra complex, where children are sexually attracted to their mothers and change to learn their sex roles due to the fear for their fathers. The appearance of Elwau's corpse is manifestation of the destructive instinct. The main phallogocentric symbol associated with Sheikh Hamzawi is the female buffalo- Aziza. According to Sigmund Freud, Sexual perversion is as a result of fixation during early stages of development. Kafrawi is fixated on sex hence the bestiality in his personality.

Finally, Elwau is the young man who loves Neffisa, Kafrawi's daughter and flees away with her to the Mayor's annoyance. He is later pursued and killed by the Mayor's henchmen. On one hand, Elwau portrays sex instincts when he recalls how he was sodomised by his cousin, Yousef, "Yousef caught him in an iron grip holding him by the back of his neck, threw him to the ground face downwards and wrenched his *galabeya* up his buttocks. He felt the powerful, heavy body press down on him..." (p. 66). Eros instinct is apparent when he is able to form strong relationship with Neffisa. She rejects the Mayor, "[r]efuses to go the iron gate,' and flees with Elwau. His destructive instincts are evident when he walks around the village without greeting anybody. The narrator says, "[h]e was always silent, never spoke to anyone nor turned his head to look at a shop..." (p. 53).

2.2 PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITIQUE OF PATRIARCHY IN *GOD DIES BY THE NILE*

Nawal El Saadawi is a strident critic of male dominance and violation of women and girls world over. In her biographical novel, *Woman at Point Zero*, the heroine Firdaus grows up like any other girls with hopes and aspirations. Her father dies and leaves her in the hands of the uncle who sells her to sheikh Mahmoud. The rich sheikh abuses and makes her pay for every cent he spends on her. The suffering drives her out of marriage and Firdaus cohabits with Bayaumi who also starts abusing her. Firdaus meets the harlot, Sherifa Dine who introduces her to prostitution as a mode of resistance against male dominance. In the story, 'The Picture,' in *She has no Place in Paradise*, Saadawi attacks sexual immorality in men. The man of the house, Nirji's father uses Nabawiya, the house help as a sex butt. In her essay "Hidden face of Eve," Saadawi decries this practice, which is embraced in Egyptian

families where fathers and their sons use housemaids to meet their sexual urges. The same sexual violations recur in *God Dies by the Nile* where the Mayor hires Kafrawi's daughters, Neffissa and Zainab, and rapes them to gratify his sexual desires (p. 69). Many other unspeakable sexual abominations are committed by male characters in Saadawi's *God Dies by the Nile*: male characters falling in love and having sex with animals, having sex with fellow males and worse still, there are male characters such as sheikh Metwali who exhume corpses to have sex with. Iyabode (2014) observes that Saadawi portrays men in a very terrible light hence bringing the didactic value of literature in question (p. 123). One of her characters, Sherifa Dine in *Woman at Point Zero* says, "[m]en are dogs running around under various names."

Although Iyabode (2014) interrogates Saadawi's propositions, literature to a great extent is a mirror of society. As psychoanalytic critics observe, the writer's work has a close connection with his or her life experiences. Saadawi has observed these sexual abominations and calls for change among men in her society.

Shihada, I. (2007) argues that class is the major factor that precipitates patriarchy and violation of women in *God Dies by the Nile*. He notes that men take advantage of their influential positions to oppress and dominate women. On the contrary, scholar Mitchell, J. (1974) singles out Freudian psychic apparatus as one of the factors that contribute to patriarchy and violation of women world over. Mitchell observes, "[t]he Marxist revolutionary must link arms with Freudian Psychologist in order to effect women's full and final liberation," (p. 412). She suggests that any change in the status of women should be accompanied with the defeat of capitalism as well as change of men's psyche towards women. As much as wealth and influence contributes to patriarchy, Freudian psychic apparatus such as the Id broadly contributes to male domination and violation of women. Mitchell J. (1974) suggests that men have a stronger Id than women hence more vulnerable to sexual and violent indignities, which is quite evident in Saadawi's *God Dies by the Nile*. Brownmiller, S. (1975) notes, "[t]he secret of patriarchy lies in rape, which is the act of forcing a woman to have sex against her consent," (209).

Saadawi's characters apparently demonstrate the presence of a stronger ID in men than women which leads to violation of not just feminine gender but fellow men, animals and the dead. The Mayor's sexual lust is, according to Freud, engraved on his mind rather than the result of his high social class. As the story begins, Saadawi (1985) contrasts between the Mayor and his elder brother who is in a higher social class than he:

The Mayor, loved city life of Cairo, the lamps shining on the tarmac roads... night clubs... the women dancing... their bodies moving...their soft laughter going through him. At the time he was a college student. But unlike his elder brother, he hated lectures and lecture rooms... above all, he hated his elder brother discoursing about politics and political groupings. (P. 12)

The Mayor who does not work hard in college and is comparatively a failure in life exhibits higher levels of primitive instincts of sex (ID). The night clubs symbolize sex and in his thoughts are dominated by erotica: women dancing, their bodies moving and women's soft laughter appealing to him. His jealousy for his elder brother represents the destructive instincts characteristic of the ID. When he looks at the mirror, he sees his successful brother saying, "I succeed in everything I undertake, but you have been a failure all the time," (P. 14). The Mayor's low sense of achievement is displaced by contempt at men of his class and violation of women of his class. He tells Haj Ismail, "[c]ompared to me, you people are just nobodies,"(15). Apparently, low class men in Saadawi's novel exhibit higher levels of sex instincts and violation of women. While the Mayor is chatting with fellow villagers like Haj Ismail, Zeinab happens to pass by. Haj Ismail makes a sexy remark about Zeinab, "[t]he younger is always most tasty," (p. 18). The remark so excites

the Mayor and he looks at Zeinab, “[h]is eyes followed the tall lithe figure of Zeinab as she walked along...he could see her firm, rounded buttocks pressing up against the long *gabaleya* from behind,” (18). Whereas members of the high society such as the Mayor’s brother are interested in political power and other important things that affect the country, the poor men are only interested in primordial instincts of sex and destruction. Men with more education tend to have more knowledge about the rules that guide society- Freud’s super ego- thereby commit few or no sex scandals. Shihada’s proposition that class is the root cause is only partly correct otherwise how would we explain the tendency of men of low social cadres exhibiting high degrees of patriarchy and violation of women?

Sheikh Hamzawi belongs to the low social cadre but portrays extreme patriarchy and violence towards women. He tells Fatheya’s father that women should not make any decisions in the house including the choice for husband. “Beat her, my brother... do you know that girls and women are only convinced if they receive a good beating?” (40). The same primordial instincts are depicted in Abdel Momoneim, Zakeya’s husband. The narrator says that every time, Zakeya’s husband “struck out at her blindly with anything he could lay hands on” (89). He could also beat her whenever she gave birth to a daughter. It is not the high cadre in society that drives men to exhibit patriarchy rather it is the poverty and ignorance of the low society, which underscores Freudian savage instincts of sex and destruction. Zakeya has undergone so much pain that it projects through dreams. She experiences funny visions. In one of her dreams, she sees Om Saber leaning over her, push one thigh away, pull out the razorblade and proceed to cut her neck, (p. 88). Her bitter attitude towards female circumcision having denied her sexual pleasure is firmly locked in the unconscious, which expresses itself through dreams.

Although Om Saber is a woman, she exhibits tremendous levels of patriarchy. The female circumcision she carries out on thousands of women is the very pinnacle of male dominance. Whenever she appears in a woman’s house, she is only interested in destroying their private parts to weaken them in the presence of men. This owes to her obsession with the ID because the cutting is the destructive instinct and the private part symbolizes her sex instinct. A classical example is when Om Saber mechanically breaks Fatheya’s virginity to give Sheikh Hamzawi power over her. The narrator says, “ Fatheya felt the burning pain left by the woman’s finger as it probed up between her thighs looking for blood,” (41).

2.3. *God Dies by the Nile* and Saadawi’s Mind

In her biography, Saadawi (1999) entitled *A Daughter of Isis*; Nawal El Saadawi was born in 1931 at Kafr Tahia in Egypt. She was the second born child in a family of nine. She was circumcised at the age of six, an experience that she did not like at all. Her father insisted that his daughters had to learn and Saadawi pursued her studies to university level, graduating with bachelors in medicine and furthered in psychiatry. In her work experiences as a young doctor, Saadawi observed the hardships and inequalities faced by rural women and her heart went out for them. At one point, she attempted to protect her female patients from domestic violence and she was summoned back to Cairo. Saadawi’s marriage life is a complicated one: she married her first husband, Ahmed Elmi for two years only. She later married Sherif Hetata and divorced him after forty three years.

Let us now focus on the correlation between Saadawi’s life and her novel, *God Dies by the Nile*. We realize that there is similarity between the setting of the novel and her place of birth. Both are small villages, the novel is set in a small village called Kafr El Teen, and the author was born at Kafr Tahia. The village experiences in the novel reflect her real experiences in her native village.

The fact that she was circumcised at the age of six years is an important detail that affects her writing of *God Dies by the Nile*. Saadawi does not conceal her hatred for female genital mutilation. Om Saber is a caricature that clearly depicts her hate for the rite. Om Saber attracts love and hate simultaneously. Saadawi actually satirizes traditional surgeons

who have joined hands with men to institute patriarchy through female circumcision. Of Om Saber, she writes:

Going from house to house, helping women in labour, circumcising the girls, piercing holes in their ears. At weddings, she would paint the feet of girls and women with red henna...at night tear the virgin's haymen with her finger... she was busy solving the problems of girls and women: carrying out abortions with a stalk of *mouloukbeya*, throttling the newborn baby if necessary (Saadawi, 1985a, p. 92).

Om Saber's contribution, although introduced in the positive is summarily negative in the sense that she break's the girls' virginity to conceal the men's impotence, she circumcises girls to make them sexually powerless before men and worst of all carries out abortion, which is inconsistent to the teachings of the religion professed by the majority in Kafr El Teen. In her biography, Saadawi (1999), she reveals her spite for female circumcision when she says, "[t]his wound in my body has not only not recovered since my childhood but also left behind a deep mark in my soul," (p. 74).

Saadawi's experiences with female patients as a young doctor are depicted in her female characters. We are told in her biography that she sympathized with female victims of domestic violence; in the same vein, she sympathises with Zakeya, Fatheya and other female characters who suffer physical abuse by husbands in *God Dies by the Nile*. Of Zakeya, she writes, "[e]very time a son died her husband Abdel Moneim struck out at her blindly with anything her hands lay on," (Saadawi, 1985, p. 89). The reader is shocked at the cruelty of men in this society; Monein beats a wife with fresh wounds of delivery. Zakeya's suffering has caused her so much mental anguish that it projects through dreams: "[h]er husband kicked her belly...he began tearing her *galabeya* down the front till her body was exposed" (p. 88). Saadawi empathizes with her heroine, Zakeya so intensely that the reader feels the full weight of her burden, most of which is caused by male dominance. The domestic violence by her husband, death of her babies, arrest and detention of her brother, Kafrawi, oppression of her nieces (Neffissa and Zeinab) cause immeasurable pain that compel her to kill the mayor.

The writer's marriage life portrays her as a person who has had her issues with men and is resentful towards them. Saadawi's first marriage lasted for two years and she broke the second after forty three years in it. Her frustration in the marriage institution seems to have developed in her bitter feelings towards men. In *God Dies by the Nile*, male characters are portrayed as depraved and immoral people who practice rape, adultery, fornication, bestiality and homosexuality. They are also depicted as wife barterers, hypocrites and impotent. The worst characters, with a shameful love and sex life are Kafrawi and Shekh Metwali. Kafrawi falls in love with a female buffalo, Aziza and establishes a soul connection and communication with it. The writer says, "Kafrawi started to speak to the buffalo"... (p. 60). Then one day while suckling her, he loves it so much that he has sex with it:

He felt something fill up, become swollen and erect... he watched it get out... slowly it crept over the soft udder, breathing in the smell of female, lapping up the familiar wetness, slid up into the inner warmth and was lost in great stillness, like an eternity, like death. (p. 61)

More shocking is Sheikh Metwali who exhumes corpses at night and "if it was that of a female, he would crawl over it until his face was neat the chin. But if the body was male, he turned it over on its face," (p. 74). That a man can only live all his life having sex with corpses is an absurd overstatement by the writer that is aimed at attacking sexual abuse of women in the society.

Freud described creative writers as people who nurse inaccessible dreams and wishes and escape it by writing. What could Saadawi's wishes and dreams be? What are her emotional characteristics?

First, Saadawi wishes to kill all men who oppress women but lacks that ability to do because of existing laws. The wish is depicted in his character, Zakeya who is so angry with the mayor for presiding over a patriarchal system that violates women and girls. At the end of the story, she picks the hoe and strikes the Mayor dead.

Secondly, she dreams of a Marxist society without the religious ideology that encourages the oppression of women. Zakeya is the author herself leading women to overthrow religion and capitalism to free women and girls from oppression. In the character of Zakeya, the author suggests that religion does not solve women's problems; it magnifies them by compelling them to submit to the oppression of men. At Al Sayeda Mosque, Zainab is instructed to go to the mayor and will find a solution to her problem (p. 115). Zakeya's problem is said to be caused by rebellion to the patriarchal system. At personality level, Saadawi is depicted as bitter about men because they violate the rights of girls and women. She is also quite jealous men and feels they enjoy sex and power over women. Her description of sex scenes, even rape, comes out in a quite captivating way to signify her admiration for manhood. He describes the way the mayor bathes Zainab, dries her in a soft towel smelling jasmine and carries her to bed to have sex (p. 126). Her jealousy for manhood is also apparent when she looks at girls in a lustful male ogles. Of the mayor, she writes, "[h]e could see her firm, rounded buttocks pressing up against the long *gabaleya* from behind" (18). In Saadawi (1985b), *Müzekekîrât Tabîbe*, she confirms that while growing up, she was ashamed of her femininity. This shows that she has always wanted to be a man and hence envies men. She writes:

I got out of the bed, posed against the mirror and looked at the two small hills growing on my chest. I wish I could die just at that moment. I was totally unable to recognize this body which dragged me from shame to shame everyday and increased my weakness. What new changes waited for me in my body. (p. 4)

The jealousy compels her to exaggerate priorities of men, for instance, she seems to suggest that men will always enjoy sex even if they have it with corpses (Sheikh Metwali) and animals (Kafrawi). In real life, men enjoy sex with those women they love rather than corpses and animals.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *God Dies by the Nile* is a feminist novel in league with Freudian principles of psychology. It is also apparent that patriarchy is not as a result of men's access to wealth and status but rather inherent in the primordial instincts of the mind. For if access to the means of livelihood were the major predisposing factor then there would be no violation of women in the low cadres of society. Saadawi's characters in the low stratum of society exhibit high degrees of rape, domestic violence, bestiality, sodomy and murder. The Mayor, who appears to be of higher class is in fact a failure as opposed to his elder brother, a politician based in Cairo. The elder brother, though a man has no a single sex scandal to his name. Patriarchy, if related to class, is not commensurate to class but is a consequence of inherent instincts in the ID that break the banks if left unrefined by education and weak ego.

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