

DISMANTLING PROSTITUTION AS AN INSTITUTION IN NAWAL EL SAADAWI'S *WOMAN AT POINT ZERO*

Nenden Syahbana Mandakini

English Literature, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Surabaya State University
radnden@gmail.com

Dr. Ali Mustofa, M.Pd.

English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Surabaya State University
alimustofa_007@gmail.com

Abstrak

Potret negative kehidupan prostitusi dalam masyarakat tak terelakkan. Sebagian besar pandangan maupun komentar terkait prostitusi selalu berupa anggapan bahwa hal tersebut merupakan bentuk penyimpangan. Namun, dalam novel Nawal El Saadawi berjudul *Woman at Point Zero*, prostitusi didepikasikan secara berbeda. Prostitusi dalam novel ini tidak ditampilkan sebagai suatu penyimpangan, melainkan malah sebagai suatu institusi yang setara dengan institusi sosial, seperti institusi pernikahan ataupun institusi pekerjaan pada umumnya. Menurut teori relasi kekuasaan Foucault, prostitusi dipandang sebagai suatu bentuk penyimpangan karena wacana mengenai seksualitas dalam masyarakat diinstitusikan dalam pernikahan, sehingga aktifitas seksualitas diluar pernikahan dianggap sebagai suatu bentuk penyimpangan. Dengan demikian, depiksi prostitusi dalam novel yang berbeda dengan realita yang ada di masyarakat bisa jadi merupakan pesan tersembunyi, hasil pemikiran radikal El Saadawi; ataupun bisa jadi merupakan wacana tersembunyi dibalik depiksi prostitusi yang ada, diluar pemikiran El Saadawi. Oleh karena itu, dalam studi ini analisis didasarkan pada dua rumusan masalah: (1) bagaimana prostitusi didepikasikan dalam masyarakat dalam novel El Saadawi *Woman at Point Zero*? (2) bagaimana prostitusi dideskripsikan sebagai suatu institusi untuk perempuan dalam novel El Saadawi *Woman at Point Zero*? Analisis dilakukan dengan mengaplikasikan metode pembacaan dekonstruksi dan konsep relasi kekuasaan Foucault, termasuk konsepnya tentang wacana, seksualitas dan institusi, untuk membongkar wacana prostitusi sebagai suatu institusi dalam novel. Hasil dari studi ini menunjukkan bahwa depiksi prostitusi dalam masyarakat dalam novel digambarkan secara kontradiktif. Prostitusi dalam novel bertentangan dengan sistem hirarki wacana prostitusi yang ada dimasyarakat pada umumnya. Prostitusi dalam novel didepikasikan berposisi dengan dua institusi sosial, yaitu institusi pernikahan dan institusi pekerjaan. Secara hirarkis, oposisi biner yang membentuk wacana prostitusi dikonstruksikan: pernikahan <prostitusi dan pekerjaan sosial> <prostitusi. Namun, melalui sudut pandang yang dinarasikan Firdaus sebagai pemeran utama dalam novel, oposisi biner tersebut mengalami pembalikan karena adanya relasi kekuasaan individu yang saling mempengaruhi didalam institusi-institusi tersebut. Dengan demikian, terungkaplah bahwa prostitusi dapat menggantikan institusi pernikahan maupun institusi pekerjaan pada umumnya untuk para *fallen women*. Dengan kata lain, prostitusi dapat disebut sebagai institusi *fallen women* untuk mendapatkan kesuksesan, perlindungan, kehormatan, dan secara bersamaan mereka dapat memainkan perannya sebagai seorang subjek secara aktif.

Kata kunci: Prostitution, deconstruction, power relation, and institution

Abstract

The negative portrait of prostitution in society is beyond out of doubt. Most of society's views on prostitution always consider it as a deviant. However, In Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*, it is depicted differently. It is depicted to be equal to social institution, such as marriage, rather than a deviant. According to Foucauldian's concept of power relation, prostitution is seen under the term of deviant because the discourse of sexuality in society is institutionalized in marriage. Therefore, the depiction of prostitution in the novel that seems to be equal to social institution might be either another message of El Saadawi's radical thought or a hidden discourse behind the present depiction that is constructed out of El Saadawi's intention. Thus, this study is written by grounding on two questions: (1) how is prostitution depicted within society in El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*?, and (2) how is prostitution described as an institution for women in El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*? The analysis is conducted through applying the method of deconstruction reading and Foucauldian's concept of power relation, including discourse, institution, and sexuality to dismantle the discourse of prostitution as an institution in the

novel. The result of this study shows that the depiction of the prostitution within society in the novel is put upside down. It is in the opposite of the hierarchical system of prostitution in the discourse of society in general. It is depicted in opposition to the two social institutions, marriage and social work. Hierarchically, the binary opposition is constructed to be marriage > < prostitution and social work > < prostitution. However, through Firdaus' narrative point of view as the main character, this binary opposition is reversed because of the interplay of power relation inside those institutions. Thus, prostitution turns out to be replacing marriage and social work as an institution of fallen women in order to get success, protection, respect, while at the same time they actively play the role as subjects.

Key words: Prostitution, deconstruction, power relation, and institution.

INTRODUCTION

Prostitution in general is supposed to be a great social evil. This case is shown through the typical reaction of rejection in the issue of legalizing or decriminalizing prostitution. This rejection is gone upon the traditional view that prostitution is a shameful act which disapprove with the social construction of sex relation and institutions like marriage and family. However, prostitution becomes a job dominated by women as the result of the existence of willing men to pay a high fee to them for giving sex service than doing a worthy job in the same place with men (Levitt, 2010: 27). Though indeed the women there are oppressed and exploited, that is according to anti-prostitution feminist ([# Arguments _ against _ prostitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_views_on_prostitution)) in perceiving the condition that has happened to women who chooses prostitution as their job. It can be said that prostitution is the most tremendous representative of what is bad, but desirable almost in all women.

The negative portrait of prostitution in society is beyond out of doubt. Most of society's views on prostitution always considers it as a deviant. It is always related to violation of morality since the sexual service transaction is supposed to be such desecration of the sacredness of sexual activity in which it should be done in marriage. In this case, the view on prostitution is a discourse. According to Foucault (in Truong, 2000: 123), discourse consist of a series of idea and argument that is constructed in binary opposition and directly related to technical controlling of society. The discourse of the truth is a dominant discourse and always related to institution of control and discipline, whereas another discourse is under the domination of the discourse of the truth which it is a historical knowledge that is disguised.

Discourse is existed through a multiplication of discursive elements which come in sight, and then creates relations of power. Power and discourse link to each other as two sides from the same proses. A power relation is only present with the correlative existence of a knowledge field (discourses), and there is no discourse

which is not simultaneously socialized or underlie the power relations (Foucault as cited in Haryatmoko, 2010: 4).

The discourse of prostitution in society seems to be a discourse that is dominated by the discourse of legal sexual activity. In this case, marriage is presented to be the institution of controlling sexuality and the discourse of sexuality. This is reinforced with the religion's precepts that forbid sexual activity out of marriage. The religion precept is a form of the discourse of the truth. Therefore, the sexual activity is institutionalized in marriage and dominates other discourse of sexuality. Besides, the discourse of marriage as an institution of sexuality is not only centered to the normal or deviant, but also to the social relation and of course underlies the power relations hierarchically. Then, how about prostitution?

Prostitution is out of the discourse of sexuality, which is institutionalized in marriage. So whenever a woman is involved in sexual activity out of the right institution, that is marriage, she is supposed to do deviation and blamable. She will not get a place in society and is supposed to be the scum of the earth, whereas a woman in marriage get a place in society as she is supposed to be a respected woman. But actually, prostitution should be understood differently since it is present different situation of sexual activity. Prostitution should be constructed in different discourse of prostitution that has been constructed under the discourse of sexuality. Prostitution should be comprehended to be an institution as equal as marriage or other social institutions rather than a deviant. This is what the novel of Nawal El Saadawi, *Woman at Point Zero* seems to be revealed.

In the novel which originally entitled, *Emra'anda noktata el sifr*, the main woman character, Firdaus, narrates her life as a woman, a wife, a social worker and a prostitute, to El Saadawi that places herself as the narrator of the story who mentions herself as a physician in research of women prison. Through the narration of Firdaus, there can be seen how the society where she

belongs, views on woman, marriage, social work, and also prostitution.

The views of society on prostitution in this novel are not far from the discourse of prostitution in general, which is structured in opposition to the social institutions. Even so, something "awkward" happens within it. Firdaus narrates that she is as a woman, having a good life in prostitution in which she grows from under the term of fallen women to be a successful women who are protected, respected and not a merely sexual object for men. These "awkward" matter, are for sure inviting a big question mark. How can a prostitute have a good life in prostitution? How can a prostitute become successful, protected, respected, even not merely a sexual object for men?

Drawing back to understand prostitution to be equal to marriage or other social institutions, the awkward matters in the novel seem to be aimed at this point. Talking about better living in which institution, tends to the better social relation that is walked out. So it is with the better living of Firdaus in prostitution, it is because her better social relation. As a woman of patriarchal society like Egypt, she is born to be under men's domination. The power relation in this case is supposed to go hierarchically, 'up-bottom'. But, power relation as it is said by Foucault, should not always be that way since power is like a fluid.

Nevertheless, the discourse of patriarchal society seems to tie women to have power relation hierarchically in every social institution that is under the domination of men. In this case, prostitution makes possible for women to reverse this situation since it appears out of the existed construction. So there is no rule that tying woman up to be dominated by men. Conversely, women can build the rule which benefits them in power relation or resist the power over them in their relation. This indicates the form of institution within prostitution, which consist of power relation and controlling. This is not implicitly said in the novel. This might be hidden under the depiction of prostitution in the novel.

Thus, doing further reading on prostitution in *Woman at Point Zero* is needed to do. The untold thing or hidden under the depiction of prostitution in the novel might be elapsed even looked down. However, according to Derrida, language is inherently unreliable (Bertens, 2001: 124) so that the hidden thing can be the main message. Therefore, the deconstruction reading is an exact method in dismantling the hidden thing in the depiction of prostitution in the novel.

Moreover, the scalpel of Foucauldian's conception of power, including discourse, institution and sexuality are used to complete the attempt of dismantling the depiction of prostitution in the novel. This conception is

useful since social relation in prostitution would never be a part of power relation. Nevertheless, prostitution never goes to be an institution in society, whereas the perception of it is grounded through indirect comparison with social institution such as marriage. Thereby, this thesis is written with potential title "Dismantling Prostitution as an Institution in Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Zero Point*."

In accordance of background study above, it can be simplify to discuss among two problems that emerge as significant concern toward this novel.

1. How is prostitution depicted within society in Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*?
2. How is prostitution described as an institution for women in Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*?

RESEARCH METHOD

This thesis is regarded as a descriptive-qualitative study and use a library research. Thus, the data will not be in number. The main Data of the study is taken from *Woman at Point Zero*, a novel by Nawal El Saadawi, which is originally published in Arabic 1975 but rejected by Egypt Publisher so that the first edition was published in Lebanon in 1985. However, In English it was published by Zed Books Ltd in 1983 and for this study is used the edition on 1st September 2007. The data which is taken involves the narrations, plots, quotations, phrases, dialogues or monologues that reveal the speech, thought, action, and attitude of the main character, Firdaus and other characters in relation to prostitution, especially the binary opposition which constructed indirectly in the development of the story.

Since the deconstruction is decided to be the approach in this study, therefore, the deconstruction technique in analyzing data is applied. The deconstructionist actually does deconstruction approach not for deconstructing text, but it is used to show how the text has deconstructed itself. It can be said that what we will do in analyzing is playing with the text itself. The steps of deconstruction application according to Gasce (Norris, 2006: 13), are the following:

1. Identifying the hierarchy's opposition in the text in which it is usually seen as a systematically privileged term, and which one is not
2. Dismantling the binary opposition, that is in a way of reversing the binary opposition – the marginal becomes dominant: *women/men*, and changes the perspectives
3. Introducing the new idea which actually could not be included in the old opposition category.

The steps above obviously show that the deconstruction reading method is different from the ordinary reading. The ordinary reading is always looking for the meaning that serves on the text, whereas the deconstruction reading makes a serious effort to prove that meaning is not just one.

ANALYSIS

Drawing from the structuralism of Saussure which privileges written and lowers discourse (Derrida in *Of Grammatology*, 1967), the views that exist in society also reflects the same thing, that is the binary structure that is opposed to each other and one of it is privileged or better than the other. In line to the binary opposition that structure the views of the society, according to Foucault those views are a discourse in which it is not just for the sake of views that consist of statements which is simply made, but also including some rules that able to make us to make those statements to be a few. Thereby, the views of society on something is a discourse, and so it is to the views of society on prostitution is also a discourse. The discourse of prostitution is for sure structure in binary opposition as follows:

Normal	Deviant
Protection	Exploitation
Success	Poor
Respected	Unrespectable
Subject	Object

If we read these binary oppositions based on the spectacles of structuralist, what is on the right is the fuse which its hierarchy is in the top, it is the good one. And what is on the left is the fuse which its hierarchy is at the bottom, it is the bad one. The discourse of prostitution that exists in the society, is drawn in the left fuse, in which prostitution is supposed as deviant since it is well related to promiscuities; exploitation since it is well related to benefited woman sexually to gain money; unrespectable since it's set at defiance; the place of poor women; and is no more than the domination of men over women to be their sexual object that can be bought and sold.

And the right fuse is tend to be the thing that opposing the prostitution, in this case tends to be marriage institution in which it is something normal because the sexual activity have to done legally under this institution; so that the women get protection under the man that has legal duty to be the protector of woman; the women get the position of respected person in the society; are valued as success women who fulfil their duty as women in nurturing and working domestic work

including give sexual and domestic service to his husband; and are not only sexual objects but also subjects that actively feels and plays role as the subjects because the emotional bound between the women and the men in marriage places both side as an active subject.

This discourse of prostitution that is structured in the binary opposition, becomes the common rule that bound society to do sex activity. They are tight to the rule of not doing sex out of marriage, including in prostitution. Society is controlled to do sex 'normally' in marriage and it has been such a standard that has to be fulfilled. However, in *Woman at Point Zero*, prostitution is represented upside down of the binary opposition's hierarchy. Prostitution is positioned in the left fuse, in opposition to the discourse that has been ruled in society.

In the analysis of the depiction of prostitution within the society of the novel results two depiction of prostitution of two characters. In character Sharifa who appears fully as a prostitute character in the novel, it finds that prostitution to something normal in the society rather than deviant, place for women to be success rather than under the term fallen or poor, and the woman there is not only the sexual object for men, but also the subject who takes an interest through her position as the object. These depictions are obviously the radical reversal of the hierarchal system of the binary opposition that has been constructed about prostitution in the society.

Then, in character Firdaus who appears as the main character who is implicatly as the junior of Sharifa and experience many positions as a woman out of prostitution, give a depiction of prostitution is in unstable condition. The unstable condition within the meaning of prostitution represented in Firdaus' is that the hierarchal system of prostitution is not radically reversed like what happened in Sharifa's. Prostitution initially is represented as the way of Firdaus to get protection and then turns to be exploited when she is under the control of Sharifa. Then prostitution for her turns back again to be the protection place after she does it by herself (not under the control of anyone). Then she finds it is not respectable so that she leaves it. But then she backs again when she feels she is more respected in it and at last, she can show her subjectivity like Sharifa and even goes further to get more success and protection. She even easily gets the position in the society as honorable woman in which it seems to be impossible to be true. But it happens in the novel.

This obviously shows that the deconstruction have been constructed in the discourse of prostitution in the novel. If it does, it means that the right fuse is represented marriage. So, is it right that marriage is related to deviant, exploitation, unrespectable, poor and objection? So how

about the depiction of prostitution of Firdaus which its depictions seem to be unstable?

Therefore, this radical reversal hierarchy needs to be dismantled further. Starting from analyzing the binary opposition of prostitution that has been existed in the society. We have recognized marriage >< prostitution, which it is seen through the side of sexuality realization. In the novel, it is one of binary opposition that appears and is well marked with the statement of policemen when he asks Firdaus to service him, "You are a prostitute, and it's my duty to arrest you, and others of your kind. To clean up the country, and protect respectable families from the likes of you..." (El Saadawi, 2007: 67). From this quotation it can be seen that the society in the novel makes such contrast view of marriage and prostitution, in which marriage is a standard institution of "protection" for woman as a "subject" in society, whereas prostitution is in the opposite as such deviant that is destructive therefore the doer should be "arrest" in order to "clean up the country."

Because of their condition, some men, including the police, instead of arrest the prostitute, they are rather to benefit them to satisfy their own sexual desire. They exploit prostitute by tantalizing them protection so that they are not arrested, as it is said by the policeman in the continue of his statement in quotation above, "But I don't want to use force. Perhaps we can agree quietly without a fuss..." And then he takes Firdaus in force to his house and takes a sexual interest on her. This shows that prostitution is a place of "exploitation". They seem to be merely a "sexual" object for men. Thereby, the opposition of marriage >< prostitution is becoming more real by the opposition of protection >< exploitation and subject><object.

The binary opposition in the discourse of prostitution within society is also constructed through the side of occupation form, that is social work >< prostitution. This binary opposition goes more obvious supported by the binary opposition of intelligence >< sex, educated >< uneducated, respectable >< unrespectable.

The intelligence >< sex is the commodity that is demanded in doing the occupation. In social work demands one's intelligence as it is represented through the requirement of school or study certificates while in prostitution demands sex as the service that should be provided so that the prostitutes makes their appearance to be as attractive as possible. Then educated >< uneducated represents the person that involving in that occupation. In social work, only educated person that can get the job and do the job, while in prostitution, there is no requirement to be educated or not because servicing sex is no need education in doing it and uneducated person is usually involved in prostitution. And the last, respectable and

unrespectable refer to the reputation that adhere to the person inside it. Because they who in social work use their intelligence and educated, are for sure supposed to be a respectable person. And for them who use their sex and uneducated, are of course said to be unrespectable person, such as they who are in prostitution.

This binary opposition is also represented in the depiction of prostitution in the novel in the event when Firdaus is said to be unrespectable by her customer named Di'aa. Di'aa wants to make some talks before he gets sexual service from Firdaus and she answers that he has to pay as much as the time that she spends with him although it is out of sexual service. Then, he makes an analogy between prostitution that Firdaus does at her job and the medical profession as he says "you make me feel I'm in clinic. Why don't you hang up the price list in the waiting room? Do you also have emergency visits?" (El Saadawi, 2007: 76). Firdaus catches such irony, tone in this sentence so that she asks "are they similar to one another?" And he answers yes "except that a doctor while carrying out his duty feels he's worthy of respect." And when Firdaus asks him what about her profession in prostitution, he answers "you are not respectable." Through this event can be recognize that the medical profession as social work is in opposition to the prostitution work. And in the next event is represented about the social work institution in which Firdaus seeks for the thing that she does not have in her work in prostitution.

Thereby, analyzing more about the depiction of social institutions which are in opposition to prostitution in the novel, in this matter are marriage and social work, and should be done before describing prostitution as an institution in the novel. Through describing the depiction of opposition, the hierarchical system of the binary opposition that constructs the depiction of prostitution in the novel can be comprehended completely. In each institution, the depiction is analyzed through the relation between individual inside it, especially the relation between men and women which imply the woman's position in those institutions. The scalpel of the Foucauldian concept of power relation is used to reveal it.

Depicting Marriage Institution as the Opposition of Prostitution

Marriage is known as the unity of two individuals which is supposed socially legitimate. Basically, marriage is an institution of legitimizing the private relation in the matter of sexual activity (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriage>). In *Woman at Point Zero* which sits on Egypt society, the marriage is an important matter to do since the Egyptian

tradition is tied to Islamic culture that compel every individual has to marry as the act of devotion (http://www.islamswomen.com/marriage/intro_to_marriage.php). Moreover, for women, getting married is something that should be done since through this institution, they will get protection from their husbands as the substitute of their father's. As it is mentioned in the event when the wife of Firdaus' uncle gives advice to arrange a marriage for Firdaus, "Firdaus has grown your holiness, and must be married. It is risky for her to continue without a husband. She is a good girl, but the world is full of bastards." (El Saadawi, 2007: 37).

Marriage in the novel is represented through the relation among Firdaus' father with Firdaus' mother, Firdaus' uncle with his wife, Firdaus with Sheikh Mahmoud, and the last is Ibrahim with the daughter of company chairman. Starting from the marriage of Firdaus' father with Firdaus' mother. Firdaus' father is like other men who plays the role as breadwinner and acts upon the Islamic tradition as an Imam in his marriage. So it is with Firdaus' mother, playing a role like women in marriage commonly. She takes care on domestic work, nurturing and serving his husband.

As Firdaus' father is imam in his marriage with Firdaus' mother, he holds power over her. Since he has power over her, he uses it to treat his wife like a slave that fulfill his demand. This is shown through the narrative of Firdaus "My father, a poor peasant farmer... knew very little things in life... [one of his knowledge is] how to beat his wife and make her bite the dust each night". (El Saadawi, 2007: 10). He would beat his wife if she makes mistakes and the body of his wife is such property for him to be enjoyed every night. Firdaus' mother does not avoid it and bow over his husband's wishes. It is a duty for her to fulfil the demand of his husband as the tradition in her society which related to the Islamic tradition that is obedience, the first duty of wife is she should be obedient as she can to her husband. As it is said by the Prophet that quoted by Musnad Ahmad, "the Prophet was asked: 'which women are the best?' he answered: "the one who pleases him when he looks at her, obeys him when he asks something of her, and is no disobedient in herself or her money in what he hates." (<http://en.islamtoday.net/node/570>).

Therefore, Firdaus' mother tends to prioritize making the best of servicing his husband rather than nurturing their children. When winter comes, she would warm his husband rather than her snuggling children and In the summer she would place herself at the feet of his husband to wash it with cold water (El

Saadawi, 2007: 16). Moreover, she would always serve dinner for his husband, although she and their children might not have something to eat (El Saadawi, 2007: 18). It is a necessity for her as a wife. She fulfills everything that his husband demand without doing some resistance, although his husband might beat her for something that is out of her fault. Like his husband does in front of little Firdaus, "When the child that died was a boy, he would beat my mother..." (El Saadawi, 2007: 17). Firdaus' mother subjugates herself thoroughly to his husband. She seems to be not having another choice other than does it. This happens because the society and religion demand it, totally obedience on her and it becomes her awareness of herself.

Next is the marriage of Firdaus' uncle. He marries the daughter of his teacher at al Azhar. In his marriage, it is for sure for him to be the bread winner and an Imam. However, as an Imam he does not act like Firdaus' father that enslaves his wife. His wife, of course, also does her duty as what Firdaus' mother does. She is taking care of domestic work, nurturing and also serving his husband with obedience. But she is treated well by his husband, Firdaus' uncle. As Firdaus narrates, "She never washed my uncle's feet, and he never beat her, or spoke to her in a loud voice." (El Saadawi, 2007: 22). This shows that the wife of Firdaus uncle is not treated as a slave just like Firdaus' mother. His husband as an Imam does not exercise his power over herself to treat her like a slave. He never beats her if she makes mistakes or without reason beats her or even speak to her in a loud voice. He also does not place her on his foot only for washes it with cold water like Firdaus' mother does for her husband. In this case, he treats his wife carefully and seems to be full of respect.

Firdaus' uncle does his wife like that, careful and full of respect might because of the status of his wife which is the daughter of his teacher. Besides, her wife is "... a higher social class than his" (El Saadawi, 2007: 23). Therefore, he treats her cautiously and also tries to please her by really well to her father or one of her relatives who come to their house as told in the same page. Firdaus' uncle becomes different man to Firdaus' father because he is on position where he cannot treat woman at his wish since she is in higher status. The social class in Egypt society indeed need to be brought into play. Thereby, the woman with higher social class status cannot be treated lightly by his husband who is lower social class status than her. Thus, the wife of Firdaus' uncle can have a better live as a woman in marriage

than Firdaus mother since her social status can make a man to be submissive.

Then, the marriage which is experienced by Firdaus, is the gift off fingerbread. Her marriage is an arranged marriage that has been done by her uncle and his wife. They arrange Firdaus' marriage with Sheikh Mahmoud, the uncle of the wife of Firdaus' uncle. With the "Sheikh" predicate, he is supposed to be a "virtuous man" that refers to well-educated man or prominent Islamic scholar (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheikh>), so that he is reliable to give well protection to the woman whom he is married. Therefore the wife of Firdaus' uncle expects that, "If he marries Firdaus she will have a good life with him..." (El Saadawi, 2007: 37). "A good life" is the general social expectation to the woman who marry a man from the upper social class. The "Sheikh" predicate that is adhered on Sheikh Mahmoud is not only indicating himself as "Virtuous man", but also his social status as upper class. So that if he marries Firdaus, her social status will be raised up and respected in society because of his husband.

Therefore, although this man is so many days old to Firdaus, but the wife of Firdaus' uncle is insistent to marry them under the cloak of the necessity of Firdaus to marry. In Egyptian society with Islamic tradition, marriage for women actually is not only a must to get patronage, but also when she is "unable to feed or clothes herself unless she gets married" (as stated by *Mawaahib al-Jaleel* in <http://islamqa.info/en/1665>). In this case, the wife of Firdaus' uncle uses this proposition in order to make his husband, Firdaus' uncle supports her idea of this arrange marriage, as she says, "... This is her best chance to get married... she has inherited nothing, and has no income of her own..." (El Saadawi, 2007: 38). In addition, still on the same page, she also promotes the dowry that they will get by this arrange marriage. Thereby, the Firdaus' uncle agrees and then forces Firdaus to comply with this arrangement.

Firdaus tries to reject that marriage by skinning out of her uncle's house into the street. But she finds feeling insecure in the street so that she comes back home and defenselessly approve the marriage with Sheikh Mahmoud. Initially, she feels live better in the house of his husband in which she can sleep in "...a comfortable bed instead of the wooden couch" (El Saadawi, 2007: 44) which she usually sleep in her uncle's house. However, she has to play her role just like another wife in common, taking care of the house (doing domestic work) and serving his husband. This role seems to torture her.

But no sooner did I stretch out my body on it to rest from the fatigue of cooking, and washing and cleaning the large house with its rooms full of furniture, than Sheikh Mahmoud would appear by my side. He was already over sixty, whereas I had not yet turned nineteen. On his chin, below the lip, was a large swelling, with a hole in the middle... When the hole dried up, I let him kiss me... but on days when it was not dry I would turn my lips and face away to avoid the odor of dead dogs which emanated from it. (El Saadawi, 2007: 45).

It can be seen that the coercion that Firdaus feels about her role as wife. She is forced to do the domestic work that is hard because she takes care alone "the large house with its rooms full of furniture" which it should be a helper to help her doing it. It of course, exceedingly exhausts her. But before she can take a rest in the comfortable bed, she still has to serve his husband sexually which she feels disgusted at him instead of loving. What Firdaus experienced is for sure in the same rate with a slave that is demanded to work force without rest.

Then Firdaus's marriage becomes worse because the stingy character of her husband. She could not glut her food well because her husband always put his eyes over her plate.

If I left anything over he picked it up, put it in his mouth and after swallowing, quickly told me off for my wastefulness. Yet I was not given to wasting anything, and the only morsels I left on the plate... and could only be removed with soap and water. (El Saadawi, 2007: 45).

From this quotation, it can be seen how very stingy Firdaus's husband is. And it goes worse more when he retires from his job so that every day he sticks to Firdaus and keep an eye on everything she does. And because he is an Imam of marriage, he stands at attention just like a boss of a slave. He will complain of everything that Firdaus does not well in his eyes, yet it is not. Then he yells at her so loudly and makes her eating dirt in front of their neighbor. Next he starts to beat her for every mistake she does, "...he got into the habit of beating [her] whether he had a reason of it or not". (El Saadawi, 2007: 46).

What is expected from the marriage, that is "a good life", indeed is not Firdaus gained. She is embarrassed instead of respected. She is put down just like a slave instead of raising up with the social status of her husband. She is mistreated instead of protection. She has to take a beat from her husband off hand. Even it makes her face and body swollen and bruised. According to her uncle, "... all husbands often beat their wives..." (El Saadawi, 2007:46). Still on the same page, the wife of Firdaus' uncle as fellow woman and wife, also adds 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 (El Saadawi, 2007: 46-47).

Because of obedience is the duty of women, Firdaus with force back to her marriage. But then she runs into the street when her husband beats her with his heavy stick until the blood run from her nose and ears. In this case, the marriage is such misfortune for Firdaus as a woman. She is not as lucky as the wife of her uncle.

Then the last depiction is in the marriage of Ibrahim. Ibrahim is one of the revolutionary men that Firdaus gets acquainted when she works in the company. He makes Firdaus in love with him, but he breaks her heart then. He marries the daughter of the company's chairman. The marriage is not described in the novel. But when the news of his marriage is widely known in the company, he gets some praises, "... he has a bright future to look forward to, and will rise quickly in the company." (El Saadawi, 2007:91). This can be an indication that his marriage would be like Firdaus' uncle, which the wife is in a higher social position. It is almost certain that in this marriage, Ibrahim will not exercise his power as an Imam over her wife like Firdaus' father and Sheikh Mahmoud do to their wife, because he gets raising socially by his wife's social status. In this case, Ibrahim's wife can have a good life in her marriage, nothing of the kind marriage of Firdaus.

By the marriage that represents through the relation among characters in each of their marriage, it can be seen that the power relation is for sure existed in it. As Foucault says, power is widely spread, it is everywhere and it consists in every relation because it is productive and goes through various institutions. In this sense, without the exception of the relation in marriage as institution consisting the relation between man and woman. The power in this relation is indicated through the consequences of domination or the existence of power imbalance between man and woman. It makes reference to the inequality of the role between man and woman in marriage. There is any factor that triggers this inequality until it strengthens the existence of power relation. The factors are mentioned as ideology agent which is growing on strongly in every activity that individual does in every day. As Althusser says (through Storey, 1997: 117), that ideology agent constructs the whole practices of every individual and creates the power within the social relation among society.

Egyptian, especially Muslim Egyptian is grounded their living in marriage under the Islamic law which is represented through Al-Quran and Al-Hadith. In this sense, Islam is one of ideology agent that influence the power relation between the individuals in the marriage. As ideology agent, Islam

gives direction that men is designated to be the head of marriage, an Imam which have a duty and full responsibility to earn the life of his family. Then through this direction the men can have power over the women of their marriage, as Hadiwardoyo (1990: 69) states that in the Islamic law, men are entitled to the obedience of his wife and his children, and men are supposed better able to lead the marriage and the family.

The Islam direction of marriage is strongly grounded in the mind of Egyptian society, so that there are no Egyptian women can resist the power of their husband over themselves as it has happened to the women of marriage that represents in the novel. Moreover, the power that the men have in marriage gives them reason to beat their wives. According to Hadiwardoyo, Islam through Al-Quran gives power to men to demand the obedience of their wives so that they have the right to punish them if they disobedience as it is stated in Surah An-Nisa' verse 34,

Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear, arrogance –[first] advise them; [then if they persist]; forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand. (Hadiwardoyo, 1990: 66).

By using this verse, Egyptian men do violence to their wives as it is represented in the marriage of Firdaus' parents and Firdaus with Sheikh Mahmoud. Even when Firdaus takes a beat from his husband until swollen and bruised, then she runs away to the house of her uncle, her uncle as a man said that it is as something normal and his wife adds to the statement that make reference to the verse of Al-Quran mentioned, An-Nisa' verse 34. Actually, this precept is not intended to trigger domestic violence to women. According to the explanation in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, many scholars interpret that actually it is for sure not an excuse for husbands to beat their wives. It is mentioned there the witness of Ibn Abbas, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad, that the prophet explains that the beat in this verse means to "only a light tap" and it refers to "using a 'siwak' (toothbrush)." Besides, an Islamic scholar, Yusuf Estes, also explains that "this verse does not give a man the permission to literally 'beat' his wife, rather only a light tap for a wife being 'lewd'." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An-Nisa,_34).

It is clear that the belting of husbands to his wives is done by reason to remind them that they has done a big fault. Besides, the belting given is not a

hard knock that deranging and hurting, it tends to be light but firm and give impression to her. However, what Firdaus' experience is in contrast. She takes a beat all over with his husband's shoe which swelling and bruising her face and her body. This is not Islam theology like what her uncle along with his wife have said. Surah An-Nisa' in different verse states that:

O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the dowry you have given them except when they have become guilty of open lewdness. On the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If you take a dislike to them, it may be you dislike something and Allah will bring about through it a great deal of good (An-Nisa', 4:19).

From the verse above, it is clear enough to explain that doing violence to women is really forbidden rather than an excuse. Therefore, Becoming "perfect obedience" (47) does not mean taking a beat from husband. And "men well versed in their religion" (46) is unjustifiable hit their wives. If Egyptian justify this behavior, it shows that marriage for Egyptian is no more than institution of violence, as Firdaus claims "That marriage was the system built on the most cruel suffering for women." (El Saadawi, 2007: 94).

However, there is also marriage in the novel that is represented not to put the women in worse condition. It is seen in the marriage of Firdaus' uncle and the marriage of Ibrahim. Both of the women in those marriages are treated carefully and very respected, no violence they get. In this case, both of these women are coming from the upper class, higher social status than their husband. So that both lift up the status of their husband. Thereby, both of their husband cannot exercise their power over their wives completely like what have been done by Firdaus' father and Sheikh Mahmoud since their wives also hold power over them. In other words, the social status that is owned by the women, are a form of power over the men that they marry. And these powers can be a resistance to the power of men as an Imam in marriage.

Thereby, the power relation in marriage is not only whirl on the power relation between man and woman in the situation of husband and wife, but also on the power relation of social classes between the upper class and lower class. Women in the upper classes than their husband might have a good life of marriage like the wife of Firdaus' uncle and the wife of Ibrahim. But women in the lower classes than their husband would have worse condition in marriage like Firdaus' mother and Firdaus herself.

Depicting Social Work Institution as the Opposition of Prostitution

Social work that is referred in this case, is within the meaning of the institution of employment which gives priority to the educated certificate as the main requirement for people to be employable. Educated certificate is for sure supposed to be important as it is mentioned by Tunsu (2013) that the educated certificate is needed to get work since it is a legal note that one has been experienced education program in such schools/universities/courses which it gives view for the employer of the qualification of people that they will employ (<http://aritunsa.com/pentingnya-ijazah/>). In this sense, educated certificate makes reference to the position that will be getting from the people to be employed. The higher level of their educated certificate, the position that will be getting in this institution is for sure higher, equal to the educated certificate owned. It can be said that educated certificate is indirectly to be such commodity since it is a matter to be valued for the first thing in this institution. Since it is used educated certificate as the commodity, society value it as the respectable work than using sexuality as commodity such work in prostitution which is valued as immoral.

So it is with the view of Firdaus as the main character. She values that the educated certificate is for getting more respected work, as she says, "I still had my secondary school certificate... to find respectable work... Come what may, I had to become respectable woman, even if the price were to be my life." (El Saadawi, 2007: 79). In this quotation, the respected work is supposed to make herself is viewed as the way to be seen in the society as respectable. This is a general view of work in society. Someone is said to be respectable through the work in which he belongs. Moreover the educated certificate is needed to enter this institution, so that the position in the work is also directly proportional to the respect of society gotten. For example, one with the certificate of bachelor of medicine will get a position as a doctor in a hospital and more respected rather than the one with certificate of senior high school who will get position only as administration in a hospital.

Then, between the higher and the lower people in their position of work institution, is for sure happen lameness. This lameness occurs because of the power relation that exist within their relation in which one of higher positions exercise more power over the lower. As it is represented in the novel through the way the company where Firdaus works treats them through separates the door of their entrance,

[...] One for the highest level employees which remained unguarded, and another for lesser officials, which was guarded by one of the employees, very much like some doorkeeper... the employees signed in the register when they arrived in the morning or left after the day's work was over... but the higher officials would come and go as they pleased." (El Saadawi, 2007: 80).

From the quotation above, it can be said that the higher level officials have more power than the lesser ones. They have more level of educated certificate, more education, more knowledge, so that they are positioned in more – high position in the company, so that they are more respected, so that they have more freedom, “would come and go as they pleased.” On the contrary, the lesser officials have lower levels of educated certificate, lower education, less knowledge, so that they are positioned in more – lower position in the company, so that they are less respected and they are under repression of monitoring, should “register when they arrived in the morning or left after the day's work was over.” However, power is differently comprehended with pressure, as Foucault says, “If power was never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really believe that we should manage to obey it?” (Foucault, 1978: 36). In this sense, have it ever one of those lesser officials complains to the treatment that they get? The answer is none. Each of lesser official does not feel under repression knowing these things. And the power is exercised through putting itself in a certain way instead of coercion. Thereby, they obey it with all the heart and soul without question more than they should be. So how about the woman in this institution? Can she be respectable as Firdaus wishes to be, while the position of women in the view of society is lower than men to be respected?

The woman of lesser official is for sure supposed to be more – lower, and unrespectable in the eyes of men in the higher level officials. As what Firdaus sees,

I looked into his eyes. They clearly said, 'you are a poor miserable employee, unworthy of esteem, running after a bus to catch it. I'll take you in my car because your female body aroused me. It is an honor for you to be desired by a respected official like myself. And who knows, maybe someday in the future, I can help you to get a rise before the others (El Saadawi, 2007: 81).

In this case, Firdaus is seen by one of the men in the higher level official, running after the bus, trying to get it. Then this man with his car, come to her and offers a lift. And there in his eyes, Firdaus sees it that she is as female lesser official is valued unrespectable as it is represented in the phrase of “unworthy of esteem.” Then, this man thinks that she can be respectable with being “desired by a respected official like myself,” which one day may give her a

help to get “rise”, the rise of salary by servicing him. The view of women can be respectable because of men, is for sure the general view that has been grounded in the society about a woman's position which is like in marriage, through marrying the respectable man, a woman is expected to be level up, to be respectable in the name of her man. This is the form of power relation that happened in the relation of men and women, which it is supposed to be something normal instead of abnormal. And this happens in the relation of work institution. The binary opposition of higher >< lower position employment is being more real with the appearance of men >< women.

The grounded view about men and women makes the men of higher level official can easily play their power over the women of lesser official. To be respectable, these women ungrudgingly to do anything, including exchange their bodies that desired by those men. Each of them “... is scared of losing her job and becoming a prostitute...” (El Saadawi, 2007: 82). In this sense, the job in social work institution such company is viewed more respectable rather than the sexual work in prostitution, although to be ridden for respectable is done through doing unrespectable matter such the work in prostitution. However, this is something normal. And the power relation within it, goes hierarchically, up-bottom.

But, for Firdaus views it differently since she ever become a prostitute. She leaves prostitution to be in that company in order to be seen as respectable. And she understands that exchange her sexuality is unrespectable but in fact it happens in the institution that supposed to be a place for a respectable woman. Moreover, the woman's body is valued lower than in prostitution, only to get the respectability. The women lesser official in the view of Firdaus, “... pays the highest price of the lowest value.” (El Saadawi, 2007: 82). Therefore, Firdaus does resistance in this power relation. She resist the men of higher level official to exercise power over her. She resist to be respectable at the cost of the lower price of the value of her body. She does it because she is accustomed to be priced in higher price. Even she is not afraid to lose her job in that company and back to be seen unrespectable in prostitution.

Therefore, she is finally to be said as “the most honorable woman” (El Saadawi, 2007: 83). None of the men in high ranking official have been able to touch her. Moreover, they are competing to take her attention. In this case, the power relation goes bottom-up as Foucault's formulation charges are the lower exercise power over the higher since the power is as

fluid and can be 'bottom-up' practices under the umbrella of such institution. Firdaus represents it through her relation in this work institution.

Nevertheless, the respected that she gets, is just such epithet, just please to hear. In the real, she does not get anything with this epithet. She is still the woman of lesser official with lower salary. She still lives in a place that can be said as home. She still gets humiliating pressure of male's bodies on her body when she rides the bus to go work and no freedom to have the toilet because she has to queue and hurry to have it for a while. Thereby, her position as a woman and as a human is still in a lower position in society and similar to unrespectable although she is in respectable institution, does more respectable work and said to be the most respected woman.

Describing Prostitution as Institution

Prostitution initially is represented as the place of Firdaus as a woman to get protection and then turns to be exploited when she is under the control of Sharifa. Then prostitution for her turns back again to be the place of protection after she does it by herself (not under the control of anyone). Then she recognize it as a work which is not respectable so that she leaves it. But then she backs again when she feels she is more respected when she is in prostitution. At last, she can show her subjectivity as a woman like Sharifa and goes further to get more success and protection than Sharifa's. She even easily gets the position in the society as honorable woman in which it seems to be impossible to be true.

Since Firdaus' prostitution depicts prostitution more complex than Sharifa's, the analysis goes on uncovering prostitution of Firdaus. In this case, the analysis goes on the construction of binary opposition of prostitution. Then, it is found that the Egypt society where Firdaus belongs, put prostitution in opposition of the social institutions, those are marriage and social work.

The binary opposition which is constructed between marriage and prostitution, is grounded on the sexual activity taking place. The normal sexual activity is done under the legal institution that is marriage. Since it is supposed to be the legal institution of sexual activity, marriage is valued to be the place for women to live in dignity. Living in dignity means that women are protected from danger that might touch her such as raping, insulting and abusing.

Besides, the women are also respected since they fulfil their duty as women in nurturing and doing domestic work, moreover if she is in the side of men who are higher social status than her. Furthermore, the women in marriage is considers to be the subjects who actively

play role in their relation with men in marriage, not merely an object for men. They occupy the subject position since there is an emotional bound in their relation with men to be united in this institution.

However, not all women can lives in dignity in marriage institution. Firdaus' mother and Firdaus herself are the women who live in suffering instead of dignity in marriage institution. Both are being the object of their husband's power. This happens because the society where they belong, Egyptian society which is tied tightly to the Islamic tradition, places men as an Imam in marriage. As an Imam, men have power over his wife to control them in order to protect, guide them, and while at the same time the women should be totally obedience to their men as their Imam. This is actually an imbalance relation between men and women. And this makes men for oftentimes treating their women as they like.

Moreover, the social asymmetries between haves and nois in Egyptian Society are also influence in the relation between individuals including the individuals in marriages. Since the women traps in power relation which imbalance, they are more being unlucky if they come from lower social class than their husband. They are supposed to be double inappreciable in the eyes of men.

This is what Firdaus' mother and Firdaus herself experience in marriage. They as women and lower social class could not do some resistance over the power of their husband that suppose them truly inappreciable. They are treated just like a slave. They are exploited to do everything in the name of obedience for their husband. They even get violence from their husband instead of protection if they do mistake even if a little one. They are embarrassed instead of respected in the eyes of society. They are merely just an object of the power of their husband since the society and religion tradition bind them to be perfectly obedience.

Marriage seems to be only the right place for the women who come from upper class. Although they are bond to be perfectly obedience, their husband would not treat them as they likes. They will be treated more carefully and truly protected by their husband since their social class is valuable in the eyes of them. Women from upper class are supposed meritorious for the men who they marry because they lift the social status of the men. This represents in the marriage of Firdaus' uncle with his wife who is the daughter of his teacher and of course an upper class, and the marriage of Ibrahim with the daughter of the company's boss. Both of the women in this marriage do not experience what Firdaus and her mother experience in their marriage since they deserve well of lifting their husband social status.

Thus, the marriage in this case actually is not always like what is supposed by the society in general which is the right institution for women to get protection, respected and while at the same time actively play role as the subjects. This happens because the interplay of power relation, between men with women and upper social class status with lower social class status, place not all women have the same experience in marriage. The women like Firdaus who is born from lower social class, is only being an object of power of her husband which is strongly supported by the society and religion precept. She cannot do a whit of resistance in this power relation. This brings women in this institution to be exploited and suffered instead of protected since the men use their power over them to treat them as they wish, including treat them just like a slave. Therefore, the view of marriage as an institution of protection for women is *sous rature* to be an institution of exploitation for women. Besides, the view marriage as an institution for women to be the subjects, is also *sous rature* to be an institution for women to be totally the objects.

The *sous rature* of marriage institution makes its condition to be equal to prostitution which in the general is supposed to be the place of exploitation of women and put women to be totally the objects of men. Besides, marriage institution also has another equality with prostitution, which is in the element of payment. It is represented in the marriage of Firdaus. When she is arranged to marry Sheikh Mahmoud, her uncle and his wife asks a big dowry to him. The dowry that they get from arranging Firdaus' marriage is similar to the money of selling Firdaus to be the wife of Sheikh Mahmoud. As Sheikh Mahmoud pays the dowry to have Firdaus as his wife, he deserves to get full service, domestically and sexually from Firdaus. The dowry as the payment of marriage is actually equal to the payment that Sharifa's get when controlling Firdaus in Prostitution.

Thus, the different between marriage institution and prostitution are only in the form of payment and the service that Firdaus gives as women. In marriage, Firdaus produces money for her uncle and his wife, then she gives domestic and sexual service throughout her life to the man as her husband. While in prostitution, Firdaus produces money for Sharifa, to each of the sexual service that she gives to the man who come in, and she does not have to do domestic service. Base on this equality, prostitution can be said as also an institution equivalent to marriage institution. Both are institution for women to be exploited.

This equality also strengthen with the fact that both in the marriage and prostitution, there is an interplay of power relation. The power relation of the two of them are also the same, men-women relation and upper-lower

class relation. Consequently, this strengthens that prostitution is indeed an institution equivalent to marriage. Moreover, women's position, either in marriage or prostitution are actually the same. They are always being an object of other's power, especially men's power. Thereby, it can be said that both marriage and prostitution are an institution of men domination over women.

Other than marriage, prostitution is also represented in opposition to social work. The opposition is grounded on the kind of work to do. Social work is supposed by the society as a respected institution to work since the requirement of education certificate have to be fulfilled to be employed, while in prostitution does not require it. Besides, the work in this institution is done through intelligence skill as it is represented on the education certificate, while the work in prostitution is done through giving sexual access to the customer. Therefore, women who work in this institution is supposed to be respected. Meanwhile, they who work for giving sexual service in prostitution is supposed to be not respected. In other words, social work is an institution of respected women.

However, in the point of view of Firdaus' narration, the social work institution for women is a kind of another form of prostitution. The interplay of power relation in social work institution places women to be the object as they are in prostitution. This happens because the imbalance relation between men-women and lower-upper class that to again also happen in this institution. A female lesser official indirectly is exploited to prostitute their self in order to keep her job in this institution and not end in prostitution to be a real prostitute. This means that social work institution do not provide protection to women from men's exploitation of herself as a sexual object. They cannot actively play the role of subjects since they are let their self being exploited. If they try to actively play the role of subjects through doing resistance over men's objectification, they are still remain to live in the condition of not respected. It happens to Firdaus' life in social work institution. She tries to actively play role as subjects through resist the effort of the higher level men to exploit and object her sexually. She is successful being the subject in the power relation with men of higher level. She is said to be the most respected woman in that social work institution. However, it is just an epithet. It does not change her life as a female lesser official who live in unrespectable condition. The society still views her as less respected with her condition.

Drawing from what happens with women and Firdaus in social work institution, some view of social work as an institution which has been constructed in society is *sous ratured*. First, the view of social work as

an institution of protection for women is *sous ratured* to be an institution of exploitation for fallen women. Second, the view of social work as an institution of respected women is *sous ratured* to be an institution of unrespectable women. These *sous rature* makes the condition of social work institution to be equal to prostitution.

However, prostitution as an institution actually can be conditioned as women likes. This is because there are no norms, rules, or tradition that the society and religion decided to women to behave in prostitution. Therefore, the prostitution can be a different institution for women which might not exploited them. It is depicted on the prostitution of Firdaus when she does it on her own, not under the control of anyone. In this case prostitution is not understood as a place of working. It is understood to be an institution for herself as a fallen women. Thereby, the view of prostitution as a place of fallen women to do sexual work is *sous rature* to be prostitution as an institution of fallen women to resist the power relation of objecting women.

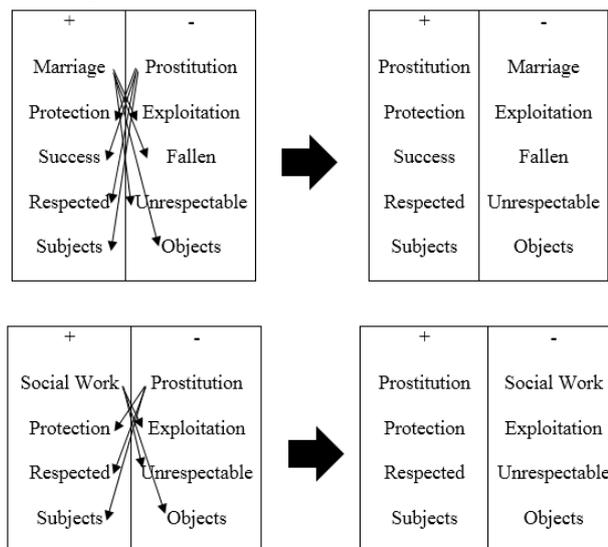
As an institution for herself as a fallen women, Firdaus builds the strategy in order to resist men's objectification on herself. She does not let herself become a sexual object at men's will. She should become a sexual object at her will. Thus, she places herself as the one who decides which man who can get her sexual service. And the sexual service that she gives, cost in the highest price. Thereby she actively plays a role as the subjects instead of a merely object like other prostitutes.

By actively playing role as the subjects, Firdaus is not exploited to become men's object. She is protected instead from exploitation since not all of the men can come near her. And when the policemen try to arrest her in order to do their duty of supporting prostitution abolishment, Firdaus can resist them with her much money that she easily earns from servicing a man. Besides, she is free to do anything and she is not burdened with domestic works or the duty of perfectly obedience to man.

Besides, Firdaus also shows that through the comprehension of prostitution as institution, she can live as a successful woman rather than a fallen woman. This can happen since the earnings of prostituting herself is more than enough to make her live in dignity. Moreover she is also respected in the eyes of society since she appears as successful woman and the model of citizen who has much donation to the society.

From the findings of prostitution analysis in *Woman at Point Zero*, especially which is represented by the main woman character, Firdaus, the table below can be the summit of the deconstruction toward prostitution to become an institution in which it causes a reversal of

hierarchy system of marriage >< prostitution and social work >< prostitution:



CONCLUSION

Based on the recent analysis of the data, the result can be concluded that the depiction of prostitution in *Woman at Point Zero* is put upside down. It is in the opposite of prostitution's depiction in the view of society in general. Prostitution in general is supposed as a deviant, women exploitation, poor, unrespectable, objecting woman as sexual object. However, the novel represents the reverse of the hierarchy system. It appears as a normal thing within society, a haven for women, place of successful and respected women, and the woman inside it is being a subject rather than merely a sexual object.

The upside down representation of prostitution in the novel is structured in opposition with two social institutions, those are marriage and social work. In the representation of marriage and social work, it is found that women do not always live like what society expected to be. This happens in the life of Firdaus. She experiences it because the lameness in the power relations in which she involves in, those are men-women relations and social relation between the upper class and the lower class. Because of the lameness in those power relation, she is as a woman and a lower class, cannot live properly in those social institutions. Instead of being respected women and get social position, she is being under term of fallen women. Prostitution in this sense is present to be an alternative place for her.

Prostitution can be a real haven for her as a fallen woman if she really comprehend prostitution more than a place of working. In this case, Firdaus shows that prostitution should be comprehended as a place where she build a strategy to resist the power relation which harm her as a woman and a human. The strategy that she

uses, is placing herself as a subject of the power relation with men and society. She does not do what other prostitutes in common do, that is always saying "Yes" and pricing their self. She tends to say "No" and prides herself at the farthest price. She has to be the one who decide and choose. Therefore, the others, especially men cannot treat her as their wish moreover dominate herself. Besides, because of this strategy, she can be successful woman which is in the upper class position of the society with the much money that she earns. The money that she has, let her to build another strategy to have power over the society so that she is seen to be a respected woman although she is only a prostitute.

The strategy that is constructed within prostitution just like Firdaus does, shows that prostitution is not only a place of fallen women, but also an institution of fallen women. Through prostitution as an institution, a fallen woman can reverse the power relation hierarchy to be 'bottom-up' so that she becomes an active individual, a subject, not merely always become an object. In this sense, it can be said that prostitution as an institution is a *differance*, it is an alternative discourse of prostitution that pass over the binary opposition which has been constructed with the view of society on prostitution and social institution.

REFERENCES

- Althusser, L. (1984) *Essays on Ideology*, London: Verso.
- An-Nisa, 34. Retrieved May 15, 2014, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An-Nisa_34.
- Bertens, Hans. 2001. *Literary Theory: The Basics* (2nd Edition). New York: Routledge.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1981a. *Dissemination* (Translated by Barbara Johnson). London: Athlone Press.
- _____. 1967. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore, Md: John Hopkins University.
- Duties of Husband and Wife. (n.d.). Islam today discussion List, (Online), Retrieved May 14, 2014, from <http://en.islamtoday.net/node/570>.
- El Saadawi, Nawal. 2007. *Woman at Zero Point*. London: Zed Books.
- El Saadawi, Nawal. 1985. *Prostitution in Egypt*. This journal is The Result of An International Meeting of Experts (Cat IV) on The Social and Cultural of Prostitution and Strategies Against Procuring and Sexual Exploitation of Women by UNESCO in Paris, November 16, 1985.
- Farley, Melissa. (n.d.). Prostitution, Libearism and Slavery. *Logos, a journal of Modern Society*. Retrieved May 14, 2014, from <http://logosjournal.com/2013/farley/>.
- Feminist Views On Prostitution*. Retrieved Jan 8, 2014, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_views_on_prostitution#Arguments_against_prostitution.
- Foucault, Michel. 1978. *The History of Sexualities*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- _____. 1980. *POWER/KNOWLEDGE-Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. In C. Gordon (ed.). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Hadiwardoyo, Al.Purwa. 1990. *Perkawinan menurut Islam dan Katolik: implikasinya dalam kawin campur*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- Haryatmoko. 2010. *Kekuasaan-Pengetahuan Sebagai Rezim Wacana Sejarah Seksualitas: Sejarah Pewacanaan Seks & Kekuasaan Menurut Foucault*. This Paper is the result of public lecturing series which is held by Komunitas Salihara in Jakarta, June 2010. Retrieved Jan 8, 2014, from <http://salihara.org/media/documents/2010/06/30/ha/haryatmoko-seks-foucault.pdf>.
- Al-Munajjid, Sheikh Muhammed Salih. (n. d.). Is it obligatory for a woman to get married? Islam Question and Answer Discussion List. Retrieved May 14, 2014, from <http://islamqa.info/en/1665>.
- Khaleeli, Homa. April 15, 2010. Nawal El Saadawi: Egypt's radical feminist. *The Guardian*. Retrieved Jan 8, 2014, from <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2010/apr/15/nawal-el-saadawi-egyptian-feminist>.
- Levitt, Steven D, and Stephen J Dubner. 2009. *SuperFreakonomics*. New York: William Morrow
- Malti-Douglas, Fedwa. 1995. *Men, Women and God(s)*. Berkeley: University Of California Press
- Marriage. Retrieved May 14, 2014, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriage>.
- Marriage. Retrieved May 14, 2014, from http://www.islamswomen.com/marriage/intro_to_marriage.php.
- Norris, Christopher. 2006. *Membongkar Teori Dekonstruksi Jacques Derrida*. Yogyakarta: Ar-ruzz Media.