UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

A STYLISTIC STUDY OF POINT OF VIEW IN NAWAL EL SAADAWI'S

WOMAN AT POINT ZERO: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

HARRY ATO INSAIDOO

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BY

HARRY ATO INSAIDOO

A Thesis submitted to the Department of English of the Faculty of Arts of the

College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial

fulfilment of the requirements for award of Master of Philosophy Degree in

English Language

JULY, 2020

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:……………………………. Date:………………….

Candidate's Name: Harry Ato Insaidoo

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature:……………………… Date:…..…………

Name: Prof. Kwadwo Opoku-Agyemang

Co-Supervisor's Signature:……………………. Date:…………………….

Name: Dr. Joseph Arko

ABSTRACT

The pre-occupation of this study was to examine point of view in El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* from a systemic functional perspective. Specifically, it focused on investigating how transitivity is employed to inscribe both ideological and psychological points of view in the novel. This was motivated first by the general neglect of existing studies to explore El Saadawi's creative style and second by the claims of both narratologists and stylisticians on narrative perspective and how it is rendered linguistically in novels. Based on the aims of the study, extracts from significant episodes in the novel were subjected to transitivity analysis. The study demonstrates that point of view constraints the linguistic choices of a writer. Also, it is shown that in the Islamic society that El Saadawi creates, men manipulate Quranic teachings to oppress and subjugate women. It is again revealed that Firdaus matures as the narrative progresses in terms of her understanding of herself and her repressive society. The study corroborates the view held by systemic functional linguistics that language users make systematic choices of linguistic items from the linguistic repertoire to present their version of reality as well as the narratological claim that focalization and narration and by extension focalizer and narrator are not necessarily the same. Moreover, it confirms the claim that the meronymic agency is a significant stylistic technique in prose narratives. The findings of the study and the conclusions drawn from them suggest the need to pay attention to the linguistic choices of writers in order to better appreciate their message.

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DEDICATION

To my doting mother, Miss Vida Judith Thompson

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The pre-occupation of this study is to explore, from a systemic functional perspective, point of view in El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*, focusing on how she employs this narrative technique to project her ideology and to encode especially Firdaus' growth of self-consciousness as well as her awareness of the realities of the repressive society in which she lives. The study is situated in the field of African literature, emphasizes its nature and functional value. This chapter deals with the background to the study, research problem, purpose of the study, research questions and assumptions underlying the study as well as the significance of the study. Moreover, a sketch of El Saadawi's biography is provided. Finally, this chapter discusses the methodological framework within which the study is grounded, provides a synopsis of the novel and defines the scope of the study.

1.2 Background to the study

Writers are social beings whose lives are influenced by the socio-cultural experiences of their complex societies. They therefore use a variety of means to communicate these experiences for diverse reasons and often the fictional worlds present them with just the right platform to articulate their experiences. As Ngugi (1982:xv) observes, 'Literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social and economic forces in a particular society' (as qtd. in Fwangyil, 2012:16). Nartey and Kakraba (2011:236) add that "…the writer cannot afford to be disinterested and passive when 'serious' social issues need to be

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commented on and when history beckons him to react." The implication is that the kind of society that prevails dictates the nature of literary work produced by the literary artists dwelling in such an environment. The attempt to capture people's societal experiences has led to the general conceptualization of literature as a mimicry of real life. (See *The Poetics of Aristotle*, 1898 for a detailed exposition of the concept of mimesis.)

Highlighting the relationship between literature and society, Amase et al. (2013:63) point out that a hostile environment produces literature that focuses on 'fair play, justice and freedom' while a utilitarian society encourages the production of literature that submerges the humanity of the populace and gives prominence to the government. By inference, literature is dynamic because it arises in response to the ever-changing conditions of society and also has a functional value in society. Mongane (1989:115), qtd. in Adedoja (2010:35), summarizes the functions of literature as well as the nexus between literature and society thus:

Literature is part of the structure of the society. It may simply record the kind of society the writer knows - its values, problems, structures, events etc. or it may attack this present society and its present evils. Literature more often embodies the writer's evaluation of his world or illuminates its possibilities.

It is apparent from Mongane's (1989) submission that literature is not only socially significant because it entertains, educates, sharpens our wit and preserves social structures and values but also because it provides the means through which socio-political ills may be x-rayed and corrected. Thus, the literary artist, through his or her work, plays comedic, interventionist or remedial and emancipatory roles. It is in this direction that we concur with

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Saro-Wiwa, cited in Amase et al (2013:63), that '…writers must not merely write to amuse or to take a bemused critical look at society. [They] must play an interventionist role.' From the foregoing discussion, literature may be defined simply as the imaginative and linguistic expression of the societal experiences of man.

African literature, in its various manifestations, is tied to the socio-cultural and political experiences of Africans in three epochs: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. Adedoja (2010) mentions three core functions of African literature which are reflective of the experiences in the historical periods mentioned: initially, it was used to glorify the African past; then, during the colonial era, it became a viable weapon for anti-colonial struggle; while currently it is often used to depict post-colonial disillusionment in African countries. For example, while Soyinka's *Kongi's Harvest* deals with the conflict between tradition and modernity, Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Achebe's *A Man of the People* depict the socio-economic and political troubles of post-colonial African countries, emphasizing that the abysmal situations of African countries emanate from the incompetence or ineffectiveness and recklessness of political leaders. In short, since colonialism plagued and still continues to trouble the traditional African life, African literature may be viewed generally as a response to the consequences of colonialism.

One literary genre which has received a good deal of critical attention is the African novel. This may be attributed to the poignancy of its thematic focus and artistic use of language. As a result, African fictional works have been studied from sociological, psychological, political and philosophical

perspectives (Mwinlaaru, 2012a, 2012b, 2014). Nawal El Saadawi is one of the Egyptian female novelists whose works have been hugely studied. Her works which often interrogate patriarchal powers, explore themes such as patriarchy, gender relations, sexuality, violence against women and culture or religion as an oppressive tool. Also, in her works, she investigates the psychology of her female characters in their oppressive society as they battle against patriarchy. These recurrent issues in her works have led to the lampooning of her works 'as mere propaganda, as a tireless repetition of her radical message' (Malti-Douglas, 1995:1). *Woman at Point Zero* (Henceforth referred to as *Woman*) is a statement of El Saadawi's vision as a radical feminist in no ambiguous terms.

Woman chronicles the traumatic experiences of Firdaus, a woman whose name means 'Paradise', but who instead of enjoying the wonderful episodes in life has her personality blighted by sexual assaults and other forms of oppression from infancy to adulthood. Focusing on Firdaus, the narrative x-rays the helplessness of Arab women, in general, and drives home El Saadawi's message that patriarchal structures sanctioned by religion gang up to brutalize women or more generally perpetuate injustice against women. The novel does not only present an utterly pessimistic view of society but also prescribes a solution to the plights of women in the Arab world: for a utopian society where equity for both male and female sexes exists, there should be 'an attack on gender oppression' because without this 'no lasting blows can be delivered against the other citadels of injustice' (Malti-Douglas, 1995:14). For El Saadawi, this means attacking any religious principle or political institution that devalues women.

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Though El Saadawi projects similar ideologies in almost all her works and demonstrate female characters with similar physical and psychological experiences, the narrative prism through which these are presented and the linguistic mechanisms used in encoding them differ as it is impossible for any writer to rehearse the same narrative technique and linguistic choices in all his or her works; thus, this study tries to demonstrate the uniqueness of the narrative point of view employed in *Woman*.

1.3 Statement of the research problem

Woman is unquestionably controversial chiefly because its thematic concerns have implications for the treatment of women in Islamic societies as well as for the interpretation of the Quran, particularly with regard to issues that verge on gender. In virtue of this, the novel has received a good deal of critical attention (e.g. Fwangyil, 2012; Issaka, 2010;Kammampoal, 2014; Pathan, 2014; Al Mhairat & Al Miniawi, 2016; Bakuuro, 2017; Suwaed, 2017). Generally, these studies engage in literary analysis, focusing on themes such as oppression, women subjugation, patriarchy, sexuality, violence and resistance.

Characteristically, not much attention is given to the technique of literary composition of which point of view is key. Point of view concerns how events and entities are perceived and comprehended by the focalizer and verbalised by the narrator. Writers draw on the linguistic resources to do this. Therefore, an examination of narrative point of view with emphasis on its different planes from a linguistic perspective reveals the nuances of novels such as their ideological underpinnings as well as the mental workings, attitudes and feelings of characters. A linguistic concept which has proven effective in this

regard is transitivity. Studies such as Breem (2005), Brooks (2010), Cunanan (2011) and Mwinlaaru (2012a, 2012b, 2014)have demonstrated the effectiveness of the transitivity model in revealing the subtle ideologies of literary works as well as characters' feelings, attitudes and cognitive development.

It is, however, noticeable that studies have generally not only been silent on point of view in El Saadawi's *Woman* but have also not considered studying the novel from a linguistic perspective though existing scholarship proves that such an approach is effective in revealing the subtle meanings of literary texts. It becomes imperative then that we shift attention from the traditional approach of literary or thematic analysis which previous studies on the novel employed and to explore it from a different perspective so as to better understand the linguistic mechanisms for rendering point of view on the ideological and the psychological planes in the novel and to eventually bring out El Saadawi's unique creative style. This need is the drive for examining point of view in *Woman* from a systemic functional perspective.

1.4 Purpose of the study

Broadly, the study examines narrative point of view in *Woman* from a functional-semantic perspective. Specifically, it analyses how transitivity has been used to inscribe both ideological and psychological points of view in the novel.

1.5 Research questions

The study specifically addresses the questions: How is transitivity used to inscribe:

1. ideological point of view?

2. psychological point of view?

1.6 Research assumptions

Three assumptions underlie this study. The first is that a novelist's style is defined by the narrative perspective he or she adopts. Every narrative involves narration, which consists of an agent that 'sees' and 'makes' sense of the object of his or her perception through a particular prism. How this is faithfully communicated to the reader rests on the narrator's linguistic choices, a function imposed on him or her by the writer. Thus, a study of point of view is ultimately an investigation into the unique style of the novelist.

Moreover, it is claimed that there is synergy between literary and linguistics analyses. This claim has been a subject of debate in a number of studies (McIyntre, 2012a; Gower, 1986). This study assumes that literary and linguistic analyses are inextricably interwoven; that there cannot be any deeper appreciation of literary texts without reference to language use. Thus, in this study, attention is drawn to the concerns of the two disciplines of linguistics and literary criticism because each complements the other in the analysis of texts.

The final assumption is that there is a complex relationship between texts and contexts. Because texts are produced by writers who reside in socio-political and cultural worlds of a specific epoch, their use of language is conditioned by certain intra and extra contextual variables. As Beard (2001) observes, texts are not self-contained, existing independent of external influence; therefore, when appreciating texts, three types of contexts, namely the writer's context, text's (story's) context and the reader's context need to be considered as each of them exerts an overwhelming influence on both the

production and the reception of the texts. Therefore, in this study, the socio-cultural context of the novelist is considered to find out how the dominant ideologies of her social milieu have seeped into the story.

1.7 Significance of the study

As already stated, studies on El Saadawi's works have largely been thematic explorations which seek to stress the socio-cultural and political significance of her works. It seems that such studies have taken for granted that El Saadawi is an artist and her significance in her society is better appreciated when she is considered as such. Therefore, by exploring point of view, an area often glossed over as far as El Saadawi's novels are concerned, the study will deepen our understanding of her narrative dexterity which defines and distinguishes her as a literary genius.

Moreover, the study contributes to studies on the transitivity analysis of texts. Following the publication of Halliday's analysis of William Golding's *The Inheritors* in the 1970s, studies have applied the transitivity model as an analytical framework to study point of view, character and themes in narrative and dramatic texts (e. g. Matthiessen, 2015; Mwinlaaru, 2012a, 2012b, 2014; Gallardo, 2006; Breem, 2005) and the relationship between text and context in poetry (e.g. Brooks, 2010). This study subjects *Woman*, an African novel, to a transitivity analysis to bring out how this linguistic concept has been used to inscribe both ideological and psychological points of view. Given that there are very few studies that apply transitivity analysis to African literary texts (e.g. Mwinlaaru, 2012a, 2012b, 2014), it is believed that findings of the study will shed light on the applicability of the transitivity model to the study of narrative perspective in African literary texts, particularly the novel. Thus, the

study generally adds to the growing body of literature on the transitivity analysis of (African) literary texts.

Finally, the study has pedagogical implications. Literary scholars and literature teachers have lamented the teething problems literature students face, particularly with regard to the analysis of the language of literary texts (Mwinlaaru, 2012a; Leech & Short, 2007; Yankson, 2007). Yankson (2007:i) attributes this to the fact that literature teaching has tended to be 'predominately theme based' and argues that without constant reference to language use, a teacher cannot 'reveal to his students the peculiar nature of a literary work'. Leech and Short (2007) add that a stylistic analysis of literary texts enables students to 'appreciate texts in detail and to perform their own analysis of other texts' (p. 288). What we seem to glean from all these is that an effective teaching and understanding of literary texts is actualized through the examination of how writers manipulate the choices in the linguistic repertoire in the construction of their texts. In this study, I have tried to make obvious how style encodes meaning and literary experience by engaging in a transitivity analysis of El Saadawi's linguistic choices so as to reinforce my claim that it is worthy to focus on style when it comes to literary studies. It is, therefore, believed that by clearly demonstrating how the linguistic analysis of point of view in *Woman* reveals the nuances of the text, the study will serve as an invaluable resource material for teachers and students as their familiarization with the step-by-step analysis of the language of the narrators will enhance their own examination of literary texts in and outside the classroom.

1.8 Brief profile of Nawal El Saadawi and characteristics of her writings

This section of the introductory chapter discusses the biography of El Saadawi, and also provides a plot summary of *Woman*. El Saadawi's biography is stretched to subsume some socio-cultural and political phenomena which exert enormous influence on her writings. The aim is to draw attention to El Saadawi's worldview or ideology and finally to highlight how it has impacted on *Woman*, in particular, and her works, in general.

Dr Nawal El Saadawi was born on the 27th of October, 1931 in Kafr Tahla, a small village in Cairo, to El Sayed and Zeinab. In 1955, she trained as a psychiatrist at the University of Cairo Medical School and in the same year, she married a fellow physician Ahmed Helmy and had a daughter Mona Helmy. However, in 1956, they got divorced and in 1964, she remarried a physician and a novelist by name Sherif Hetata with whom she had a son named Atef Hetata. Two years later (i.e. in 1966), she received the Master of Public Health Degree from Columbia University. From 1963 to 1972, she worked as the director general for the public health education of the Ministry of Health, Egypt (Issaka, 2010; Newson-Horst, 2010; Giunti, 2001; Malti-Douglas, 1995).

She started writing very early in life at the age of thirteen, in 1944. Her first novel was *Memoirs of a Female Child Named Su'ad*. Generally, she was inspired by her personal experiences. Put differently, she was influenced by the social conditions of her time. For example, her campaign against clitoridectomy emanates from her experience as a doctor.

In 1972, she published a non-fiction, *Women and Sex*, which was very critical of female genital mutilation. The book was banned and she was

subsequently dismissed as the director general for the public health education of the Ministry of Health and also relieved of her position as the editor-in-chief of the ministry's magazine, *Health*. In 1981, she criticized President Anwar Sadat's policies. Consequently, she was apprehended and incarcerated, but released one month after Sadat's assassination. In 1982, she established an international organization called the Arab Women's Solidarity Association (AWSA). In line with its aim of 'lifting the veil from the mind' (Malti-Douglas, 1995:11), it organized conferences and seminars and discussed gender related issues. Following a criticism of the US government for its involvement in the Gulf War, the association was outlawed in 1991.

Death threats from some Islamist fundamentalist groups forced her into exile. However in 1996, she returned to Egypt to continue her writing and political activism. In 2004, she contested the presidency of Egypt, but was coerced to 'withdraw her candidacy in the face of government persecution' (Newson-Horst, 2010: viii).

The following are also woks authored by El Saadawi: *God Dies by the Nile (1976)*, *The Hidden Face of Eve (19977)*, *The Fall of the Imam (1981)*, *Two Women in One* (1968), *Memoirs from the Women's Prison* (1983), *The Circling Song* (1989), *Searching* (1991), *Innocence of the Devil*, *A Daughter of Isis* (1999), *Walking through Fire* (2002), *God Resigns at the Summit Meeting* (2007) and *Zina, the Stolen Novel* (2008).

A critical review of studies on El Saadawi's literary works (Issaka, 2010; Fwangyil, 2012; Pathan, 2014; Al Mhairat & Al Miniawi, 2016; Bakuuro, 201; Suwaed, 2017) reveals that her works generally focus on the oppression of and discrimination against Muslim women in all facets of life and often

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religion and stereotypical patriarchal or cultural assumptions are portrayed as the instruments employed by men to dominate women. Thus, sexuality and politics, patriarchy, rebellion against the status quo, female genital mutilation, forced marriages, religion as a tool of oppression and discrimination against women are common themes in her works.

Also, El Saadawi's writings are based on her personal experiences (Issaka, 2010; Fwangyil, 2012; Al Mhairat & Al Miniawi, 2016; Suwaed, 2017). For example, her experience of clitoridectomy is captured in *Woman at Point Zero* and *The Hidden Face of Eve* and *Memoirs of a Girl Named Suwaed, a Prisoner and a Woman in Exile* are based on her experience of discrimination, her incarceration and experiences in exile.

Moreover, it is noticeable that the female heroines double as the first person narrators. An example is Firdaus in *Woman at Point Zero*. Suwaed (2017) states that two types of women could be identified in El Saadawi's writings: there is 'the middle class woman who can pave way to success and independence' and 'a woman who cannot fend for herself being used, exploited and driven to tragic end' (p. 244). While the female doctor in *The Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* and Bahiah Shaheen in *Two Women in One* are examples of the former, Firdaus in *Woman at Point Zero* and Zakeya in *God Dies by the Nile* are examples of the latter. It should be mentioned that both types of women rebel against the *status quo*. For instance, Bahiah rebels against forced marriage and demands the right to choose her own husband while Firdaus rebels against the maltreatment of married women by running away from her husband's house.

El Saadawi's views have always run counter to the values and belief systems of her Islamic society. Her radicalism was borne out of her conviction that 'even though women occupy an inferior position in traditional society, Islamic societies manipulate the precepts of Islam in order to oppress and restrict women' (Issaka, 2010: 7). She calls for an end to all forms of discrimination against women and equality for both men and women. As a result, her writings have challenged many Islamic and Quranic teachings, often calling for a re-evaluation of religious laws on gender so as to promote the status of women, ensure justice for both sexes and most importantly eradicate any form of marginalization endorsed by cultural norms and religious precepts in the Arab world.

1.9 Synopsis of the novel

The story opens with the fruitless efforts of El Saadawi to interview Firdaus, an inmate of Qanatir Prison, following the information she receives from the prison warden that Firdaus' demeanour is different from the other prisoners: she neither welcomes visitors nor talks to anyone and has even refused petitioning the government to commute her death sentence to life imprisonment. El Saadawi gets frustrated as all her attempts to interview this 'strange' Firdaus prove futile. Surprisingly, on the day she decides to give up on her quest to interview her, which is also the day before Firdaus' execution, Firdaus concurs to grant her audience. She is taken to Firdaus' cell by the prison warden where Firdaus narrates her entire life story to her.

As a child, she witnessed how her father beat her mother, gave her male siblings preferential treatment and her family suffered hunger and as well as

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her experience of clitoridectomy. This forms the exposition of the plot structure.

At a tender age, she lost both parents. This is the point of attack. Because of her parents' death, she relocates to Cairo with her uncle. Initially, things go on well for her, despite her uncle's constant sexual harassment. She is sent to school. Being an assiduous and a brilliant student, she receives a certificate of merit for her excellent academic performance. However, her graduation sets in motion a train of problems that are to claim her reputation and culminate in her bitter end.

The point of attack leads directly to conflicts. She is forced to marry Sheik Mahmoud against her will. Her marriage is full of problems. Mahmoud molests her and when it dawns on him that Firdaus' uncle remains quiet about his maltreatment of her, he resorts to beating Firdaus all the more. She runs away from her marital home and finds herself at a coffee shop.

From here, events get complicated for Firdaus. She is provided with a temporary accommodation by the shop owner Bayoumi, but he is no different from Mahmoud. He first treats Firdaus warmly, but when she announces her decision to look for a job, he becomes enraged. His attitude towards her changes. Not only does he beat her but he also abuses her sexually and even arranges with his friends to also assault her sexually. However, with the help of a neighbour, she escapes from Bayoumi's into the street again.

Her escape from Bayoumi's leads to her chance meeting with Sharifa Salah El Dine, a prostitute, by the Nile. She introduces Firdaus into prostitution and makes money out of her. Everything appears to be going on well until her (Sharifa's) lover Fawzy surfaces out of the blue and decides to take Firdaus

away from her. Before the argument between Fawzy and Sharifa regarding his decision to take Firdaus away, he informs Firdaus that Sharifa is only making money at her expense. With this in mind, Firdaus leaves Sharifa's apartment to become a high-class prostitute on her own.

While in this profession, she deludes herself that she is respected until one of her clients by name Di'aa, a journalist, bluntly tells her she is not revered. The pronouncement by Di'aa wounds her pride so much that she quits prostitution with the sole determination to be a respectable woman. This is a turning point in her life. With her secondary school certificate and her certificate of merit, she secures a job in a company. Unlike other female employees, Firdaus is not terrified of losing her job. Because of this, she flatly refuses the sexual advances of all the senior male members in the establishment. However, she falls in love with Ibrahim, a revolutionary young man in the company. Firdaus comes to believe that the world is not as horrible as she has envisaged it because she believes so much in Ibrahim, her love for him and his for her. Sadly, she learns the painful truth that he was married to the daughter of the chairman of the company. This leaves her completely devastated. Reflecting on her life as a prostitute, the comfortable life she had and the fact that she had had to give all that up just in the name of trying to be a respectable woman and finally gets deceived, she comes to a gruesome conclusion that it is better to be a successful prostitute than a misled saint.

Firdaus' problems come to a head. She re-enters prostitution and becomes not only the most expensive prostitute but also the most successful. The success of Firdaus catches the attention of influential people such as the head of state and even Marzouk, a dangerous pimp, who makes life unbearable for

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her. Marzouk threatens and sleeps with her and even takes the lion's share of whatever she earns as a prostitute. Firdaus tries to emancipate herself from the shackles of this pimp but discovers rather surprisingly that he is well-connected than she is. She promises never to allow him to continue to manipulate her so she decides to quit prostitution, leave her apartment and search for a job with her certificates. Marzouk is opposed to the idea. This generates quarrel and finally a fight in which Firdaus kills Marzouk. The killing of Marzouk is the climactic moment of the story.

From here, the story unfolds steadily towards the denouement. She again enters the street, which has become a place of refuge for her, and immediately a prince approaches her and offers three thousand dollars to sleep with her. After the romance, she frightens him by not only telling him of her deadly nature but also by slapping him. Terrified, he calls the police and she is arrested. Just before her execution, she tells El Saadawi that she is excited that she has used the weapon of 'truth' to strike a lethal blow at every form of oppression perpetuated by men. This is why she is not dejected that she is to be executed.

1.10 Methodology

1.10.1 Method of analysis

This study adopts a stylistic approach to the analysis of the novel. Stylistics defies a single definition. Azar et al. (2012) define it as the study of variation in texts. Similarly, to Leech and Short (2007:7), 'Stylistics is the (linguistic) study of style'. According to Simpson (2004:2), 'Stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language'. Stylistics is a sub-discipline of language that mediates between linguistics and

literary criticism (Zhang, 2010; Leech & Short, 2007) because it integrates the concerns of both disciplines. Whereas linguists are concerned with why writers make certain linguistic choices, literary critics are interested in how chosen linguistic forms are used for aesthetic effects. The work of stylistics then is 'to relate the critic's concern of aesthetic appreciation with the linguist's concern of linguistic description' (Leech & Short, 2007:11). Ayodabo (2013) aptly expresses this when he postulates that stylistics is not only concerned with the description of linguistic features but also with their functional significance which informs the interpretation. Ayodabo's (2013) submission re-echoes Simpson's (1993:3) claim that in 'any serious attempt to engage with the meaning of a particular text, there must be some concomitant engagement with the language of that text.' Stylistics, therefore, provides the means for a systematic exploration of a writer's creative or artistic use of language to encode meaning, with emphasis on the deviant and recurrent linguistic structures which highlight the uniqueness of the language.

Stylistic analysis is purposive in that stylisticians subject to scrutiny the aspects of the language that are of relevance to them. These stylistically relevant forms are isolated, described and interpreted with reference to their context of usage (Ayodabo, 2013). It must be mentioned that the analyst's intuition is crucial in the interpretation, but the intuition finds support in the linguistic forms that are being analysed. We, therefore, appreciate the fact that stylistic analysis is a complex enterprise that involves the isolation of salient linguistic forms, their description and finally their interpretation in relation to their context of usage to give credence to our intuitions about texts. By inference, stylistics is not interested in only the question of *what* linguistic

forms are used but also *why* and *how* they are used. It is in light of this that we find Leech's (1991:57) piece of advice that '[A]nyone who wishes to investigate the significance and value of a work of art must concentrate on the element of interest and surprise, rather than on the automatic pattern' illuminating. Consequently, in this stylistic study, stress is laid on the linguistic structures which are given salience over and above others by the character-narrator because however bizarre they may appear, their 'apparently unnatural, aberrant, even nonsensical [form or usage] is justified by [their] significance at some deeper level of interpretation' (p.56). Simpson (2004:4), commenting on stylistic analysis, states that it is *rigorous, retrievable* and *replicable*. What he means is that the methodological approach of stylistics should be explicit, systematic and verifiable or testable.

As already stated, in a stylistic analysis, the emphasis is on the linguistic structures used for special effects. Such structures are said to have been foregrounded (Acquah, 2010; Zhang, 2010; Yankson, 2007; Simpson, 2004; Miall and Kuiken, 1994; Leech, 1991). Foregrounding may be conceptualized as a deviation from the norm or as a recurrent of linguistic forms. Yankson (2007:3) explains that any deviation from the norm which brings the writer's message to the 'forecourt of the reader's attention' is the foreground. However, Simpson (2004) admits that what constitutes the norm is hard to define because it is relative. I argue here that the deviation could be seen as any stylistically motivated departure from the norm, where the norm is to be understood as the set of rules that members of a speech community have come to accept as being responsible for the well-formedness and appropriacy of linguistic expressions in discourse situations. Construed this way, the normal

language code, the language from which the foreground departs, becomes the background. The deviation may take the form of a violation of the category or selection restriction rule or recurrence of similar linguistic structures.

In this study, foregrounding is defined broadly as a technique a writer employs to deliberately bestow on a linguistic feature stylistic significance by making it weird, either through linguistic deviation or pattern repetition, so that its strangeness draws the attention of the reader to it while at the same time forcing him or her to slacken the pace of reading in order to pay extraordinary attention to it and to eventually draw on his power of inference to decode its meaning or functional value. It is therefore understandable why in this study we are interested in the linguistic structures foregrounded by the focalizer-narrator.

Stylistics has been employed by a number of scholars to analyse literary texts (e.g. Halliday, 1971; Leech, 1991; Simpson, 2004; Semino & Short, 2004; Leech & Short, 2007; Semino, 2014). The aim of these scholars has been to argue that a language-based approach to literary analysis offers a greater insight into literary texts and also to draw attention to the connection between linguistic and literary analyses. On the significance of stylistics, Leech and Short (2007:288) write:

> If stylistics is to be of any practical benefit, it must be
> because it helps others to understand and appreciate
> particular texts in detail and to perform their own analysis
> of other texts.

Discussing the pedagogical significance of stylistic analysis of literary texts, Cummings and Simmons (1983:xv) state that 'the student will come to

appreciate literature more, as, through stylistics, he learns to talk about it more articulately.' Carter (1996:5) adds that "stylistics provides students with a method of scrutinizing texts, 'a way in' to a text, opening up starting points for fuller interpretation."

Despite these, stylistics has come under severe criticisms (*See* McIntyre, 2012; Leech & Short, 2007; Simpson, 2004). I shall provide a summary of the arguments. Lecercle (1993), cited in Simpson (2004), argued that people do not really know the meaning of stylistics and do not even care to know. He further argued that stylistics is ailing, waning and its popularity is fading into distant memory. Contrary to this, Simpson (2004) argues that Lecercle's prophecy of doom for stylistics is unfounded because the popularity of stylistics is on the ascendency. He states that the proliferation of textbooks and research works on stylistics bears testimony to this. The popularity of stylistics is also noted in the existence of journals on stylistics such as *Language and Literature*, *Style* and *Literary Semantics* as well as the growing number of members of the *Poetics and Linguistics Association* (PALA).

Again, it is asserted by some scholars that stylistics is solely concerned with meaning and is, therefore, analogous to thematic analysis; hence, it is unnecessary. In reply to this, it could be said that definitions of stylistics all emphasize the primacy of language because it is from the linguistic choices that stylisticians draw meanings from texts. In effect, stylistics is as much interested in meaning as it is in language for without language, the whole enterprise of stylistics will be futile.

There are different strands of stylistics. Mention could be made of corpus stylistics (Semino & Short, 2004), pragmatic stylistics (Black, 2006), formalist

stylistics (Burke & Evers, 2014), functionalist stylistics (Canning, 2014) and pedagogical stylistics (Hall, 2014). This study draws insights from systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Refer to discussions on SFL in Chapter Two.)and therefore conceives of language as a system network which enables users to make certain linguistic choices to encode their version of reality; thus, in this study, El Saadawi's linguistic choices are analysed stylistically in relation to their context of usage to reveal how they encode both psychological and ideological points of view. The specific strand of stylistics adopted in this study is functionalist stylistics (Canning, 2014). Functionalist stylistics also draws insights from SFL and is basically concerned with the relationship between the form of language as a system and the context or situation of its production, as well as the social, cultural and political (what we may collectively call ideological) factors that impact upon its construction and reception (Canning, 2014: 46).

The choice of this strand of stylistics is justified because its focus ties in perfectly with the aims and the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of this study.

To conclude, the discussion above has characterised stylistics as a method of textual analysis, summarized the arguments regarding its application, commented on its significance in the analysis of texts, highlighted some strands of stylistics and finally justified the choice of functionalist stylistics for this study.

1.10.2 Data and analytical procedure

A narrative's plot structure consists of the exposition, point of attack, conflict, complication, climax and resolution. Data for the study consisted of

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extracts sampled from these significant episodes across the novel. Simpson's (2004) transitivity profile was adopted in selecting the data. The extracts were segmented into clauses and their transitivity patterns established. For easy identification, the clauses were numbered, using counting numbers and in some cases the lower case of the letters of the English alphabets were used together with the numbers, especially when sub-clauses were to be identified. Internal boundaries of clause complexes were indicated using two vertical strokes.

Generally, participants, processes and circumstances foregrounded were analysed. The analysis began with the isolation and description of these foregrounded elements before their discussion in relation to their context of usage. With research question one, attention was given to those linguistic patterns with ideological implications; however, concerning research question two, a lot of emphasis was laid on mental clauses as they reflect the psychology of the focalizers.

1.11 Delimitation

This study examines point of view in *Woman* from a linguistic perspective. It pays attention to questions such as *Who is the focalizer? What are the facets of focalisation? What/who is the object of perception?* And *Who is the narrator?* Though there are four planes of point of view, this study limits itself to only point of view on the ideological and the psychological planes. Extracts from some significant episodes such as the exposition, point of attack, conflict, complication, climax and resolution in the novel were taken for analysis. While some of the extracts were narratives interspersed with dialogue, others were narratives without dialogue. While Firdaus was the only narrator

considered, the focalizers were many: Firdaus herself, Firdaus' Uncle (Sheik), Sharifa, Firdaus' uncle's wife, Di'aa and Bayoumi.

1.12 Synopsis of thesis

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one, the introduction, gives the background to the study, states the research problem, spells out the purpose of the research, states the research questions to be addressed and the research assumptions. Also, it contains the significance of the study, methodological framework, analytical procedure, delimitation and synopsis of the thesis.

Chapter two reviews literature related to the study. Specifically, it examines conceptual frameworks such as point of view and transitivity and the theory of systemic functional linguistics. With regard to point of view, the theoretical formulations of narratologists such as Genette (1983), Bal (1999) and Rimmon-Kenan (2005) and those of stylisticians, namely Fowler (1986/1996) and Simpson's (1993) were reviewed. The discussion on transitivity drew on Halliday (1994) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004/2014). Again, it surveys some studies that employed transitivity as an analytical framework as well as studies on *Woman*. Chapters three and four analyse and discuss the data to answer the respective research questions. Chapter five is the concluding chapter. It summarizes the key findings and draws conclusions based on the findings. Also, it highlights the implications of the study, makes recommendations for further study and provides a general conclusion to the research.

1.13 Conclusion

The introductory chapter has given a broad overview of the study. It begins by looking at the background of the study. This is followed by the statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions and research assumptions. Moreover, it provides a brief biography of the novelist, Nawal El Saadawi, characteristics of her writings and a plot summary of the novel. Finally, it points out the significance of the study, discusses the research method and summarizes the thematic structure of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature related to the study. First, it explores narratological and linguistic approaches to the concept of point of view. Second, it discusses systemic functional linguistics, the theoretical lens through which the study is conducted, and its concept of transitivity as well as studies on *Woman at Point Zero* and other studies that employed the transitivity model as the analytical tool. The aim is to situate the study within the on-going discourse on narrative perspective, demonstrate how transitivity is used to analyse literary texts, point out the areas of convergence and divergence between the current study and the existing ones and finally to highlight the relationship between point of view, linguistic choice and transitivity.

2.1 Narratological origin of point of view

According to Schmid (2010), the term 'point of view' as it relates to narration was introduced by Henry James in 1884 in the essay *The Art of Fiction* and developed in the prefaces to his novels (James, 1907/09) in order to establish the relationship between the narrator and the narrative. As a result, James paid attention to the 'method of narration in which narrative perspective is strictly tied to the epistemological constraints of a particular character' (Meister, 2009:335, cited in Ruuskanen, 2016:30) and by this James "initiated what was later theorised as the dramatic novel with its preference for 'showing' over 'telling'" (Gholami, 2013:23).

James' novelistic insights inspired Percy Lubbock (1921), who systematised James' ideas into a theory of point of view (Schmid, 2010; Ruuskanen, 2016). Focusing on the narrator's position relative to the narrative, Lubbock proposed a taxonomy of four points of view. The first is a type of narration with an authorial and a prominent narrator; the second is a first person narration; the third is a third-person narration told from a character's perspective; and the fourth is also a third-person narration told from an outsider's point of view. These theorizations raised pertinent questions bordering on the objectivism and the subjectivism of the narrator and most importantly the question of whether the character whose consciousness orients the narrative is the same as the character that narrates the story. These questions opened the narratological floodgate for diverse theoretical and conceptual postulations on point of view.

2.2 Narratological approaches to point of view

I consider particularly Gerard Genette's (1983) approach to point of view. The reason is that his introduction of the term *focalization* marks a watershed in narratology, as far as theoretical postulations on the concept are concerned. His approach is considered in relation to those of Bal (1999) and Rimmon-Kenan (2005) which are revisions of Genette's. According to Genette (1983:186): theoretical works on this subject [i.e. point of view]...suffer from a regrettable confusion between what I call here *mood* and *voice*, a confusion...between the question...*who sees?* and the question *who speaks?* He added that it is not "legitimate" to conflate such distinctions "under the single category of 'point of view'" (p.188). His argument is that perspective and narration and thus the agent *who sees* the events and the one *who tells* what is seen are not the same; therefore, the theoretical distinction between

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them needs to be made. He introduced the term *focalization* to refer to the perspective or angle from which the narrative is told, arguing that the term is abstract and free from the visual connotations of the existing terms: *vision*, *field* and *point of view*.

He distinguishes three types of focalization: *zero focalization* or *non-focalization*, *internal focalization* and *external focalization* (pp. 189-190). A *zero focalized* or *non-focalized* narrative has an omniscient narrator who knows and says more than any other character. With *internal focalization*, the narrator says just what a particular character knows. This type of focalization may be *fixed*, *variable* or *multiple*. An external focalization has a narrator that says less than what a given character knows. The narrator has no access to the inner world of the character.

Genette's concept of focalization was modified by Miekal Bal (1999). She identified the *focalizer* and the *focalized* as the two agents in the focalization process. The focalizer is the agent whose perceptions are related to the narratee while the focalized is the object of the focalizer's perception. The focalizer's perception of the focalized is influenced by his position with respect to the focalized, his previous knowledge and his attitude to the focalized. All these impact on the kind of picture the focalizer presents about the focalized. Like Genette, she identified both *internal* and *external focalization*. Narratives with internal focalization have a character as the vehicle of focalisation. Such a focalizer is called a *character-bound focalizer*. Internal focalization usually occurs in first-person narratives. Where focalization lies with an invisible agent outside the story, we have external focalisation.

Following Bal (1999), Rimmon-Kenan (2005) reformulates the concept of focalization. She takes the discussion of the 'facets of focalization' (p.79) as her point of departure. The *perceptual*, *psychological* and *ideological facets* are discussed using two parameters, namely the focalizer's position relative to the narrative and the degree of persistence. The perceptual facet is determined by spatio-temporality and it relates to the sensory range of the focalizer. That is, it refers to what the focalizer sees, hears, smells etc. Spatially and in relation to external focalization, the focalizer is positioned above the events and therefore perceives them with the bird's eye view. The external focalizer therefore has a panoramic or simultaneous view of events. However, with internal focalization, the narrative is from the limited viewpoint of an observer. Temporally, while external focalization is *panchronic*, internal focalization is *synchronic* (p.80).

The psychological facet deals with what the focalizer thinks and feels about the focalized. Put differently, it concerns 'the cognitive and the emotive orientations of the focalizer towards the focalized (p.81). The cognitive component is built on the opposition between 'unrestricted knowledge' and 'restricted knowledge' *vis-à-vis* external and internal focalization. The external focalizer has unrestricted knowledge about the focalized; thus, he or she is omniscient. The internal focalizer's knowledge of the story is restricted as he or she does not know everything about the story. The emotive component is anchored in the opposition between 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' (p.82). External focalisation is characterised by an emotionally distal or detached and unbiased presentation of the focalized. The focalizer-narrator, to a very large extent, refrains from injecting his or her feelings and

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comments into the story and presents the events as they occur. However, internal focalization is coloured by the character-narrator's feelings and opinions about people and events as well as the revelation of the mental state of the focalized, if human. Thus, while internal focalization is subjective, external focalization is objective.

The ideological facet basically refers to the focalizer's conceptualised worldview upon which s/he evaluates the events and the characters in the story. In other words, it refers to a set of 'norms of the text' (p.83) which are presented through the dominant perspective of the focalizer. The focalizer-narrator's ideology is deemed authoritative that it subordinates other emerging ideologies which are evaluated with reference to this authoritative ideology, yet there are cases where the focalizer-narrator's authoritative or dominant ideology allows for multiplicity or plurality of ideologies.

We gather from the exposition above that a study of focalization needs to address the following questions: 'Who is the focalizer and what/who does he focalize?' 'What is the position of the focalizer in relation to the story?' 'How is the focalization done?' 'What is the focalizer's attitude towards the focalized?' and finally 'How does the focalizer present the object of his/her perception based on his worldview?'

2.2.1 Critique

The distinction Genette made is an attempt to dispel "the confusion between perspective and narration which often occurs when 'point of view' or similar terms are used" (Rimmon-Kenan, 2005:74) and to set in perspective a model for a theoretical discussion of point of view and related narratorial terminologies. It is observed by Lorente (1996) that since Genette's

introduction of the term 'focalization' and his disassociation of the focalizer from the narrative voice/narrator, scholars have reviewed his stance. He, however, laments that this has unfortunately led to some confusions as new terminologies which are considered by scholars as seemingly the better substitutes for Genette's term have failed to achieve the typological neatness their users intended for them. Echoing Nelles (1990), Lorente (1996) attributes the confusion to lack of proper understanding of Genette's original term of focalization.   Further, he argues that the focalization-narration debate sanctions the existence of two dichotomous traditions, namely the 'Anglo-American studies on point of view' and 'Genette's narratorial category of focalization' (*ibid*, p.64).

Some of the claims Genette made need to be interrogated. He argues that the study of point of view should focus on focalization or the perspective from which events are narrated. By this claim, he clearly downplays the role of the narrator. But it is doubtful how focalization can be studied without the narrator since the former is embedded in the narration; hence, it is through the examination of the narrative process that the perspective from which it is related could be discussed. This seems to be the position of McIntyre (2006) when he argues that 'to study focalization without considering the narrator ('who speaks') would seem to be a logical impossibility' (p.36).

Also, Genette substitutes the term 'focalization' for 'point of view' and 'vision' because of the latter's visual connotations. However, focalization is not free from visual connotations either. As Rimmon-Kenan (2005:73) rightly argues, "[T]he term 'focalization' is not free from optical-photographic connotations." The reason is that focalization is a process of seeing events and

regulating or restricting narrative information from the observer's perspective. This is perhaps why Chatman (1986) argues that the introduction of the term *focalization* does not resolve the problem Genette identifies in *point of view* because it retains the visual connotations of point of view. Finally, there is a problem with Genette's 'zero focalization'. Although the term obviously implies the non-existence of a focalizer, he argues that it has an 'omniscient focalizer'. The term therefore appears contradictory.

Finally, in Bal's model, the narrator could assume the role of the focalizer and she calls such a narrator the *focalizer-narrator*. This is worrying in that she appears to rehearse the very problem Genette tries to solve. Chatman (1986:194-5), cited in Ruuskanen (2016:38), puts it better when he argues that the focalizer-narrator blurs the distinction with which Genette himself cleared up the traditional confusion…between voice and point of view – between Who speaks? and Who sees?

2.3 Stylistic/linguistic approaches to point of view

Stylisticians have developed linguistic frameworks to account for point of view in narratives. Such frameworks spell out the linguistic mechanisms which serve as criteria for identifying and elucidating typologies of narratives and narrative perspectives. The seminal approaches of Roger Fowler (1996) and Paul Simpson (1993) to point of view are reviewed because their interpersonal nature relates intimately to the theory underpinning this study. Besides, they incorporate Genette's (1983) concept of *focalization*. All these make them ideal models for this study which engages in a linguistic exploration of narrative perspective.

Fowler's (1996) interpersonal approach to point of view is an elaboration of Uspensky's (1973) model. Uspensky identified 'planes' of points of view, namely the ideological, psychological, spatio-temporal and phraseological planes of points of view. Thus, he established a kind of a 'quadruple' system for analysing point of view. Phraseology point of view 'includes discussions of how characters are named and of the representation of a character's speech' (p.162).

Ideology is 'simply the system of beliefs, values and categories by reference to which a person or a society comprehends the world' (p.165). Point of view on the ideological plane, therefore, refers how these beliefs, assumptions and value systems are 'communicated by the language of the text' (p.165). Fowler maintains that the modal system is used to express ideology directly or indirectly in narratives and proceeds to classify the modal expressions responsible for the expression of ideology into *modal auxiliaries* (e.g. may, might, must etc.), *modal adverbs or sentence adverbs* (e.g. certainly, probably, perhaps etc.), *evaluative adjectives and adverbs* (e.g. lucky, luckily, fortunate, regrettably etc.), *verbs of knowledge*, *prediction and evaluation* (e.g. seem, believe, guess etc.) and *generic sentences* (pp.166-7).

Spatial point of view 'corresponds to viewing position in the visual arts' (p.162). That is, it is the relationship between the events and the focalizer in terms of space. It concerns whether the focalizer considers the events proximal to or distal from him or her. Temporal point of view, on the other hand, refers to 'the impression which a reader gains of events moving rapidly or slowing, in a continuous chain or isolated segments' (Fowler, 1986:127). Put differently, it is the perception of how the time of the events interacts with the

time of narration as in whether the event time is anterior to, posterior to or simultaneous with the narration time. In fact, spatial and temporal points of view are interwoven in that the narration of events takes into consideration simultaneously the location and time of the events; thus, the unitary term spatio-temporal point of view.

Spatio-temporal point of view is rendered through the use of deixis. Lyons (1979:637) defines deixis as follows:

By deixis is meant the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred to, in relation to the spatio-temporal context created and sustained by the act of utterance and the participation in it, typically, of a single speaker and at least one addressee.

The critical point here is that deixis is basically concerned with how proximal or distal an object or event is to the deictic centre in relation to time and space. The deictic centre is the 'zero point' (*ibid*) from where the 'reader takes a cognitive stance within the world of the narrative and interprets [events and objects] from that perspective' (Segal, 1995:15). Two issues are discernible here: one, the reader establishes some assumptions about events, activities, objects etc. and draws inference in relation to the 'here-and-now' of the narrative in order to interpret them; and two, the deictic centre refers to the narrative speaker and his 'here-and-now' in the fictional world. Sometimes, the interpretation of events is from the perspective of others. This is often done through what is termed 'deictic projection' (Stockwell, 2002:43). A speaker projects a deictic centre when he or she recognises the spatio-temporal point of view of others, mainly the listener, and interprets events from the listener's perspective.

Pure spatial and temporal deictic linguistic terms are demonstrative adverbs '*here* and *there*' and '*now* and *then*' respectively. The significance of tense as a temporal deixis in narratives has been established by studies such as Wiebe (1994), Carmona (2001) and Ribera (2007). For instance, Carmona (2001: 226), citing Zydatiss (1986) and others, argues that the present perfect tense is used to highlight topicalised sentences while 'the simple past is used to describe details'.

Point of view on the psychological plane refers to the perspective from which a narrative is told. It 'concerns the question of who is presented as the observer of the events of a narrative, whether the narrator or a participating character' (Fowler, 1996:169). Spatio-temporal point of view is subsumed under psychological point of view. The reason is that events are focalized at a particular place and time and presented in a particular way based on the focalizer's cognitive and emotive orientations to them. Thus, a discussion of psychological point of view takes cognisance of spatio-temporality and vice versa.

Fowler's model develops the Uspenskian distinction of internal and external narration further, subcategorizing them as *Internal Narration Type A and B* and *External Narration Type C and D* based on the linguistic features predominant in the narratives. With Type A, the story is narrated from the perspective of a character who usually expresses his feelings about, opinion on and evaluations of events and characters in the narrative. The narrative is coloured with referential first-person pronouns, especially *I*, present tense, modal expressions of judgement and opinions, *verba sentiendi*(i.e. verbs of physical and mental perception) that reveals one's feelings and thoughts and

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transitivity which encodes ideology (p.171). It is 'internal and wholly subjective' (p.174). An *Internal Type B* narrative is presented from the perspective of a narrator outside the story, but who is privy to the feelings and thoughts of the characters. The narrator is omniscient. It is marked by the preponderance of '*verba sentiendi*, detailing intentions, emotions and thoughts' (p.173). That is, '[t]o a greater or lesser degree, the author gives an account of the mental processes, feelings, and perceptions of the characters' (*ibid*).

In external narratives, events are related and characters described 'from a position outside of any of the protagonists' consciousness' (p.170). Its basic characteristic is the 'avoidance of any account of the thoughts or feelings of characters' (p.177). External narration is subcategorised into Type C and D. Fowler notes that in Type C, the narrator declines to report the characters' inner (mental) processes as well as judge or evaluate their actions; hence, the narrative is the most impersonal as the narrator purports to be objective. Linguistically, it is characterised by the general absence of *verba sentiendi* and evaluative modalities. It is associated 'with epic among the older literatures' and in the modern era 'with news reporting' (p. 177).

Finally, Type D is the second type of external narration. However, unlike Type C which is highly impersonal; with Type D, the narrator injects his opinions or impressions into the narrative. As Fowler puts it, 'the persona of the narrator is highlighted, perhaps by the first-person pronouns, and certainly by explicit modality' (p.178). This creates an impression that the narrator actually controls the story and also has 'definite views on the world at large…and on the actions and characters in the story (*ibid*). Type D is replete

with non-factive words or what Uspensky calls *words of estrangement*. They include *apparently, evidently, perhaps, as if, it seemed*, as well as *metaphors* and other *comparisons*. They make the narrator appear external to the characters because they indicate that the narrator has no direct access to the feelings and thoughts of the characters so what is presented may be viewed as an attempt to reconstruct the psychological states of the characters. As a result, even when *verba sentiendi* are used, they are suffused with "words denoting appearance or speculation: 'He **seemed** exhausted,' 'She was **probably** furious' " (Emphasis mine) (p.178).

Simpson (1993) elaborates and modifies Fowler's model, leading to the development of his modal approach to point of view based on the modal system in English, namely the *deontic*, *boulomaic*, *epistemic* and *perceptual systems*. His model makes a distinction between *Category A* and *B narratives*, using the narrator's position relative to the narrative as the parameter. A Category A narrative is in the first-person point of view and is recounted by a character within the narrative. It is analogous to Genette's *homodiegetic* narration.

Category A narratives are subdivided into *positive, negative* and *neutral* narratives. That is, a Category A narrative may be told from a positive, negative or neutral point of view. A Category A positive (A+ve) narrative is identical with Fowler's Internal Type A. Linguistically, it is characterised by the use of *verba sentiendi* and evaluative adjectives and adverbs. Also, it is generally characterized by the use of deontic and boulomaic modals which highlight the narrator's desires and opinions in relation to events and characters. Again, there is the absence of what Uspensky (1973) calls *words of*

estrangement (p.52). Category A negative (N–ve) narrative is recognised by its explicit use of epistemic and perceptive modals. Epistemic modal auxiliaries (e.g. *can*, *may*, *could*, *might* etc.), modal adverbs (e.g. *possibly*, *certainly*, *supposedly*, *allegedly* etc.), modal lexical verbs (e.g. *suppose*, *imagine*, *believe*, *assume*, *wonder* etc.), adverbs of perception (e.g. *apparently*, *clearly*, *evidently* etc.), verbs of perception (e.g. *appear*) and comparative structures relating to perception (e.g. *it looked as if…*, *it appeared to be…* p.53) are linguistic markers of this kind of narrative. A Category A narrative told from a negative point of view is thus coloured with the subjective feelings, opinions and comments of the narrator. This narrative corresponds to Fowlers' External Type D narration. Category A neutral narratives are identified by their 'complete absence of narratorial modality' (p.55). The narrator declines to comment on the events and characters and also refrains from revealing the private feelings of the characters. The narrator merely focuses on the external description of characters or provides a factual description of events. The narrator therefore appears to be objective.

Category B narratives have a third-person point of view and are related by an invisible narrator outside the story. A Category B narrative corresponds to Genette's *heterodiegetic narration* (p.51). Category B narratives are first subdivided into Category B narratives in the Narratorial and the Reflector Modes. Narratives in the former mode are related from outside the consciousness of a character by an omniscient narrator while the latter are told by a third-person narrator from the consciousness of a character within the story world.

Each of these two modes are further divided on the basis of positive, negative and neutral modalities, yielding six subcategories of Category B Narratorial positive, negative and neutral narratives on the one hand and Category B Reflector positive, negative and neutral narratives on the other hand. However, they exhibit the same linguistic characteristics. There is the foregrounding of deontic and boulomaic modalities, evaluative adjectives and adverbs and generic sentences in positively shaded narratives. However, the negatively shaded narratives make use of 'words of estrangement'. Also, the narrator does not give detailed presentation of the thoughts of characters. These make them resemble Fowler's Type D narratives. They are also similar to Category A negative narratives in the use of epistemic and perceptive modals. The Category B neutral narrative, whether in the Narratorial or Reflector mode, is marked by the absence of or minimal use of modalized language. The narrator declines from describing the thoughts and feelings of characters. It is therefore impersonal in nature. It thus corresponds to Fowler's *Type C*, Genette's *external focalization* or Rimmon-Kenan's *objective focalization* (p.62).

2.3.1 Critique

Reviewing Fowler's (1986/1996) nomenclature, McIntyre (2006) criticises Fowler because according to him, the typology that Fowler presents makes it appear as though there were no other narration types apart from those that he (Fowler) identified. McIntyre's claim appears unfounded in that he himself fails to identify other narration types that Fowler's taxonomy fails to account for. Besides, Fowler (1996) mentions in his introduction to the discussion of point of view that his illustrations 'by no means complete the range of types of

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point of view' (p.160). By inference, he admits that there may be other types of points of view and by extension types of narratives which his concept does not account for.

There are a number of issues with Fowler's model, some of which he himself observes. It is common knowledge that no text is ideologically neutral in that language is invested with ideology. That being the case, it is difficult to welcome Fowler's assertion that objectivity, neutrality and impersonality characterize Type C narrative. Fowler himself (1986:178) submits that it is 'virtually impossible to remove all modals and psychological indicators from a text'. It is surprising then why he identified a narrative type characterised by the absence of linguistic indicators of psychological point of view. The question McIntyre (2006:35) poses in relation to this narrative type is, therefore, in the right direction:

> If an otherwise purely externally focalized narrative contains just one instance of the presentation of a character's internal state, does this mean that the whole narrative should not be considered an example of external focalization? Or should we just say that the external focalization has been momentarily interrupted by an instance of internal focalization?

Fowler remains silent on these questions and this is not surprising in that any answer he provides shakes the premise of his argument for narration Type C. In fact, the fact that he even finds it difficult to cite texts which perfectly fit this framework reveals the difficulty in applying Type C to narratives.

Moreover, Fowler's claim that Internal Type A is 'internal and wholly subjective' (p.174) needs to be interrogated. The reason is that there are some narratives whose narrator is a first-person but the text itself is not highly subjective, as Fowler purports. For instance, in his review of Fowler's concept of point of view, Simpson (1993:56-62) presents a text which, though a first-person narrative, is less subjective. Thus, Fowler's account of Type A appears problematic. Not all, Fowler claims that in Type B, '[t]o a greater or lesser degree, the author gives an account of the mental processes, feelings, and perceptions of the characters' (p.173). The problem, however, is that Fowler does not account for the extent to which the author does that. Thus, we concur with Hargreaves (2010:79) that Fowler's 'framework does not focus on accounting for this 'greater or lesser degree'.

Finally, Fowler's claim that Type C is external and is associated with epic poetry is not wholly true in that epic poems make use of modals. The extract below from Virgil's great epic *The Aeneid* lends credence to my assertion:

> Of arms **I** sing and the hero, destiny's exile,
>
> Who came from the beach of Troy and was the first
>
> To make the Lavinian landfall, Italy;
>
> Who in the grip of immortal powers was pounded
>
> By land and sea to sate the **implacable** hatred
>
> Of Juno; who suffered **bitterly** in his battles

[**From Dickinson's (1961:7) translation**]

This extract is a refutation of the general characteristics of narration Type C in two senses: first, it has internal narrator indicated by the personal pronoun **I**; and two, it is not wholly objective because of its explicit use of modals

implacable and ***bitterly*** (emphasis mine) which indicate that the narrator is injecting his subjective views into the narrative.

Despite these criticisms, Fowler's model of point of view is illuminating. It particularises Uspensky's rather broad conceptualisation of point of view. But more significantly, it reveals 'that it is possible not only to identify structural categories in narratives but also to provide clear linguistic criteria for their recognition' (Simpson, 1993:39).

Simpson's model, like Fowler's, analyses point of view from a linguistic perspective. The emphasis on modalized language makes it feasible for the identification of the focalizer and tracing of shifts in narrative perspective. Also, his typology of nine points of view and by extension nine types of narratives established mainly on the following parameters – the existence or non-existence of modality and the dominant type of modality – makes precise Fowler's general account of modality within the framework of psychological point of view. However, Category B Narratorial Neutral Mode with its claim of objectivity encounters the same criticism levelled against Fowler's Type C above.

What makes these two models relevant to this study is their emphasis on linguistic choices in explicating point of view. That is, the linguistic priority of the models is consistent with the purpose of this study, which is to examine El Saadawi's linguistic choices in rendering point of view, particularly points of view on the ideological and psychological planes, in *Woman*.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The study is conducted from the theoretical perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). With insights from Saussure, the Prague School

of Linguists and the London School of Linguists, Halliday developed a new functional approach to the study of language called Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) beginning in the 1960s. Bloor and Bloor (2004:237), tracing the historical evolution of SFL, state that the Saussurian distinction 'between syntagmatic and paradigmatic dimensions' played a key role in the development of SFL. (*See* also Matthiessen et al., 2018) They added that at the heart of SFL is the Firthian concept of 'system, a paradigmatic set of choices' (p.245). In the words of Bloor and Bloor, to Firth, 'the grammar of a language is polysystemic, a system of systems' (*ibid*). This 'system of systems' is the 'concept of system network' upon which the whole theory of SFL is based. Also, the Prague School's concepts of 'Theme' and 'Rheme' are incorporated into SFL, particularly under the textual metafunction of language.

SFL, as an approach to language study, rests on the assumption that the structure of a language is related to its social functions and context of usage. As Halliday and Hasan (1989) observe, function is integrated into language: it is intrinsic to the semantic system. Taking a functional view of language, SFL theorists are concerned with the use of language in everyday social events to accomplish specific purposes such as demanding goods and services, exchanging information and establishing interpersonal relationships rather than on the structure of the language. That is, they are interested in language as a social semiotic (Halliday, 1994; Eggins, 2004). Because of this, they are more interested in 'what makes one piece of language different from another' (Butt et al., 1999:10). The emphasis on function is due to the conviction that it is through the functional use of language that meanings are made; thus, Eggins (2004:3) describes SFL as a 'functional-semantic approach to language.'

Two prominent theoretical constructs in SFL are the concept of language as a system and the metafunctions of language. SFL conceives of language as consisting of series of levels or strata, each of which is realized by specific linguistic signs or elements (Butt et al., 1999; Matthiessen, 2007). Each level is technically called a system. The system refers to the whole potential of language. But then, language consists not of a single system but a set of systems which together constitute a system network that specifies the choices available to the language user as well as the structures realizing these choices at each level of language use. Below is a diagrammatic representation of language as a system network and the realization relations between the systems as well as the contextual variables that influence language use.
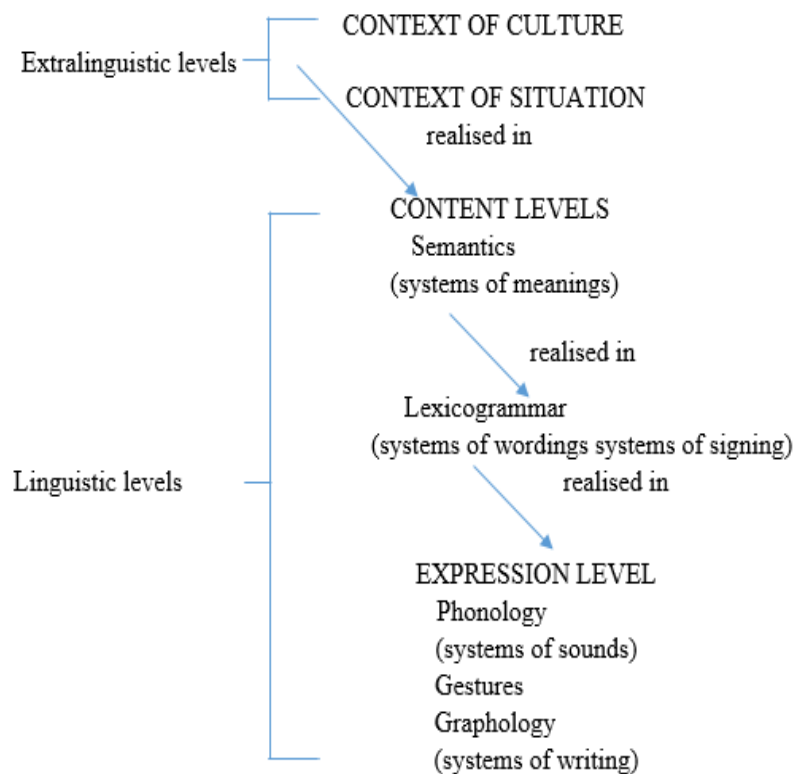
(Source: Butt et al., 1999:15)

The basic system is made up of 'an entry condition and a set of two or more signs in opposition, of which one and only one must be chosen' (Eggins, 2004:194). As its name implies, entry condition refers to the condition under which an individual enters the system to make a choice of one of the signs (Matthiessen et al., 2010) while the signs, also called 'terms' (Eggins, 2004:194), are linguistic categories that are set in opposition in the system. Below is the structure of the basic system.
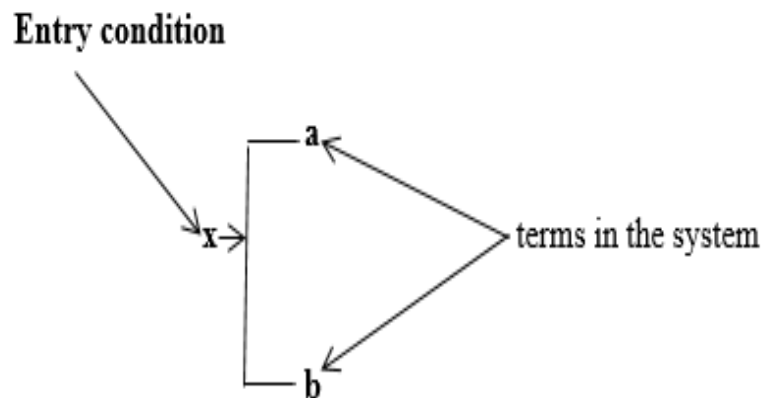
(Source: Eggins, 2004:194)

The meanings of the linguistic signs within the system are discussed with reference to two relation types: one on the horizontal axis and the other on the vertical axis. These may be referred to respectively as syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations. In a word, a linguistic sign obtains its meaning by entering into both syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations with other signs in the semiotic system. A syntagmatic relation concerns the ordering of linguistic items into meaningful structures and the function each component performs in the structure. That is, it looks at the relationship a linguistic item has with other signs that go 'before and after it' (Eggins, 2004:190). A paradigm is 'a

set of oppositions or choices in a particular context' (p. 192). A paradigmatic relation, therefore, focuses on choices that obtain within a system. Specifically, it is concerned with the choice of linguistic signs against the background of other choices that could have been made.

It is apparent that 'the basic organizing concept of the system is that of choice' (p. 196) because systemicists generally conceptualize language as 'a resource for making meaning, and meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice' (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004:23). Within the system, the choice is made from left to right on a scale of delicacy which Eggins (2004:197) defines as the '*logical priority* among choices'. The first choice made at the farthest left hand side of the system is the least delicate choice, but as the network extends to the right, the choice increases in delicacy until one reaches the final system at the right hand side where the most delicate choice is made.

The idea of choice implies that a linguistic item cannot be meaningful if there are no potential choices that one could have made. For example, we have a choice between 'peep' and 'stare' and whichever one is chosen depends on the context of situation. Systemicists would argue that the choice of 'peep' would not be meaningful if 'stare', a potential choice, did not exist. This does not, however, presuppose that the choice is a conscious act on the part of the language user.

Conceptualizing meaning as choice, systemicists prioritize paradigmatic relations and this influences how they analyse texts in that in textual analysis, they focus on the actual choices writers and speakers make against the potential choices they could have made because it is when the two have been juxtaposed that meaning can be inferred.

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2.5 Transitivity system

The transitivity system is a component of the ideational metafunction of language. It is a semantico-grammatical system for the conceptualization and encoding of our collective cognitive and physical experiences of the world. For Simpson (2004:23), 'Transitivity…refers to the way meanings are encoded in the clause and to the way different types of processes are represented in language.' Central to the transitivity system is the clause because it is the grammatical 'unit that enables us to organize the wealth of our experience, both semantically and syntactically, into manageable number of representational patterns or schemas' (Downing & Locke, 2006:123). The pattern of experience is conceptualized as a situation consisting of three components, namely the processes, participants and circumstances. In other words, the transitivity system has three components, namely the processes, participants in the processes and circumstances (Halliday, 1994; Butt et al., 1999; Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Downing & Locke, 2006) which enable us to 'explain in the most general way how the phenomena of our experiences of the world are construed as linguistic structures' (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004:178). Below is a simplified diagram of the transitivity system with its various participants, process types and circumstances.
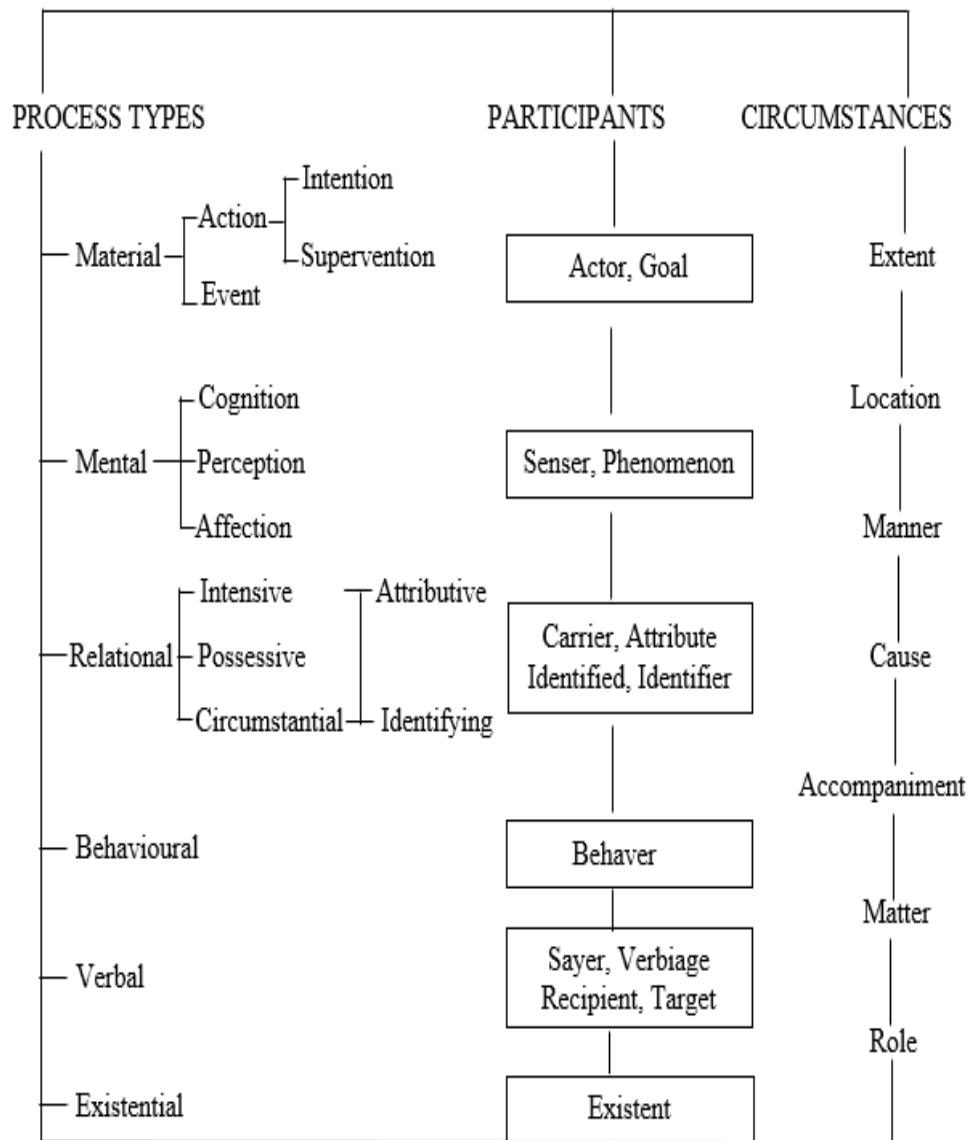
The participants are the entities, whether animate or inanimate, involved in the process. A participant may be the one who initiates an action or the one the action is directed at; the one experiencing something by either seeing or feeling it; the one who says something or the one spoken to; and may even be the one that exists. These participant roles are process specific in that their nature is predicated on the type of process in the clause. Downing and Locke (2006:126) make a distinction between 'actualized' and 'unactualized' participants. The actualized participant refers to the participant explicitly stated in the clause while the unactualised participant is implied.

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The process which is central to the system is realized by the verbal element of the clause. It may be a process of doing, stating, happening, behaving, sensing, existing or saying. As Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) put it, "Our most powerful impression of experience is that it consists of 'goings-on' - happening, doing, sensing, meaning, being and becoming" (p.106). The process determines the number and type of participant roles in the system.

There are six process types in the transitivity system: three are major and the remaining three are minor processes. The major ones are the Material, Mental and Relational processes while the minor ones are the Behavioural, Verbal and Existential processes. The material process is the first major process type. It is the process of *doing* (e.g. *James kicked the ball*.) or *happening* (e.g. *He was bitten by a snake*.) which encodes our experiences of the outer or external world such as the actions, events, happenings, the people involved in the processes as well as the circumstances under which the processes occur. Thus, it answers the question 'What did A do to B?' or 'What happened to A?' Every material process has an obligatory participant called the Actor responsible for the process, but others have an Actor and another participant called the Goal, the entity the process is directed at, extended to or that which suffers the action denoted by the process. Simpson (1993:83) distinguishes two subtypes of material processes. A material process whose Actor is animate capable of a conscious, wilful act (e.g. <u>John</u> *kicked the ball*.) is a material process of action but if the Actor is inanimate (e.g. <u>*The lake*</u> *simmered*.), the process is an event. Further, he subcategorized the action process into 'intention process' and 'supervention process'. Whereas with intention process the Actor voluntarily instigates the process or performs the

act (e.g. *The lion sprang*.), with supervention process, the process just happens outside the control of the Actor (e.g. *The boy fell over*.).

Again, in material clauses, the processes are construed as unfolding through distinct stages over some short duration. The final stage or phase which is the outcome of the process is a representation of the change the participant undergoes. The outcome may affect either the Actor of an intransitive process or the Goal of a transitive process and can be 'creative' or 'transformative'. In a creative material process clause, the Actor or Goal is thought of as being brought into existence as the process unfolds (Halliday & Matthiessen (2004:184): <u>Clouds</u> _{Actor} *formed* _{Pro: Material: Creative} or <u>He</u>_{Actor} *drew* _{Pro: Material: Creative} <u>a tree</u> _{Goal}. However, in a transformative clause, the Actor or Goal is transformed in some way as the process unfolds: <u>The ice</u> _{Actor} <u>melted</u> _{Process: Material: Transformative}. The outcome of a transformative process may elaborate, extend or enhance either the Actor (of intransitive clauses) or the Goal (of transitive clauses). It must be mentioned that while in creative clauses there is the non-existence of the Actor or Goal, but only brought into being as the process unfolds; in transformative clauses, the Actor or Goal exists before the unfolding of the process. What the process does is to change it in some conspicuous way.

Other participants associated with the material process are the *Recipient*, *Client*, *Initiator*, *Attribute*, and *Scope*. Recipient and Client are similar in that they all play a benefactive role, but while the Recipient is the one who receives something from the Actor, the Client is the entity for whom services are done. Grammatically, the Recipient role is signalled by the preposition 'to' whereas the Client role is signalled by 'for'. Another distinction is that while

Recipients generally occur in material transformative clauses, Clients occur in material creative processes. The Initiator is not the Actor but rather co-exists with the Actor and is responsible for activating the process. The Attribute is simply a quality assigned to either the Actor or the Goal. When the Attribute is a specification of the 'resultant state of the Goal,' it is called a 'resultant attribute' (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004:6): 'They stripped her <u>clean</u> of every bit of jewellery she ever had.' On the other hand, if the Attribute indicates the state of the Actor or Goal as it takes part in the process, it is termed 'depictive attribute' (*ibid*): *What - so it's not fresh here? You don't get it <u>fresh</u>.*

Finally, the Scope is a participant which is not affected by the process. Rather, it denotes the domain over which the process takes place. Though an entity whose existence is independent of the process, it may enter into different kinds of processes. As Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explain, our experiences inform us that *piano* in 'Does Hogey Carmichael play the piano?' (p.192) exists independent of the process - the act of playing piano. But then, 'piano' may enter into diverse processes: 'play the piano', 'polish the piano', 'tune the piano' etc. They conclude that in the aforementioned instances, 'Scope is the domain of the process rather than another name for the process itself' (*ibid*).

The second major process type is the mental process of sensing. It is concerned with the representation of our world of consciousness. In other words, it encodes in the grammar of the clause the experiences that go on inside us. These experiences are those of perception, cognition and affection. These constitute the three subtypes of the mental process. Perception processes are processes of perceiving: *seeing*, *noticing*, *hearing* etc.; processes

of cognition are those of *thinking*, *believing*, *understanding*; and affective processes are processes of *liking*, *wanting*, *hoping* etc. There are two inherent participants associated with the mental process: the Senser, the conscious being that perceives, likes, thinks etc, and the Phenomenon, that which is liked, perceived, sensed etc. Unlike the Senser who is a conscious being, the Phenomenon may be a thing (e.g. *The man believed <u>her explanation</u>*.), a fact (e.g. *He regretted <u>that he didn't believe her</u>*. or *He regretted <u>the fact that he didn't believe her</u>*.) or an act (e.g. *She saw <u>the animal jumping over the fence</u>*.).

An important feature of the mental process is its "ability to set up another clause 'outside' the 'mental' clause as the representation of the 'content' of consciousness" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 253). In other words, a mental process can project another clause which represents the content of our mental process of thinking, presuming, believing etc. The projected clause, also called idea clause or Idea Phenomenon, takes the form of either an indirect or reported thought (e.g. *She thought that <u>Nancy would help them</u>*.) or a direct or quoted thought(e.g. *She thought, <u>'Nancy will help them.'</u>*). The projected clause is a separate ranking clause or an independent clause in the clause complex and therefore stands in a paratactic relationship with the projecting clause. In the examples above, *She thought* is a projecting clause while *Nancy would help them* and *Nancy will help them* are projected clauses. The projected clause is different from a *Thing Phenomenon* and an *Act Phenomenon* because it is a full finite clause with its structural elements for both transitivity and mood and it also differs from a *Fact Phenomenon* because it is independent of or cannot be introduced by a 'fact-noun' such as 'fact' and 'case'.

The third major process type is the relational process. It is the process of being. This process is responsible for relating our experiences, both external (actions and events) and internal (a replay of the outer/external experiences) by either classifying or identifying them. In other words, this process establishes a relationship between two entities in which one either characterizes or identifies the other. There are three subtypes of the relational process, namely Intensive, Possessive and Circumstantial processes. An intensive process expresses a kind of 'x is a' relationship between two entities; possessive process expresses an 'x has a' relationship while circumstantial process denotes an 'x is at /in/on' etc. relationship between entities (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Simpson, 2004; Iwamoto, 2005; Bustam, 2011). These classifications are complicated because they intersect with two other modes of 'distinction between attributive and identifying processes' (Simpson, 2004:24). The intensive attributive process posits a kind of 'x carries the attribute of y' relation. Here, **y** is the entity being described or assigned an attribute. It is called the Carrier. **X** is the quality being ascribed to the Carrier. It is called the Attribute. Thus, the two participant roles in the intensive attributive relational clause are Carrier and Attribute. Whereas the Carrier is usually a nominal, the Attribute may be an adjective or a nominal which is indefinite. The process itself is irreversible. Two types of attributes are identified depending on the type of process in the relational clause. When the attribute results from the process, it is called 'resulting attribute'. Examples are 'They turned *traitors*' and 'They grew *tired*'. However, when the Attribute is thought of as coinciding with the process, it is termed a 'current attribute'. A typical example is *The students are <u>silent</u>*. Occasionally,

there appears a participant in the intensive attributive process whose role is to ascribe the Attribute to the Carrier. It is called the Attributor. An example is *The boys* in the clause <u>*The boys*</u> _{Attributor} *made* _{Process: Relational: Attributive} <u>*Joe*</u> _{Carrier} *happy* _{Attribute}. Common verbs used in attributive clauses are *be*, *seem*, *appear*, *become*, *turn*, *look* and *grew*.

A relational identifying process may be expressed as 'x defines y'. Accordingly, **x** is called the Identified while **y** which serves as **x**'s identity is the Identifier. Because the Identified and the Identifier refer to a single entity, there is a co-referential relationship between them. Also, participants in identifying processes are reversible: <u>*Charles*</u> _{Identified} <u>*is*</u> _{Process: Relational: Identifying} <u>*the president*</u> _{Identifier} and <u>*The president*</u> _{Identifier} <u>*is*</u> _{Process: Relational: Identifying} <u>*Charles*</u> _{Identified}. Some identifying intensive clauses have another participant called the *Assigner* that usually associates the Identified with the Identifier: <u>*They*</u> _{Assigner} <u>*elected*</u> _{Process: Relational: Identifying} <u>*Bob*</u> _{Identified} <u>*the chairman*</u> _{Identifier}.

Briefly, the six sub-types of the relational process may be categorized broadly into three: 'intensive attributive and identifying process,' 'possessive attributive and identifying process' and 'circumstantial attributive and identifying process'.

The behavioural process is the process of *behaving* such a *dancing*, *laughing*, *screaming* etc. Having no clearly defined characteristics of its own, it mediates between the material and the mental processes; thus, it is responsible for the physical manifestation of our processes of consciousness. Simply, a behavioural process is a process of physiological and psychological behaviour. Its key participant is the Behaver, the wilful entity that behaves. An example is <u>*Felix*</u> _{Behaver} <u>*cried*</u> _{Process: Behavioural}.

The second minor process is the verbal process. It is the process of saying and is encoded by verbs such as *tell, say, report, inform* and *ask*. It is the borderline between mental and relational processes. Basically, it has three participants: the Sayer (the one who speaks), the Recipient (the entity being addressed) and the Verbiage (what is said). The Sayer need not be a human entity; it can be anything provided it 'puts out a communicative signal (that clock, Jill, our correspondent)' (Downing & Locke, 2006:152). An example is *Mary*Sayer*told*Process: Verbal*Nancy*Recipient*the truth*Verbiage. In some verbal process clauses, there is a participant called the Target, the entity that the verbal process (of saying) is aimed at: *The teacher*Sayer *accused*Process: Verbal*Bill*Target*of stealing his notebook*Circumstance. In such instances, the accusation (e.g. of stealing his notebook), praise, blame, condemnation etc. is treated as a circumstance.

Like the mental process, the verbal process projects clauses which are representations of the 'content' of saying. The projected clause takes the form of a quoted speech (e.g. *He said, 'I am hungry.'*) or a reported speech (e.g. *He said he was hungry.*) The projected clause is functionally a secondary clause in the clause complex and it is analogous in status to the projected clause of the mental process. The projected clause may make a proposition (e.g. *Mr Deshmurkh* **said** *that some dissidents had met him* and **asked** *him whether they should vote according to their conscience or direction.*) or proposal (e.g. *Bush* **urges** *China to release crew.*) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 253-254).The Verbiage is different from a projected clause in that while the former refers to what is said and generally represents it as a class of thing, the latter represents what is said as a quote or report.

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Finally, there is the existential process which denotes that something exists. Its only participant is the Existent, that which exists. The existential clause is typically introduced by 'there', the dummy subject, followed by the verb (e.g. 'be') and the subject [in this case the Existent] and other clausal elements (e.g. circumstantial elements)' (Insaidoo, 2013:205). The Existent may be any phenomenon or entity, ranging from conscious beings to abstract entities like fact. An example is: *There is* _{Process: Existential} *a dead man* _{Existent} *in the room* _{Circumstance}.

The circumstantial roles include those of time, place, manner, reason, behalf etc. These are peripheral roles because they are not directly involved in the semantic configuration of the participants and processes in the transitive system. They are chiefly realized by adverbial and prepositional phrases.

Apart from the typical means of encoding our experiences described above, nominalized structures may encode them. Nominalization realizes processes, attributes and circumstances as entities or concepts (by means of abstract nouns). This means of encoding experiences is called 'grammatical metaphor' (*See*Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004/2014; Downing & Locke, 2006). Put differently, grammatical metaphor, otherwise known as ideational metaphor, is an alternative mode of encoding our experiences which highlight our version of reality. Grammatical metaphors have two consequences: one, the loss of human agency because it is replaced by an abstract entity which is analogous to the original agent; and two, there is an increase in lexical density. The following are some examples: (a) 'X burst out laughing suddenly' and (b) There was a sudden burst of laughter' (Downing & Locke, 2006:163/4). Here,

the grammatical metaphor of 'b' converts the Behavioural process of 'a' into an Existential process.

The transitivity system which encodes our collective experiences of the world is built on the concept of choice. It means that speakers make systematic choices to represent both their inner and outer experiences of the world. This is expressed at the level of the clause. Similarly, novelists regulate narratorial information not only in choosing what to present but also how to present it by exploiting the choices in the linguistic repertoire in rendering narrative perspective. As Simpson (2004:26) opines, 'The general point is that transitivity offers systematic choice, and any particular textual configuration is only one, perhaps strategically motivated option from a pool of possible textual configurations.' Therefore, a transitivity analysis of the linguistic choices of narrators will reveal the perspectives from which events are narrated as well as the subtle meanings the writer intends to communicate through the narrators.

2.6 A survey of previous studies that employed the transitivity system

2.6.1 Azar and Yazdchi (2012)

Azar and Yazdchi (2012) analysed the character of the heroine *Maria* of James Joyce's *Clay* using the transitivity model. The aim was to validate the equation of Maria's character with that of Holy Virgin Mary by some scholars. The study revealed the following: one, the material process clauses reveal Maria is favoured by people; two, the behavioural and relational clauses do not only cast her as a joyful character but also demonstrate her childish obsession with her cloak; three, the mental processes construct Maria as a

reflective person; and finally, the absence of negative cognitive clauses underscores the fact that she holds no ill feelings towards anyone.

Some stylistic techniques were also identified. One is the technique of assigning agency to Maria's body parts. Simpson (2004) calls this technique the *meronymic agency*. An example is <u>*The tip of her nose*</u> *met the tip of her chin*. Its significance, they assert, is to show that Maria has no control over her own body. This lends credence to Halliday's (1971) claim that the meronymic agency shows ineffectiveness (Simpson, 2004; Mwinlaaru, 2012a). The other is the use of goal-less material process clauses. Examples are *She went* and *She stood* (p. 1053). This stresses the fact that though Maria is the Actor, her actions do not affect anyone or anything. The study concludes that Maria's good nature authenticates critics' argument that she is comparable to Blessed Virgin Mary.

Significantly, the study demonstrates how the analysis of the linguistic choices of a writer may reveal the subtle meanings of the text and provide evidence for the intuitive-based construction of characters by readers and scholars alike.

2.6.2 Nguyen (2012)

Nguyen (2012) studied the personality of the 'Heroic Mother,' the eponymous heroine of Hoa Pham's *Heroic Mother,* through a systematic analysis of her transitivity profile. The analysis is in three parts: Part 1, 2 and 3. The divisions are reflective of the transformations the Heroic Mother undergoes.

In Part 1, Nguyen notes that the emphasis on participants, especially "the city or the environment such as 'the locals,' 'the kids,' 'the green of the lake'

and 'the traffic'" (p.89) shows that the centrality of the main character is not foregrounded and the use of circumstantial elements could be seen as an invitation of the reader to appreciate the character's society in order to better understand the Heroic Mother's reactions to her society.

Again, in Part 2, Nguyen highlights that the verbal process *They say it* (2a, p.92), outside the dialogue between her and other family members, is her family members' assessment of her state of mind: they think *[S]he is a little crazy* (p.89); therefore, they avoid conversations with her, making her existence characterized by loneliness. Also, the dominance of mental and verbal processes implies that the main character does not reserve her concerns but voices them as pieces of advice to her granddaughter.

Part 3 discusses the character transformation the Heroic Mother undergoes by comparing her past and present lives. One conclusion is that she is a 'dominant' participant in this section, accounting for 61% of 62 processes isolated. Moreover, mental processes (e.g. *I remembered*, 24a), relational processes (e. g. *I wasn't as mad as…, 24e*), verbal process (e.g. 51b, *What I can say about the world*.) and material processes (e.g. *I [enacted] out the great epics*.) (p. 90) which are in the past reflect her exploits in the past which stand in marked 'contrast to her position on the side-lines in the present activities' (*ibid*). Finally, the negative attributes *mad*, *crazy* and *scared* that she carries in relational process clauses reflect her stereotypical portrayal by her relatives. But since she claims sanity by referring to herself as 'a kindly grandmother', the negative attributes should be construed as the failure of her relatives to fathom the *raison d'être* behind her queer mannerisms.

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It should be noted that the discrepancy in the transitivity patterns of the three parts, namely Part 1, 2 and 3, which delineate the character of the Heroic Mother, supports the claim by systemicists that linguistic choices are stylistically foregrounded and contextually conditioned.

2.6.3 Gallardo (2006)

In *Verbal Hygiene*, Deborah Cameron (1995) asserts that Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* thematically concerns both social class and gender. With this as a point of departure, Gallardo (2006) investigates gender issues in the play from a systemic functional perspective, focusing on how characters – Henry Higgins and Eliza Doolittle – are cast.   Data were mainly drawn from three dialogues extracted from Acts II, IV and V.

The analysis concentrated on the major process types, namely Material, Mental and Relational processes. Gallardo observed that Higgins is a dominant Actor of material clauses with processes realized by 'do', 'make' and 'teach'. While clauses with 'do' (e.g. *I go my way and **do** my work without...*) highlight Higgins' 'confidence, professional-oriented mindset and independence' and insensitivity (p.742); those with 'make' (*e.g. I shall **make** a duchess of this draggletailed guttersnipe [i.e. Eliza]*) and 'teach' (e.g. *He said he could **teach** me, p. 744*) reflect his capability and professional status respectively. It is found out that the Mental clauses (e.g. ***I** care for life, for humanity…What else **can** anyone **ask*** (p. 747). indicate that he conceptualizes the world from a public perspective and thus seeks social progress while his arrogance is also evident in the Relational processes such as *…I **have** my own soul: my own spark of divine fire* (p. 754).

Eliza, on the other hand, is cast in future material clauses *I'll **teach** phonetics* and *I'll **advertise** in the paper* (p. 711) which present her as an ineffectual and unreliable character. Also, unlike Higgins, her actions seem to be fuelled by her negative emotions such as anger as exemplified by the following clauses: *[**snatching** up the slippers, and **hurling** them at him…]*(p. 741). Finally, Gallardo finds that Eliza's transitivity profile indicates her desire to be cared for. Typical examples are the Mental processes *I want to be a lady…* and *I won't care for anybody that doesn't care for me*. This desire transforms her: she becomes bold.

The study concluded that 'the male's characteristics portray men concerned with rational matters while the female character represents women as being more concerned with the emotional side in their relationships' (p. 735).

2.6.4 Breem (2005)

Breem's study (2005) analyses point of view in Alasdair Gray's *The Star* using Berry's (1975) version of the transitivity model to raise the reader's awareness of Cameron's (the main character's) poverty, loneliness and sense of neglect. The analysis is in three sections labelled as Extract One, Extract Two and Extract Three.

Extract One focuses on Cameron's imagination of and search for the fallen stars as well as the neglect he suffers at the hands of his parents. The participant roles, process types and circumstances make interesting revelation about Cameron. For instance, the circumstantial elements accompanying the processes in *He slipped through the lobby…* and *He hurried down three flights…* (p. 41) present Cameron as a focused and an energetic child actively engaged in a search for the star. Also, the neglect Cameron suffers at home at

the hands of his parents is foregrounded by the following clauses relating to his parents: *[He] filled in a football coupon* and *...mother continued ironing under the pulley...* (p. 41). Cameron's cognitive processes *thinks*, *hears*, *sees* and *knows* construct him as an imaginative child as he thinks the glass marble he has discovered is a real star. Also, they help to situate him in an idealized world. These experiences are further highlighted by the second extract where his experiences with the star and his emotional states are foregrounded.

In Extract Two, attention is focused on Cameron's activities. Typical material clauses like *He picked it up*, *He put it in his pocket...* and *He brought it close to his eyes* (p. 46) highlight his energetic nature, foreground his agency and highlight the close relationship between him and his star. We note a transformation in Cameron between Extract One and Two: whereas in the former, he is so lonely, he finds companionship and comfort in his star in the latter.

Extract Three explores Cameron's experiences at school, with particular emphasis on his star and teacher. While the material (e.g. *...he brought out the star*) and the cognitive (e.g. *...He looked [at it]*) clauses highlight the intimacy between him and his star and his detachment from class activities, the verbal clauses *Marbles are for the playground, not the classroom* and *You'd better give it to me* attributed to the teacher reveal the asymmetrical power relations between the teacher and Cameron as well as the 'maltreatment on the teacher's side' (p. 50).

An important stylistic technique Breem identified is the placement of some inanimate entities at the subject position as Actors of material processes as in *A star had fallen...* and *[T]he third fell...* (p. 41). The general conclusions

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drawn are: one, a transitivity analysis provides linguistic support for intuitions about texts; two, Cameron is an imaginative child; and three, Cameron's world is interrupted by his teacher.

Breem's study is significant. It indicates how a linguistic analysis of literary texts provides evidence to support our intuitive judgements about characters and events in literary texts. However, his failure to comment on circumstantial elements which establish a spatial relationship between the star and its environment on the one hand and between Cameron and his class on the other makes it difficult for him to clearly link Cameron's and the Star's processes to their attending circumstantial elements.

2.7 Some studies on Woman at Point Zero

Studies on *Woman at Point Zero* have been biased towards its thematic concerns and portrayal of the female protagonist, Firdaus. Generally, they pay attention to the various forms of oppressive conditions Firdaus, especially, and other female characters undergo, the role of religion and culture in the oppression of women and the attempts by the oppressed women to liberate themselves. It must be mentioned that where studies examined *Woman at Point Zero* and other narratives, only the discussion or analysis on the former is reviewed.

2.7.1 Gilio (2007)

Applying the postcolonial theory of the subaltern, Gilio (2007) studied the primary narrators of El Saadawi's works, namely *Woman at Point Zero*, *The Fall of the Imam* and *The Innocence of the Devil*. For consistency, only Sherif Hetata's translations were used. The study aimed, first, at finding out the degree of the silencing of these narrators – Firdaus (of *Woman at Point Zero*),

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Bint Allah (of *The Fall of the Imam*) and Ganat (of *The Innocence of the Devil*). Second, it sought to find out whether they subscribe to Leitch's (2001:2194) idea of the ambiguous status of the 'subaltern'. The import is to answer Spivak's question: 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'

Thematically, the analysis on *Woman* is in two sections: the first concentrates on Firdaus' oppression and her aversion for men and the second explores the killing of Marzouk. She finds that Firdaus' burning loathness for men is the direct corollary of different forms of maltreatment, oppression and marginalisation she experienced from childhood to adulthood.

The problem with the study is that though the analysis focuses on the silencing and subjugation of Firdaus, it is largely silent on her ambiguous status as the analysis fails to highlight her challenge to patriarchy or the 'silencing' structures. Though the conclusion that the narrators are 'silenced in...different ways' (p. 16) is valid, it fails to answer Spivak's question, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' Thus, Gilio is unable to clearly point out the ambiguous status of the narrators, particularly Firdaus.

2.7.2 Issaka (2010)

Issaka (2010) examined the situation of women in patriarchal societies. From a feminist perspective, the study aimed at finding out if women are considered inferior to men and whether women's consent is regarded as significant in Islamic marriages. Also, it sought to establish the relationship between religion on the one hand and polygamy, power, sex etc. on the other hand.

The study revealed that in patriarchal Islamic societies, there is the thwarting of Islamic religious doctrines by men to 'oppress' and 'restrict'

women. This observation is consistent with the findings of both Ayalew (2012) and Nadaf (2015). Also, it is shown that Quranic teachings emphasise equity for both sexes; therefore, the negative treatment of women is against the Quran. The study again indicates the existence of forced marriages in Islamic societies. That is, women's consent is not treated as significant in the contraction of marriage. Moreover, polygamy is sanctioned by religion. Equally important is the observation that women in Islamic societies are not regarded as equal to men. This is responsible for the discrimination against women. This conclusion is confirmed by both Ayalew (2012) and Nadaf (2015).

2.7.3 Fwangyil (2012)

Fwangyil (2012) makes a thematic analysis of the novel, focusing on the varying degrees of oppression to which women and particularly Firdaus are subjected and the measures they take to disentangle themselves from them. The analysis proper is divided into six sections with the following headings: *Infancy*, *Childhood*, *Adulthood*, *Cultural and Religious Beliefs*, *Gender Violence throughout a Woman's Life* and *Effects of Abuse and Violence on Women and Children*. She observed that from infancy to adulthood, Firdaus underwent different forms of maltreatments such as discrimination and sexual and physical abuse. Both have physical and psychological effects on her.

Besides, it examined the relationship between marriage and prostitution and drew the following conclusions: first, male chauvinism inhibits the progress of women; second, oppression is sanctioned by religion; and third, the subjugation of women is a 'plague that cuts across African societies' (p.27). One of the aims of the study is to find out how the subjugated women

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resist oppression. One would expect that a section of the analysis would be devoted to this. However, the study remains silent on this. As a result, how the women resist oppression remains nebulous. Thus, like Gilio's (2007), it fails to answer Spivak's question, 'Can the subaltern speak?'

2.7.4 Ayalew (2012) and Nadaf (2015)

Both Ayalew (2012) and Nadaf (2015) investigated into the varying degrees of oppression which women in patriarchal Islamic societies face. Ayalew's study is a comparative analysis of the portrayal of women in three novels, namely *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Book*s by Azar Nafisa and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini while Nadaf's focuses on only *Woman.* The studies are conducted from the theoretical lens of post-colonial feminism.

Both studies made similar findings. For example, they reveal that women in patriarchal Islamic societies suffer a lot of injustices. For example, wives are beating by their husbands. Besides, women or girls are considered inferior to men or boys and therefore do not have the same educational opportunities as the male sex. This finding is a corroboration of Issaka's (2010) claim of the absence of equity for both men and women in the Islamic world. The sexual abuse of women is given focus in the studies. Firdaus is married off to Sheik Mahoud, a man about forty years older than Firdaus. Besides, she is sexually abused by Bayoumi and his colleagues, a policeman and her uncle.

Interestingly, both studies reveal that religion and patriarchal cultural assumptions contribute to the oppression of women or generally the female sex. Cultural assumptions regarding gender attribute superior status to the male gender and inferior status to the female gender and this paves way for the

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subjugation of the female gender. Also, cultural assumptions regarding married women demand that women submit to the dictates of their husbands. Besides, the studies highlight that men distort religious teachings to oppress and subjugate women. The various forms of discrimination against women, the studies point out, hamper women's advancement in society. Because of this, women attempt to liberate themselves from the oppression of men. Surprisingly, women resort to prostitution and murder to seek their liberation. Firdaus does not only become a successful prostitute but also kills Marzouk to assert her freedom. According to Nadaf (2012), women resort to prostitution because sex appears to reverse the power asymmetry between men and women. Clearly, while Gilio (2007) fails to answer Spivak's question, it is shown that the subaltern can indeed speak by these studies.

2.8 The point of departure in the present study

Briefly, many studies have employed the transitivity framework to examine literary texts. The first is Halliday's (1971) transitivity analysis of Golding's *The Inheritors* which revealed the two different worldviews from which the novel was constructed. Gallardo (2006) and Mwinlaaru (2012a) demonstrate the interplay between transitivity and characterization. Also, Breem (2005) and Mwinlaaru (2012b) show that the transitivity framework is effective in exploring point of view in novels.

Though El Saadawi's *Woman* has received a good deal of critical attention (Ayalew, 2012; Fwangyil, 2012; Pathan, 2014; Nadaf, 2015; Al Mhairat & Al Miniawi, 2016; Bakuuro, 2016; Suwaed, 2017), these studies have generally been preoccupied with the novel's thematic issues with no attempts at examining the unique narrative technique the novelist employed in projecting

the themes. Again, the novel has not been studied from a linguistic perspective even though existing scholarship (e.g. Halliday, 1971; Breem, 2005; Mwinlaaru, 2012a, 2012b, 2014) proves that a linguistic analysis of literary texts helps to uncover the texts' subtle meanings and to define the writer as far as his or her style is concerned.

Though the present study is generally meant to contribute to previous studies on *Woman* as well as studies on transitivity analysis of literary texts, it differs from previous studies on *Woman* in two ways: first, its focus is El Saadawi's narrative technique of point of view; and second, it examines the novel from a linguistic perspective. Also, it differs from previous studies on transitivity analysis of literary texts because it incorporates the narratological concept of *focalisation* into a linguistic analysis of point of view on the ideological and psychological planes. Thus, it goes beyond the traditional accounts of point of view which rely on the typological distinctions of the first and third person points of view and narrators by examining linguistically who is presented as the focalizer and the focalized as well as the situational contexts influencing the process of focalization and shifts in focalization.

2.9 Conclusion

The chapter reviewed literature related to the study. The review covers both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks underlying the study. Specifically, SFL as a linguistic theory and its concept of transitivity were reviewed. Also, there is a review on the narratological and linguistic approaches to narrative perspective. Finally, it reviewed studies that applied the transitivity model as well as studies on El Saadawi's *Woman*.

CHAPTER THREE

TRANSITIVITY AND IDEOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

This chapter begins the analysis and discussion of the text. Specifically, it examines the use of transitivity in the text to inscribe ideological point of view. The events in the episodes extracted were recounted by the character-narrator, Firdaus, from different perspectives – the perspective of her Uncle (the Sheik), her Uncle's wife as well as her own perspective. The discussion commences with the understanding that ideology is conceptualized as a set of beliefs that partition people in a given society into distinct classes such as the oppressor versus the oppressed, the ruler versus the ruled, the master versus the servant, the powerful versus the powerless etc. (*See* Sack, 1994) or generally as the beliefs or body of ideas which legitimizes certain socio-cultural and political structures (Eagleton, 1991). My interest is in how ideology is textually instantiated through point of view.

Like all feminists, El Saadawi is concerned about gender roles, especially the stereotypical assumption that the woman's role is in the kitchen. This idea is given focus in the narrative as the transitivity profile of Firdaus presented and discussed below indicates:

1. On my head I**Actor** carried **process: Material** a heavy earthenware jar, full of water **Goal**. Under its weight my neck would sometimes jerk backwards, or to the left or to the right (p.11).

2. ||| (a) Once back**Circumstance**, I**Actor** would sweep**Process: Material** under the animals**Circumstance** and || (b) then**Circumstance** make**Process: Material** rows of dung cakes which I left in the sun to dry **Goal**. |||

3. ||| On baking day _{Circumstance} I_{Actor} would knead _{Process: Material} dough _{Goal} || and make _{Process: Material} bread _{Goal}||| (pp. 12-13).

4. ||| (a) Once back _{Circumstance} I_{Actor} would sweep _{Process: Material} || and (b) clean _{Process: Material} the house _{Goal}, || (c) wash _{Process: Material} my uncle's clothes _{Goal}, || (d) make _{Process: Material} his bed _{Goal}, || and (e) tidy _{Process: Material} his books _{Goal}.|||

5. ||| He_{Actor} bought _{Process: Material} me _{Recipient} a heavy iron _{Goal} || which I_{Actor} would…use to launder _{Process: Material} his kaftan and turban _{Goal}. |||

6. Shortly before sunset _{Circumstance}…I_{Actor} served _{Process: Material} supper _{Goal}|| and we ate together (p.20).

7. ||| My uncle's wife _{Actor} only did _{Process: Material} the cooking _{Goal}, leaving _{Process: Material} the pots and pans _{Goal} || for me _{Actor} to scour and clean _{Process: Material}||| (p.23).

8. ||| All day long _{Circumstance} he (Sheik Mahmoud) _{Behaver} remained _{Process: Behavioural} by my side _{Circumstance}…in the kitchen _{Circumstance}, ||| watching _{Process: Mental (Perception)} me_{Phenomenon} || as I cooked or washed _{Circumstance}||| (p.46).

9. ||| The following morning _{Circumstance} I_{Actor} made _{Process: Material} breakfast _{Goal} for my uncle _{Circumstance}||| (p. 40).

10. ||| (a) When I_{Actor} cooked _{Process: Material} fish _{Goal} || I_{Actor} used to give _{Process: Material} it all _{Goal} to him _{Circumstance}, || and (b) just take _{Process: Material} the head or the tail _{Goal} for myself _{Beneficiary}. || (c) Or if it was rabbit _{Goal} I_{Actor} cooked _{Process: Material}, || I_{Actor} gave _{Process: Actor} him _{Recipient} the whole rabbit _{Goal} || and (d) nibble at _{Process: Material} the head _{Goal}||| (p.51).

These clauses were extracted from some significant episodes across 'Chapter Two'. The events were focalised and narrated by Firdaus. As can be noticed, there is the preponderance of material process clauses with a woman (Firdaus or her Auntie) as the Actor and the suppression of other process types such as the mental and verbal processes. For instance, in clauses 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, where women are Actors, their actions are defined by processes such as *carried*, *would sweep*, [*would*] *make*, *would knead*, [*would*] *wash*, *did*, *served*, *scour*, *clean*, *washed*, *made*, *cooked*, *used to give* and *gave*. Though contextually they share the semantic feature +*domestic chores*, these 'domestic' processes could be grouped broadly under the following sub-types: *process of cooking* (e.g. *would knead, [would] make, cooked* and *made*), *process of serving food* (e.g. *served, used to give* and *gave*) and *process of cleaning* (e.g. *would sweep, clean, wash* and *scour*). Also, all these processes are intentional material processes, indicating that women consciously or willingly perform such duties. This heavy utilisation of material process clauses is stylistically relevant. As Simpson (1993:97) points out, 'One of the stylistic consequences of the dominant material paradigm, where mental and other processes signifying reflection and deliberation are suppressed, is that it creates a highly 'actional' descriptive framework.' Even with clause 5, *He bought me a heavy iron* <u>*which I would…use to launder his kaftan and turban*</u>, the only material clause whose Actor is a man, Firdaus' Uncle; Firdaus is still presented in the sub-clause underlined by a process that denotes *serving*. Its process *bought* is goal-directed as it extends to a Goal participant, *a heavy iron*. The purchasing of the iron is an activity external to domestic chores. However, when the *iron* is purchased, it is Firdaus, who uses it for the

domestic purpose of ironing. The Goal participant of *launder*, the process of the subordinate clause *which I would...use to launder his kaftan and turban*, is *his kaftan and turban*. The possessive determiner *his* attributes the possessor role to her uncle. That is, the *kaftan* and the *turban* belong to the Sheik, her uncle. What it means is that the beneficiary of Firdaus' services is her uncle. Thus, these 'domestic' processes constitute a paradigm that foregrounds not only the active role of women in domestic affairs, especially with regard to activities that take place in the kitchen, and presents the patriarchal assumption that the kitchen is the main social domain in which a typical African woman's contribution to her family is best appreciated but also highlights women's role in the entrenchment of this ideology.

It is also significant to consider the Goals of the material processes identified above. The oddity of the Goals is that characteristically none of them relates to Firdaus. In the above clauses, it is observed that she acts on external inanimate entities, most of which are related to food (e.g. *dough* and *bread*, clause 3; *supper*, clause 6; *breakfast*, clause 9; *fish*, clause 10a; and *rabbit*, clause 10c). Also, none of them relates to any human entity and particularly to a man or her uncle proper; rather, they relate to items that are associated with her uncle: *my uncle's clothes*, *his bed* and *his books*. It means that her uncle is the beneficiary of her services. On the surface, it would appear that El Saadawi is interested in demonstrating particularly the culinary prowess of women; however implicitly, these Goals constitute a semantic paradigm which depicts women as subordinate to men whom they exist to serve. Thus, through the processes and their respective Goal participants, El Saadawi reproduces the dominant traditional Islamic ideology that a woman's

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duty is to serve her husband, in particular, and her family, in general, by cooking food for them.

It is also worth considering the circumstantial elements because of their stylistic relevance. The first to discuss are the temporal circumstances of clauses 2, 3, 4 and 6. These circumstances of time, namely *Once back* (clause 2), *On baking day* (clause 3), *Once back* (clause 4) and *Shortly before sunset* (clause 6) attending to the 'domestic' processes do not just represent the tripartite time distinctions of morning, afternoon and evening, but are carefully deployed to complement the processes so as to emphasise the domestic roles of women as well as their (women's) exploitation by men. The second is the spatial circumstances of clause 8. In clause 8, Mahmoud is cast in behavioural and mental process clauses as the Behaver and Senser respectively. Both processes – *remained* and *watching* – denote inertia and consciousness. The circumstance of accompaniment *by my side* and location *in the kitchen* define him in spatial terms relative to Firdaus herself and the kitchen respectively. These circumstances like the processes do not indicate the involvement of the Sheik in domestic affairs. By implication, his presence in the kitchen is unnecessary. That is, the process *remained* and its attendant circumstances *by my side* and *in the kitchen* background Sheik's domestic role by distancing him from domestic activities associated with the kitchen as the real Actor role is attributed to Firdaus by the processes *cooked* and *washed* in the circumstance *as I cooked or washed*. The ideological implication of the circumscription of the spatial realisation of *cooked* or *washed* to the kitchen is that a typical African woman's place is in the kitchen.

Gender stereotyping does not manifest only in marriages. Even at the educational level, there are disparities in terms of the privileges available for both men and women. It must once again be mentioned that religion or generally culture is instrumental in this. The data below were extracted from pages 14 and 15. I believe some background information is necessary for the discussion. During one of the visits of Firdaus' Uncle, she expressed a desire to travel to Cairo with him so that she could attend El Azhar. The extract below which encodes the dialogue between Firdaus and her Uncle is discussed to highlight the issue of gender stereotyping in the fictional Egyptian society El Saadawi creates:

'What will you do in Cairo, Firdaus?'

1. ||| And I _{Sayer} would reply _{Process: Verbal}, || 'I _{Actor} will go _{Pro: Material} to El Azhar _{Circumstance} and || study _{Pro: Material} like you _{Circumstance}.'|||

2. ||| Then he _{Behaver} would laugh_{Pro: Behavioural} || and [he]_{Sayer} [would] explain_{Pro: Verbal}|| that El Azhar _{Possessed} was _{Pro: Relational} only for men _{Possessor}.|||

3. ||| And I _{Behaver} would cry_{Pro: Behavioural}, || and [I] _{Actor} [would] hold on to _{Pro: Material} his hand_{Goal}, as the train started to move.|||

A noticeable feature of the data is the perspectival shift. In clause 1, the events are focalised by Firdaus, but the centre of focalisation shifts to her uncle in clause 2. In clause 3, Firdaus again becomes the focalizer. The Behavioural processes suggest that the events are tied to the epistemology of the focalizers. The analysis commences with a consideration of the verbal clauses of both Firdaus and her uncle. Clause 1 is Firdaus' verbal reaction to her uncle's question *What will you do in Cairo, Firdaus?* In clause 1, she is

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the Sayer of the verbal process *would reply* whose projection is *I will go to El Azhar and study like you*. The projected denotes her aspiration. This stands in contrast with the projected clause *that El Azhar was for only men* attributed to her uncle. When this projected clause is parsed into its various transitivity configuration, *El Azhar* and *men* are attributed the possessed and the possessor roles respectively. The attribution of the possessor role to *only men* creates the impression that women are not allowed access to El Azhar. Thus, the man's utterance is circumscriptive. The contrasting projected clauses indicate that in a patriarchal society such as Firdaus' which is riddled with religious precepts and customs antipathetic to women, women do not have the same educational opportunities as men. Put differently, women have limited access to the resources of the land. In a study by Issaka (2010:33) on *The Situation of Women in a Patriarchal African Society*, she observes that 'Muslims in general believe that Islam gave women many rights, but at the same time, they feel that women are not equal to men in rights'. This general observation is in consonance with the conclusion made above.

Also, the two behavioural process clauses are worth considering. The uncle's response to her reply in clause 1 is cast in a behavioural process *Then he would laugh* (clause 2). The Sheik is aware of the antagonist cultural norms in their society which preclude women from attending El Azhar, a tertiary educational institution. The behavioural *laughter* presupposes that he treats her reply as a mere expression of her sophomoric unrealistic aspiration. The intellectual superiority of Sheik is implied here. Surprisingly, Firdaus' behavioural response to her uncle's verbal reaction *that El Azhar was for only men* is *weeping* (*I would cry*, clause 3). The adjoining material clause *I*

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[would] hold on to his hand is equally important. Here, Firdaus is the Actor and her uncle's body part, *his hand*, is the Goal. The Goal is devoid of any consciousness, thereby suggesting the futility of her protestation as well as revealing her childish mannerism. It will be recalled that clause 1 encodes Firdaus' academic aspiration. Though an infant, her high academic aspiration is an index of her high level of intellectual ability. The behavioural and the material clauses of clause complex 3, therefore, appear to be a reduction of her rational behaviour encoded in clause 1 to the irrational behaviour of weeping and nagging. In effect, the intellectual ability of women is made subordinate to that of men. Thus, it comes as no surprise that there is no equity for both sexes in terms of education. This appears to be the fate of women in a society consumed by gender prejudice.

Later on in the novel when her Uncle's wife suggests that Firdaus should be sent to university, her uncle rejects the idea. The following is the analysis of the transitivity profile of Firdaus' Uncle with the sole objective of demonstrating how he embodies the dominant ideology of his society:

1. 'To the university?' To a place where <u>she</u> _{Behaver} <u>will be sitting</u> _{Pro: Behavioural} <u>side by side with men</u>? _{Circumstance: Accompaniment}

2. <u>A respected Sheikh and man of religion like myself</u> _{Actor} <u>sending</u> _{Pro: Material} <u>his niece</u> _{Goal} <u>to mix in the company of men</u>?...' _{Circumstance: Purpose.}

Here, Firdaus is the narrator but the events are mediated through the consciousness of her Uncle, the Sheik. Both clauses are the Sheik's reply to his wife's suggestion that they should send Firdaus to the university. The processes and their differing circumstances have narrative significance. In both clauses, Firdaus is cast as the Actor of the action-oriented material

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processes *will be sitting* and *to mix* while men are cast in a circumstance of Accompaniment. This foregrounds the action of Firdaus while backgrounding that of men. The clauses trigger the assumption of an existence of a hitherto exclusive male society or community into which women are being integrated. This assumption may lead to the naive conclusion that there is an attempt at the neutralisation of male dominance and the provision of equitable access to the resources of the land, especially when we consider the fact that *El Azhar* is an educational resource.

However, this assertion may be downplayed. *El Azhar* is referred to anaphorically as *To a university* and *To a place*. Clause 2 could be paraphrased as <u>*As a respected Sheik and man of religion, I cannot send my niece to mix in the company of men.*</u> Firdaus' uncle, the Sheik, is the Actor of the negative goal-directed material process *cannot send*. The Goal participant is Firdaus and the negative process denotes that she is not acted on; hence, the mixture of both sexes does not materialize. The circumstance of reason underlined indicates that religion is responsible for the Sheik's refusal to send Firdaus to El Azhar. This patterning of clause 2 leads to significant presuppositions. The first is that gender prejudice against women has been institutionalized by the teachings of the Islamic religion that it is difficult to insist on equality for both sexes. The second is that men in Islamic societies generally manipulate religion, using it as a mechanism to entrench their privileged position. In this vein, I share Acciliens' (2008:7) line of reasoning that 'religion is an excuse and a weapon used by those with power, mostly males, to maintain the status quo'. It should be noted that what El Saadawi is attacking is not religion *per se*; the attack is directed at men who manipulate it

to oppress or dominate women. Briefly, the data highlight the novelist's call for the collapse of the walls of religious bigotry so that both sexes would have equitable access to the resources of the land.

At this point, it is pertinent to examine the issue of domestic violence given focus in the narrative by considering the data below. The data extracted from pages 46-47 encode Firdaus' complaint of being beaten by her husband, Sheik Mahmoud:

1. One day he discovered some leftover scraps of food, and started yelling at me so loudly that the neighbours could hear. After this incident, he got into the habit of [[beating Process: Material me Goal whether he had a reason or not Circumstance.]]

2. On one occasion Circumstance: Time he Actor hit Process: Material me Goal all over with his shoe Circumstance : Instrument

3. My face and body Carrier became Process: Relational: Intensive (Attributive) swollen and bruised Attribute.

4. ||| So I Actor left Process: Material the house Scope || and [I] Actor went Process: Material to my uncle Circumstance: Destination.|||

5. ||| One day Circumstance he Actor hit Process: Material me Goal with a heavy stick Circumstance || until blood ran from my nose and ears Circumstance.|||

6. ||| So I Actor left Process: Material, || but this time Circumstance I Actor did not go Process: Material to my uncle's house Circumstance.|||

7. I Actor walked Process: Material through the streets Circumstance…

Once again, Firdaus is both the narrator and the figural medium of the events presented in the data. First of all, let us consider the material clauses in which Firdaus is the Goal participant. In the clauses *beating me whether he*

*had a reason or not ||On one occasion he **hit** me all over with his shoe* and

*One day he **hit** me with a heavy stick*, Firdaus is the Goal participant of the

violent processes *beating* and *hit* whose agent is Sheik Mahmoud. That is,

only Sheik acts; Firdaus just passively suffers his actions. The processes are

intentional and therefore suggest that Sheik is conscious of his actions and

their injurious effects on Firdaus. Clearly, the transitive pattern presents Sheik

as the powerful and Firdaus as the powerless. The asymmetrical power

relation between Sheik Mahmoud and Firdaus is therefore given focus here.

The circumstance of contingency *whether he has a reason or not* and that of

instrument *with his shoe* and *with a heavy stick* underscore Sheik's irrational

behaviour and the intensity of violence meted out to married women.

Generally, violence or aggression instils fear in the victim and entrenches the

dominance of the aggressor. By inference, the Sheik's irrational violent

behaviour is to make Firdaus submit to his authority or control. This

corroborates Green's (1999:2) submission that violence is 'one of the crucial

social mechanisms by which women [in patriarchal societies] are forced into a

subordinate position'.

   The idea that patriarchy perpetuates violence against women is further

encoded in clauses 3 and 5 where the effects of the beating Firdaus receives

and their ideological implications are given focus. In the relational clause

(clause 3) *My face and body became swollen and bruised*, Firdaus' *face* and

body are the Carrier of the resultant attribute *swollen and bruised*. The process

became connotes transformation and therefore portrays the disfiguring of the

beautiful appearance of Firdaus, the woman. In fact, the narrator could have

simply employed a material process clause *I was hurt by him*, but such a

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stylistic variant will not be powerful enough to convey the metamorphosis her *face* and *body* underwent. What the transitivity analysis has done for us is to highlight the extremity of oppression women in Islamic societies are subjected to or the injurious effects of brutality on women in Islamic societies. Generally, the transitivity configurations of the clauses discussed above present married women as helpless victims of the barbarity of men and bring to the fore El Saadawi's deconstruction of the assumption of her society that perceives violence as a mechanism for controlling women.

Against this background, it is not surprising that women attempt to liberate themselves from the patriarchal structures that oppress and suppress them. Two types of resistance may be identified: I call the first one *passive resistance* for its obvious lack of militancy and the second one *radical* or *violent resistance* for the obvious reason. The first is discussed with reference to clauses 4, 6 and 7. The second is discussed under the last extract on page 19. In the clause complex 4 *So I left the house and went to my uncle*, Firdaus is the Actor of the processes *left* and *went*. These processes denote movement. The scope of *left* is *the house* which is her matrimonial home where her husband oppresses her. Taking the matrimonial home as a metaphor for oppression with Sheik Mahmoud as its tool, Firdaus' attempt to vacate her nuptial home presupposes an attempt to liberate herself from the shackles of oppression. But this is a passive resistance to oppression in that the process *left* denotes non-violence. In the adjoining clause, *[I] went to my uncle*, the process *went* also denotes movement and the circumstance *to my uncle* denotes her destination. That is, she flees her matrimonial home to her uncle's. By implication, being at her uncle's house means she is outside her

matrimonial home and therefore free from oppression. It therefore appears that, from the perspective of the focalizer and El Saadawi, marriage is a tool of oppression.

The same attempt to resist extreme oppression is encoded in clause 6: *I walked through the streets*. Firdaus is the Actor of the action oriented process *walked*. At first glance, the clause may seem ideologically constrained, but it is not. The contrast between the two place circumstances *to my uncle* and *through the streets* is stylistically relevant. The former connotes an environment controlled by a man (her uncle) just as her marital home is controlled by her husband while the latter connotes an uncontrolled environment. Also, the process *walked* contextually denotes an escape from her home and metaphorically refers to a break of her nuptial ties with her husband. The presupposition is that marriage is oppressive and that for women to be liberated from oppression, they must be outside the control of men. Put differently, they must be single. Thus, through Firdaus, El Saadawi attacks the manipulation of marriage by men to oppress women. Another point of note is that though the resistance is passive, El Saadawi has made her message clear: women will not forever be silent about oppression.

But then, the oppression of women or more specifically domestic violence against women seems to have been naturalised in the fictional world of Firdaus. The analysis of the clauses below should make this explicit:

1. ||| But <u>my uncle</u> _{Sayer} <u>told</u> _{Process: Verbal} <u>me</u> _{Recipient}|| (a) that *all husbands* _{Actor} *beat* _{Process: Material} *their wives* _{Goal}, || and (b) <u>my uncle's wife</u> _{Sayer} <u>added</u> _{Process: Verbal} || that *her husband* _{Actor} *often* _{Circumstance} *beat* _{Pro.: Material} *her* _{Goal}.|||

2. ||| I **Sayer** said **Process: Verbal** || my uncle was a respected Sheik, well versed in the teachings of religion, || and he **Carrier**... could not...be **Process: Relational (Circumstantial)** in the habit of beating his wife **Circumstance**.|||

3. ||| (a) She **Sayer** replied **Process: Verbal** || that it was precisely men well versed in their religion who **Actor** beat **Pro: Material** their wives **Goal**. ||| (b) [The precepts of religion **Actor** permitted **Process: Material** such punishment **Scope** ||| (c) A virtuous woman **Sayer** was not supposed to complain **Process: Verbal** about her husband **Verbiage**. || (d) Her duty **Identified** was **Process: Relational: Intensive (Identifying)** perfect obedience **Identifier**.|||

Once again, we note the shift in focalisation. Firdaus is the narrator but the events are focalised by her Uncle and his wife and Firdaus herself. The shift in focalisation is reflective of their ideological differences. The above clauses encode the interaction between Firdaus, her uncle and her uncle's wife when she complains to them that her husband beats her. I will first of all consider the material clauses *1a...all husbands **beat** their wives*, *1b...her husband often **beat** her* and *3a...who **beat** their wives*. The clauses are projections of the processes *told*, *added* and *replied* respectively. While the Sayer of *told* is Firdaus' uncle, her uncle's wife is attributed the Sayer role in clauses 1b and 3a. By attributing agency of the process of saying to them, the speech becomes a report of their verbal behaviour; thus, the projections are the expressed opinions of her uncle and his wife. When the projections ...*all husbands* **Actor** *beat* **Process: Material** *their wives* **Goal** and ...*her husband* **Actor** *often* **Circumstance** *beat* **Process: Material** *her* **Goal** are analysed individually, they are material clauses. The process *beat* of the three clauses is a violent process. It is also transitive as it extends to a Goal participant *their wives* and *her*. In 1a, both the Actor *all*

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husbands and the Goal *wives* are plural. This contrasts with the singular Actor *my husband* and the Goal *her* of clause 1b. This means that in 1a, her uncle generalises domestic violence with the implication that it is prevalent in all societies, while his wife, in 1b, particularises it as it pertains to their Islamic society.

Clause 3a *who beat their wives* is Firdaus' uncle's wife's reaction to Firdaus' claim encoded in clause 2: *I Sayer said Process: Verbal|| my uncle Carrier was Pro: Relational a respected Sheik Attribute, well versed in the teachings of religion, || and he Carrier … could not … be Pro: Relational (Circumstantial) in the habit of beating his wife Circumstance*. The process *beat* has the Actor *who* which refers anaphorically to *men well versed in their religion*. Once again, there is the generalisation of the Actor. It will be realised that in all the clauses the Goals are passive, implicating that women do not resist oppression. It appears that in clauses 1a, 1b and 3a, her uncle and his wife assume a world-wide deictic centre in an attempt to justify that the oppression of women is a universal phenomenon and that religion sanctions it. Using Sheik and his wife as ideological vehicles, El Saadawi reveals that women all over the world are oppressed or suffer domestic violence and that they are accomplices to religion which perpetuates their oppression.

When Firdaus' verbal reaction (clause 2) *I said that my uncle was a respected Sheik, well versed in the teachings of religion, and therefore could not possibly be in the habit of beating his wife* is considered in relation to clauses 1a, 1b and 3a, it is noticed that the process *beat* in the former clauses has become a circumstantial element in clause 2 through a grammatical metaphor. Considering that circumstances are peripheral elements, the

conversion of the process *beat* into circumstance (underlined for emphasis) serves the stylistic purpose of absolving religious men from domestic violence and subsequently from blame. However, Firdaus' position contrasts with that of her uncle's wife as the analysis of clauses 3b, 3c and 3d shows. All the clauses are projections of the process *replied*. In *The precepts of religion permitted such punishment*, the Scope *such punishment* has an anaphoric reference to the beating of women. The process *permitted* denotes approval.

When this clause is considered in tandem with the preceding clause (clause 3a), the *precepts of religion* becomes the initiator of men's aggression. Note that religion refers to the beating of women as *punishment*. What this means is that religion considers domestic violence as a disciplinary act. It therefore appears that religion imposes moral superiority on men, thereby elevating them to some 'divine status' which makes it possible for them to correct the supposed 'depravity' of women. Nadaf (2015:162) aptly puts it thus: 'According to the teaching of ... Islam, an evil exists in women's souls'. From Nadaf's submission, it appears that religion enjoins men to correct women through the use of violence. This may lead one to conclude that the Islamic religion perpetuates the oppression of women.

Moreover, in clause 3c *A virtuous woman was not supposed to complain about her husband*, the verbal process *was not supposed to complain* denotes prohibition. It also connotes that women are unfairly treated; hence, their resolve to complain about it. The Verbiage is *her husband*. This means that the complaint is directed at the misbehaviour of her husband. But then, the complaint is suppressed as the process is negative. The complaint should be seen as women's reaction to their subjugation; however, religion silences

them.   Apparently, any resistance on the part of women is viewed as irreligious and as an affront to religious precepts. Clearly, by tying virtue to silence, religion imposes submissiveness on women in the face of gross male aggression since obedience is a *sine qua non* for the attainment of such societal label as a virtuous woman. Nadaf (2015:163) is therefore right in arguing that in Islam, the 'attempt of women to get rid of violence is conceived [as] a challenge due to long tradition and culture of Arab society. Hence, she is contrived to accept her subordination and low class position.' Thus, through the transitivity analysis of the clauses above, we appreciate the convoluted relationship between religion and domestic violence and most importantly the fact that the oppression of women is not attributable to the genetic differences between men and women, but it is purely a cultural phenomenon seen in the manipulation of religious precepts by men to oppress and dominate women. This conclusion echoes Kimmel and Messner's (1992:4-5) submission that the 'psychological and social differences [between men and women] are more the result of the way cultures interpret, shape, and modify' the genetic differences between both sexes.

   As already stated, El Saadawi has made her message clear: women will not forever be silent about oppression. The rest of the paragraphs are devoted to what may appropriately be called El Saadawi's radical challenge to the patriarchal structures that oppress and stereotype women in all spheres of their lives. The excerpt taken from pages 104-5, the climactic moment in the novel, chronicles the epic battle between Firdaus, the novel's heroine, and Marzouk, her pimp. The cause of the fight is the latter's opposition to the former's desire to go out of her house:

1. ||| (a)…I_{Actor} <u>caught hold of</u> _{Process: Material} <u>the latch of the door</u> _{Scope} <u>to open it</u> _{Circumstance: Purpose}, || but _(Conj.) (b)<u>he</u> _{Actor} <u>lifted</u> _{Process: Material} <u>his arm</u> _{Goal} <u>in the air</u> _{Circumstance: Locative}|| and (c) <u>slapped</u> _{Process: Material} <u>me</u> _{Goal}.|||

2. ||| (a) I_{Actor} <u>raised</u> _{Process: Material} <u>my hand</u> _{Goal} <u>even higher</u> _{Circumstance: Manner} … || and (b) <u>brought</u> _{Process: Material} <u>it</u> [i.e. the hand] _{Goal} <u>down</u> _{Circumstance: Locative} <u>violently</u> _{Circumstance: Manner} <u>on his face</u> _{Circumstance: Locative}.|||

3. ||| <u>The whites of his eyes</u> _{Carrier} <u>went</u> _{Process: Relational: Intensive (Attributive)} <u>red</u> _{Attribute}. || His hand started to reach for the knife he carried in his pocket but my hand was quicker than his.|||

4. ||| I_{Actor} <u>raised</u> _{Process: Material} <u>the knife</u> _{Goal}|| and <u>buried</u> _{Process: Material} <u>it</u> [i.e. the knife] _{Goal} <u>deep</u> _{Circumstance: Degree} <u>in his neck</u> _{Circumstance: Locative}， || <u>pulled</u> _{Process: Material} <u>it</u> _{Goal} <u>out of his neck</u> _{Circumstance: Locative} || and then <u>thrust</u> _{Process: Material} <u>it</u> _{Goal} <u>deep</u> _{Circumstance: Degree} <u>into his chest</u> _{Circumstance: Locative}， || <u>pulled</u> _{Process: Material} <u>it</u> _{Goal} <u>out of his chest</u> _{Circumstance: Locative} || and <u>plunged</u> _{Process: Material} <u>it</u> _{Goal} <u>deep</u> _{Circumstance: Degree} <u>into his belly</u> _{Circumstance: Locative}.|||

5. ||| I_{Actor} <u>stuck</u> _{Process: Material} <u>the knife</u> _{Goal} <u>into almost every part of his body</u> _{Circumstance: Locative}.|||

6. ||| I _{Carrier} <u>was</u> _{Process: Intensive (Attributive)} <u>astonished to find how easily my hand moved</u> _{Attribute} || as I thrust the knife into his flesh, and pulled it out almost without effort.|||

7. ||| I_{Actor} <u>opened</u> _{Process: Material} <u>the door</u> _{Goal} || and <u>walked</u> _{Process: Material} <u>down the stairs into the street</u> _{Circumstance}.|||

8. ||| My body _{Carrier} was _{Process: Relational (Intensive)} as light as a feather _{Attribute}, || as though its weight _{Carrier} had been_{Pro: Relational} nothing more than accumulation of fear over the years _{Attribute}.|||

In this extract, Firdaus is the focalizer and narrator of events. In clause complex 1, Firdaus and Marzouk are cast as Actors of a non-violent and a violent process respectively. In 1a, Firdaus is the Actor of the process *caught hold of*. This is an intentional material process whose Scope is *the latch of the door*. The use of the home under man and the 'space outside the home' as motifs of oppression and liberation respectively has already been pointed out. Here, her action affects the *latch* and indirectly the *door* and this is significant, especially when we consider it *vis-à-vis* the circumstance *to pen it*. The opening of the door denotes her exodus from the house and her being located on a new spatial plane. Referring to the two metaphors above, the door becomes the veil or wall between oppression and liberation and until it is destroyed, she will perpetually be trapped in the world of oppression. Her understanding of this is seen in her determination to emancipate herself from the dominion of man by struggling to open it. This attempt is 'passive'. Surprisingly, in 1c, where Marzouk is the Actor, his process *slapped* is violent. The Goal of the process is Firdaus. It means that he acts on her. Marzouk's action reveals the extremity of oppression of women. Also, since the violence is to convert Firdaus into timidity to forestall her liberation attempt, it could be thought of as a mechanism to entrench the *status quo*.

In the rest of the material clauses, Firdaus is attributed the Actor role of violent material processes *brought*, *buried*, *pulled*, *thrust*, *plunged* and *stuck*. Interestingly, there is a reversal of participant roles: Firdaus is the agent that

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acts on Marzouk. In clause 2, the processes *raised* and *brought* are self-directed but Marzouk's face is the locative element that receives her action, the slap. The circumstances *even higher* and *violently* complement the processes, thereby foregrounding the extremity of the violence. It must be emphasised that by meeting Marzouk's oppression with extreme violence, Firdaus is rebelling against the *status quo*. It will be recalled that her earlier attempt at liberating herself from oppression or her resistance to the dominant ideologies of her society is 'passive' or non-violent. Therefore, this violent action could only have been triggered by a sudden consciousness that extreme oppression requires an equally extreme violent action to liberate the oppressed.

Also, in clause complex 4, there is the preponderance of violent-intentional- material processes. As the Actor of these processes, she acts on *the knife* and Marzouk's body parts *his neck*, *his chest*, *his belly* and *every part of his body* become the locative elements that placidly suffer her violent action. The 'knife' which is the Goal translates into the instrument for the destruction of Marzouk. In clause 1c where Marzouk acts violently on Firdaus, he acts on the whole of Firdaus (i.e. *me*), not her body part. But here, Marzouk has been reduced to his body parts. Therefore, while in the former clause Firdaus is visible; in the latter, Marzouk is less visible as he appears to be hidden in the grammatical configuration of the clause complex.

An important stylistic technique employed in clause 4 to achieve this is the technique of meronymic agency (Simpson, 2004) in which agency is assigned to a character's body part. This technique of reducing Marzouk to his body parts has a number of implications. For one, it is a reflection of the

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cataclysmic reversal of the hitherto asymmetrical power relations between men and women and the subsequent demystification of the perceived absolute male dominance or superiority. Also, by submerging his body parts in different circumstances so that they stolidly receive Firdaus' jabs, it makes it possible to foreground El Saadawi's message that it is through womanish militancy or revolution against the citadels of oppression that women can truly be liberated in a phallocentric society. In sum, what El Saadawi has achieved through Marzouk's murder or the use of the technique of meronymic agency is the reversal and collapse of the biased gender binaries in her Islamic society through a shocking cataclysm.

This chapter has discussed the use of transitivity to inscribe ideological point of view. Taking ideology to mean the beliefs or assumptions upon which people conceptualise the world and partition people into distinct groups, extracts from the novel were analysed to find out how the prevailing or dominant ideologies at the time of production of the text and the novelist's own ideological perspectives are textually instantiated. The extracts were homodiegetic in nature with Firdaus acting as the narrator and sometimes doubling as the narrator and the reflector of events. The analysis indicates that in the patriarchal Islamic society El Saadawi creates, women are underprivileged. Also, it is revealed that women are oppressed and the oppression has been institutionalised by the cultural norms of the Egyptian society and by men through the manipulation of Islamic religious precepts. Again, it is shown that Islam subscribes to the general African belief that a woman's role is in the kitchen and therefore assigns subservient roles to women in the family. Further, it is indicated that it is only through a

subversion of the *status quo* that women could free themselves from the shackles of oppression. Finally, from a stylistic point of view, the study corroborates the finding of previous scholarship (Halliday, 1971; Kennedy, 1982; Mwinlaaru, 2012a) that the technique of the meronymic agency is a dominant stylistic technique in prose narratives.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSITIVITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

This chapter answers research question two. That is, it examines the use of transitivity to inscribe psychological point of view in the novel. Point of view on the psychological plane relates to the interpersonal metafunction of language, which refers to the interactivity of a text. Interactivity of a text refers to the aspects of a text that express opinions, feelings, attitudes and beliefs (Kisurulia, 2012). Therefore, this chapter examines, from a systemic functional perspective, how the writer, through the *I*-narrator, uses expressive language not only to encode the epistemic, perspective and emotive orientations of the focalizer to events but also how such language evokes certain feelings in the reader. While doing this, a good deal of emphasis is laid on Firdaus' cognitive development in order to understand her self-consciousness, quest for a new self-identity and freedom as well as her understanding of the discrimination against women in her patriarchal society.

The first extract to be analysed was taken from page 19. The character from whose point of view the narrative is verbalised is Firdaus. However, since it is a retrospective autodiegetic narrative, the events are mediated specifically through the consciousness of 'child' Firdaus and verbalized by 'adult' Firdaus. It is analysed to demonstrate how the *I*-narrator's linguistic choices reflect her initial self-awareness, limited consciousness of herself and her world as well as her later self-awareness:

1. ||| When I _{Actor} entered _{Pro: Material} my uncles' dwelling _{Scope} || I_{Actor} put _{Process: Material} my hand _{Goal} on a switch_{Circumstance} || and lightsfloodedthe room.|||

2. ||| I_{Actor} shut _{Process: Material} my eyes _{Goal} against the glare _{Circumstance} || and screamed _{Pro: Behavioural}.|||

3. I_{Senser} glimpsed _{Process: Mental (Perception)} myself _{Phenomenon} in the mirror _{Circumstance}.

4. |||At first _{Circumstance} I_{Senser} did not know _{Process: Mental (Cognition)} || that it _{Identified} was _{Pro: Relational} a mirror _{Identifier}.|||

5. ||| I_{Senser} was frightened _{Process: Mental} ||when I _{Senser} found _{Pro: Mental} myself _{Phenomenon} [[looking at _{Pro: Behavioural} a little girl...]] |||

6. There was _{Process: Existential} no one else _{Existent} in it _{Circumstance} apart from me _{Circumstance}.

7. ||| (a) I_{Senser} could not understand _{Process: Mental (Cognition)} where this girl had sprung from _{Phenomenon}, || nor (b) realize _{Process: Mental (Cognition)} that she could only be me _{Phenomenon}.|||

8. ||| (a) The room _{Carrier} was _{Process: Relational (Attributive)} empty _{Attribute}, || and (b) the wardrobe mirror _{Carrier} was _{Process: Relational (Circumstantial)} right in front of me _{Attribute}.|||

9. The girl standing upright in it _{Identified} could _{Pro.} only be _{cess: Process: Relational (Identifying)} me _{Identifier}.

The dominant processes are the mental processes such as *glimpsed*, *could not understand*, *did not know* and *realised*. However, except *glimpsed* which is a mental process of limited perception, the rest are negative mental processes. This foregrounding of negation in relation to cognitive processes implies that the events are tied mainly to the limited psychological facet of Firdaus, thereby giving the impression that she is not mentally alert to her surroundings or the events in her society.

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The first to consider are the processes *put*, *shut* and *glimpsed*. While the first two are material processes, the third is a mental process of perception. The respective Goals of *put* and *shut* are *my hand* and *my eyes*. They relate to Firdaus' body parts but the Phenomenon of *glimpsed* which is *myself* relates to her entire body. This makes the processes self-directed as well as processes of self-analysis. The oddity of these transitive processes is that none of them relates to participants outside of Firdaus. Two stylistic techniques used to achieve this are the techniques of meronymic and hologynic agencies (Simpson, 2004). While the former is mentioned in reference to the Goals of clauses 1 and 2, the latter is in relation to the Phenomenon of clause 3. These processes *put*, *shut* and *glimpsed* together with their respective Goals and Phenomenon constitute a paradigm which foregrounds Firdaus' self-consciousness. This is the narrative significance of the stylistic techniques aforementioned.

Then, there is the shocking revelation of her limited consciousness. This limited consciousness could be considered from two main perspectives. The first relates to her identity as a woman and the second concerns her lack of understanding of her repressive society. The first is highlighted by clause complex 7 – *I could not understand where this girl had sprung from || nor realized that she could only be me* – which is ideationally a mental clause. These mental processes *could not understand* and *realized* which are contextually negative denote lack of knowledge. The objects of knowledge or more specifically the respective Phenomenon, *where this little girl has sprung from* and *that she could only be me* are significant. In the former, the *little girl* – the Actor of the creative process *had sprung from* – refers to Firdaus herself.

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The process also connotes lack of knowledge. The latter, taken individually, is an Identifying relational clause with *she* as the Identified and *me* as the Identifier. They both refer to Firdaus and this makes the process reflexive or self-directed. But then, Firdaus fails to establish this kind of referential relationship between *she* and *me* and subsequently between them and their external referent, Firdaus herself. The relevance of these transitivity configurations lies in how they map onto the grammatical structures Firdaus' lack of self-consciousness. From a broader perspective, the processes and their participants constitute a semantic paradigm which highlights El Saadawi's awareness of the difficulty in defining the identity or status of women in her predominantly male society because it appears to have been submerged. This idea immediately raises the question of personhood and foreshadows Firdaus' search for a new definition of the female identity. These issues are treated in subsequent paragraphs.

A critical look at the discussion so far indicates its paradoxical nature. The reason is that it sounds ridiculous that the focalizer-narrator first claims self-consciousness and later professes lack of self-awareness. This paradox is created by the shifts and complexity of focalization. It appears that in clauses 1 to 3, there is the suffusion of 'infant' Firdaus' perspective with that of 'adult' Firdaus' while in clauses 4 to 7, events are mediated through the consciousness of the former only. To resolve the paradox, we refer to the time circumstance *At first* of clause 4, <u>*At first*</u> *I did not know that it was a mirror*. In this clause, the object of knowledge or the Phenomenon of the process *did not know* is *that it was a mirror*. Here, there is the foregrounding of negation in cognitive processes and since the *mirror* is a reflection of the harsh realities of

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her repressive society, the implication is that Firdaus is not conscious of these harsh realities of her immediate surroundings. Clearly, this limited consciousness is attributed to infant Firdaus. This triggers another important assumption. When the circumstance is considered in tandem with the process *did not know*, it creates the presupposition of a prospective awareness of the harsh society in which she grows. However, this consciousness is attributed to 'adult' Firdaus. The foregoing discussion inevitably leads to a discussion of the second phase of Firdaus' limited consciousness emphasized by clauses 1, 6 and 8.

When the circumstance of time of clause 1, *When I entered my uncle's dwelling*, is parsed into its transitivity configuration; *I* is the Actor, *entered* is a material process and *my uncle's dwelling*, the Scope, is a microcosm of her macroscopic society. Seen this way, it is understandable that the *mirror* in clause 3 is a reflection of the harsh realities of her society. The clause encodes the relationship between her and her society. The possessive phrase *my uncle's* attributes ownership of the 'dwelling' to her uncle. This kind of transitivity patterning does not only implicate that there is a distal relationship between her and her society but also encodes Firdaus' sense of alienation which justifies her lack of understanding of her society. These are further emphasised by clauses 6 and 8. In both clauses, her surroundings are defined by attributes of *emptiness* and *stolidity*. This is suggested by *no one else* and *apart from me* of clause 6 and *empty* of clause 8 on the one hand and *right in front of me* and *wardrobe* of clause 8 on the other hand. These attributes are current attributes and therefore indicate that they are the innate characteristics of her surroundings. They serve to reinforce her sense of estrangement from her

society as well as foregrounding how oppressive her patriarchal society is. Sadly however, it is within this context that she grows in awareness.

The process of growing self-consciousness is encoded in clauses 5, 6, 8 and 9. In these clauses, there is the preponderance of participants and circumstances related to Firdaus. This is calculated in that they reflect the significance of Firdaus' growing self-awareness or the discovery of her identity. The growth in self-awareness begins in clause 5 *...when I found myself* [[*looking at a little girl*]]. The processes *found* and *looking at* are mental process of perception and behavioural process respectively, indicating that the events are filtered through the perceptual lens of the ***I***-narrator, Firdaus. The participants *I*, *myself* and *a little girl* all contextually relate to Firdaus. This makes the processes not only self-directed but also processes of self-analysis. Besides, the participants foreground Firdaus, indicating that she is the focus of our attention here. One notices a change in the participant roles of the aforementioned participants related to Firdaus in clauses 5, 6, 8 and 9. It is observed that *myself* which is in the nucleus of the circumstance of clause 5 first moves into the comitative circumstance *apart from **me*** of clause 6 *There was no one else in it apart from me*; and then, into the locative circumstance *in front of **me*** of clause 8 *... the wardrobe was right in front of me*. Eventually, *myself* transmogrifies into *The little girl* becoming both the Identified and the Identifier of clause 9, *The girl standing upright in it could only be me*. This linguistic patterning is not coincidental in that it is specifically deployed to give the impression of the focalizer's eye tracking the transformation of the participants in the various clauses, thereby reflecting the process of Firdaus'

growing self-awareness. This confirms the claim that a writer's linguistic choices are stylistically motivated (Leech & Short, 2007).

In the relational clause 9 *The girl standing upright in it could only be me*, *it* refers to the *mirror* which symbolically refers to the harsh Islamic society of the fictional world of the narrative. The identifying process *could…be* connote consciousness. It means that the event is oriented to the epistemic filtration of Firdaus. The process establishes a referential relationship between *The girl…* and *me* and since the Identifier *me* refers to Firdaus, it could be inferred that the girl living in the harsh Islamic society is Firdaus. It is clear that the process of self-discovery or self-awareness began in clause 5 gets completed in clause 9. It is therefore not coincidental that the *little girl* has transmogrified into both the Identified and the Identifier of clause 9. In brief, the focalizer-narrator's modulation of the transitivity patterns of clauses 5, 6, 8 and 9 enables us to see from her perspective how her repressive society triggers the process leading to her self-awareness.

As already stated, it is her repressive patriarchal society that triggers her self-consciousness, the need for liberation, society's perception of a respectful woman, marginalization of and discrimination against women. Some of the events which occasioned this are her chance meeting with Sharifa Salah el Dine, her encounter with Di'aa, one of her clients, and the coming of Marzouk, the pimp, into her life.

In her retrospective confession to the Doctor, Firdaus relates her chance meeting with Sharifa, an established prostitute, after escaping from Bayoumi's house. This incidental meeting is a significant episode in her life as it awakened her consciousness about her past life and her physique and its

monetary worth or value. The extract below (from page 58) is analysed to reveal how the narrator's linguistic choices encode her sudden realization of her beauty, her attitude as a result of this realization and her sense of power:

1. ||| I became a young novice in Sharifa's hands. ||| She _{Actor} opened _{Pro: Material} my eyes _{Goal} to life, _{Circumstance} to events in my past, _{Circumstance} in my childhood, _{Circumstance} ||which _{Carrier} had remained _{Pro: Relational} hidden _{Attribute} to my mind _{Circumstance}.|||

2. |||She _{Actor} probed _{Pro: Material} with a searching light_{Circumstance} ||revealing _{Material} obscure areas of myself, unseen features of my face and body, _{Goal} || making _{Material} me _{Senser} become aware of _{Pro: Mental: Cognition} them, _{Phenomenon} || understand _{Pro: Mental: Cognition} them _{Phenomenon}, see _{Pro: Mental: Perception} them _{Phenomenon} for the first time_{Circumstance}.|||

3. ||| I_{Senser} discovered _{Pro: Mental: Cognition} || I_{Possessor} had _{Pro: Relational} *black eyes*, _{Possessed} *with a sparkle* _{Circumstance} [[*that* _{Actor} *attracted* _{Pro: Material} *other eyes* _{Goal} *like a magnet* _{Circumstance},]] and that *my nose* _{Carrier} *was* _{Pro: Relational} *neither big, nor rounded*_{Attribute}, || but *full and smooth*_{Attribute} with the fullness of strong passion which could turn to lust _{Circumstance: Comitative}.|||

Firdaus is both the narrator and the filter of events. This narrative exploits three sensorial aspects of Firdaus: perceptive, emotive and epistemic. The processes *opened* and *probed* connote Firdaus' self-consciousness. They are active and therefore require an agent. Their agency is ascribed to Sharifa, thereby making her the initiator of the process of self-awakening. That is, it is Firdaus' perception of Sharifa's role in making her understand the realities of her harsh society that is being subjectively relayed. Thus, though material

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processes, their metaphorical implication relates epistemologically to Firdaus in that they connote her growth of awareness.

An important stylistic technique employed here is the repetition of circumstances for narrative effect. The first instance concerns the recurrence of locative circumstances *to life, to events in my past* and *[to events] in my childhood*. The circumstance *to life* connotes a panoramic view of events and therefore appears to arrogate to Firdaus an omniscient status, a position usually assumed by the third person narrator. Put differently, it suggests her ubiquitous understanding or consciousness of life, especially when we consider the opening of the eye as a metaphor for self-awareness.

Construed this way, the circumstances *to events in my past* and *[to events] in my childhood* which are specifics of the circumstance *to life* restrict her consciousness particularly to her childhood and this is significant; for it triggers Firdaus' retrospective reflection of some events in her childhood such as her father's attitude to his male and female children, his beating of her mother (Firdaus' mother), as well as the discrimination against the female sex in her society. The latter will be considered in later paragraphs. Moreover, the referent of *which*, Carrier of the circumstantial relational clause *which had remained hidden to my mind*, is *events in my life or past*. Interestingly, the syntactic connection between the Attribute *hidden* and the locative *to my mind* suggests that the events are slanted through the limited perspective of Firdaus. Therefore, a consideration of the process *had remained* in relation to the process *opened* reveals Firdaus' sudden understanding of her past life, thereby foregrounding the process of growth in consciousness.

Also significant is the recurrence of Goals which connote lack of self-consciousness and cognitive processes which denote consciousness. This is evident in clause complex 2: *She probed with a searching light revealing obscure areas of myself, unseen features of my face and body, making me become aware of them, understand them, see them for the first time.* The whole clause is a material clause with *She* (i.e. Sharifa) as the Actor. The events encoded by its sub-clauses *revealing obscure areas of myself*, *[revealing] unseen features of my face and body* and *see them for the first time* appear to have been tied to the perceptual aspect of Firdausic filtration. That is, the nature of the processes *revealing* and *see* and Goals *obscure areas of myself* and *unseen features of my face and my body* demonstrates that the events are oriented to the pectoral view of Firdaus vis-à-vis her unique physique. However, these Goals implicate her hitherto limited consciousness of her physique. The association of these lack-of-awareness-denoting Goals with the following parallel mental clauses *become aware of* them, *understand* them and *see* them therefore helps to foreground Firdaus' sudden awareness of her unique features or her identity as a woman.

In fact, how the novelist has invested *see*, a perceptive process, with a cognitive function needs to be commented on. The mental processes aforementioned denote self-analysis as their Phenomenon *them* whose referent is *my face and my body* relates to Firdaus. They are also self-directed processes. Also, though *become aware of* and *understand* are cognitive processes and *see* is a perceptive process, the latter also presupposes a clear understanding of not just her bodily features, but her identity as a woman; hence, it is contextually cognitive in function. The significance of the

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neutralization of the semantic opposition between the two processes which have the same Phenomenon is the foregrounding of the metaphor of growth in self-consciousness of Firdaus.

In clause complex 3, we are again allowed access into Firdaus' cognitive space so that the narratee shares the same mental landscape with the narrator. This unique position makes it possible for the narratee to infer the emotive aspect of her filtration. Basically, the clause *I discovered I had black eyes...* presupposes a hitherto negative Firdausic self-concept as well as a prospective deconstruction of that demeaning perception. The process *discovered* re-emphasises self-realisation. There appears to be a shift from her epistemic orientation of events to her perceptive and emotive orientations. Taken individually, *I had black eyes...* is a relational clause. *I* (i.e. Firdaus) is the Carrier of the Attribute *black eyes*. Interestingly, the *black eyes* has the attribute *sparkle* and their seductive power, on men perhaps, is brought out through a metaphorical comparison with a magnet: *that attracted other eyes like a magnet*, a material clause when considered individually. The *nose* is ascribed a positive attribute *full and smooth with the fullness of strong passion...* Clearly, the transitivity configurations of the clauses, both relational and material, reveal how Firdaus has come to perceive herself: she is a woman with beauty and special seductive powers. Also, implicitly, the clauses suggest the jollity with which she greets this kind of awareness. Put differently, the stylistic effect of clause complex 3 is the foregrounding of Firdaus' pulchritude and her attitude of admiration to her unique feminine features as well as the demystification of her earlier negative self-concept.

Another important event which catalyses Firdaus' self-consciousness is her meeting with Di'aa, one of her male clients. In a conversation with Firdaus, he sarcastically draws an analogy between the medical profession and prostitution with the implication that unlike the former, the latter is viewed with contempt; hence, prostitutes are without respect in society. The data below (from pages 76-78) encode their conversation:

1. '…a doctor while carrying out his duties _Senser_ feels_Pro: Mental_ he's worthy of respect.' _Phenomenon_

2. |||'You _Carrier_ are _Pro: Relational_ not respected _Attribute_,' || he _Sayer_ replied _Pro: Verbal_, || but before the words 'not respected' had even reached my ears, my hands rose to cover them quickly...|||

3. ||| Before that moment_Circumstance: Time_ my mind_Carrier_ had been _Pro: Relational_ calm, tranquil, undisturbed_Attribute_.|||

4. ||| But now _Circumstance: Time_ my head_Actor_ vibrated _Pro: Material_ with an incessant movement that kept on without respite_Circumstance: Manner_…|||

5. ||| The veil _Goal_ was torn _Pro: Material_ from my eyes _Circumstance: Locative_.|||

6. ||| It_Identified_ was_Pro: Relational_ something [[I had not known]]_Identifier_ before_Circumstance: Time_…|| I _Carrier_ had remained _Pro: Relational_ ignorant _Attribute_ of the fact_Circumstance: Matter_.|||

The events are filtered through the consciousness of both Di'aa and Firdaus. While events in clauses 1 and 2 are oriented to the cognitive and emotive filtration of Di'aa, those of clauses 3 to 6 are tied to the epistemic, perceptive and emotive facets, to borrow Rimmon-Kenan's (2005) phrase, of Firdaus. In clause 1, the cognitive mental process *feels* has *a doctor* as its Senser and therefore denotes that the event is oriented to his epistemic

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sensorium. Note that the entire clause is Firdaus' verbal report of Di'aa's speech. Di'aa draws a distinction in terms of social status between the medical profession and prostitution on a scale of respectability. But then, he does it in a way that appears that he is merely reporting the doctor's impression. To achieve this, he superimposes his mental awareness on the doctor's. In the relational clause (clause 2), it is Di'aa's emotional facet that orients the events. Its attributive process *are* is stative. Also, the Carrier *You* refers to Firdaus. By implication, Firdaus is the one ascribed the negative attribute *not respected*. These syntactic patterns enable the *I*-narrator to encode the focalizer's (i.e. Di'aa's) definition of the two professions as well as his respective attitude of reverence and contempt towards them.

From clause 3, there is a shift of centre of focalisation from Di'aa to Firdaus, who perceives prostitution from an 'internal' perspective, being a prostitute herself. In clause 3, *Before that moment, my mind had been calm, tranquil and undisturbed*, *that moment* refers to the time of her shocking realisation of the contempt with which society holds her, in particular, and prostitution, in general. Therefore, the whole time circumstance *Before that time* anachronistically relates to the time prior to that realisation. *My mind*, the Carrier, is given the attributes *calm, tranquil* and *undisturbed*. These positive attributes constitute a paradigm that foregrounds not only her hitherto peace of mind but more importantly her deluded sense of self-respect. We understand her sense of respect because she has to conceive of prostitution as a dignified profession before she can practise it. It is noticeable that the linguistic choices of both Firdaus and Di'aa have influenced their representation of prostitution. Thus, there is a confirmation of a general view held by narratologists that a

focalizer's 'psychological attitude towards the object [of perception]…affects the picture [he or she] forms and passes on to others' (Bal, 1999:142).

Firdaus' reactions to Di'aa's assertion and his definition of her are significant in that they spark off a chain reaction culminating in her shocking realisation of the demeaning status as a prostitute. The first is her internal conflict or confusion. Clause 4 *But now my head vibrated with an incessant movement that kept on without respite* is a metaphorical expression of her confusion. Speaking broadly, the conflict emanates from the disparity in the focalizers' (i.e. Di'aa's and Firdaus') cognitive and emotive orientations to prostitution. From the discussion, two specific arguments may be advanced for the internal conflict Firdaus experiences. The first is that the internal conflict is the emotional effect of the twist of her sense of self-worth triggered by Di'aa's verbal response. Second, Firdaus suffers this kind of psychological torture because of her inability to appreciate the patriarchal orientation of Di'aa's vitriolic attack or remark. These conclusions corroborate Bal's (1999:148) claim that shifts in focalisation present 'a good picture of the origins of a conflict' in narratives.

Firdaus' state of internal conflict or confusion triggers her introspection of her life as a prostitute, leading to her understanding of the fact that prostitution is not revered or considered a dignified profession by society and that a prostitute, such as her, is treated with contempt by society. This growth in consciousness is encoded in clauses 5 and 6. Clause 5 *The veil was torn from my eyes* is an agentless passive sentence. While *The veil* (the Goal) connotes Firdaus' ignorance or lack of consciousness of a prostitute's demeaning status in society, the action-oriented material process *was torn* connotes her sudden

realisation of this. According to Simpson (2004), an agentless passive sentence is used by writers to focus attention on the sufferer of the action as well as the verbal action itself. Therefore, by thematizing *The veil* and backgrounding the agent, the focalizer-narrator refracts or regulates the narratorial information in such a way that it encodes her understanding of society's attitude of derision to prostitution and prostitutes.

In the clause complex 6, *It was something I had not known before…I had remained ignorant of the fact*, the events are tied to the epistemic filtration of Firdaus. This is suggested by the mental process *had not know* and the attribute *ignorant*. This clause relates very much to clause 5 because its participants Identified *It*, Identifier *something* and circumstance of matter *of the fact* all relate to *The veil* of clause 5. One striking thing about clause 6 is its ambivalence caused by the perfective aspect of its processes. One the one hand, the clause emphasises Firdaus' initial limited consciousness of a prostitute's demeaning social representation aforementioned. On the other hand, it highlights her prospective awareness of the degrading social image of prostitutes and the contempt with which society holds prostitution.

Such an understanding is the reason behind Firdaus' search for a positive social image by quitting prostitution. She declares, 'Come what may, I had to become a respectable woman…' (p.79). From the discussion, it could be inferred that though Firdaus is the focalizer, it appears that now the relationship between her and prostitution is distal, indicating a change in her hitherto positive psychological attitude to it. That is, she now views prostitution, like Di'aa, from the 'outside'. This is necessary for without it she

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could not accept her negative social image which serves as the reason for her search for a respectable social image or identity.

The final data reveal Firdaus' understanding of the level of discrimination against women in her society. While extracts 1 and 2 were from pages 17-18, extract 3was from pages 100 and 101:

1. ||| When one of his female children_{Behaver} died_{Pro:Behavioural}, || my father_{Actor} would eat_{Pro: Material} his supper, _{Goal}…and || then_{Circumstance} he_{Actor} would go to sleep, _{Pro: Material} || just as he _{Actor} did _{Pro:Material} every night_{Circumstance}.|||

2. ||| When the child that died_{Carrier} was_{Pro: Relational} a boy_{Attribute}, || he_{Actor} would beat _{Pro: Material} my mother, _{Goal} || then _{Circumstance} have _{Pro: Material} his supper _{Goal} || and lie down to sleep _{Behavioural}. ||| My father never went to bed without his supper.

3. ||| (a) He _{Sayer} said_{Pro: Verbal}, || (b) 'Every prostitute _{Possessor} has _{Pro: Relational} a pimp _{Possessed} to protect her from other pimps, and from the police _{Circumstance: Purpose}. |||That's what I'm going to do.' ||| (c) 'There isn't _{Pro: Existential} a woman on earth who can protect herself _{Existent}.' |||(d) '…I _{Actor} went _{Pro: Material} to the police _{Circumstance: Location}, || only to discover || (e) that he _{Possessor} had_{Pro: Relational} better connections than I _{Possessed}.|||(f) Then I _{Actor} had recourse to _{Pro: Material} legal proceedings _{Goal}. ||(g) I _{Actor} found out _{Pro: Material} || (h) that the law punishes women like men, // (i) but turns _{Pro: Material} a blind eye _{Scope} to what men do _{Circumstance}.

A noticeable feature of the data is the swift shifts in focalization. The events in clauses 1 and 2 are slanted through the consciousness of Firdaus.

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Marzouk is the focalizer of the events encoded in clauses 3 (a), (b), (c) and (d). However, in clauses 3 (e), (f), (g) and (h), the events are again filtered through Firdaus' consciousness. This narrative technique is stylistically motivated for it appears it is deliberately employed to highlight the differing perspectives and attitudes of the focalizers.

Clauses 1 and 2 encode Firdaus' father's attitude and Firdaus' own feelings and thoughts regarding her father's actions, in particular, and the attitude of her Islamic society, in general, towards women. Of stylistic significance are the sub-clauses introduced by *When*. In *When one of his female children died*, the process *died* is Behavioural, but the action is not deliberate as it is not instigated by *one of his female children*. In other words, no one is responsible for the process; thus, no one could be blamed for the death of the female child. In its main clause, *…my father would eat his supper…*, Firdaus' father is the Actor of the process *would eat* whose Goal is *supper*, a non-human participant. This means that his action neither affects the dead child nor any living member of his household. The clause *just as he always did* which denotes habituality suggests that his daughter's death does not trigger any behavioural change in him. One notices that the linguistic choices and their transitivity configurations first enable the narrator to implicitly relate her father's emotional detachment from and his disregard for his female children so that the narratee cannot help denouncing her father's apathetic attitude to his female children.

Clause complex 2 *When the child that died was a boy, he would beat my mother // then [he would] have his supper…* encodes Firdaus' father's attitude in the event of the death of a male child. Once again, the process *died* of the

sub-clause underlined is Behavioural. But unlike clause 1, this time, the process triggers an aggressive behaviour in her father. This is expressed by the main clause *he would beat my mother*. The Actor is her father and the process *would beat* is a violent-intentional-goal-directed process. Its Goal participant is her mother. The clause implicates that he blames his wife for the son's death, but this is unfounded as the process *died* suggests that the wife is not the one responsible for the death of the child. Thus, from the perspective of Firdaus, the punishment her father metes out to her mother is unwarranted. In fact, her father's behavioural change contrasts with our usual expectation of a mournful attitude of a bereaved parent. The import of the situational irony created by the transitivity patterns above is to evoke the narratee's feeling of dislike towards her father. Another significance of the backgrounding of our expectation is that it helps the character-narrator to highlight her father's insensitivity to her mother's doleful state, emphasise the absurdity of his actions and eventually evoke a feeling a sympathy in the narratee. Undoubtedly, Firdaus comes to understand the marginalization of or discrimination against the female child in her society and the fact that misfortunes in marriages are blamed on women. It must, however, be mentioned that this consciousness is prospective.

A little background information is needed for the discussion of clause 3. As the story progresses, Firdaus leaves the service of Sharifa and establishes herself as a wealthy prostitute. She could decide the food she wanted to eat and the house she preferred. She could also refuse a man for whom she 'felt an aversion no matter what the reason' (p. 74). All these gave her a sense of independence. However, the intrusion of Marzouk, a pimp, into her life throws

her into utterly novel experiences which culminated in her understanding of not only the extent of discrimination against women in her society but also the impossibility of women to have independent existence. Clause 3 encodes the conversation between Firdaus and Marzouk, who wants to control her life or threatens her independence.

The Sayer role of the verbal clause 3a *He said* is attributed to Marzouk. The process projects two clauses: 3b *'Every prostitute has a pimp to protect her from other pimps, and from the police* and 3c *'There isn't a woman on earth who can protect herself"* which are relational and existential clauses respectively. The possessor *Every prostitute* is contextually generic. The possessed is *a pimp*. The relational possessive process is stative and with its generic implication, it normalizes the practice of prostitutes having pimps. The circumstance *to protect her…* suggests that men are powerful or strong and women, represented by 'prostitutes', are innately vulnerable and, therefore, need the protection of men. This gendered view is again highlighted in the Existential clause. The Existent *a woman*, like the possessor, is generic. The process *can protect* of the embedded clause *who can protect herself* denotes 'ability'. The process is reflexive in that *who* (which refers to *a woman*) is both its Actor and Goal. The sub-clause thus attempts to assert the independence of women; however, the negative process *isn't* of the superordinate clause backgrounds this implication. The entire clause, therefore, implicates that weakness is a universal attribute of women. The stylistic significance of the transitivity configurations of clauses 3 and 4 lies in how they demonstrate how the focalizer-narrator has refracted the narrative events to emphasise the extent to which Marzouk, in particular, and men, in

general, have internalised the patriarchal cultural assumption of gender dichotomy of their society which attributes power to men and weakness to women and the fact that women cannot have independent existence because they are defined in relation to men. Thus, Firdaus comes to acknowledge men's inclination not only to dominate women but also to entrench patriarchy.

Firdaus tries to use the law and the police to extricate herself from Marzouk's oppression but this move leads to her realizing shockingly that the legal and the security institutions favour men. This awareness is encoded in clauses(3d)*...I went to the police,* ||(3e)*only that he had better connections than I,*(3f) *Then I had recourse to legal proceedings* ||(3g)*I found out*|| (3h)*that the law punishes women like me,* ||and (3i)*but turns a blind eye to what men do*. Of relevance to me are the clauses underlined. The processes *to discover* and *found out* are mental processes of cognition. This means that the events encoded in the clauses are tied to the epistemic filtration of Firdaus. They inscribe Firdaus' development in consciousness. The process *found out* of clause (g) projects two clauses, namely (3h) *that the law punishes women like me* and (3i) *turns a blind eye to what men do*. While (3h) seems to suggest the oppressive situation of women, the transitivity configuration of (3i) and the projected clause (3e) implicates the privileged position of men and their freedom from oppression. Besides, the clauses help the focalizer-narrator to evoke the narratee's attitude of sympathy to women and contempt for the oppressive civil institutions of her society. In brief, through Firdaus' cognitive lens, we come to appreciate the oppressive situation of women and the fact that the oppression is perpetuated by the very legal and police institutions which are to protect the rights of individuals.

Again, the study confirms the claim that the meronymic agency is a dominant narrative technique (Simpson, 2004). Interestingly, unlike previous studies, in the present study, the analyses in Chapters Three and Four indicate that the meronymic agency has an ambiguous status. In Halliday (1971), meronymic agency is found to show ineffectiveness or powerlessness whereas Mwinlaaru (2012a) observes that contrary to Halliday's conclusion, meronymic agency constructs Sam in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* as an effective and powerful character. By ambiguous status, I mean that it does not corroborate Mwinlaaru's (2012a) conclusion and contradict Halliday's (1971), but rather confirms the conclusions drawn by both studies. The reason is that whereas in relation to Marzouk, it highlights his ineffectiveness and powerlessness; with regard to Firdaus, it constructs her as an effective and a militant or powerful character.

This chapter has discussed the use of transitivity to inscribe psychological point of view. Construing point of view on the psychological plane broadly to subsume the epistemic, emotive and perceptual orientations of the focalizer to the narrative events, some extracts from significant scenes in the narrative were subjected to a transitivity analysis to bring out how the focalizer-narrator exploits the linguistic resources at her disposal to encode how she *feels about*, *understands* and *sees* events as well as how she evokes certain feelings in the narratee. A good deal of emphasis was laid on Firdaus' limited consciousness and growth in consciousness. The analysis reveals that Firdaus becomes aware of her identity and self-worth. Second, she realizes that prostitutes are treated with contempt by society. Third, she comes to acknowledge the fact that the oppressive situations in which women find themselves are as a result of the

civil institutions operative in her society. Fourth, she comes to understand that men capitalize on the cultural or patriarchal assumption of the vulnerability of women to oppress women. Finally, the novelist employed the technique of shifting perspectives rapidly to highlight the contrasting perspectives, attitudes and feelings of the focalizers.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This is the final chapter of the thesis. In this chapter, I provide a summary of the whole thesis. First, I summarise the goals of the study, the narratological and linguistic approaches to point of view and the linguistic theory underlining the study. This is followed up with a recap of the methodology and key findings from the study. I then discuss the conclusions and the implications drawn from the findings. I further make suggestions for research. The chapter ends with some concluding remarks.

5.1 Summary of aims, theories and concepts

This study has examined El Saadawi's manipulation of the resources of language in rendering point of view. Specifically, I investigated how her systematic choice of certain linguistic forms or structures and the variations in the linguistic choices are tied in with the particular narrative perspective she adopts so as to address the two research questions posed in Chapter One. The first research question aims at finding out the interplay between transitivity and ideological point of view and the second is concerned with the synergy between psychological point of view and transitivity choices.

To achieve these goals, I found Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) the best theoretical approach for the study. I relied specifically on the transitivity system of SFL which is built on the concept of choice and also drew insights from narratological postulations on narrative perspective, especially the distinctions between focalization and narration and between focalizer and narrator as well as the linguistic accounts of point of view by Fowler (1996)

and Simpson (1993). Also, in line with the aims of the study, I adopted stylistics as the analytical tool. Adopting Simpson's (2004) concept of transitivity profile, extracts from significant scenes – the exposition, inciting incident, conflict, complication, climax and resolution – in the novel were taken. They constituted the data for the study. They were coded and the linguistic features found to be relevant to the research questions were identified, described and interpreted to bring out their aesthetic effects as far as the encoding of point of view in the novel is concerned.

5.2 Summary of main findings

At the beginning of this study, I posed two questions. The first question examined the use of transitivity to inscribe ideological point of view in the novel. The analysis shows that there is the foregrounding of domestic processes of cooking, washing and serving with women, namely Firdaus and her Uncle's Wife, as Actors and men, namely Firdaus' Uncle and Bayoumi, as the beneficiaries. Also, there is the foregrounding of locative circumstances related to the kitchen. These circumscriptive locative circumstances and domestic processes are deployed to depict the active role of women in domestic affairs, particularly with regard to activities related to the kitchen. Moreover, it is found out that women do not have the same educational opportunities as men. This is revealed by the contrast between Firdaus' verbiage of aspiration and her Uncle's verbiage of circumscription as well as the use of clauses which connote prohibition. This inequality is justified using Quranic teachings.

Regarding violence, it is revealed that domestic women in Islamic societies, represented by Firdaus and her Uncle's wife, are constantly beaten

or harassed by their husbands. Surprisingly, these women usually do not resist such brutalities and, therefore, perceive those who try to resist their maltreatment as irreligious. The reason is that they justify violence in marriage by appealing to Quranic teachings on the need for married women to be submissive to their husbands. Also, Marzouk, the pimp, uses violence to control the life of Firdaus. But then, Firdaus reciprocates Marzouk's violent action with equal violence to free herself from his oppression. In fact, she kills him in order to exert her independence. Concerning Marzouk's murder, the novelist employed two stylistic devices. The first is the foregrounding of violent material processes whose Actor is Firdaus. The second is the use of the meronymic agency. While the former reveals Firdaus' militant and powerful nature, the latter ascribes powerlessness to Marzouk. The murder of Marzouk by Firdaus is El Saadawi's attempt at reversing and collapsing the biased gender binaries in her Islamic society.

Also, concerning the second research question which examines the use of transitivity to inscribe psychological point of view, some significant findings are recorded. It is shown that Firdaus lacks a clear understanding of her personality. This is achieved by her being ascribed the Senser role of mental processes that foreground negation. Besides, the foregrounded features of the transitivity patterns associated with her surroundings which are attributes of emptiness and stolidity encode her sense of alienation and the repressiveness of her society. It is ironic that it is within this context that she grows in awareness. The study reveals that Firdaus grows in consciousness as the narrative progresses. First, she grows in self-awareness. She becomes aware of

her unique physique, especially of the fact that as a woman, she is beautiful and has special seductive powers over men.

Moreover, it is revealed that Firdaus comes to understand that prostitution is not a dignified profession and that society treats prostitutes with contempt. This situational irony is the reason for her search for a respectable social image. The study again highlights that Firdaus comes to understand that her society privileges the male sex over the female sex. Because of this, not only are men or boys given preferential treatment in the family but also the laws of the land are designed to favour them.

Finally, an important narrative technique employed by the novelist is the shifting of the centre of focalization. The perspectival shifts reflect the ideological differences of the focalizers as well as their differing emotive and cognitive orientations to the events. The shifts in focalization are made possible through the variation of the linguistic choices in the transitivity profile of the focalizers. This indicates that there is a relationship between point of view and linguistic choices.

5.3 Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the findings of the study. Syal (1994:6) states that literary texts are 'ideologically constituted to make certain kinds of statements, transport meanings of particular social, cultural and political value', cited in Mwinlaaru (2012a:185). The study corroborates this assertion in that the linguistic choices of the focalizer-narrator reveal the patriarchal ideologies upon which Firdaus' and by extension El Saadawi's society is structured. The first concerns gender roles. The fictional Islamic world El Saadawi creates subscribes to the phallocentric ideology that women

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are inferior to their husbands or men whom they exist to serve. The second relates to the patriarchal ideology regarding the rights of the sexes. The study reveals that Islamic societies believe that the female sex should not have the same rights as the male sex. As a result, women or girls do not have the same rights as the men or boys to the resources of the land. This confirms Issaka's (2010:33) claim that 'Muslims in general…feel that women are not equal to men in rights'. Finally, the ideology that violence is a mechanism for controlling women is highlighted. Surprisingly, these ideologies are sustained by cultural norms and the thwarting of Quranic precepts by men.

Second, the study confirms the view that linguistic choices of literary texts are influenced by the point of view a writer adopts. (*See* Fowler's (1996) and Simpson's (1993) discussion of point of view and linguistic choices in Chapter Two.) Point of view itself relates to how events and objects are seen and made sense of based on the cognitive, perceptual and emotive orientations of the focalizer. Writers rely on their linguistic choices and the structuring of these selected linguistic elements to bring out how the focalizer actually does this. As Gee (1999: 2) notes, 'when we…write, we always use the grammar of our language to take a particular perspective'. The analysis of the transitivity profiles of the narrators indicates that the linguistic elements, in terms of the participants, processes and circumstances, selected and the modulation of their transitivity configurations are constrained by the perspectives of the focalizers in that they are specifically deployed to reflect the focalizers' psychology and perception of and attitude to events and people.

Again, the study confirms the claim that the meronymic agency is a dominant narrative technique (Simpson, 2004). Interestingly, unlike previous

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studies, in the present study, the analyses in Chapters Three and Four indicate that the meronymic agency has an ambiguous status. Refer to the penultimate paragraph of Chapter Four.

Finally, systemicists assert that users of a language make systematic choices to encode their collective experiences of the world. This implies that it is the message that users of a language intend to communicate which influences their choice of linguistic items. The same argument may be extended to literary texts as writers, consciously or unconsciously, select certain linguistic elements from the ecology of linguistic terms to convey their desired message. This study confirms this systemicist claim. It shows how El Saadawi foregrounds certain linguistic elements in encoding the patriarchal ideologies of her Islamic society and in revealing Firdaus' metamorphosis from naivety to maturity.

5.4 Suggestions for further studies

Three recommendations are made for further studies based on the limitations of the study. First of all, the study examined the use of transitivity to inscribe point of view in El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*. It limited itself to points of view on the ideological and psychological planes, excluding the third important aspect of point of view, which is spatio-temporal point of view. It is therefore suggested that further studies employ the transitivity model to examine spatio-temporal point of view in the novel to demonstrate how El Saadawi creates atmosphere and construct characters in certain circumstances and also to reveal the relationship between spatio-temporality and the overall thematic structure of the novel.

Second, as already stated, the study employed the transitivity model to analyse point of view in the novel. It means that it limited itself to the ideational metafunction of language. But then, it is possible to analyse point of view using the Appraisal Theory which relates to the interpersonal metafunction. Further studies should therefore consider the use of the Appraisal Theory in examining point of view in *Woman at Point Zero*.

Third, further research should extend the approach used in the present research to other novels of Nawal El Saadawi in order to examine whether it is possible to make general statements for her style so far as transitivity patterning and point of view are concerned.

5.6 Concluding remarks

My aim in this study has been to explore point of view on the ideological and the psychological planes in El Saadawi's novel, *Woman at Point Zero*, using the SFL concept of transitivity. The present study is there a shift from the traditional approach of literary or thematic analysis which is the preoccupation of previous studies on the novel. The study has demonstrated the unique creative style of El Saadawi, something often glossed over by existing studies. In this chapter, I have provided a summary of the aims of the study and the theoretical, conceptual and methodological frameworks guiding the study. Also, there is a recap of the key findings, the conclusions drawn from them as well as their theoretical, methodological and pedagogical implications. The chapter ends with suggestions for further studies.

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