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Socio-Cultural Representation and Politics of Exclusion: A Cultural Critique of Human Rights in Saadawi's Zeina

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Abstract

Cultural Studies is conceived as an interdisciplinary field of study which analyses how various ideological experiences in a society are constructed, lived, and interpreted on the basis of economic, religious, and gender-based differences among human beings resulting in the dominance of one group over the other which is tagged as the politics of exclusion. The current study aims to explore how does the hegemonic order in Egyptian culture as represented in the literary fiction of Nawal El Saadawi's *Zeina* deprive the people of low stratum, women and children of their human rights and exclude them from the mainstream power structures which is the violation of their birthrights. These marginalized groups sometimes indulge in the battle for signification and their rights from the powerful and the dominant groups. These culturally constructed modes of dominance and resistance ensure cultural mobility and flexibility which bring about some changes in the society. The theoretical framework of the study is Stuart Hall's Cultural Studies and Pramod K Nayar's Human Rights and



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Literature to analyse cultural mobility through the politics of exclusion, resistance, and human rights in Egyptian society depicted in Saadawi's *Zeina* whose protagonist is an illegitimate daughter of a now-renowned literary critic Bodour who abandoned her on a street for the fear of society when she was a university student. *Zeina*, her daughter, survives after fighting against all the odds and human rights violations to be a heartthrob in the field of music but is murdered in the end because of her blasphemous profession according to the religious bigots. Overall, it is a significant study to ponder over the Egyptian culture to know about its socio-political structure and resistance against deprivation of human rights.

Keywords: Culture, human rights, patrifocal, Egypt, oppression

1. Introduction

The academia of the present-day conforms to the injunctions of fiction writing to project social, political, economic, ethnic, religious, and cultural conflicts among human beings living in kaleidoscopic societies which sometimes become the threshold for deprivation and victimization of the others' rights. Nawal El Saadawi, the Egyptian fiction writer, projects all these constructs in her discourse highlighting human rights for a better socio-cultural environment but clashes between rights and duties give way to the polarization of the powerful and the politics of exclusion of the marginalized. She has foregrounded these cultural representations and social constructs fractured by power politics through her characters in *Zeina* (2011) which are contextualized in her work with the postulates of Stuart Hall's Cultural Studies and Pramod K Nayar's Human Rights and Literature.

No one except Saadawi has focused upon the polemics of gender issues, politics, theology, and social hierarchy very candidly to the extent that she is threatened with her life. She presented Arab life and culture more stubbornly and rigorously after her time of incarceration on the ground of talking about female oppression, freedom, and equality. According to Fedwa Malti-Douglas (1995) in *Men, Women, and God(s): Nawal El Sadawi and Arab Feminist Poetics*, Saadawi has earned the status of 'modern day Shahrazad' who voices the voiceless by narrating the unrevealed tales of sorrows of people. In her various works *Woman at Point Zero*, *The Circling Song*, *Zeina*, and *The Fall of Imam*, etc, she has depicted the oppressive tilt of some of the patrifocal bigots who snatch constantly the human rights of women especially and demote them to the status of a commodity. Being a feminist, she vies for integrity, dignity and independence of her characters in a patriarchal and totalitarian society with various socio-cultural structures "manifest in institutionalized religion, government institutions, military systems, police organizations, educational curriculum, media..." (Ouyang, 1997, p. 101).

Nawal El Saadawi's *Zeina* (2011) narrates the fears of an elite professor and literary critic Bodour who abandons her illegitimate daughter Zeina on the street of Cairo when she was a university student and remains haunted by the loss of her daughter and her creative work – a novel. Zeina survives, becomes a musician, and earns admiration or envy in many characters in the novel. She symbolizes freedom and vitality of life which is prohibited for women and marginalized section of male-dominated society and many people from the ruling and the ruled classes aspire to be like her. On the other hand, the male section of society represented by Bodour's husband, her cousin, and her friend's husbands, etc. is thoroughly hypocrite as they keep lustful eyes on girls and women but pretend to be pious and God-fearing. There are also religious impostors who condemn music but feel attracted towards Zeina's musical notes who is shot dead at the end of the novel. As far as Bodour's novel is concerned, it is stolen by her husband who gets it published with his own name later on. Consequently, the rights of women either rich or poor, and people of a low stratum of society are at stake by men who cannot bear to see them progressing or at a high pedestal.

Culture is a pluralistic way of life with its particular paradigm of social, economic, political, feminist and ethnic, etc. representations. In *Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams defines culture as "the best that has been thought and said" (1983, p. 13) with significant structures and patterns in life over the years. Cultural Studies analyses these patterns and formations in totality. According to Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon, cultural Studies is a locus of a link between "literary text and social context" (in Waugh, 2007, p. 248). Stuart Hall signifies more the role of text in encompassing the multiple forms and practices of culture which are related to feminism, marxism, ethnicity, religion, politics, and power, etc. Hence, literature and cultural studies are interconnected for ages because various dimensions and stages of culture are well-represented in literary discourse.

While living in a society with varying identities, people who belong to different classes may not have a singular approach towards life. They may have their own interests to pursue which may be in clash with the larger interests of society. For Edward Thompson (1961), culture does not evolve smoothly but it is a "continuous struggle between contesting cultures" (p. 41) which results in cultural change, mobility, and evolution because culture is constructed so it can be contested. This struggle and contestation reveals the notion of hegemony and power as Gramsci (1998) argues that resistance to dominant or corporate culture is a valid option in society with the problems of identity formation and politics of exclusion.

This politics of exclusion and annihilation of identity are the violation of human rights. Its history can be traced out to the 18th century Enlightenment thinking which says that a man is born free to act without any oppressive dominance and inequality. Nayar (2016) says that the literary discourse depicts cultural norms, aspirations, beliefs, and

human rights and through narratives, the social understanding and empathy with other fellows, either stable or dehumanized, is developed. In this politics of exclusion, a person is forced to be an outcast in some specific phenomena of life. We have used Pramod K. Nayar's concept of Human Rights and literature in which he attempts to write about the rights of human beings and their violation through different social acts. Nayar (2016) says that "Cultural texts construct a social imaginary — the set of beliefs, ideologies and aspirations — of the human, and by extension, of Human Rights" (p. xi). He says that literature especially fiction reading sharpens our understanding of society and we feel empathy towards individuals in society living in their own cultures. He argues further that these stories have strong impact on the emotions of the readers to look after human rights that is why more literary texts should be brought under the study of "representations and discourses of rights" (p. xii).

Stuart Hall's concept of cultural studies is also used to study the above-mentioned literary work. According to him, cultural identity in a society is a continuous process of suturing where different concepts, things, and ideologies are stitched together. Hence, socio-cultural identities are constructed through distinction and difference; through one's relation with the Other which one does not have or which one lacks. These differences of identities on multiple levels of gender, class, economy and ethnicity, etc. may lead to the problematisation of identity or the loss of a stable "sense of self" (1996, p. 172). This conflict is sometimes called the de-centering of the subject from its socio-cultural position and personal self. This crisis of identity and double displacement – both on socio-cultural and personal planes – gives birth to the politics of exclusion in the society.

2. Literature Review

The review of literature is presented on the key points of cultural studies, human rights, and selected Egyptian fiction. Cultural Studies is an umbrella term and ideology which lets readers, critics and academicians peep into any specific society, its politico-social norms, economy, belief system, flora and fauna, etc. According to Ziauddin Sardar (1997), Cultural Studies deals with multiple ranges of old and new dimensions of studies with some unique characteristics. He says that it examines the relationship of cultural practices with power under the specific "social and political context" (p. 9). Culture is significant in cultural studies as it is "the *object* of study and the *location* of political criticism and action" (p. 9). It tries to unite the knowledge of local and global cultures and to develop a "common interest between the knower and the known, between the observer and what is being observed" (p. 9). Cultural Studies is characteristic for its understanding of the change in the social structures of dominance, especially in industrial materialist societies.

Chris Barker (2003) in *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* writes about the basic concepts of cultural studies and then the problems and changes in these concepts with the advancement of age and society. Culture is homogenized as well as heterogenised. Modernity and postmodernity have played roles in evolving cultural studies. According to him, Cultural Studies has got profound significance in every kind of writing and mode of inquiry narrating the identities of people. Identity can be individual or social or based on gender. Media has played an important role to establish certain identities in a culture and society.

Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg and Alexandra Schultheis Moore (2012) in *Theoretical Perspectives on Human Rights and Literature* tag human rights and literature as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge which draws its meanings from culture, sociology, economics, feminism and race studies, etc. According to them, it is an important field of study which should not be compartmentalized as “compartmentalization of knowledge ... must especially be disrupted if we are to tackle the complexly interwoven problems accelerating in our new millennium” (p. 4).

Claire Chambers (2017) in *Rivers of Ink: Selected Essays* writes about the representation of Pakistani culture in the discourse of human rights. She has highlighted the precarious condition of the suppressed and the minorities in Pakistan. She says further that the writers through their literary works should address and deal with the problems of survival and existing in today’s perilous world; “the problems of hunger and poverty, social backwardness and political subjection” (p. 144) so that help should be extended to solve these issues.

Abdul Rahman al-Sheha’s concept of human rights in *Human Rights in Islam and Common Misconceptions* (2007) is based on the Islamic teachings and precepts culled from the Holy Quran and Sunnah. According to him, living in a society make individuals feel protected and they can perform their duties quite well. He says further that to secure our lives in society, three trends are prevalent in a “global society” (p. 4): 1- the right of an individual on society in which he enjoys unchecked freedom; 2- the right of society on an individual in which the individual does not cherish any rights except those few given by the ruling group and 3- both are given due rights. Among the abovementioned three trends, the writer endorses the third trend with the injunctions of Islam to secure human rights in a society. Katerina Dalacoura (2003) in her book *Islam, Liberalism and Human Rights* has discussed about the value of human rights as a norm in human relations. Islam gives due weightage to human rights dispelling the image of Islam as a rigid religion.

Jamal Assadi and Alia Al- Kassim Abu Reesh (2015) in “The Depiction of Masculinity in Nawal Al-Saadawi’s Fiction” discuss that Nawal Al Sadaawi projects a negative picture of men in her works because of male oppression on the female. In her

works, the man even as a father is a tyrannical figure representing the male community. In contrast, women are depicted as victims. Even such names are selected for female characters which stand for their being upright and virtuous; for example, “Bahiyah (the gorgeous woman), Zakia, (the pure woman), Nafeesah (the precious woman), Fareedah (the unique woman), Ain Al-Hayat (The eye of life) and Hameedah (the praised woman)” (p. 34).

The culture of a country consists of the deep-set traditional patterns which make up the mindset of its people over the years. Gloria Ada Fwangyil (2012) in “Cradle to Grave: An Analysis of Female Oppression in Nawal El Saadawi’s *Woman at Point Zero*” raises a crucial issue that women are not let to be independent as it indicates indirectly a challenge to the long-held traditional patriarchal structures of a society as women are kept subjugated generation after generation. Women cannot outcry against the superior position of their male counterparts as it would result in violent behaviors of men towards them. Male issues are preferred to be born whereas females are given secondary position and they face this discrimination since they enter this world. When married, women bear thrashing from their spouses which also affect them and their children who get attuned to this domestic violence and accept it as a norm in their future life. Firdaus in *Woman at Point Zero* has gone through multi-layered experiences of male oppression from her uncle, spouse Sheik Mahmoud, a coffee shop owner Bayoumi, pimps, and many other men. “Firdaus also observes that the men who exploit the poor and oppress women invoke Allah’s blessings and observe their prayers dutifully” (p. 23) which represents the hypocritical attitudes of men. Fwangyil concludes her discussion by saying that male chauvinism suppresses female progress and independence in male-driven societies which can be improved by the change in attitudes of male. Society and culture could be restructured when gender discrimination will subside and the opportunities will be equally accessed by both genders.

3. Methodology and Theoretical Stance

The present research is qualitative. It is analytical research based on the textual analysis of the content and form of the work from Egyptian literature. The theoretical framework consists of Stuart Hall’s concept of cultural studies and Pramod K Nayar’s notion of human rights in literature. In “Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms” (1980), Stuart Hall describes that Cultural Studies consists of two opposite dimensions of study: one is culturalism and the other is structuralism. Culturalism focuses upon experience as a base of culture whereas structuralism claims that experience is an ‘effect’ of culture or in other words, experience is the outcome of culture itself. Culturalism pays focus upon human agency whereas structuralism focuses upon ‘ideology’. Stuart Hall argues that Cultural Studies is possible by merging these two approaches through “dialogic critical engagement” (p. 31).

In “The Question of Cultural Identity” (1996), Stuart Hall propounds an argument that the identity of an individual is made in discourse through difference with the Other rather than the sameness. He presented the following three concepts of identity: i) Enlightenment, ii) sociological and iii) post-modern subjects. The first concept rests upon the notion of a man as a unified individual with the power of wisdom focused upon ‘self’. The second notion pleads that subject is not independent but is dependent on “‘interaction’ between self and society” (p. 276). The third type of identity is formed through constant formation and transformations in the culture we live in. It depends on the time frame. The temporal frame of reference helps the individual to make “different identities at different times” (p. 277). In this way, the self was negotiated into various identities under the influence of different movements in a culture. One of these movements was the feminist movement who raised the question against discrimination based on gender. Hence, they raised their voice for their separate identity. Another factor that influenced people’s identity was economic status which affects human relationships also. According to Hall, cultural studies also highlight the concept of power and politics to represent the marginalized social groups with the need for cultural change. He further says that Cultural Studies also deals with knowledge which becomes a tool for political practice because such knowledge is never a neutral or objective one but a matter of ‘positionality’ which means a place from where one speaks to someone for some purpose. Stuart Hall (1997) in *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* says that the concept of representation occupies a central place in cultural studies. The text gives multiple layers of meanings through the system of representation. For this purpose, various approaches to representation take the concepts and model of studies from feminism, anthropology, psychology, etc.

The human rights theory advocated the basic tenets that all human beings should be equally respected by others and they should be free from state repression. Every human being should live in socio-economic, cultural, and political conditions in which they might flourish otherwise they might be harmed by the politics of exclusion. According to Nayar (2016), such discourses “ignore or reject the particularity of each and every person” (p. 4). He further says that the literary texts present such threats to the social standing of the human subjects “which therefore implicitly demonstrate how the subject can only develop and grow in *conditions* that *sustain* life – and in many parts of the world such conditions are rare” (p. xiii). According to him, such discourses take two ways: the first route establishes the growth of human beings and the second presents the broken human beings.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Nawal El-Saadawi, an Egyptian physician-cum-activist writer, focuses upon equal rights of women and men and confronts patriarchal and hierarchical socio-political

oppressive set up in Egyptian culture as “true liberation is impossible within a hierarchical, oppressive social system” (Suwaed, 2017, p. 234). She traces out a connection between sexual and socio-political oppression of women as individual oppression leads to communal oppression. In her work *Zeina*, she has also penned down religious hypocrisy which reflects upon the maneuvers of the so-called religious clerics to misinterpret injunctions of the Holy Book for their own benefits and to subjugate people, particularly women to keep intact their supremacy. Media is also depicted as under strict observation of authorities who do not bear any criticism, opposition, or defiance by any individual.

In the work understudy, *Zeina*, the readers are told about the dispiriting behaviors of people towards street children who do not carry their fathers’ names but their mothers’ names in the slot of parenthood. The protagonist Zeina Bint Zeinat is such a character as came into this world without her consent but she faces quite heroically the onslaught of people about her sinful birth. On the other hand, Mageeda Zakariah al-Khartiti, the daughter of a famous newspaper writer Zakariah al-Khartiti and an eminent professor and literary critic Bodour Hanem, is given special treatment by the same society as she is a legitimate child. Quite surprisingly, Zeina is the illegitimate elder daughter of Bodour and her friend/lover during her university days and the period of revolution and demonstrations who was incarcerated and murdered later on. Zeina is shunned and ridiculed by her community even in her school: a teacher hits Zeina with his cane and abuses her to write her complete name on the board “Write the names of your father and grandfather, asshole” (2011, p. 2) which she could not produce and was expelled from the school later on because of being a product of sin which is quite inhuman and barbaric act to deprive a child of her basic right of getting education. She is considered as an outsider whose integrity is violated by the so-called nobility of the society. Her class fellows write her name on the walls of a bathroom of the school and parents do not allow their children to play with her. According to Anker, all these are the “images of corporeal unmaking and abuse” (2012, p. 4) which create a hostile environment for the affected to survive.

Human beings are shown living side by side with the animals on footpaths, shabby wooden huts, and roads in the novel which is violation of human rights. The writer has narrated about various kinds of people living in ‘dehumanised’ conditions. “Expressions of exclusion and dehumanization in cultural texts ... ‘fix’ humans in specific categories that then enable the violation of their subjectivity, identity and bodies” (Nayar, 2016, xv). Among the people living below the mark in poor condition are illegitimate children living on the streets whose parents could not own them due to various issues; moreover, the workers who used to work on the field or in the factories were deprived of their jobs because of their owners’ bankruptcy; the farmers who left villages for the cities because they could not gain profit out of their barren lands and wives who were thrown out of their homes after getting divorces from their husbands,

etc. All of them live miserably but more pathetic lives are those of children who are homeless and try to survive on their own keeping themselves safe from plunderers sometimes successfully and oft-times unsuccessfully. Zeina tries to save herself from an attacker because of her prowess and long pointed fingers; besides, she protects and supports other street children also who melt with her motherly love. She considers herself as their mother despite the fact that she would only be two or three years older than them. In school, Zeina has made no other friend except Mageeda who has ambivalent feelings of both admiration and repulsion towards her. She is impressed by Zeina's long fingers which are appreciated by her music teacher Miss Mariam and her tall stature which is in contrast with the short stature and the small plump hands of Mageeda. She wants to be free to play with street children and confident to face any person or situation without any reluctance like Zeina but she cannot do it as she belongs to a noble family. Zeina's superiority over Mageeda in every sphere of life, except her sinful birth and penury, causes a sense of deprivation in Mageeda and repulsion also as Zeina is a child of sin but is more talented than Mageeda.

One Friday, Zeina, nine years old, visits Mageeda's home to play with her but she and her mother are not at home. Her father, Zakariah, lies to her that Mageeda is at home just to appease his sexual hunger when she enquires about her friend's presence at home: "Is Mageeda here, Uncle?"; "Yes, sweetie. Do come in" (2011, p. 37). His falsehood creates a negative image in the minds of the readers. He is apparently a thorough Muslim but has multiple extra-marital affairs and his marriage is that of convenience to raise his social status as Bodour's father was a military man and later an active member of the government. He is a newspaper writer and usually discusses about a balance between religion and science and most often gives ambiguous and uncertain opinions which do not clarify on whose side he is so that it would be easier for him to change the sides according to the benefits involved. The writer very keenly describes the incident in which pronouncements from the mosques can be heard in the background when Zakariah makes advances to Zeina. His evil intentions candidly dawn upon her when he assaults on her and tears away her clothes. Despite being a male and senior in age and experience, he could not fulfill his nefarious designs. He, like other males of the society, talks against the illegitimate children but has no hitch in having illegitimate activity with one of them which highlights the double standards of the society and violation of the social rights of survival of any living being. Moreover, in retrospection, we are told that he himself was raped by his teacher when he was a schoolboy and beaten by the police during revolutionary activities and demonstrations. "Deep down, he was a schoolboy that had been raped himself" (2011, p. 39). Since then, he is psychologically trying to seek his revenge upon any lady, student, subordinate, or colleague who comes across him whom he can treat violently or vice versa. It shows that the identity of an individual was sabotaged which left an indelible mark on him because of which he became a sexaholic. On the other hand,

Zeina considers him her friend's father and calls him 'uncle' which is a norm of her society to give respect through such salutations and titles. The identity of an elderly person and his respectful status is demolished by his act of disrespect which gives way to the violation of human rights also.

A similar situation of violating human rights and child abuse is incorporated in the narrative by Bodour when she found on another Friday in her childhood her father doing a dehumanizing activity with a limp street child with whom he forbade his daughter to interact. "Her father forbade her from going out on the street. He told her that street children were born of sin. They were the Devil's children, especially the lame boy who looked like a little monkey" (p. 65). The hypocrisy of patrifocal society is unveiled sometimes by the close relations of Bodour e.g her father, her husband, and her friend Safaa's husband, etc. The writer communicates the cause of the limp of the child who is abused by Bodour's father that he was run down by a car: "He had lost his leg when he was run over by a speeding car in the dark" (p. 57). This is the heartrending episode of the merciless society for whom the illegitimate children are debased and dehumanized to the level of animals or who can be run down as they are inanimate or non-living things who cannot feel any kind of pain. The street boy was of the same age as Bodour who was eight years old. After doing her homework, she wanted to visit her nearby friend before her father returned home after offering Friday prayer as she was prohibited either to go outside even to her friend's home or to play with the street children who had no luxuries or necessities of life but tried to live their life with utmost fun and enjoyment though she once noticed the lurking tears specifically in the eyes of the same limp boy whose laughters resounded in the street. Her father emphasized upon her fragility "A girl's honor is like a match. It can only light once" (p. 66) and wanted to save her from the outside world by repetitively advising her to stay indoors. Before going out, she strolled in the garden and heard the stifled voice of a child coming from the junk room about which his father threatened her to imprison her if she ever disobeyed his orders. In the beginning, she could not decipher the situation and thought that her father and the boy were one entity or more like a mother kangaroo who pocketed her baby kangaroo but later on the real situation dawned upon her and baffled her to the core. Her trust in her father's religious persona was shattered. She felt her father was in an ecstatic condition but the boy was in pain and helplessly looked at the little opening of the door possibly for some rescuer. His eyes were bulging out with pain and tears. The rights of an individual are violated and he is dehumanized to be a source of pleasure for a powerful person. The victim (the boy) could never talk about it with her or with any one about his harassment because of the fear of the perpetrator and the society as "the victim is considered despicable by society because rape and sexual harassment victims are considered a disgrace in Arab society" (Ahmadi, 2021, p. 38).

Bodour trembled to think that she might be in the place of that child if she would have been parentless. She grew up with this pain and found that her husband Zakariah also resembled her father in many ways most specifically in violating the marriage bond. So Saadawi's pen reveals the negation of self, loss of identity, "women's discrimination, abuse of the low classes by the rich and the powerful, and religion's control of the public-political arena" (Suwaed, 2017, p. 246), etc. in her work.

Nawal al Saadawi has depicted various characters who belong to the profession of journalism in the novel: some of them cannot write up to the mark and get the help of their assistants but they are given various awards because of their strong political affiliations and affluent family background and some of them have the talent of writing but they lead an anonymous life because of having no approach. One of such assistants of Mageeda is Mohamed who has been writing many columns for many years for her but she bags the credit and acknowledgment for writing them. Mohamed lets his pen be hired by her because he could not get a job at a good place and he has a family to support as well. Once in his life, he writes an article in praise of Zeina who is blacklisted unfairly for emotionally charging up people to get their dreams fulfilled. The real cause behind it is her ignoring the amorous/sexual advancement of Ahmed al-Damhiri, the emir, "the Islamist prince" (p. 52). Despite the censorship, Mohamed takes a bold step once in his life and gets it published in a magazine owned by some opposition members of the government. He highly appreciates Zeina for her purity and unpretentiousness who earns the fame of a celebrated singer and musician genuinely on the basis of her merits. All of a sudden, Mohamed gets fame among the masses which is unacceptable for the ruling political party and other renowned and senior journalists and columnists. The society has repressive cultural norms set by the ruling elites; hence, his death sentence is also issued as he tried to agitate the passions of people by highlighting the rebellious soul of Zeina as a protagonist and icon of the society. He is incarcerated and questioned for writing an article in favor of a child of sin putting aside her contribution to music. Mohamed opines that everyone should have the liberty to express his opinions and he raises his voice against the double standards of his society. Ultimately, he is shot dead as the law-enforcing people could not bear the figment of truth and as they are steered by the decisions of the authorities who do not like any questioning against their rule and status quo.

5. Conclusion

'Cultural studies' is a multidisciplinary field of knowledge that consists of different ideological experiences in a community. Those ideological experiences may be called cultural constructs which are constructed on the basis of socio-economic, religious and gender-based, etc differences among human beings. All these constructs result in the supremacy of one group over the other and this dominant group excludes the other groups from mainstream power politics which is called politics of exclusion. The

research work explores the selected Egyptian fiction to draw the main strings of patriarchal and political culture which explore such hegemonic order prevalent in society. The marginalized groups consist of women, religious and ethnic minorities, and people of the lower stratum of society who try to resist sometimes and answer back to the oppressors at the loss of their identity which may result in futile or fruitful consequences to preserve their human rights. Some of the characters in Nawal's *Zeina* survived after hard struggle and some collapsed either through their weaknesses or through the atrocities from the high-ups. The survivors could not keep their identity intact and suffered from various kinds of depression for which they seek a psychiatrist's aid. There is a constant oscillation between religion and science. Wherever any benefit can be gained, religion is presented to win the battle. The mighty and powerful make rules for society but exempt themselves to follow these rules and patterns of behaviour. In short, the writer has minutely highlighted the economic condition, emotional exploitation, physical deprivation, patriarchal setup, ethnic rights, human rights, class distinction, etc. in her work.

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