

Woman at Point Zero

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"All the men I did get to know, every single man of them, has filled me with but one desire: to lift my hand and bring it smashing down on his face. But because I am a woman I have never had the courage to lift my hand. And because I am a prostitute, I hid my fear under layers of make-up." --Excerpt

Egyptian novelist, doctor and militant writer on Arab women's problems and their struggle for liberation, Nawal el Saadawi was born in the village of Kafr Tahla. Refusing to accept the limitations imposed by both religious and colonial oppression on most women of rural origin, she qualified as a doctor in 1955 and rose to become Egypt's Director of Public Health. Since she began to write over 30 years ago, her books have concentrated on women. In 1972, her first work of non fiction, *Women and Sex*, evoked the antagonism of highly placed political and theological authorities, and the Ministry of Health was pressurised into dismissing her. Under similar pressures she lost her post as Chief Editor of a health journal and as Assistant General Secretary in the Medical Association in Egypt. From 1973 to 1976 she worked on researching women and neurosis in the Ain Shams University's Faculty of Medicine; and from 1979 to 1980 she was the United Nations Advisor for the Women's Programme in Africa (ECA) and Middle East (ECWA). Later in 1980, as a culmination of the long war she had fought for Egyptian women's social and intellectual freedom, an activity that had closed all avenues of official jobs to her, she was imprisoned under the Sadat regime. She has since founded the Arab Women's Solidarity Association and devoted her time to being a writer, journalist and worldwide speaker on women's issues. With the publication by Zed Books in 1980 of *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World*, English language readers were first introduced to the work of this major writer. Zed Books has also published four of her previous novels, *Woman at Point Zero* (1983), *God Dies by the Nile* (1985), *The Circling Song* (1989) and *Searching* (1991) as well as a collection of her non-fiction writings *The Nawal El Saadawi Reader* (1997). She has received three literary awards.

Text: English, Arabic (translation)

Other Books

The Routledge Handbook of Women's Work in Music, *The Routledge Handbook of Women's Work in Music* presents a unique collection of core research by academics and music practitioners from around the world, engaging with an extraordinarily wide range of topics on women's contributions to Western and Eastern art music, popular music, world music, music education, ethnomusicology as well as in the music industries. The handbook falls into six parts. Part I serves as an introduction to the rich variety of subject matter the reader can expect to encounter in the handbook as a whole. Part II focuses on what might be termed the more traditional strand of feminist musicology - research which highlights the work of historical and/or neglected composers. Part III explores topics concerned with feminist aesthetics and music creation and Part IV focuses on questions addressing the performance and reception of music and musicians. The narrative of the handbook shifts in Part V to focus on opportunities and leadership in the music professions from a Western perspective. The final section of the handbook (Part VI) provides new frames of context for women's positions as workers, educators, patrons, activists and promoters of music. This is a key reference work for advanced undergraduates, postgraduates and researchers in music and gender.

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