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Writing and Resistance: A Reading of Nawal El Saadawi's *The Novel*, *The Fall of the Imam* and *God Dies by the Nile*

Mridula Kashyap

Writing is a human cultural activity to express the hidden truth, the hidden true self, the hidden language.

(El Saadawi 1988A: 7)

I write to emerge from the dark to the light of knowledge, from the chaos of the unjust world to a new world of justice, freedom and love. I write to challenge the superpowers on earth and in heaven. Both are living on war, exploitation and deception. Both discriminate between people according to race, gender, class, religion and other traits. I write to change myself and the world for the better.

(El Saadawi 1988A: 9)

Set in the backdrop of the Arab world Nawal El Saadawi's writing explores the oppression, prejudices and 'otherness' to which Middle-Eastern women have been subjected to. Her writing originates from her personal experience as a doctor, the exploration of her female identity and a resistance to the oppressive Egyptian regime which forced her to undergo a self imposed exile. Her writing can be considered as a domain where the predicament of the Islamic women is vividly explored. In her novels— *The Novel* (2005), *The Fall of the Imam* (1988) and *God Dies by the Nile* (1985) Saadawi seeks to provide voices that have been repressed not only by the repressive state apparatus of the society but also by the dogmatic religious structures of the Arab world. Her writing, therefore, acts as a medium of resistance to the power structures of the Middle Eastern milieu on the one hand, and the Orientalist discourse of the West on the Arab women on the other hand. Keeping in mind this perspective my attempt in this paper is to argue how Saadawi's writing acts as a medium of resistance against the patriarchal