

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
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**A FEMINIST READING OF NURUDDIN FARAH'S
FIRST TRILOGY
"VARIATIONS ON THE THEME OF AN AFRICAN DICTATORSHIP"**

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A Feminist Reading
of
Nuruddin Farah's First Trilogy

“Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship”

By
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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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Abstract

Gender stereotyping is a cross cultural phenomenon prevalent across borders regardless of religion, ethnicity or color. The nature and the negative impact of such stereotyping are more pronounced in poorest continents of the world like Africa where development, education, access to media and awareness are scarce. The prevalence of such stereotyping in the continent is the reason which compelled the researcher to engage in studying the contribution of feminist African writers in this regard.

This study, thus, primarily focuses on investigating the extent of the reflection of embedded gender stereotyping and the degree of females' resistance to such stereotyping by feminist African writers, also tries to assess the significance of the novels in eliminating this stereotyping.

To this effect, the researcher has employed a purposive sampling technique to select three novels of the first trilogy of Nuruddin Farah's work which could better show cultural roles of sexes in East African Society, Somalia. In this respect, from the total of 10 novels he wrote from 1970 to 2007, the researcher had to confine herself to the study of only three novels written at the beginning of 1980s.

The result of this study has shown that the availability of novels which address the most important problems of femininity like economic dependency, societal rejection, non political participation, etc. However important raising these issues in the novels and the writer is a feminist one is for feminists, the novels have some embedded patriarchal touches which have been exemplified the characters.

From the novels, it is also observed that there are female characters who are well-to-do, educated, active political participants and male characters who believe in gender equality in representing the role and representation of both sexes in the contemporary society. However, feminists, in this regard, believe that the literary works should have been seen to address the embedded patriarchal ideologies. Other than this, they will only be a contribution to producing a new patriarchal generation.

In the sense of identifying the deep-rooted patriarchal ideologies which manifest themselves on both female and male characters instinctively, bringing the change in the novels and thereby the targeted audience, this study, therefore, intends to pinpoint the cultural and gender bias elements which hinder active participation of women in the society. The researcher believes that both the writer and the audience will see the deep-rooted patriarchal embedded elements and be aware of transforming the nature of novels in response to feminists' aim of creating a new world free from gender bias.

Chapter one: Background of the Study

As literary works are reflection of real life situations, the depiction of female characters in literary works pinpoints their role in the society. The portrayal of female characters beginning from early times reflects male bias since the world has been male dominated.

Some ancient scholars who paved the way for modernism through their writings had a negative attitude towards women's role in the society. To cite some examples from Krishnaswamy et. al (2001). Aristotle declared that '*the female is female by virtue of a certain lack of quality*', Aquinas believed that '*woman is an imperfect man and female is a mis-begotten male*', and also Nietzsche is convinced that '*woman is the source of all folly and unreason, the siren figure that lures the male philosopher out of his appointed truth-seeking path and that woman is God's second mistake*'. These instances show that even the well known philosophers have a biased outlook towards females. Besides, the society's acceptance of this biased outlook paved the way for women to have a submissive role and forced them to live in the patriarchal dominated world.

Some people including women themselves argue that women should be marginalized and are expected to continue practicing traditional roles like taking part in raising children, household chores, prescribed for them by the patriarchal ideology.

Therefore, every woman has been subject to patriarchal oppression regardless of culture, race, ethnicity, age, etc. Conventions and traditions set by the patriarchal society favor men unfairly to impose their supremacy in every aspect of women's existence.

As is a fact of life in the world as a whole, the case in Africa is no different; it has a long history of predominated patriarchal nature in addition to post colonial effect. In harmony with this, Rich (1977) describes patriarchy as:-

The power of the father: familial, social, ideological, and political system in which, by direct pressure or through tradition, law and language, custom, etiquette, education and division of labor-men

determine what parts women shall or shall not play, and the female is everywhere subsumed by the male.

Bearing this in mind, it is not as such difficult to see the problems women face and their passive role in the real world. Similarly, their representation in a work of literature reflects the predicament they face in the real life situation. The fact that women's portrayal as submissive, unreasonable, emotional, powerless, and incapable of decision making on literary works as well as real life situation creates imposition to exclude them to involve in their own affairs also.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Male dominance in a society that promotes female obedience and dependence are reflected in many literary works written by male as well as female writers. Hence, it is not unusual to find literary works (African novels) which reflect the submissiveness, incapability, powerlessness and subjugation in the patriarchal system.

Hence, East African women are victims of the double oppression, the patriarchal and traditional Islamic systems, the researcher tries to examine the representation of female characters in Nuruddin Farah's Trilogy, Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship, (Sweet and Sour Milk 1980, Sardines 1981 and Close Sesame 1983).

1.2 The Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate how female characters are depicted in the three consecutive novels by Nuruddin Farah from a feminist point of view. It seeks to analyze the effect of the patriarchal ideology on the female characters in the selected novels.

The research will have the following specific objectives:-

⇒ To analyze the role of women in the society described in the selected novels.

- ⇒ To examine whether women remain submissive to the patriarchal system or defy themselves particularly in issues concerning their active involvement in social activities.
- ⇒ To analyze the author's ideology from a feminist point of view.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives and arrive at a sound conclusion, the researcher has raised these four questions primarily and will attempt to find their answers. These are:-

- a. What do the selected novels reveal about women's position in a patriarchal society?
- b. Does the trilogy strengthen or weaken patriarchal ideologies like submissiveness, passivity and dependence?
- c. How do economic, social and political issues affect the female characters in the selected novels?
- d. What kind of message do the novels convey to the coming generation?

1.3 Significance of the Study

Literature reflects reality. Similarly, Nuruddin Farah describes the problems women face in the patriarchal system, in which women have been denied equal rights with men. As literature is the reflection of real life experience, many scholars in the field of feminism argue that female characters are misrepresented in literary works. Most of them agree that this submissiveness of women is caused by society's wrong perception towards women.

A feminist reading of the novels written by the above renowned novelist can reveal whether women in particular societies described in the novels are changing in the modern times in which feminists have struggled to bring about an end to suppression of women in the patriarchal system.

Therefore, this study reveals women's position in the social order, highlighting the question of gender equality. Moreover, the study tries to show the writers perspective about women and the society's view towards women in a time of dictatorship. In addition, the study may also offer some important points which can serve as a spring-board for other in-depth studies on similar issues.

1.4 Scope of the Study

In this study, the researcher confined herself only to feminist reading of the first trilogy of Nuruddin Farah (*Sweet and Sour Milk* 1980, *Sardines* 1981 and *Close Sesame* 1983). The researcher believes that the study of the representation of female characters in the trilogy can show their position, problems and hopes in the society described in the novels that are cited.

1.5 Organization of the Study

This paper consists of five chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction part which includes the objectives of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, scope of the study, important questions to be raised in the study and the biography of the author. The next chapter deals with a review of previously done research findings and issues raised by scholars in the research area. The third chapter discusses the methodology used in this research. The fourth chapter presents the analysis of the selected novels and the last chapter incorporates a summary of the findings and its conclusion.

1.6 The Background of the Author

Nuruddin Farah was born in Baidoa, a city in Italian Somaliland, which was at the time under British control. His father worked as a translator for the British. Soon after Nuruddin's birth his father was transferred to work for the governor in Ogaden, Ethiopia. He completed his primary education at schools in Kallafo, Ogaden.

After studying literature and philosophy in India at the University of Chandigarh, he returned to Somalia and taught in Mogadishu. Farah escaped from his homeland after authorities had condemned his second novel, **A Naked Needle**. The then officials, Siyad Barre's regime, banned all of his works in the country and ordered that he should be killed.

After 22 years in exile, Farah saw his motherland in 1996. In 1998 he moved to Capetown, South Africa, where he wrote the novel, **Knots**, in 2007, he wrote about an exile's return to Mogadishu in the middle of the civil war.

Farah has held teaching positions at universities in the United States, Europe, Africa and Asia. He had an opportunity to visit the former Soviet Union and also lived in Rome. He speaks English, Arabic and Amharic and writes in his native language (Somali) and English.

Farah has often dealt with the history of his country through the fates of his characters. He wrote novels such as **From a Crooked Rib** (1970), **A Naked Needle** (1976), **Sweet and Sour Milk** (1980), **Sardines** (1981), **Close Sesame** (1983), **Maps** (1986), **Secrets** (1998), **Gifts** (1999), **Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voice from the Somali Diaspora** (2000), **Knots** (2007), and also essays, short stories, plays and film scripts. He has also translated children's stories from Arabic, Italian, French and English into Somali. Farah received in 1980 and 1998 the English – Speaking Union Literary and the Neustadt Awards respectively.

Chapter Two: A Review of Related Literature

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, attempt is made to review studies related to the topic of this thesis. According to Creswell's (2003:33):

A literature review of a proposal or a research study means locating and summarizing the studies about the topic – often these summaries are research studies (because you are conducting a research study), but they may also include conceptual articles or thought pieces that provide framework for thinking about the topics.

Endeavor is also made to evolve a conceptual framework for this study which will be used to make a feminist analysis of Nuruddin Farah's trilogy.

2.2 Definition of Feminism

The paragraphs below present definitions by scholars in the field to highlight the different views on feminism.

To put feminism in simple terms, it is a movement which struggles to simplify a refusal of operation, and a commitment to struggle for women's liberation from all forms of operation i.e. internal, external, psychological and emotional, socio-economic, political and philosophical. It pays special attention to women. The essence of feminism is to restore females to their natural and pristine equality with man in domestic, social, cultural, economic and political spheres of collective life and thereby to empower women to emancipate themselves from the age-old imprisonment of patriarchy.

However, the fact that gender is interwoven with ideology and ideology in turn is a factor of many variables makes the term feminism, apparently, complex. In this regard, Tyson (1999) says that due to the different points of view in looking in to the problems of women, some feminists call their field in its plural form (i.e. feminisms).

On the other hand, Pope (2002) and Belsay and Moore (1997) claim that since politics is related to power, feminism is political in its nature. Its political nature is related to power of domination between genders. To put feminism with Pope's (2002) words, "a politically motivated movement dedicated to personal and social change." From this definition, it is not clear which sex is the active participant of the movement and it is also not clear which group benefits from the change. Pope deliberately gives this non discriminatory definition to show that participation in bringing about a change is inclusive of both sexes. Thus, both sexes need an ideological change and that change is dependent on their collaborative participation.

According to Jane Miller as quoted in Thornham and Purvis (2005:111), "the purpose of feminism as I see is to disturb irrevocably the steady male gaze and the unquestioning male possession of the structures of economic and cultural power." She defines feminism in a militant and strong manner.

On the other hand, Krishnaswamy, Verghese and Mishra (2001) put feminism with a mild tone as "an attempt to formulate the issues and find a solution to gender problems." According to them, feminists will have to engage in two faceted activities: to discover the kind of gender problems and to participate actively in the combat against patriarchal ideology.

After taking in to consideration the above mentioned definitions by different scholars on feminism to support what feminism is by the researcher, she will pass to the distinction between sex and gender by contemporary feminist theorists. They contend that gender is how one acts based on the expectations of the constructs of a society. It is a culturally shaped group of attributes and behaviors given to distinguishing feminine and masculine: differences of dress, social role, expectations, etc. Sex, however, refers to our biological

differences: which determine human beings as female or male: differences of chromosomes, genitals or hormones (Humm, 1992: Pope 2002).

Even though, by virtue of its nature, culture is different in different places, races, religious groups; the similarity of its impact on women (females) makes it uniformly identifiable. Gender, which is a way of centrally endorsed assignment of characteristics to both sexes, is thus the business of feminists. This paves the way for feminists (both male and female) to stand together in fighting against the prevailing male domination.

In the process of eliminating these gender differences, feminists should first uncover the unconsciously internalized ideological attachments of gender (Warhol and Hernd, 1991). In this way, ideology, which is an important concept, also plays a pivotal role in feminism. Ideology, in broad terms, is a generally accepted kind of belief which governs every member of each society. The meaning of ideology often seems transparent to people but it actually serves the interest of dominant power structures.

Thornham and Purvis (2005:113) explain ideology and its feminist significance as follows:-

If ideology is the process of making the world mean, so that we live our lives and construct our identities within the frameworks it provides, and if those frameworks operate through representations then it is clear that a key concern for feminist criticism must be with ideologies of femininity and the representations through which they circulate.

Ideology, according to Ruthven (1984), is a system of assumptions which operate in a society but never articulate fully. She added that sexist ideology (which is commonly termed as patriarchal ideology) or the ideology of male dominance operates by repressing

or displacing sexual contradiction. In her opinion, a literary critic then has to figure out traces of ideology which shape the literature and to point to the discrepancies between what a work intends to say and what a careful reading of it reveals.

Patriarchal ideology, which is a concern for feminism, refers to the norms and values that privilege males by promoting traditional gender roles in a society. Every culturally endowed behavioral manifestation of human beings (male and female) is being considered as natural because of the long standing instigation with patriarchal ideologies. In line with this, Humm (2002) states, “we were all born female or male; but each of us learn to be feminine or masculine according to our experience of the prevailing social norms.”

With regard to this, feminists believe that feminism is not the question of deciding what a woman is by nature rather it is a question of examining what a woman is assumed to be in a society; how these assumptions came about and whose interest they serve. As a result, they argue that women should get more opportunities in the socio-economic, political and philosophical engagements.

Furthermore, Tyson (1999:85) states that the need to avert male supremacy since traditional gender roles have been constructed by phallogocentric order; cast men as rational, strong, protective, decisive, and born to arts and education. But women are viewed as emotional, weak, nurturing, and submissive and born to language. These roles have been considered as reasons for gender inequalities. Thus, conventionally, leadership and decision making positions and those which need mathematical knowledge or logical reasoning have long been reserved only for males.

Feminists such as Ruthven (1984) and Tyson (1999) believe that the roles of women as prescribed in a patriarchal society are not natural. According to Tyson (1999), giving birth or conceiving is natural for a woman; however, biological differences could not affect male dominance over females since there is no scientific evidence which claims men to be more intelligent, logical, and courageous or better leaders. As a result, feminists argue that the difference is only the result of cultural programming.

Females who are denied the educational and occupational means of acquiring economic, political and social power by cultural programming are deemed to be dominated by their male counterparts socio-economically as well as politically (Tyson, 1999). Hence women could not do highly paid jobs, and do not involve in socio-economic and political agendas due to the submissiveness and indeterminacy attached to their behavior by traditional gender roles.

Until recently by depriving women, men had unconditional rights to their wives' body. Women were denied individual citizenship and free access to education and employment. These and other legal aspects which are patriarchally inspired (the mere interest of men) affected women's personality (Lister, 1997). This fact made Ruthven (1984) to conclude that "the feminist project is to end domination."

By strengthening this idea quoting Andrea Dworkin, Ruthven stated:

In order to do this, we will have to destroy the structure of culture as we know it, its art, its churches, its laws, its nuclear families based on father-right and nation states; all of the images, institutions, customs and habits which define women as worthless and invisible victims (1984).

With regard to some practical instances of patriarchal programming, Pope (2000) stated that both sexes are designed in a certain fashion: to speak and write in a stereotypically coded way. In conversation, men talk longer and louder and often about sports and politics, share more and compete with one another; whereas females talk quietly and more properly (often about children and relationships) and support one another. In terms of gender, men like war stories or pornography, whereas women like romance and perhaps domestic soap opera. These interests are by no means biologically stimulated but culturally motivated or perhaps internalized.

On the basis of their response to patriarchal programming, women have been classified as "good" or "bad". Those who abide by the predetermined patriarchal female roles (i.e.

those who are submissive, tolerate familial abuse, wait patiently for men's rescue, consider marriage as the final reward, modest, self-sacrificing, happy with serving the family) are judged as "good girls". On the contrary, those who are forward in sexual behavior, polyandrous or generally against patriarchal sexual norms are termed as "bad girls" (Tyson, 1999).

2.3 Historical Background on Feminism

Scholars in the field of feminism traced back the existence of gender based problems to the beginnings of life, in biblical terms, which attests the belief that Adam is created first and Eve is created from a rib of Adam. According to Krishnaswamy et al. (2001), this shows the different positions the two sexes have been given. Still scholars quote ancient philosophers like Aristotle (384-322 BC) as evidence to reflect gender outlook of the times by quoting him as, "the female is female by virtue of a lack of qualities," "we should look upon the female state, as it were, a deformity, one which owns in ordinary course of nature."

Though females have long been victims of gender bias, a systematic and organized form of their movement started half a century ago. Pope (2007), Krishnaswamy et al. (2001) and Belsey and Moore (1997) state that feminism was started by Simone de Beauvoir in **The Second Sex** (1949). These books show the philosophical and political history of women as institutionalized others in relation to the dominant notions of the male self. Feminism emerged in the 1960s when women continued to claim their right to self autonomy and determination.

The history of the feminist movement can be categorized in to two major movements: first wave feminism and second wave feminism.

2.3.1 First Wave Feminism

Even if an organized and systematic form of feminist movement is only half a century old, the first decades of the twentieth century are known as the first wave feminism. Feminist writers such as Simone de Beauvoir, Olive Schreiver and others were writing articles on the theme of women's material differences from men (Humm, 1992).

First wave feminism was much more concerned with material differences. In this regard, Virginia Wolff is a prominent figure in demanding women's financial independence through their employment and domestic parity with men. Wolff's fundamental contribution to feminism is her strong belief that gender attribution is a societal construct which began early in the patriarchal family and thus can be challenged and changed (Humm, 1992).

In this period, women won legal advances and public emancipation. Besides, women's rights as wives and mothers and divorce and property laws were raised as crucial points. In addition, women underscored the importance of equal access to education.

2.3.2 Second Wave Feminism

Unlike first wave, second wave feminism gave a special attention to reproduction, experience and difference (Humm, 1992). Reproduction succeeded earlier focus i.e. production by first wave feminism. Feminist scholars strongly argue that it is reproduction which pulled back women from production. Therefore, reproductive rights become the core concern of second wave feminists.

It is a common understanding among first and second wave feminists that women's oppression is related to sexuality. The former, however, like other political theories has concerns with the state in asserting legal, educational and economic equal rights for

women. On the other hand, the latter focuses on internalizing women's problems and their solutions in dealing with reproduction politics for they believe that the personal is political. Images of women on literary works which is the main concern of this paper was also the central theme of the second wave feminism of 1960s and 70s (Thronham and Purvis, 2005).

Humm (1992:11) summarizes the goals of the two feminist movements discussed above by saying,

The movement from a first wave feminism which is principally concerned with equalities, to a second wave feminism which uses women's differences to oppose the 'legalities' of a patriarchal world, is a radical and visionary formation. In the first movement women are objects, sometimes victims of mistaken social knowledge. In the second movement, women are challenging that knowledge from the strength of their own experience.

Another feminist scholar Julia Kristeva, as rephrased in Krishnaswamy et.al. (2001) and quoted in Humm (1992), and Belsey and Moore (1997) divide the historical and political phases of feminism in to three phases. Thus, for Kristeva the two waves of feminism do not fully represent the historical and political background of feminism. According to Kristiva, the first category of feminism is liberal feminism, the second radical/cultural feminism and the third demassification.

Liberal Feminism:- as identified by Kristeva, is attributed to masculine time. Liberal feminism demands equal access to symbolic order (political and professional equality with men). These feminists believe in reform not revolt.

Radical/Cultural Feminism:- this movement starts after the students movement of 1968. This period is considered as **females' time** since they rejected male symbolic order in the name of difference. Activists of this phase of feminism were dedicated to create a separate and radical women's culture. This movement stressed that women are different

and superior to men. In terms of theater, it tries to create new forms that go against traditional (patriarchal) constructs of theatre and create separate female forms. According to Ruthven (1984), the aim of radical/cultural feminism is to break the andocentric hegemony which conflicts with the women's internal feeling of reality and the reality outside.

Demassification:- this movement combines the socioeconomic politics of liberal feminism with the cultural politics of radical/cultural feminism. Kristeva herself hold as a position, it rejects the dichotomy between masculine and feminine as metaphysical.

2.4 Feminism and Literature

A very important and influential approach to the study of society and its product in literature is feminism. This approach is based on the realization of the injustice done to women for centuries due to dominance of patriarchy in society. Women have been considered inferior to man and suppressed for years in human history. In challenging this male superiority and subjugation as well as suppression of women, feminism raised some crucial questions related to biology, psychology, society, culture, and prominent political and economic ideologies.

Under feminism and literature, two points are addressed. Firstly, women as writers and the second one is women's representation in literary works. Male dominated ideology has greatly affected women both as writers and in their unfair depiction in literary works. The famous female writer Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) explained the problems that women faced as members of society as well as intellectuals like writers for example. Before the feminist revolution in the 1960s, female's literary production has for long been denied the right to be included in the literary canon.

Tyson (1999) supports this idea by saying, forgetting the case of race; it is daring to say that women were unfairly taken out of the domain. In an attempt to skip these barriers,

some works were published with a pseudonym (pen) names; for example Emily Bronte used Ellis Bell as her name in 1847. Ruthven (1984) in relation to women's writings said that the absence of their work from literary history is an evidence for the presence of significant patriarchal conspiracy. Recommending a balance between male self-realization and female self annihilation, Virginia Woolf in her essay, '*Profession for Women*' argued that women writers should liberate themselves from the traditional roles imposed on them like "angel in the house", "restraining expression of their emotions and passions". According to her, these problems of women could be solved when they attain social and economic freedom and equality with men.

With the introduction of feminism, female writings started to flourish. The works were focusing on distributing and rewriting the western established relations between men and women. Evans (1997:107) addressed this situation as:

Any one not rereading the works of feminist authors of the early 1970s can have no doubt that the project of these works was both to re-think and to re-construct the social world in radically different ways. Patriarchy was to be defined and over thrown and women were to assume a measure of hither to unknown power and autonomy.

Regarding women's representation, women heroines, in contrast to men heroes, were absent even in the nineteenth century for culturally constructed womanhood was an obstacle for the portrayed patriarchal society. However, works especially after 1970 reveal the development of female heroines. In order to negotiate with the social realities, these heroines remain in the bedroom yet. In a more concise way, Ruthven (1984) concluded that it becomes traditional for a hero to succeed and a heroine, if she is lucky merely to survive in a narrative discourse.

In short, it is public that male writers under (misrepresent) women (Pope, 2002). And also male philosophers like John Stuart Mill (*The Subjection of Women*, 1869) and Fredrich Engles (*The Origin of Family*, (1884) discussed the pathetic predicament of

women in society. In support of this grounded fact, Toril Moi in Belsey and Moor (1997:105) stated that feminists are pluralistic in their approach the same way as the socialists. Feminists use any approach to meet their final target. A key word, she added, in this sense is 'appropriation' in the sense of adaptation.

2.5 Feminist Criticism

Feminist Criticism as a discipline developed since the late 1960's. However, feminism began in 1792 with Mary Wollstonecraft's essay, "**Vindication of the Rights of Women**" /Tyson 95/.

Yet, in 1949, Simone de Beauvoir published the narrative entitled, "The Second Sex". In this narrative, she discusses "women's existential otherness", men's depictions of women in biology, psychoanalysis, history and literature. She argues that gender is not natural but a social construct. /Greenblatt and Gunn, 1992: 252/.

Virginia Woolf is said to be the first woman writer who is also readily identifiable as a feminist critic. In her well known work "A Room of One's Own" /1927/, she discusses the subject of women and fiction. /Hawthorn, 1984:73/.

In *Literary Women: - The Great Writers* /1977/, Ellen Moers explains that among other things the one reason why female writers in the 19 century were not as prolific as male writers was because women could not join the university until the second half of 19th c. Besides, they did not have the opportunity to discuss the subject of fiction with other people /1977:5/. However, some female writers were able to show that they could write excellent pieces of literature. Ellen Moers points out that the best known women of letters of 19th c were George Sand and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. She comments on their literary skill by saying "A magnetism emanates from their stories, some compelling

power that drew the world to them and all the goods and blessing that facilitate and ornament the woman's life in letters" /1977:5/.

2.6 Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary criticism is a kind of literary criticism which is informed by feminist theory or by the politics of feminism broadly speaking. Feminist literary criticism is broadly defined as the way in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social and psychological operation of women (Tyson, 1999).

Belsey and Moore (1997) give a more comprehensive definition for the term feminist criticism. According to them, it is a specific kind of political discourse: a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism. They politicize the term to indicate feminist critics, concern of power relations between genders. As a result, practical feminist criticism touches upon the social, institutional and personal power relationships between males and females.

Feminist criticism tries to avert the representation of woman as she is comfortably accepted by the male dominated society. The prime concern of feminist criticism is changing the scenario especially in the literary discourse since the oppression of women and its reflection on literature is an accepted truth.

Feminist literary critics approach a literary work from the point of view of its influence on women in economic, social, political and cultural deeds. Hence, their focus is on marginalization of women, male monopoly in socio-economic and political powers and women's negligible contributions in areas considered as "manly". Feminist literary critics' objective is to lead the world to a new state of affairs where there is no female oppression.

As compared with other critical approaches, feminist criticism does not have its own unique framework of criticism. Underlining this as a debatable issue, not having clear and unique outline to approach literary works, it uses a number of discursive strategies like psychoanalytic, structuralism, deconstructionist theories to turn the invisible components of patriarchy in to evidence. With regard to this, Ruthven (1984:25), quoting Annis V. Pratt, put the other side of an inclusive nature of feminist criticism as: “lining a single best methodology is not only dysfunctional but also an attribute of patriarchy.”

Tyson (1999:93) strictly warned that feminist critics have to be aware of the patriarchal nature of the literary theories such as Marxism and psychoanalysis even though they adapt them to expose the embedded patriarchal ideology. Therefore, the prime concern of adapting the aforementioned theories should be to increase the understanding of women’s experience from the past till the present, promote our appreciation of women’s value and help annihilate patriarchy.

In the previous section, it has been discussed that literature as a product of cultural heritage represents the woman as she is comfortably accepted by the male dominated society. If this repression of women and its reflection in literature is an accepted truth, an attempt of changing this scenario especially in the literary discourse will basically be the task of feminist critics.

Since the essence of feminism is to restore woman to her natural and pristine equality with man in domestic, social, cultural, economic and political spheres of collective life and thereby to empower woman to emancipate herself from the age-old imprisonment of patriarchy, feminist criticism, according to Belsey and Moore (1997:104), “is a specific kind of political discourse: a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism”. Politicizing feminist criticism is to indicate its concern of power relations between genders, the concept of ‘personal is political’. Thus viable feminist criticism and theory has to touch upon the social, institutional and personal power relationships between males and females.

Giving weight to the ideological influence of patriarchy in literature, Tyson (1999) advises feminist critics to see literary works ‘against the grain of the texts’ apparent intention. She contends that patriarchal literatures are not aware of the sexist ideology they are loaded with.

Feminist literary critics approach a literary work from the point of view of its influence on women in socio-economic, political and cultural discourses. For instance, the study of Susan Bruce of Jonathan Swift’s third book of *Gulliver’s Travels* named “A Voyage to Laputa” (1988) and the study of Annis Pratt (1982) of the image of the Great Mother in myths and literature, revealed how women in society in general and in literature in particular have been subjugated to the dominant, patriarchal culture in society. Thus feminists’ focus is on the marginalization of women, lesser consideration of women’s contribution in “manly” areas and male monopoly in socio-economic and political powers. Their final target is to lead the world in to a new scenario where zero oppression of females is guaranteed.

Regarding the methodology it uses, feminist criticism does not have its own unique framework. This has been a debatable issue for feminists. It is a trend which uses a number of discursive strategies, like Marxist, psychoanalytic, structuralism, deconstructionist theories to render visible the hitherto invisible components of patriarchy. In this regard, Ruthven (1984:25), quoting Annis V. Pratt, put the other side of an inclusive nature of feminist criticism as follows: “lining a single best methodolatriy is not only dysfunctional but also an attribute of patriarchy.”

On the other hand, Tyson (1999:93) warned that feminists’ have to be aware of the patriarchal nature of the literary theories like Marxism and psychoanalysis even though they adapt them for their own purpose of exposing the embedded patriarchal ideology. In other words, the prior target of the aforementioned literary theories should be to increase our understanding of women’s experience both in the past and present and to promote our appreciation of women’s value in the world.

A feminist reading of any literary work primarily examines the ways in which feminist issues are treated in a piece of work. A feminist literary critic might be interested to evaluate how a writer tries to address the subject matter of women and his/her attitude towards those concerns in a particular work. For doing so the feminist reader could begin by examining the author's female characters and the roles assigned to them within that context. Guerin and et al (1992) argue that feminist literary critics reread texts, showing how women in those texts are constrained in culture and society.

The following is a set of questions that feminist literary critics ask about a literary text as presented by Lois Tyson (1999):

i. What does the work reveal about the operations (economically, socially culturally or psychologically) of patriarchy. How are women portrayed? And how do these portrayals relate to the gender issues of the period in which the novel was written or is set?

ii. What does the work imply about the possibilities of sisterhood as a mode of resisting patriarchy and/or about the ways in which women's situations in the world – economic, political social or psychological-might be improved?

iii. What does the work suggest about the ways in which race, class and/or other cultural factors intersect with gender in producing women's experience?

iv. What does the history of the work's reception by the public and by critics tell about the operations of patriarchy? Has the literary work been ignored or neglected in the past? Why? Or if it is recognized in the past is it ignored or neglected now? Why?

v. What role does the work play in terms of women's literary history and literary tradition?

2.7 Approaches to Feminist Literary Criticism

Lois Tyson states that because feminist issues widely range across cultural, social, political and psychological categories, feminist literary criticism it is also wide ranging. It should, however, be noted that whatever kind of analysis is carried out, the ultimate purpose of feminist literary criticism is to broaden our knowledge of women's experience both in the past and present and appreciate women's contributions in our world. The following is a list of the diversity of feminist literary criticism:

- i. Black feminists:** These critics consider themselves as to be 'doubly if not triply oppressed,' as put by Ruthven, 'as blacks in a white supremacist society, as woman in a patriarchy, and as workers in capitalism.'(19)
- ii. Lesbian feminists:** Ruthven states that this group of critics work on the relationship between sexuality and textuality by taking the lesbian as a source of distinctively feminine writing. Tyson also argues that lesbian critics address the issues of both *sexism* and *heterosexism*. These critics focus on the kind of literary work that favors women's spending their time together and sharing the different aspects of their lives with each other.
- iii. Marxist feminists:** Guerin states that these critics combine the study of class with that of gender. They attack the prevailing capitalist system which they consider to be sexually and economically exploitative.
- iv. Psychoanalytic feminists:** examine images of women in light of the theories of Freud and the Freudian revisionist Jacques Lacan. They look in to literary texts for unconscious articulations of feminine desires or traces of where they are repressed.
- v. Semio- feminists:** for these critics semiotics-which is the symbols, is very essential. They study the signifying practices by means of which females are coded and classified as women in order to be assigned their social roles.

vi. Socio-feminists: These critics examine the roles the society assigned to women. Their focus is on how women are represented in literary texts.

vii. Socio-Semio-psycho-Marxist feminists: perform a little bit of everything on reflecting images of women as the situation demands (Tyson 1999).

For the sake of this particular study, the researcher confined herself to Semio and Socio-feminist approaches because the symbolic representation and role of women in the society have been more applicable the research at hand.

2.8 Traditional Gender Roles

Traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive (Tyson, 1999:84). Regardless of culture, ethnicity, education and other factors, traditional gender roles privilege men by promoting the norms and values of patriarchy. The above mentioned traditional gender roles have been used to justify the inequalities among sexes which exclude women from equal access to various facets of power.

In this regard, patriarchal ideology promotes the belief that women are innately inferior to men. This belief has been used to rationalize and maintain the male monopoly of economic, political and social power. These traditional gender roles keep women powerless by denying the academic and occupational opportunities of acquiring economic, social, political and psychological control.

Traditional gender roles that advocate male supremacy (patriarchy) continually exert forces that undermine women's self-confidence and assertiveness. Bearing this in mind, feminism therefore distinguishes between the word sex, which refers to biological constitution as female or male, and the word gender, which refers to cultural

programming as feminine or masculine, which are categories created by society rather than by nature (Tyson, 1999:84).

Traditional gender roles create unfavorable conditions for women even at an early age. Taking this opportunity as a steppingstone, patriarchy creates the failure which it then uses to justify its assumptions about women. By the same token, traditional gender roles are destructive for men as well since they state guidelines to act accordingly such as being strong, courageous, unemotional, boisterous, breadwinner, wealth and the like. Failure to accomplish the above mentioned or similar criteria on the male part will lead to frustration or being considered as “feminine”.

Therefore, a feminist approach is very important and influential to study society and its product and bring remedy to the unjust dominance of patriarchy in society for centuries. In this regard, the outcome of feminism will benefit both sexes since traditional gender roles one way or another discriminate both sexes to extremes. Feminism challenges traditional gender roles not only as male superiority and subjugation and suppression of women but also supposedly “manly” jurisdictions.

2.9 Patriarchy and Language

The finger print of patriarchy is observed in the day to day language use. Pope (2002) believes that language is a common place to explore the way women and men are constructed in different discourses. Tyson (1999) also discusses sexually connotated words like slut and stud which reflect a repressive attitude towards females’ sexuality.

Kate Millet (1970) focused on the distinction between ‘sex’ and ‘gender’, the former as determined by birth and the latter constructed by cultural, social and psychological factors thereby conditioning the stereotypical and historical roles of women in patriarchal terms of domination. Other female writers explained how women have been confined to

their social and domestic roles to serve men and satisfy their egocentric interests at home and in society. Imbalances between masculine and feminine terms are prevalent in English as in many languages. Even the language structure and usage has been against women. For instance, Robin Lakoff in her work, *Language and Women's Place* (1975) and Dale Spender in her book, *Man-Made Language* (1981) explained the gender bias perpetuated in language. Pope (2002) also asserted that in common ways the masculine one is the privileged (considered as normal, unmarked or positive), while the equivalent feminine term is abnormal, marked and often negatively loaded. Examples in this regards can be: mankind (not woman kind), chairman (madam chairman), master (mistress), governor (governess), courtier (courtesan), wizard (witch), dog (bitch), the nouns referring to the female sex are derogatory.

What Pope (2002) said regarding patriarchy's impact on language can be detected in all languages. If we can take Amharic language in the Ethiopian context for instance, he said males are addressed as Mr. (Ato in Amharic), a substitute for master through out their lives, whether married or not. Females, however, are addressed as Miss (*Weizerit* in Amharic) if they are not yet married and Mrs. (*Weizero* in Amharic) when they get married. This is patriarchal for the title is biased on determining the unmarried (available) or married (unavailable) states of the sexes.

Similarly, the sexist bias is also observed in syntactic arrangement of items. For instance, the ordering of the male and female, Mr. and Mrs., he or she feels natural to use. The reverse of this ordering could be felt odd. We often, however, address as 'ladies and gentlemen'. This is still another blue print of patriarchy which asserts the projection of masculine viewpoint.

2.10 Feminist Critics' Views on Literary Works

Feminist critics and writers like Elaine Showalter (1979, 1985), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1979), Sara Mills et. al. (1989) and others emphasized the need to re-evaluate literary works by re-reading and re-representing their thematic implications by displaying how women in general and the women characters in literature in particular were portrayed in humiliating and distorted ways. They argued that there is a need to reverse this scenario, with special reference to the study of literature.

In this section, some important points, which can be used as tools to expose the sexist agenda of a literary work, are dealt with. They are discussed as they can be found in Tyson (1999: 101-102) and Pope (2002:123-124). These points can be guidelines which will help the writer of this thesis to describe the roles and representations of men/women in the literary works under study.

Pope (2002) focuses on the kinds of male and female characters represented in the literary texts; the portrayal of a family and the responsibilities attached to each gender inside home as well as in the society. He also advises critics to critically observe if there are gendered ways of speaking, dressing and behaving. Besides, he also wants to emphasize the outlooks of different institutions such as religion, commercial, legal, medical or military on gender (i.e. if there is a biased treatment of sexes).

Tyson (1999) on the other hand, desires to emphasize the portrayal of the impact of patriarchal ideology in the society depicted (socially, psychologically, economically or politically). She, therefore, wishes to see if there is a relationship between the portrayal of characters and the prevailing gender issues of the period during which the novel is produced. To this end, she also focuses on unfolding the contribution of the literary work in judging the gender issues it raised (whether it reinforces or undermines patriarchal ideology).

Moreover, Tyson (1999) also stresses the availability of sisterhood as a way of resisting male supremacy or as a means of improving women's situation in the economic, political, social or psychological aspects. Thus, collaborative effort to a better end is to be explored in the literary work as per its availability.

2.11 A Review of Local Studies Related to Feminism

The researcher has gone through various research works conducted in Addis Ababa University as well as those that have been accessed online in order to make sure of the originality of this research work. In the MA thesis written by Muluaem Denbegna's (2006), entitled "Aspects of Feminism in Amadi's *The Concubine* and *The Great Ponds* Emanchata's *Second Class Citizen: A Post Structuralist Approach*", has clearly shown women's place in the society.

Yemisrach Binalfew (1996 E.C) and Metamu Friews' (1995 E.C) research works focus on domestic literature that the portrayal of females in the literatures of their interest inculcates both groups of women: those who strongly resist patriarchal domination and others who are under the influence of patriarchal ideology. Conclusions of Yihenew Melese's "A Feminist Reading of 'Tobbya' and 'Endewotach Kerech' and Teshome Egere's work "The Portrayal of Women in Dhabaa's Selected Afan Oromo Prose Fiction" also focus on domestic literature.

The MA thesis written by Mekonnen Fekadu "Images of Women in the Fiction of Selected Women Writers: A Comparative Black Feminist Study" (2005) focuses on studying the objective of Black women writers. To this end, he has rated the representation of women in the works into five major types. That is as victims of gender and class operation, mothers, rebellious and non conformists, custodians of cultural values and tradition and figures of female solidarity and upholders of family relations. He concluded that, "It seemed that black women writers have a common agenda – to

construct the stereotyped image of women and fight against several forms of oppression that women still suffer in Africa.”

The other research work which has relevance to this study is Mekonnen Zegeye's, "Image of Women and Plot Structure in the First Four Novels of Fikremarkos Desta" (June, 2001).

Mekonnen has divided the female characters in the novels into two categories: women portrayed as victims of culture and those who are portrayed as 'strong' or 'liberated' women. Apart from the critical analysis of women's portrayal, he has tried to investigate previous researches related to women's portrayal. In doing so, Mekonnen considered Fekade Azeze's (1982 E.C) seminal presentation which addressed the necessity of knowing the status of women in the society before examining their fictional depiction. In a similar manner, Zerihun Asfaw's (1988 E.C) study on "Images of Women in the Short Stories Written between 1949-1985 E.C" reveals the fact that female characters are portrayed stereotypically.

Mekonnen also listed out some senior essays written on female characters portrayal. Mekonnen revealed the boastful, cruel and greedy behavior of female characters in Askale Lema's, "Image of Feudal Women Characters in Seven Novels" (1978 E.C). On the contrary, the feeble, emotional and shallow nature of females is uncovered in Yeshe Tadesse's (1978 E.C) "Image of Women in Five Plays", Teferi Melese's (1978 E.C) "Images of Women in Three Plays of Ayaleh Mulat and Jemanesh Solomon's (1980 E.C) "Images of Young Girls in Five Plays".

Though the above mentioned works are related to feminist reading on different works, none of these deals with female representation in East African Literature. Thus, the researcher feels that this study is a new paradigm which could bring content analysis of Nuruddin Farah's First Trilogy with concern of feminist ideology.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study aims at exploring the gender roles and their subsequent impact on females in the trilogy by undertaking a feminist reading. To this end, the researcher intends to approach the trilogy hermeneutically. According to Robson (1993:196), hermeneutics is “an art and science of interpretation.” He believes that hermeneutics which is a kind of qualitative research methodology which brings the researcher as an active participant of the research.

Thus, the researcher in light of the purpose of this research would consider the basic notions of feminism as a guiding principle to explicate the plays, salient but invisible features (gender issues). The following are what the researcher considered most crucial while analyzing the literary works from a feminists’ point of view among others.

- The role of both genders in the trilogy
- Females’ reaction to the patriarchal programming
- Patriarchally founded actions of males in relation to the ideology’s impact on females
- The characters works reaction to patriarchy
- Sisterhood as a means of resisting patriarchy
- Females’ representation socio-economically, politically and culturally.

3.1 Research Sampling Technique

The study at hand is meant to be conducted on Nuruddin Farah’s works. Due to the inaccessibility of the works, time and resource limitations, the researcher is compelled to

restrict the study only to the first trilogy which have three independent but consecutive novels.

The focus on these novels (first trilogy) will have a tri-fold benefit. The first one is the novelty used in reflecting the contemporary society. Since these novels give a good highlight to what happened in the specific time in Somalia, it will help to understand ideologically imbedded oppressions. Secondly, any comments or suggestions that will be given after the completion of this study will clearly indicate the double oppression African women face under patriarchy in general and post colonial dictatorship in particular. Finally, since the trilogy has three versions, the novels will indicate whether there is any change in gender equality through time.

With regards to the sampling technique, the researcher has implemented a non-probability sampling technique which is called Purposive or Judgmental Sampling. Though this sampling technique limits the generalizability of the research findings, it is worth implementing it to satisfy the need of this particular research. According to Babbie (1998), Cohen and Manion (1994) and Robson (1993), purposive or judgmental sampling is a technique in which the researcher selects the sample based on his/her judgment on typicality or interest. Thus, in this study novels which have continuity and reflect gender issues are of interest for selection.

On top of the above basic parameters, the researcher's inclination is to undertake a feminist reading on East African literary works. In doing so, she found Nuruddin Farah's trilogies applicable with variations they provide for readers. However, because of limitations, the researcher wants to confine herself to the first trilogy which shows the "Variations on the Theme on an African Dictatorship". To this effect, the three consecutive novels: Sweet and Sour Milk, Sardines and Close Sesame are selected.

3.2 Text Analysis

In order to carry out text analysis, economic, social and political representations of the characters from the novels taken as source data and Semio- and Socio-feminist approaches are used to analyze the literary texts selected for this study and to reach sound conclusion. These two feminist approaches have much more applicability than the other approaches stated on review of related literature since there is an improvement on gender outlook.

The succeeding chapter deals with synopsizes, roles and representations of characters both male and female and the novels reaction to patriarchal ideology on the selected three novels which have been found on the first trilogy and written from 1980 to 1983 by the East African well known writer Nuruddin Farah. These are, *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1980), *Sardines* (1981) and *Close Sesame* (1983).

Chapter Four: Analysis of the Novels

4.1 Analysis of Sweet and Sour Milk

Under this section of this research paper, the synopsis, roles and representations of characters both male and female and the novel Sweet and Sour Milk's reaction to patriarchy has been discussed. The researcher will try to show unconscious patriarchal embedded elements which can be grounds to justify the hypothesis to what extent the writer of these novels Nuruddin Farah is free from gender bias.

4.1.1 Synopsis of Sweet and Sour Milk

Sweet and Sour Milk is the first novel in the first series of Trilogy "Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship". It was published in 1979. The novel is about the story of twin brothers, Soyaan and Loyaan. Soyaan was a journalist and occupied an official position in the country's military regime. At the beginning of the novel (in the prologue), Soyaan dies mysteriously. Before hiccupping his last, shouting his twin brother's name (Loyaan) three times.

The whole novel focuses on Loyaan's inquiry on his dissident brother's apparent death. While investigating his brother's death, among other things, Loyaan finds out that Soyaan was a member of a clandestine organization that aimed at overthrowing the dictatorship.

After the death of his brother, Loyaan becomes the center point and has been surrounded by so-called friends who are willing to help. He found himself in a dilemma-whom to trust. At the end of the story, the government decided to name a street and erect a statute after his name (Soyaan) regardless of his opposition to the regime, Beydan, his father's second wife, died giving birth to a child who is immediately named Soyaan by his sister Ladan and Loyaan is appointed ambassador of Yugoslavia, like his brother, and his fate is left open.

4.1.2 Roles and Representation of Characters

In this section the role of characters both males and females is analyzed. In this respect, the socio-economic and political activities of both genders are investigated as per their availability and in accordance with their relevance to feminist reading.

To start with, the social roles of male and female characters seem to be constructed according to the patriarchal setup they have been living in. To support this argument, pointing a number of instances is possible. For instance, even if Keynaan is economically dependent on his son, Soyaan, he is the head of the house and makes every decision by himself.

...Soyaan had cut the small allowance which used to be earmarked for maintenance of Keynaan and his other wife, Beydan. ...Soyaan had learned that the old man had been courting a young girl Ladan's age and he had spent on her what money he had received for Beydan, despite the fact that Beydan was heavy with nine month's pregnancy.
(p.14)

Though the traditional practice gave him a way to re-marry young girls, Keynaan decides to allocate the money he took from Soyaan to his second wife for "the would" be third one. He even misuse the privileges he got from patriarchal programming first of being dependent on his son and second regardless of his joblessness and reliance on others still looking after young and new wives. Even the patriarchal ideology helped him to seek more young women since it is considered as normal to marry more than one and to have more young wives.

When we see the relationship between Keynaan and his first wife, Qumman, the way they address each other is completely different. For instance, one can see Qumman's hate for

Keynaan because he mistreated her and her children. However, she never showed her detests in front of him or in public regardless of his abusive behavior. She only confided her feelings about him with close family members or worthy neighbors. The maximum degree she can express her loathing feeling to him is not mentioning his name or addressing as 'him' apart from that the patriarchal social construct would not allow her to express inner most feeling. It reads:

“Let us not talk about him in the room of the dead,” she suggested. “Let us talk about him another time....” (p.30)

But still, she expected her son to pay every respect to his father very strongly. The following extract shows her strong belief in respecting a father regardless of his deeds. This by itself would show how deep rooted patriarchal programming influenced her thinking. It reads:

“Be sincere with yourself, my son. That is the first and most important thing of all. Hold no grudge against your own father. He is your father, don't you forget that.” (p.30)

From the above extract, it can be seen that Qumman is a victim of male dominating societal behavior and a very traditional one who took every instance of patriarchal operation for granted.

On the other hand, Keynaan did not respect the mother of his children. He undermined her. The subsequent extract shows how oppressive he is and the way he ill treated her. It reads:

“Her presence defiles the room, that evil woman. Have her brought out of there. Or else I shall go in and drag her out myself. And I am serious, Loyaan. I will do that if you don't.” (p.35)

Besides, one can see Keynaan's negative outlook towards women. He also minimized their role to carry out domestic affairs only not having a say in any social or familiar affairs which is one way of showing patriarchal dominance. In critically observing the above two extracts, the researcher found it important to talk about the tone of voice (low and high tone) both characters used. From each conversation, it can be said that the two characters' manner of speech is reflective of patriarchal programming. As Pope (2002) discussed, men have been attached with a noisy behavior and women characterized by quietness in a patriarchal society. This is also reflected in this novel, as revealed in the two characters dialogues with their son. To support this idea, mentioning the following extracts are presented below.

“Women are for sleeping with, for giving birth to and bringing up children; they are not good for any other thing.” said Keynaan. “They are not to be trusted with secrets, they can serve the purpose Allah created them for originally, and no more.” (p.84)

From this extract, it can be understood that patriarchal ideology wants to give a religious touch to the submissive role they impose on women. Most feminist scholars trace back the existence of male dominance from the beginning of life and pinpoint that women lived comfortably with this inequality. Such kind of raising religious referential would help men like Keynaan to rule the women without opposition.

“You discuss your ideas with women? You disappoint me.” (p.86)

“Women are like one's shadow, Somalis have a proverb,” quoted Keynaan. “They follow at the heels of those who run a way from them. They bully and boss and lead those who follow them.” (p.86)

From the above two extracts, Keynaan's deep-rooted patriarchal ideology can be inferred and the society's outlook towards women. Besides, the other very important thing from

these extracts is that whether he succeeds or not he is implanting his patriarchal seed on his son.

Furthermore, Keynaan undermines women's role in this world to childbearing and undertaking domestic affairs only. He believes that apart from this, they are not capable of handling any social, political or economic matters and are weak in keeping secrets. This is the direct result of patriarchal ideology. So, women refrain themselves from any kind of social activities apart from domestic ones.

On another occasion;

“...He has listened to the counsel of women. A man who seeks and follows women's advice is a man ruined.” (p.14)

Soyaan said that this extract what his father would say when he found about the cut of the small allowance which used to be earmarked for the maintenance of keynaan and his other wife, Beydan. Keynaan as an advocate of the patriarchal ideology believed that women are not capable enough to counsel on issues which concern men only. And if they have a chance to give their suggestion, they will ruin everything. From Keynaan's point of view, a man should handle cases by himself or if necessary he can share ideas with fellow men. A man who will consult a woman on such issues is not worthy of being called a “man”.

Another important parameter in assessing patriarchal impact is the decision making roles the two genders play. In most instances, males have the lion share in making crucial decisions in a family matter. This fact is fundamentally the product of patriarchal ideology which made the male benefit through ruling his familial world.

Decision making roles of the characters in the present novel can be observed by indicating how males (husbands) are sole decision makers by oppressing the rest of the family's opinion.

“I answered that very question in an interview which will be published in tomorrow’s daily. I also gave them the right photograph of Soyaan. Yes, I offered the right photograph of the Martyr of the Revolution and an interview. A photograph of mine as well.” (p.90)

“I am the father. It is my prerogative to give life and death as I find fit. I’ve chosen to breathe life in to Soyaan. And remember one thing, Loyaan: if I decide this minute to cut you in two, I can. The law of this land invests in men of my age the power. I am the Grand Patriarch.” (p.95)

In the above two extracts, Keynaan is the one who makes very important decisions exclusively including changing the deceased’s point of view (political opinion). It can be seen that the husband is the person who has the mandate to make decisions. In the novel, it can be seen that the husband is on top of every member of the society. He does not seem to be willing to allow a member of the family to express their opinions though the issue concerns both. To support this argument, we can see this extract:

“Legally it was with in the male parent’s absolute prerogative to act on behalf of a dead son or daughter or wife.”(p.86)

In addition, the other and main parameter we can see in the novel to proof male dominance is the economic dependency. Traditionally women are expectants (dependents) on men to secure their financial status through marriage or offsprings. The economic disparity between males and females in the novel can be associated with what feminists are saying about male’s monopoly over economic, social and political scenarios. Tyson (1999) explains that the prevalence of such economic difference is inevitable in a patriarchal world because women are denied the educational and occupational means of acquiring those powers. That is why Qumman waited to long to leave her husband because she cannot afford to help herself and raise her children by

herself. As a result, she waited till her sons could get an income. Here is an extract which clearly shows economic dependency of women.

“Qumman: she would wait until the twins grew up, she would wait and then leave. ... Qumman waited too long: he left her for another woman instead.” (p.95)

In the above extract, it can be inferred that Qumman needs her husband's economic support till her sons can afford an income. So, she had to tolerate the unbearable life with Keynaan. Not only would Qumman be dependent first on her husband then on her sons but also the extract put aside the role of Ladan (her daughter) to participate in the income generating activity for the family. As a reflection of the real society, the novel puts men's responsibility to support their family. The patriarchal programming that lends women to be economically dependent also puts men to suffer from the responsibility of being a sole economic source. This is directly related to what Tyson (1999) said. She suggested that patriarchal programming is not only hurting the woman in its multifaceted ways, but it is also putting a burden on the male because he is expected to be economically strong. To support this idea, we can see the following extract. It reads:

“I was fooled. For six years, all anybody told me was that you would qualify as a doctor. And I waited for your return. A doctor for a son. I boasted: finally a doctor for a son. Hurrah. Not that I take any pills; these are poison. But I thought you would earn enough money to give us independence so that we wouldn't need Keynaan any more. I thought we would somehow be able to forgo our means of financial independence. A tooth-doctor. What do you think will make people come to you?” (P.55-56).

Her speech reflects that Qumman and the generation she represents are not the only ones who are economically dependent but also the new generation is symbolized by Ladan. Even if to some extent she has a small amount of income, she is not still economically

strong to be independent. This is because the society programmed in such a way that women are not entitled to play such kind of role. This belief or patriarchal ideology will keep the female to be financially unsecure, which in turn will ascertain this all time control over the economic production of the household, as Barrett (2002) suggested.

To support this idea, the following extract shows how Ladan's income doesn't affect the normal activity of the family since we can see her role as maiden only. It reads:

There was Ladan half-leaning against the open door. "Would you like some tea?" she held a cup out to him from that distance.

"Have you seen the papers?"

"Would you like some tea?"

Loyaan stood. He saw how jaded she looked. Although it was past nine o'clock, at least she hadn't gone to school to teach. (p.101)

Though she is a professional, she does not take herself seriously to be economically strong and independent. Rather she depends on her brothers. For this reason, we will find her joining hands with her mother to stand against her brother's widow. In this regard, the writer at least is not able to portray a strong female character that can resist patriarchal oppression in the novel. The sole reason Ladan and Qumman did not want to accept the presence of Soyaan's mistress is because of the financial question she might raise. The following is what Ladan said to her brother Loyaan about the woman:

Ladan shook her head. "This young woman has come, I suspect, for a major remittance." (p.64)

This saying of Ladan has two implications. The first one is that in most instances mistresses made their presence public when the financial source is cutoff especially after the death of the lover or supporter to seek help from the family because in the patriarchal ruling society the source of income is the male partner. If he is not around to carry out

his socially accepted responsibility, the women will definitely appear to look for financial help and parental title.

Secondly, her speech implies that the woman putting on tailored dress, her son is also well taken care of and the deceased (Soyaan) holding high government post, the claimer is here to take the lion's share from the family they can obtain from the late economic sources.

Another most important feature of the novel from feminist perspective is that even though there are women like Margaritta who are economically independent and strong characters, the following extract reflects the deep-rooted patriarchal construction. It reads:

She had a decent and very well-paid job. In addition to that, she had recently inherited her (Italian) father's wealth. So she could easily maintain Marco and her mother. (p.70)

The deep rooted patriarchal ideology does not give a chance for women to support themselves and their families even if they have well-paid jobs. So, they need to have an additional source of income which obtained without hard work like inheritance, spouse help, etc. in this regard, the writer make financial attachment for Margaritta through inheritance which being half-caste give a chance for this character to secure economic well off since inheritance will go to male family member in Somali society. The other core point from the above extract is that she inherits her father's wealth only because he was an Italian and not bound by traditional patriarchal ideology of the society. If we see male dominance in Somali context, male parent or another male kin will inherit the deceased's wealth. That is why all female characters in the novel do not have something of their own and are always dependent on their husbands or sons. Margaritta is an exception because she is half-caste. The next extract from the novel can be a good citation. It reads:

Legally it was with in the male parent's absolute prerogative to act on behalf of a dead son or daughter or wife. In the absence of a male parent, then the nearest of kin, another male. (p.86)

This can tell to some extent why people like Qumman, Beydan or Margaritta's mother do not have strong economic background since they might have parents who passed away but the inheritance will go to males only.

The other subconscious but influential patriarchal construct is the identity of oneself through paternal figure. There is an extract from the novel to justify this thought. It reads:

“And on top of everything,” she went on, “she wants us to give her bastard a name. She will squeeze herself in to the decency and respectability of our home.” (p.71)

This shows a long lasting accreditation of the society to male supremacy. From Qumman's utterance it can be understood that the most important source of biological to identify oneself is not the maternal line but something related to the paternal figure. This can be related to the assignment of a family name which scholars like Pope (2002) judge as the finger print of patriarchy.

In studying the role of the characters, we can classify in to male and female characters. Apart from having here and there some female characters such as Mulki (committed for her belief even under very difficult situation), Margaritta (having strong economic foundation and political opinion) and Ladan (politically aware but confined her to household chores), we can not find female characters opposing the deep-rooted patriarchal ideology. On the other hand, the male characters can be classified as advocates of patriarchy, like Keynaan, and who believe in gender equality as Loyaan and Soyaan. To support this idea, the following extract is quoted from the novel. It reads:

“Does one notice the small insects which die a suffering death under the eyeless heels of one’s feet? Keynaan and his generation have never known women. Women are simply a generally generalized about human species more mysterious than Martians,” Soyaan would argue. (p.86)

Soyaan argues that women deserve better treatment and chance to be educated and employed. They should also have the opportunity to apply their ability and have their say on every decision making. Soyaan better understand the submissive role they have in the society. Women have been treated unfairly by patriarchal programming. They did not have a share in the community affairs. Soyaan and Loyaan were safeguarding and capacitating Ladan to be independent starting from her childhood. This extract exemplifies their effort to secure gender equality and fight against patriarchal ideology in their own way.

How the two had loved her. How the twins had protected her from those murderous looks of Keynaan and the – at times – indifferent attitudes of Quamman to a girl. They would invest in Ladan their hope, they would trust their future with her. (p.110)

This is how they root a seed to see its fruit in the future. The above extract shows that not all men in patriarchal society are in favor of supremacy and burdening females with submissive role. The last parameter to have an entry point to undertake feminist reading on the novel is political participation of the characters. The male characters in one way or another, whether in favor or against the military regime, have a significant role in the novel.

On the other hand, we can see female characters like Mulki who is determined not to reveal the whereabouts of Soyaan’s memorandum which have political significance even under torture. It reads:

Keynaan contemplated his son. He then said: “Two security men have interrogated Soyaan’s secretary/typist and reported that she typed the manuscript of Memorandum. She would not reveal its exact contents even under torture.” (p.91)

The other female character is Margaritta who confided only with trustworthy friends like Soyaan and Loyaan. These extracts will show her dialogue with Soyaan and Loyaan respectively.

When he did, she asked: “Has anybody else seen it?”

“Why?”

“Dangerous stuff.”

“Do you think so?”

“It certainly is a strong political statement” (p.12)

“It was during that visit that the first mention of this project filled Soyaan’s gaping map with the curiosity of its juiciness: to research into something of national use, that is what he always wanted. Now who led the delegation?” (p.122)

Ladan is also alert on political issues in this novel. We can see her role with her brothers Soyaan and Loyaan. She discussed political issues with them. From her next utterance, we can see that even if the regime names a street after Soyaan, she is aware of his political stand and says:

“It is his soul they are after,” (p.110).

The last character who is politically aware is the director’s secretary who is Mulki’s cousin. The following is a conversation she had with Loyaan about Soyaan.

“Isn’t Soyaan the man the General’s regime has name a street after because he died serving the interests of the revolution? Isn’t he the one whose last words were, ‘Labor is honor and there is no General but our General’? I personally find the whole affair too embarrassing.” (p.

Apart from these characters who express political and opinions behind doors we cannot find any female characters who engage themselves actively in the overthrowing of dictatorship.

4.1.3 The Novel’s Reaction to Patriarchal Ideology

In general, the novel has raised an important issue in relation to the prevailing unfair treatment of women (females) by the patriarchal programming. When we see the novel’s reaction to patriarchal ideology, it can be inferred that the novel objectively revealed the practice in the society as it is. It is hard to classify whether the novel is a feminist one even though it has some feminist elements represented by Soyaan and Loyaan or the one representing the patriarchal ideologically affected society which the dominant part of the novel represents.

Therefore, readers could understand that their way of living is the result of patriarchal ideology. Hence, the women will continue to be economically dependent, submissive and docile while the men will be dominant and the sole financial source of the family.

4.2 Analysis of Sardines

This part of the thesis paper will focus on the second novel of the first trilogy “Variations on African Dictatorship” called Sardines written in 1981. This section incorporates the synopsis of the novel, roles and representation of female and male characters and the author’s reaction to patriarchy.

4.2.1 Synopsis of Sardines

Sardines is the second novel of the Trilogy which revolves around a woman who had been educated abroad and came to Somalia as one of the young educated Somali.

Because of her strong political opinions and comments she put in the newspaper, Medina loses her job as editor-in-chief of the national newspaper. She is a very strong female character who fights against the oppressive government and the traditions of conservative Islam.

The main character Medina is fortunate to find a husband, a brother, a father and some friends who understand and help her fight against patriarchal ideology. She also has a very bright daughter. Though Medina loses her job, she puts her effort to instill a sense of dignity and independence in her daughter. She is aiming to achieve by not sending her daughter to government schools and be the only focal point of her circle.

Though Medina is a very strong female character who achieved economic independence and is the decision maker of the house, she could not win the patriarchal programmed societal acceptance. She tried her best to alleviate patriarchal ruling of the regime from the society by taking part in the clandestine movement which worked underground to overthrow the dictatorship of the General. In the story, we see her struggling to sustain her family and protect her daughter against harmful traditional practices, circumcision.

At the end, she confined her efforts to her family first who desperately needed her conscious attention to make her dream true. Besides, when she had time she attended to her social obligations.

4.2.2 Roles and Representation of Characters

In discussing the role of female and male characters in the novel, it is first important to talk about the background of the story. The setting of this novel is located in Mogadishu, the capital city of Somali where the main character, the wife, was editor-in-chief of the national newspaper.

In discussing the role of female and male characters in the novel, it would be necessary to talk first about the background of the main characters. Medina is half Yemeni and half Somali born and raised with her brother from a very traditional conservative Muslim family on her mother side and with a non patriarchal father. She perceives the strong hand of patriarchal oppression from her grandfather and the society. Being able to secure scholarship with her brother in Rome, she met her husband Samater and returned to Mogadishu for good. She came from a well-to-do family even though they are traditionally conservative and very patriarchal. The novel highlights two ideological clashes.

On the other hand, Samater is a nomadic Somali whose mother is very poor to support him and his sister and a very conservative traditional Muslim. They did not afford to have a place to stay, permanent income to buy food or cloth.

The difference in the role of sexes in this novel is basically determined by social acceptance. In this novel, we can see strong female characters who are economically independent regardless of their submissive role in the patriarchal ideology. For this novel taking economic independence as one parameter to show patriarchal imposition does not

take the study further because the issue of economic independence is not as such significant since we have many female characters who are self-sufficient. For instance we can see Idil, Medina's mother-in-law, who might be a good example of the female character who is living comfortably in spite of patriarchal oppression. Though she was poor, she was able to find a means to make something in order to feed her family, buy clothes and send her children to school. Though her job is to bake local bread called "canjeera" and maize-cakes for a restaurant owned by a man on commission basis, the owner had easy access to her. It reads:

Then she obtained a commission to bake canjeera and maize-cake for a restaurant owned by a man who – the truth must be told – had easy access to her. (p.87)

In the patriarchal programmed society, men have been privileged to satisfy their desire by the cover of allowing women with job opportunities. This is one aspect of patriarchal construct to undermine women's role as an independent citizens to decide for themselves. If Idil rejected the restaurant owner's offer of infidelity, she will starve with her children. Knowing the consequences, she gave access to herself in order to secure an income and help her dependents considering herself as a commodity.

Another female character, Ebla, mother of Medina's friend Sagal, who was economically independent but still lived comfortably under the submissive perspective of patriarchy. Though Sagal's step-father was a gentleman who loved her as his own, inherit her and her mother a house against the traditional programming of patriarchy to give them a chance to secure their own income and house. We can see the indirect effect of patriarchal programming in that Ebla was not able to secure a property through her efforts rather her husband's inheritance.

Even if Ebla secures an income of her own by renting the house her husband inherits her, she has been a result of patriarchal programming which discourages females to work hard and be independent. To ascertain this argument we can see the following extract.

“If I were you, I’d take up your parent’s challenge, move in to the house, use the car he is willing to give you, and the money as well.” (p.140)

Ebla uttered the above speech to Amina Sagal’s friend (a young woman who had been raped by three men and deserted by her family). From the above extract, we can see though Ebla is helping herself and her daughter through her own efforts owning a shop, she is discouraging Amina to accept the privilege she can get from her father who turned his back at the time of need by forgetting to struggle for her right and accept compensation whenever patriarchy oppresses women. The above utterance has its own implication on accepting or refusing the proposal on Amina’s part. If Amina refused to accept the proposed properties which represent patriarchal way of silencing women, she will look for a way to secure an income to support herself and her daughter by opposing the patriarchal construct.

On the other hand, by accepting her parents’ proposal she fell under the strong hand of patriarchy again regardless of Medina’s strong influence. This shows how the patriarchal ideology is deeply rooted and cannot be easily eliminated. Amina’s first instance to be a victim of patriarchy is on account of her father’s deed. She had been raped by three men who intended to take revenge on her father. While she appealed to them to leave her alone, the response was surprising. They raped her to harm him only not her. In the following paragraphs, extracts from the novel are used to discuss issues related to considering a woman as an object.

“Please, no, I am not he, nor am I my father. ...”

“We’re doing this not to you but your father.” (P.)

In the patriarchal society, raping a girl is a sign of humiliating and disregarding the father ignoring the well-being of that girl and causing physical and psychological trauma. One can understand from the above extract that the situation is almost the same in any patriarchal ideology. If the men are after the father, they can inflict other problems on

him but in a patriarchal society, causing any problem to the girl or mother is considered as degrading the status of the family's head who is the father.

Apart from this, without addressing Amina's problem through justice, her father's deed in consulting the General, will demonstrate the patriarchal outlook all decision for her. They offer to cover her expenses for living or studying in other country without guaranteeing her rights. The other thing is that the mother does not have a role in her daughter's life. She is by herself secondary in her family since the father has all the right to make any decision. It reads:

“No. The General and I. I haven't spoken to your mother. I've spoken to the General. His instructions are clear: no publicity, no scandal.” (p.136)

The patriarchal programming not only denies the mother's right to decision making but also forbids her from making any suggestion on matters which concern her. On the contrary, the father will make every decision in consultation with the Grand Patriarch, the General. This represents the influence of dictatorship in society and household level.

Economic independence might be one factor to ensure gender equality but societal acceptance has its own strong influence on who is making decisions. The difference in the role of sexes in this novel basically lies in social approval not economic independence. Even if the economic disparity between male and female characters is not as such significant, societal sanction is mandatory to ensure gender equality. If the society defiles ones' role in social commitment, the pre patriarchal programming will be manifested. Here is an extract in which one of the female characters, Idil, talked to her son about a house owned by his wife. It reads:

“First, get yourself a house out of which you can throw anyone. ‘I buy these drinks with my own money.’ Why not save it towards a down-payment on a house while you can,

eh? This is Medina's house. Don't forget that. You cannot throw me out." (p.86)

From the above extract, it can be understood that Idil is sick and tired of being dependent on her daughter-in-law. It does not give comfort to a woman like her to see her son live under his wife's roof which is against the patriarchal construct. And this incident does not give Idil a chance to interfere in her son's marriage apart from considering her son (Samater) as powerless to make any decision. The patriarchal programming would not give a suitable environment to men like Samater. The imposition will come from every corner to aggravate the men to be part and parcel of the patriarchal ideology. Idil is confronting her son to behave like "men" and to uphold socially approved manners. She wants him to have an account and a house of his own. So he will be in the decision making position in the house regardless of his comfortable living situation. He prefers his wife's decision making role in the financial system since he lacks the ability to say 'I do not have' when every clansmen or clanswomen showed up for financial assistance. It reads:

What kind of a son have I ended up with? A man dependant upon a woman? And what are you a minister for? ... Look at your colleagues. They've changed house and wife and mistress." ... "Do you know any man in this country who trusts his wife with a delicate matter such as administering his financial affairs? What if you die today? You have no bank account in your name, there is nothing which belongs to you legally, your name will not enrich me a cent. Turn this over in your head and think of me and your sister and your clan." (p.75)

In the patriarchal ideology, a woman is expected to be dependent on a man not the other way round. From Idil's point of view, it is a curse to end up with a son who trusts his wife with delicate issues like finance after enduring many things to raise him.

In spite of society's disapproval of women assuming male roles, this novel is characterized by economically independent and strong women, active participants in political issues and determined to change the patriarchal construct. The novel can be called a feminist one by considering the male and female characters' roles.

In this novel, we can find male characters who are advocates of feminism represented by the young and educated generation like Nasser and Samater. Nasser is the elder brother of Medina who was educated and lived abroad. He considered Medina as someone capable of dealing with economic, social and political issues regardless of her sex. We could not find a line which states her weak points as a woman. Besides, he engages himself in domestic chores which are attributed to women in the patriarchal ideology. It reads:

“I don't guarantee you'll eat well,” he said. His eyes were clear as the vegetable soup he had made; his gaze was as vague as the pale circle of a young moon. (p. 111)

Even though looking after the household (cooking, cleaning, raising children, etc) is considered to be the responsibility of women, Nasser, opposing the submissive role of patriarchy is found putting himself in the areas restricted for women only by male dominated society.

On the other hand, we find strong female characters determined to overthrow the dictatorship from the country. Among political female activists' who have energetic partaking, Medina is the first one. She is the only female member of an underground movement working to overthrow the oppressive government and the traditions of conservative Islam. It reads:

Whatever had become of her personality, the strength of her weaknesses, the undeniable fact that she was almost always a woman among men, sharing things with them, drinks, reading the same books as they, borrowing or lending them ideas? Was she not the only woman member

of the underground organization which so far had sacrificed
Soyaan and Koschin? (p. 94)

In the above passage, we will find the major character to be strong enough to fight dictatorship, patriarchy and traditional conservative religious beliefs showing that if women have a chance to be educated, they will have an active role in shaping the society. The economic, social and political power disparity is only not having an opportunity. It has nothing to do with sex difference. To support this idea, Tyson (1999) explained that the prevalence of such economic difference is inevitable in a patriarchal world because women are denied the educational and occupational means of acquiring those powers.

The other active political participant female characters are Cadar and Hindiya (Sagal's competitors to win the contest). In this novel, we can see Sagal as politically aware and determined to overthrow the dictatorship as well as patriarchy from her steamed conversation with Medina, Amina or Ebla her mother. But she represents the young and politically aware generation who do not engage themselves in the actual action and envy the strong ones. Sagal is found in the novel swearing to her friends or mother to participate in writing on the walls at dawn to humiliate the General. On the contrary, the ones who never boast publicly, Cadar and Hindiya, write their names in the nation's history in bold. It reads:

Sagal seemed weak like a moth, she seemed fragile as a myth. Cadar Cali and Hindiya. Her first and second most feared rivals when it came to swimming. Cadar Cali and Hindiya! The two girls who had done as well as herself in everything at school and who challenged her in everything, the two girls who had taken her boy friends away from her – Cadar and Hindiya at last heroines of a movement and Sagal a mere spectator? (p.143)

The other parameter through which we can identify the deep rooted patriarchal ideology is imposed on both male and female characters. To begin with male characters, they play the role of advocates of the deeply rooted traditional practice of circumcision unknowingly. The young and educated members of the society which are represented by Nasser and Samater, are unconsciously in favor of circumcision at early age. Indirectly their utterance reveals that circumcision should be practised on young girls at an early stage preferably. As educated members of the society, they should have condemned circumcision as a harmful traditional practice rather than making time reference. It reads:

“At sixteen?”

“Does it matter whether a girl is six or sixteen?”

“I am sorry, I didn’t mean that.”

“That is the same exclamatory remark Samater and every man to whom I’ve told the story made. ‘At sixteen!’ what if she were six or seven or eight, would it make a difference? Wouldn’t you be just as horrified? Of course not.”

From Medina’s utterance we can understand her great expectation that young and educated people should induce society to eliminate harmful traditional practices but still they have been where their fathers were when it comes to women’s circumcision. And she makes a reference that they can not understand the pain and suffering. That is why they all put time reference and believe that circumcision might be painless at early age. The above extract shows that the traditional practices have been deeply-rooted. Even people who consider themselves as feminist unconsciously support circumcision.

Such deeply rooted patriarchal beliefs are not manifested on male characters only. We can see in this novel that the protagonist (Medina) who can be classified as a strong female character in every aspect lay under the well-built hand of patriarchal construct unconsciously. We can take the following extract as an instance. It reads:

She had hoped that Samater, too, would one day say this, she had waited for him to outgrow her, outgrow his mother and breathe with his own lungs, have an affair with another woman, do something unexpected. (p.19)

Besides, the writer could create female characters who are very comfortable with patriarchal ideology and traditional conservative Muslim values like Idil, an advocate of patriarchy and circumcision and Fatima Bint Thabit, Medina's mother, who are supporters of submission. The following extract gives a hint on her strong belief to continue the patriarchal oppression she is living in. It reads:

“I remember something my grandfather used to say: ‘A woman, like any other inferior being, must be kept guessing, she mustn't be given reason to believe she is certain of anything.’”

“That's right. Children must be kept guessing. ...” (p.159)

Though Fatima Bint Thabit is considered as inferior by the patriarchal society being a woman, she has never complained against the imposition but rather lives comfortably in the situation of traditional conservative society.

Furthermore, another most salient feature which reflects the deep rooted patriarchal construction can be detected from Sagal's question to Amina. Here is the extract from the dialogue.

“Cadar”

“Cadar who?”

“Cadar Cali, of course.” (p.143)

From the response of Amina, it can be understood that the most important thing to identify a person is not the maternal line but something related to the paternal figure. This

shows a long lasting accreditation of the society to male supremacy. This can be related to the assignment of a family name which scholars like Pope (2002) judge as the finger print of patriarchy.

4.2.3 The Novel's Reaction to Patriarchy

With very few deep rooted patriarchal impositions which manifest themselves unconsciously here and there, the novel has anti-patriarchal stand. It is feminist in approach because there are strong female characters who are economically independent, decision makers, struggling to avert patriarchy and traditional conservative beliefs.

Besides, male characters' contribution in fighting against patriarchal ideology and considering women based on their potential regardless of their sex is another input to consider the novel as a feminist one.

The message of the novel from feminists' perspective which aims at condemning the deeply-rooted patriarchal ideology and traditional practice also paves the way for the eradication of women's oppression. This and ensuring equal access to educational and occupational opportunities being the purpose of feminism makes the novel to be judged as a feminist one.

In general, the embarked sisterhood and brotherhood life of the characters in helping each other to alleviate economic, decision making and political problems, which obviously led women to subjugation by men, could allow one to say that the novel is anti-patriarchal. Even most of the incidents in the novel do not applaud patriarchal ideology and submission of females to patriarchy. Some male and female characters are not aware of the deeply rooted patriarchal programs they are immersed themselves unconsciously. Leaving these characters without awareness of the deep-rooted submission they advocate would be a gap in the novel from a feminist point of view.

4.3 Analysis of Close Sesame

This last part of the analysis focuses on the third novel of the first trilogy in the same pattern which consist the synopsis of the novel, the role and representation of characters and the novel's reaction to patriarchal ideology.

4.3.1 Synopsys of Close Sesame

The final book of this trilogy, Close Sesame, has to do with an old man who has been entwined with visionary dreams. The novel revolves around the old man's, Deeriye's, life in colonial power and after independence. Because of his firm nationalistic view and strong political opinion, Deeriye spent most of his years in prison and detention where he learnt English and Italian languages.

The main character of this novel, Deeriye, is fortunate enough to have real friends who look after his and his family's spiritual and material needs when he fights for his nationalistic and Pan-African views. He has a son and a daughter who are taking good care of him after his beloved wife, Nadiffa, passed away. He is grateful with his children's help but still suffer from visionary dreams and struggles to overthrow tribal dictatorship.

The novel concludes after Deeriye and his son sacrifice their life to what they believe worthy of it and not dying anonymously. At the end, the novel gives a clue that of underground movements will continue with the young generation.

4.3.2 Roles and Representation of Characters

In this section, the role of characters both males and females is analyzed. In this respect, the social, economic or political activities of both types of characters have been investigated as per its availability and in accordance with its relevance to the subject of discussion.

To start with, the social role of male and female characters seems to be constructed according to the patriarchal set up they have been living with. In support of this argument, it is possible to consider a number of instances. We will start from the major character, Deeriye. As the story revolves around his life starting from childhood till the day of his last breath, we can see him as a dominant figure in social life. He is the sultanate of his clan and a person determined to bring change in the nation. He is well respected by his age mates and even by the younger generation. Deeriye and every member of the clansmen have the right to assemble, discuss issues concerning the clan's male and female members, political or social issues.

On the contrary, women in the patriarchal constructed ideology have the role of hosting nothing more. While the clansmen gather for crucial issues, female members of the clan keep themselves busy in arranging the venue, preparing drinks, showing a way, etc but not taking any part in the actual events. We can see the following extract. It reads:-

“Haji Omer’s son was speaking, a young man than most of those present in the room (which had been lent by a clanswoman to the meeting) ... (women were not invited to important meetings where decisions affecting the clan were made ...) (p. 183)

The chaos wouldn't die down until the hostess pushed open the door, bringing trays of tea along with her daughters and

a young boy. The hostess's appearance on the scene silenced everybody. (p.186)

From the above passages, one can understand the limitation of women's role to serving only. It advocates the patriarchal ideology that women are not good enough in keeping secrets and decision making.

To be hostess is what the patriarchal construct expects of every woman. That is why the hostess brings all her daughters to help her in hosting the clansmen. When she faced shortage of hostesses, she took a young boy. This shows how patriarchy affects even the boys not to engage themselves in the domestic affairs. They will give a hand when the real need arise, at the time of shortage of girls.

Besides, the clansmen who have been debating fiercely become quite by the appearance of the hostess because they don't want to extract secret of the important meeting since in the male dominated society women are not worthy of such trusts. Apart from this such kind of set up gives the male ample chance to be the dominant figure in the society as well as in the house. In most instances of the novel, female characters have been deprived of the opportunity to engage in the social activities.

On the other hand, Deeriye as a major character in the novel has a feminist view regarding women's participation in the social activity. It reads:

(women were not invited to important meetings where decisions affecting the clan were made, although Deeriye held the progressive view they should be for it might make some of these stupid idiots talk less, since mixed company would most probably have made them feel ashamed of themselves....) (p.183)

But his wish for women's participation in this particularly important meeting is to minimize the chaos and irrelevant ideas which have been raised by the clansmen. In the patriarchal traditional construct, men will choose words while addressing an issue in the

presence of women. But, if they are alone they will address each other bluntly. This kind of behavior is associated with what Pope (2002) discussed that men have been attached with noisy behavior and women with quite in a patriarchal society. This is what is being reflected in this novel, when the clansmen assembled to discuss on the important issue.

Another important parameter in assessing patriarchal impact is the economic independence. In this novel, we can have economically independent and strong female characters like Zeinab (Deeriye's daughter), Natasha (Deeriye's daughter-in-law). Since the novel revolves around Deeriye, we have very few female characters and among those economic independence is not a factor to reveal patriarchal suppression since Zeinab is a well educated character and a doctor by profession, who earns a good living from her career. The other character is Natasha who is a foreigner in Somali and a university professor. The occupational area in which she engaged herself in Somali is not clear but her stable and comfortable economic status is obvious from the various parts of the novel.

However, there was Nadiffa (Deeriye's wife) who had never been to school and is economically dependent first on her husband, while he was in prison and detention on her brother. The following extract shows Nadiffa's dependency on her son for reading and writing to her husband. It reads:

in the way Nadiffa had sought Mursal's assistance in reading and writing letters to him, Nadiffa a woman who did not know how to read or write but knew how to speak...(p.202)

Even if Nadiffa never set a foot to school, she was very understanding and intelligent. Besides, the second and third young wives of the elder men were also economically dependent on their husbands or step-children. One can witness this in the following extract. It reads:

Ninety-nine percent of his peers re-marry when their wives die or age, as at their menopause- some marry again with

their wives still alive, ... their offspring who maintained them plus their wives. (p.27)

From the above extract, these second or third young wives are dependent on their husbands or their offspring since they are the result of the patriarchal influence. The prevalence of such economic difference as Tyson (1999) explained is inevitable in a patriarchal world because women are denied the educational and occupational means of those powers. This will expose women to male oppression.

Another and still very important patriarchal influence in this novel is considering women for childbearing only. The elderly men need to get more young wives in order to have more children which are the direct result of patriarchal ideology. The following extract shows how patriarchal ideology deprives women from social privileges. It reads:

“But what can I do with a woman who won’t give me any more children?” Rooble, his best friend, had re-married too and now had a son a few months old. So had Elmi-Tiir. (p. 27)

Such kind of behavior paves a way for women as well as men to continue their way of living in the patriarchal ideology oppressing women’s rights.

Active political participation of the two genders in the novel is the other very important parameter in addressing patriarchal oppression. We can find male characters who are active participants in the political affairs of the nation like Deeriye who spent most of his years in prison and detention. We have also people like Mursal (Deeriye’s son) who sacrifice his life on the process of overthrowing the dictatorship. There is also Mahad (Mursal’s friend) who was caught red handed on the scene trying to kill the General by taking a gun from the bodyguard. There are also many of male characters who are active participants in the political affairs of Somali and dedicated to sacrifice even their lives to overthrow tribal ruling like Jibril, Mukhtar and others who are well educated and high post citizens.

On the other hand, we have female characters who are aware of the political situation but are not active participants. They prefer to discuss the issue behind closed doors for knowing the consequences. For instance, even if Zeinab is not active participant of the political movement, she is conscious of national and international political issues. The following extract will show us how she perceives the implementation of 'democracy'. It reads:

“In many countries, one hasn't any rights; but neither does one really have them in Western Europe or North America although one is made to believe on does. Governments decide how best to rule masses; and to the elite of these countries are guaranteed some rights. That is more or less the situation,” said Zeinab. (p. 100)

From the above extract, one can visualize Zeinab's political awareness and motives not to participate with the underground movement to overthrow the General like her brother and his friends.

Furthermore, the writer of this novel is capable of portraying a major character who is able to address both sexes equally. In most instances, Dariyee is found addressing both female and male characters regardless of their sex. For example, revealing addressing the reasoning ability of Mursal and Zeinab, he gives them equal status. It reads:

Which reminds me: isn't the worst curse on the head of any Somali the malediction: May your tomb never dig! I am certain Mursal's reticence on this topic is justified; I am also certain Zeinab's worries are justified. So please.” (p. 136)

Dariyee addresses his son's (Mursal) and his daughter's (Zeinab) way of thinking regardless of their sex. Besides, one can say the novel is a feminist one because the major

character addresses both female and male characters on economic independence and ownership equally. To support this argument here is an extract from the novel. It reads:

The multifarious warmth and trust between friends: Rooble and Deeriye. And the two met in the living room of Mursal and Natasha's house and greeted each other in silence: (p. 32)

In the patriarchal ideology the head of the house is the husband, who is the decision maker. From the above extract we can see that the house does not belong either to the husband or wife but both. The extract ensures both have a say in the house. Belongingness which is a sign of gender equality has been manifested in this novel.

Even if there are patriarchal ideology in this novel like Nadiffa and the second or third wives of the elder men, the rest female characters are well educated, economically independent and politically aware regardless of their ethnicity and background.

4.3.3 The Novel's Reaction to Patriarchy

Generally speaking, the novel raised an important issue in relation to the prevailing unfair treatment of females in the traditional African society. When we see the novel's reaction to patriarchal ideology, it can be inferred that it has a feminist stand which could put its share to alleviate the unfair treatment of the female by the male.

With very few deep rooted patriarchal impositions here and there which make themselves subtly noticeable, the novel has anti-patriarchal view. The novel can be considered as feminist apart from economic dependency and passive political involvements. It is more feminist since there are well educated, economically independent and politically conscious female characters.

Besides, there are male characters like Deeriye who fight patriarchal ideology and evaluate women based on their potential regardless of their sex. This is another key point to consider in this novel written by a writer who champions women's rights. And also the core message of the novel from feminists perspective which aims at denouncing the deeply rooted patriarchal construct pave a way for the eradication of women's oppression and ensuring equal educational and occupational access being the theme of feminism makes the novel classified under it.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusion

5.1 Summary

So far, an attempt has been made to analyze three novels written on the first Trilogy “Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship” by Nuruddin Farah. The framework for the analysis is feminism. In the following paragraphs the researcher tried to summarize the highlights of the analysis.

The three novels under discussion are set in the capital city of Somalia, Mogadishu. In addition to the similarity of the setting, the theme of the three novels revolves around the young and well educated members of the society. The fact that these novels are addressing dictatorship and traditional conservative beliefs, the extent of females’ suppression by patriarchal programming is reflected.

Sweet and Sour Milk, in which patriarchal influence is more pronounced, portray female and male characters as follows. Female characters are depicted as economically dependent, politically passive, unable to make decisions, submissive to patriarchal order and confined to household activities.

Male characters like Keynaan in this novel are powerful, hot tempered, sole decision makers in the family who expect no argument or resistance from their female counterparts. In short, they are typical patriarchal figures who do not feel about the very existence of females, patriarchal oppression.

On the contrary, Sardines is the other novel that aims to show gender equality through female characters who have strong and independent economic status, are politically active and able to make decisions on their own accord. In this novel, contrary to what can be seen on the surface, gender equality, societal denunciation and deep rooted patriarchal impositions exemplified unconsciously have been observed. This indicates that strong hands of patriarchy are still there. In Sardines, patriarchal mentality has been challenged by both female and male characters.

This novel brings in to view two conflicting female figures. The first which is represented by Idil and Fatima-Bint-Tabit is the result of patriarchal programming which considers patriarchal oppression as a normal occurrence. The characters also live comfortably. Members of the second group, Medina and her successors are anti-patriarchal figures who strive to boost female self-confidence and self-reliance.

Furthermore, there is another group which lies in between the two groups. It is represented by Ebla. This group understands patriarchal oppression but does not have the bravery to stand against male-domination. However, this group serves as a bridge to transform women from living comfortably under patriarchal oppression to engaging in anti-patriarchal movement.

The last one is Close Sesame which simply reflects the reality without the aim of classifying as patriarchal or anti-patriarchal. In the novel, there are some patriarchal touches like reducing women's role in the society to childbearing and economic dependence only.

On the other hand, there are characters such as Zeinab who are well-educated and are economically well off even if their political participation is limited to indoor discussions with trustworthy relatives unlike female characters found in Sardines.

5.2 Conclusions

In the review of related literature attempts have been made to show the potential of literary works in presenting the actual contemporary society. Literary works can represent reality in various ways.

Since Farah is able to create anti-patriarchal male and female characters in the trilogy who are fighting against male oppression, there are elements which advocate patriarchal suppression unconsciously. These problems arise as the novel forwards the prevailing cultural practice as it is. As Thornham in Jackson and Jones (1992) says, when such cultural practices which need a fundamental change (for example the case of gender stereotyping) is presented without a thorough investigation, then the novels' socialization role will affect the audiences' point of view.

Thus, literary works in addition to their most important nature (i.e. entertain and educate) should aim at modifying inappropriate cultural practices. Then only will the socialization role of the novels bring a satisfactory result and ensure a better world.

In this respect, Mogadishu, in which the setting of the novels under discussion relies, is a place where traditional societies as well as modern people live. It is also a place where many harmful traditional practices, for instance, circumcision, rape, sexual violence and others happened. These practices are done either by men or for the sake of their interest. As a result, it is possible to say that those practices are the result of patriarchal ruling spread through the locality. Therefore, the novels apart from portraying the stereotyped patriarchal practices have to reveal the negative aspects of patriarchy by punishing the criminals. They should also suggest the ways of eradicating the practices. In this respect, it can be said that one of the novels (Sardines) under discussion in this study has certain flaws. For example in Sardines, though the novel can be classified as an anti-patriarchal as it encourages women's active participation in the social, economic and political affairs of the society, it does not reflect the wrong deeds of the rapists and the outlook of the society. It also discourages women from safeguarding their rights.

Even though, Sardines is anti-patriarchal by portraying female heroines who are active political participants, economically independent, decision makers, confident and rational, it does not contribute much to eliminating deep-rooted patriarchal oppressions.

Close Sesame, like the above novel, is anti-patriarchal because it gives a chance to female characters to have an active role in the society except active political participation. The novel, however, does not contribute much in producing confident, rational and strong female characters. The novel also does not give female characters the chance to participate in a social gathering such as the tribal assembly and their role has been limited only to hosting the clansmen. In short, both the female and male characters are portrayed in fundamentally similar ways as the stereotyped patriarchal assignments.

In Sweet and Sour Milk, an important message has been transmitted. In this novel, female characters who were patriarchally programmed appear to understand the most important point which can help female spectators to decree economic independence and thereby self-confidence. The problem with this novel is its gap in deconstructing the patriarchally constructed masculine behavior of male characters such as Keynaan.

The other one is that most of the female characters have a low economic status and are dependent. This status of women which does not seem to change in the course of the novel will be a common experience for the audience. This fact may not help them to feel or wonder why they are economically dependent. However, a portrayal of an economically independent women who are enjoying the financial freedom like Margaritta, could positively affect the spectator.

In short, from the novels under discussion, it can be deduced that all the novels target to abolish patriarchy which a feminist reader could applaud except some deep rooted patriarchal oppressions. However, two of the novels could not change or at least resist the specific role the two sexes are given in a patriarchal arrangement.

Feminists, in relation to the above idea, believe that literary works should go against the predetermined role and representation of both sexes. Though this could be contradictory

to the actual society to be depicted, they believe, it is helpful to shape the already established patriarchal construction in the contemporary society. In this regard, the sequence of the novels in the trilogy should be 'Sweet and Sour Milk', 'Close Sesame', and 'Sardines' rather than 'Sweet and Sour Milk', 'Sardines' and 'Close Sesame'.

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