

THE QUEST FOR LIBERTY IN NURUDDIN FARAH'S TRILOGY

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Literature at the University of Nairobi.

MAY 1999



## ABSTRACT

This study is inspired by the fact that critics of African literature have not given Nuruddin Farah and his works sufficient attention despite his prolific literary production.

To correct this critical bias, this thesis attempts a thematic analysis of Nuruddin Farah's trilogy which consists of Sweet and Sour Milk, Sardines, and Close Sesame. We analyse the treatment of the quest for liberty in the three works. The basic premise is that in the three works, Farah presents the struggle against impediments to both individual and corporate freedom. To achieve this objective, the study has adopted a method in which the individual texts that comprise the trilogy are discussed in detail by first focusing on the impediments to freedom and the rationale behind them. We then go on to discuss the struggle waged by progressive forces to create a society in which the individual enjoys freedom from arbitrary control.

In the introduction, we look at the author, highlighting his concern for freedom. It is also here that we review the criticism on Farah and explain the reader response theory on which we have grounded this study.

In chapter one entitled "The Despot and The Patriarch: The Depiction of High-Handed Authority in the Trilogy," the study looks at the society presented in the three works highlighting the various impediments to freedom. Here, the study looks at the political and cultural facets of Somali life during the reign of Siyaad Barre.

In chapter two, we concentrate on the struggle for freedom from the political oppression of the General. We focus on the conflicts between the liberal minded characters and the political establishment. It is here we demonstrate that despite the great forces that those who champion the cause for political freedom are faced with, they do not resign to authoritarianism.

Chapter three, our last chapter, looks at the struggle against conservative cultural values in quest for freedom from their limitations. We attempt to show that there are liberal minded characters who struggle to assert themselves and attain freedom from patriarchal limitations and bias. The success achieved by these characters is seen as an optimistic projection of the creation of a liberal cultural world view that would guarantee freedom from cultural impediments.

In the conclusion, we highlight the main findings of the study. We conclude that as a writer, Farah is committed to the total liberation of the individual and the society from arbitrary exercise of authority whether derived from political office or tradition.