AN OVERVIEW on NURUDDIN FARAH'S MAPS in TERMS OF GENDER

Nuruddin Farah'in Maps Adli Eserine Toplumsal Cinsiyet Üzerinden Bakiş

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ABSTRACT

People are born with their biological sex, but society constucts their gender identity through their biological sex. In other words, sex is innate, but gender is acquired later. Gender differs in every society. In other words, each society created different meanings for biological sex and develops gender roles accordingly. However, although gender differs from society to society, the secondary position of women does not change in many parts of the world. For example, the concept of "heroism" and the myth of "national hero" shaped over this concept was associated with male power all over the world. The word" motherland "refers to the woman because of the word" mother". Tasks such as being a soldier, participating in the war and protecting the motherland are assigned to the man. Therefore, while protecting his homeland, the man also undertook the duty of protecting the woman, who has the connotation of "homeland". In other words, the myth of being a "national hero" built as a sacred duty includes gender roles, and makes the position of women secondary. The reason that the gender issue in this work is exemplified through the 'national hero' myth is that in this novel the phenomenon of gender is reinforced from the ideology of nationalism and the idea of nationalism reproduces the roles of gender.

The novel begins with the story of Ashkar, a baby who loses his mother and begins life alone. It is Misra who found and raised Ashkar. In other words, Misra is his world and the only link that connects him to life. From the moment Misra finds Ashkar, a very strong bond develops between them. Ashkar is firmly attached to Misra during his early childhood years. Misra is not a woman; she is his world. However, as Ashkar grew up, he started to be under the influence of society rather than Misra and started to adopt the roles that society determined for a man. Over time, Ashkar begins to see Misra as a woman, not his universe. He sometimes accuses this woman, whom he once loved, sometimes finds her inadequate. Because Misra is a woman and always in a secondary position. As Ashkar grows, gender roles become stronger. For example, fighting is an action that symbolizes the masculine power of a man. In this novel, gender roles imposed by the society will be discussed and examined through the characters of Ashkar and Misra.

Key Words: Maps, gender and sex, identity, Nuruddin Farah

ÖZET

İnsanlar biyolojik cinsiyetleri ile doğarlar ancak toplum biyolojik cinsiyetleri üzerinden toplumsal cinsiyet kimliklerini inşa eder. Diğer bir deyişle biyolojik cinsiyet doğuştan gelir ancak toplumsal cinsiyet sonradan kazanılır. Toplumsal cinsiyet her toplumda farklılık göstermektedir. Yani her toplum biyolojik cinsiyete farklı anlamlar yükleyip bu doğrultuda toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri geliştirmektedir. Ancak toplumsal cinsiyet toplumdan topluma farklılık gösterse de kadının ikincil konumu dünynın pek çok yerinde değişmez. Örneğin bütün dünyada ''kahramanlık'' kavramı ve bu kavram üzerinden şekillendirilen ''ulusal kahraman'' miti erkek gücü ile ilişkilendirilmiştir. Anavatan kelimesi ise içerdiği "ana" sözcüğünden dolayı kadına çağrışım yapmaktadır. Asker olmak, savaşa katılmak ve anavatanı korumak gibi görevler erkeğe verilmiştir. Dolayısıyla erkek vatanını korurken "anavatan" çağrışımı yapan kadını da koruma görevini de üstlenmiştir. Yani kutsal bir görev olarak inşa edilen ''ulusal kahraman'' olma miti toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri içermekte, kadının konumunu ikincilleştirmektedir. Bu çalışmada yer alan toplumsal cinsiyet konusunun ''ulusal kahraman'' miti üzerinden örneklendirilmesinin sebebi romanda toplumsal cinsiyet olgusunun ulusçuluk ideolojisinden beslenmesi ve ulusçuluk fikrinin toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini yeniden üretmesidir.

Pek çok tema ve konuyu içerisinde barındıran roman annesini kaybeden hayata yalnız başlayan bir bebek olan Ashkar'ın hikayesiyle başlar. Ashkar'ı bulan ve büyüten Misra'dır. Diğer bir deyişle Misra onun dünyası, onu yaşama bağlayan tek bağdır. Misra Ashkar'ı bulduğu andan itibaren aralarında çok güçlü bir bağ gelişir. Ashkar ilk çocukluk yıllarında Misra'ya sıkı sıkıya bağlıdır. Misra bir kadın değildir; onun dünyasıdır. Ancak Ashkar büyüdükçe Misra'nın etkisinden çok toplumun etkisi altına girmeye başlamış toplumun bir erkek için belirlediği rolleri benimsemeye başlamıştır. Ashkar zamanla Misra'yı evreni olarak değil, kadın olarak görmeye başlar. Bir zamanlar taparcasına sevdiği bu kadını bazen suçlamakta bazen yetersiz bulmaktadır. Çünkü Misra bir kadındır ve hep ikincil konumdadır. Ashkar büyüdükçe toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri pekişmektedir. Örneğin savaşmak ona göre bir erkeğin eril gücünü simgeleyen bir eylemdir. Bu romanda toplum tarafından empoze edilen cinsiyet rolleri tartışılacak, Ashkar ve Misra karakterleri üzerinden incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Maps, cinsiyet ve cinsiyet, kimlik, Nuruddin Farah

1. INTRODUCTION

The desire to be member of a group is a fundamental impulse for the life. Along with that wish to live with other people, people want a safe community, a nation to support them and struggle with any internal or external threat against them. "Mother" is the most comprehensive metaphorical image used to portray the nation. Whilst the metaphor as well as what it conveys seem sacred, issues behind it are linked directly to the constructed role of the mother. As Kirsten Stirling (2008:11) puts it:

> Whenever gender and nation collide, whether this involves the representation of the nation as gendered, or the concomitant role of women as citizens, complications appear. One of the most obvious and visible ways of gendering the nation is the familiar practice of representing the nation itself in the form of a woman, a symbol which is ingrained in European tradition and, judging by its widespread use, has a great deal of attraction. This use of the female figure elevates and semi deifies women on the symbolic level but can contribute to disenfranchising them from the position of citizen on a practical level. The symbolic elevation appears to value women's role in the nation but it masks the political powerlessness of actual women.

As Stirling describes, the female image is used to portray the country metaphorically. Often the country is portrayed as the poor and helpless female figure who needs protection. Even the nation is portrayed as a mother. The mother is regarded as the child's live-giver, but the ideals of maternity are confined to the private sphere, which is also viewed as feminine, fragile and helpless. The public and private spheres are based on the traditional conception of man and woman. The transition of traditional concepts of manhood and womanhood to the Western nationalist debate through its conceptualisation in the Western ideology has aggravated the struggle for women in African nations who are still coping with their own oppressive traditional cultural structures. The creation of the modern Western nation is justified by the family's patriarchal centralisation. Within patriarchal societies, the role of men in society is overestimated and social achievements are attributed to men. The ideology of male dominance and male centrality has contributed to the empowerment of male individuals in the public sphere. Since patriarchal principles promote masculinity, feminine values are limited to the private sphere and exposed to the male forces that dominate and regulate both the public and private spheres. As Allan Johnson (2014:10) puts it:

> In addition to being male dominant and male identified, patriarchy is male centered, which means that the focus of attention is primarily on men and what they do. . . . If you want a story about heroism, moral courage, spiritual transformation, endurance, or any of the struggles that give human life its deepest meaning, men and masculinity are usually the terms in which you must see it. Male experience is what patriarchal culture uses to represent human experience, even when it is women who most often live it.

Catherine Hall (1993:100) describes the nation-building as directly linked to centralized and focused on masculine force. This masculine power is exhibited in esteemed leadership, battle, achievement and commitment. The male power in the family structure is illustrated by the importance and status of the father. On the other hand the feminized home country is represented as the mother, and the people should therefore be thankful. Hall states:

> The symbolic place of gender in the construction of national identities provided another. The gendering of nations and nationalisms provides many clues as to why, for example, women's active involve- ment in nationalist struggles does not result in their holding effective political power after independence. The common theme of the nation as female, which implies the gendering of the citizen as male, sets limits on the forms of national belonging available to women. Indeed, we often think of the state as masculine and discussions around this led us to try and clarify, not always terribly successfully, the distinction between nation and state. Women can often be conceptualized as 'mothers of the nation', an image which places their reproductive capacities as at the centre of their service to the nation.

People in each community are classified in two separate categories as men and women. Their obligations and roles are defined by their society. Male and female principles are described differently in traditional societies, based on the context in which they are positioned. That drives us to research the other metaphorical portrayal, the masculinized national hero. National hero is a man of outstanding bravery,

dignity and power. The masculinized national hero is a constructed role created by the society for the benefit of men. Only men can be national heros. As Linas Eriksonas (2004:15) puts it:

> Regardless of the political views held by the scholars of nationalism, all parties regard national heroes as the flesh and blood of national identities. The only difference in their views is qualitative. For the perennialist, national heroes possess an intrinsic value. For the constructivist, national heroes are a value-added commodity traded across the centuries. For the rest, at best they are images in people's heads.

As Eriksonas states, the idea of the national hero, is of vital importance to the national culture and identity, and it unites people sentimentally. Therefore, the roles given to men and women are also shaped in this context. The woman is a figure who needs to be protected, just like the motherland, and the man is a hero who saves her. Masculine-identified history and culture that celebrates men and their achievements imposes on people that it is the man's duty to protect the nation, and the man must perform this duty in the best way possible.

Nationalist feminists such as McClintock, Yuval-Davis, Anthias and Enloe state that, due to the sexism of the nationalistic discourse, women are being oppressed and marginialized. As Enloe (2004:44) puts it: ''nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope.'' These nationalist feminists claim that sensitive issues, such as femaleness and femal values are neglected in the masculinized discourse. There is a patriarchal influence that can directly be attributed to the inequal role and division of power in the contemporary nation's values of men and women. This patriarchal influence is embodied in the paradigm upon which this modern society is built. According to McClintock (1993: 64)

> Since the subordination of woman to man, and child to adult, was deemed a natural fact, other forms of social hierarchy could be depicted in familial terms to guarantee social difference as a category of nature. The family image was thus drawn on to figure hierarchy within unity as an 'organic' element of historical progress, and thereby became indispensable for legitimizing exclusion and hierarchy within non-familial (affiliative) social formations such as nationalism, liberal individualism and imperialism. The metaphoric depiction of social hierarchy as natural and familial . . . thus depended on the prior naturalization of the social subordination of women and children within the domestic sphere.

McClintock acknowledges that the hierarchy of power structures in the modern nation is maintained and controlled by the family institution and the old patriarchal systems are reinforced by religion and culture and the language that focuses on only men and ignore women. It is important to notice that Yuval-Davis (1997:15) makes reference to van den Berghe and Enoch Powell who both describe the nation in terms of bloodline.

> There is a rumour (I never actually managed to find the exact reference) that Enoch Powell, the first theoretician of the British 'new right', once defined 'the nation' as 'two males plus defending a territory with the women and children'. This definition is based on a naturalized image of the nation (or actually an ethologist image clearly based on the behaviour of a pack of wolves) which other 'primordialist' theoreticians of the nation also share (for example, Van den Berghe, 1979). According to these theories, nations not only are eternal and universal but also constitute a natural extension of family and kinship relations. The family and kinship units in these constructions are based on natural sexual divisions of labour, in which the men protect the 'womenandchildren'.

According to Yuval-Davis, the sexual divisions of labor are built according to the patriarchal distribution of power that pushes femininity to the secondary position in the face of masculinity. Yuval Davis and other Nationalist feminists naturally criticize the definitions of the modern nation provided by Powell, who was a prominent English politician. After this new patriarchal western paradigm was introduced to the postcolonial nations, it worsened postcolonial women's struggles with a depreciated femininity, especially in the public domain. Powell's concept of the modern nation in terms of kinship is completely important to identify its patriarchal structure. This patriarchal family system, which determines masculine and feminine ideals, should be viewed as the key factor in reinforcing patriarchal definitions of men and women. The masculinized nationalist discourse removed the woman from the definition of the modern nation. In other

words, It is the marginalization and devaluation of women and the glorification of men that constructs the modern nation. Feminist nationalist thinkers opposed the patriarchal feminized image of the modern and the metaphors as the "mother nation" and "motherland."

Western ideology of family is built on a ground which is preserved throughout European history. This system consists of a father, who acts as the head of a family and as leader, described as masculine position. This system also involves the mother figure, who plays the role of child-bearer, described as a feminine role. The mother is supposed to conform to the father's rules. Lerner (1986:17) suggests the subjugation of women – who are mothers in the family institution who perform feminized positions, is clearly present and naturalized in religious history.

> Men's greater physical strength, their ability to run faster and lift heavier weights, and their greater aggressiveness cause them to become hunters. As such they become the providers of food for their tribes and are more highly valued and honored than women. The skills deriving from their hunting experience in turn equip them to become warriors. Man-the hunter, superior in strength, ability, and the experience derived from using tools and weapons, "naturally" protects and defends the more vulnerable female, whose biological equipment destines her for motherhood and nurturance. Finally, this biological deterministic explanation is extended from the Stone Age into the present by the assertion that the sexual division of labor based on man's natural "superiority" is a given and therefore as valid today as it was in the primitive beginnings of human society.

In Lerner's claim, sexual inequality is responsible in the public and private sphere for the formation of labor divisions between men and women. Naturally, this describes the dynamics of power in the family institution, which privileges masculinity with total power and authority in the family, and oppresses femininity and the feminized positions in this men's authority. As the traditional view claims that men's positions in the public domain are inevitable because of their 'strong' maleness, it also gives them absolute control over family income. As Lerner states, men are considered to be primary breadwinner. Women are deprived of these rights, however, the right to have and manage their personal income. Lerner further argues that:

> The rationale for women's peculiar position in society has always been that their home is the essential nucleus of society as we know it. Yet the millions of housewives and homemakers have throughout history been deprived of the one tangible reward our society ranks highest: an income of their own (1986:4).

As Lerner states, the women are privately placed and given the feminized positions of mothers. In other words, without having any income or control they accept unpaid jobs and take responsibility. In a private domain, this patriarchal family system encourages men and subordinates women and influences people's perception of nation. The patriarchal family system restricts female ideals and women to the domestic sphere. Yuval-Davis analyze the limited role of women in relation to the nation. According to her women are regarded as

(a) as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities;

(b) as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups;

(c) as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the

collectivity and as transmitters of its culture;

(d) as signifiers of ethnic/national differences - as a focus and symbol in

ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and

transformation of ethnic/national categories;

(e) as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles (1992:7)

The main task given to women from the very beginning of history is motherhood. In other words, one of the duties attributed to women is to ensure the continuity of the nation by producing new individuals for the nation. Therefore, the marriage of women is a social imperative. As stated earlier, a woman is seen as an individual's producer, not an individual. When a woman marries someone other than her ethnic / national

community, she is regarded as being outcast. Yuval-Davis and Anthias state that some marriages outside of national / ethnic groups are limited and even forbidden.

> Women do not only teach and transfer the cultural and ideological traditions of ethnic and national groups. Very often they constitute their actual symbolic figuration. The nation as a loved woman in danger or as a mother who lost her sons in battle is a frequent part of the particular nationalist discourse in national liberation struggles or other forms of national conflicts when men are called to fight 'for the sake of our women and children' or to 'defend their honor.' (1992:9-10)

As Yuval-Davis and Anthias clarify, it is men who play the heroic masculine role of defending and preserving the mother country. Since struggle for the nation is perceived as a masculinized social position, women are not supposed to have the role of protecting the nation. In other words, men and women were given roles according to their physical characteristics. The man was honored with a holy mission like protecting the homeland because of his physical strength. While men are exalted to such a degree, the only duty deemed suitable for women is to give birth to new men to protect the homeland. It is possible to come across the female figure, which is the product of this patriarchal ideology, at every stage of history. Farah reveals this fact through Misra character in this novel. The aim of this study is to reveal and examine the patriarchal thought system gender roles which are the products and extensions of a patriarchal system. The myth of the national hero and its representations of gender have reinforced the dominance of masculinity over femininity and reproduced the struggle of women against the male dominated system. Maps is analyzed to see how the author approaches this system imposed by the patriarchal ideology.

1.1. Background of the Study

The novel is about the war over Ogaden between Ethiopia and Somalia. The emphasis is rather patriotic, seeing as how the Somalis believe they are indeed an unified community unlike the Ethiopians, and also that a Greater Somaliland must be established, integrating all the areas that Somalis live. Nuruddin Farah is potentially one of Africa's most important Anglophone authors of today. Born in 1945 in Somalia, he has continually investigated the essence of national and personal identity. Farah's worldview is evidently one that Islamic ideals are of the uppermost priority. Yet the author condemns what he sees as the inappropriate use of Islamic values, especially where they help to excuse abuse or to hold women in a second-class role. *Maps* illustrate this problem well.

One of the elements that shape the novel is the situation of Somalia. For this reason, it would be useful to take a look at the political situation of Somalia to understand the events in the novel. The novel is set during a time of sociopolitical turbulence between Ethiopia and Somalia which results in discrimination of individuals of one ethicity who live on the territory of another ethnic group.

Nuruddin Farah's novels best reflect the problems of Somalia, his country. His critical writing must be interpreted in the context of both past and present of the Somalia. With the construction of the Suez Canal in 1869, the situation of Somalia took on a higher importance as it became a necessary route for global maritime trade. This road eventually reached its peak in the 1960s and kept 10% of the oil supply globally. This route is important for Europe and more precisely for Spain. Countries in this region (Eritrea, Djibouti, and Ethiopia) are not regarded as entities but as a whole community. Along with these countries the European Union recognized eight of them as part of the region, including Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and Southern Sudan. Moreover, it is better for the international forces not to focus on a single weakened African nation in view of the world. As for religion, Islam is the dominant religion in the country since the Middle Ages. In 2006, an extremist organization called Harakat Al Shabaab Mujahedin or shortened Al-Shabaab emerged. Somalia is one of the Horn of Africa countries with a noticeable social, economic and political instability. This country has been in total chaos for a lot of years. Indeed, it led the global list of vulnerable states in 2012 and control was the key factor. Benedict Anderson developed this idea in his book *Imagined Communities.* According to him ''official nationalism in the colonized world of … Africa was modelled directly on that of the dynasty states of nineteenth-century Europe'' (2006:163). As Anderson suggests Somalia was viewed as an immagined community. In Djibouti, in northern Kenya, and in Ogaden, Ethiopia, there are for example a Somali population.

Farah describes the implications of nationalism giving the title ''Maps'' to his story, which eventually becomes a emblem of identity. Just nine years after independence from European colonization,

authoritarian dictator Siyad Barre took power and removed the rights of Somalis and remained there for a long totalitarian dictatorship until 1991. In those years politics in Somalia had such an effect that foreign economic forces infiltrated the country. There was communism and capitalism, each led by opposing, contrasting world forces, such as the Soviet Union and the USA. In order to appease the Soviet Union, Barre proclaimed his country Marxist state; then, he made an alliance with the USA. The turmoil was so obvious that in 1992 it sparked a clan-dominated civil war which waged the Ogaden territorial dispute — which was an utterly crucial aspect of Farah's novel. As a result, Barre went into exile and left his country with starvation, refugees and thousands of deaths. Therefore, the situation in Somalia was highly dangerous. Nevertheless, the UN Security Council has adopted several preparations and policies. In Somalia – Unosom-a UN operation was born with the goal of calming the Somali people in the disastrous situation. The UN Unitaf group was also sent with the same mission. Such dangerous activities were not carried out successfully and they have caused many casualties, many of whom are American soldiers. When they were still required, foreign alliances and forces were removed from the region. As the main characters in Maps, Somalia people have experienced violence, inequality and pain. The year 1991 represents the beginning of a complete tragic life in Somalia, in this year Barre's régime ended and the nation underwent an internal war that resulted in over 350,000 deaths. Not only was the country plagued by European colonialism, but also by the Ogaden wars.

2. GENDER NORMS IN *MAPS*

Nuruddin Farah's *Maps* has been widely appreciated for its brilliant exploration of the gender identity. The *Maps* functions as a traumatic testimony to gender oppression in Somalia. The novel discusses the gender and how culture constructs, produces and reproduces it through the patriarchal family system. Nuruddin Farah's Maps opens doors for world readers to the Somali society. It is a highly patriarchal society which does not allow the voice of female to be heard. Not only female's but even the male's voice who opposes the norms of patriarchy is also silenced. The society always predominates individuals, dictates its deep-rooted rules over them. The main characters of the novel are Askar and Misra, whose lives are intertwined inextricably. Unquestionably Misra is influenced by her gender. She is a person whose gender-related struggles directly led to her being with Askar. The other characters like Hilaal, Salaado, Aw-Adan and Uncle Qorrax offer different perspectives to the plot with their lives and values. The story is told on first-person, second-person and third-person narration, with the point of view changing with each chapter.

The novel portrays in a simplistic way the difficult situation of a Somali orphaned boy named Askar. He comes from the Ogaden and reflects the whole war. He was found in solitude and looked after by Misra who later became his caregiver. Misra and Ashkar are both very important to each other. Misra is the universe that connects Ashkar to life, and Ashkar is the power that gives Misra an identity, as Misra is not an ethnic Somali.

The concept of identity in the novel is one of the most complicated topics, because identity is created by the society. The novel incorporates a variety of factors including appearance, status, age, race, ethnicity, gender, education, and other variables. In this study, I will concentrate on identity-gender relationships. While sex and gender are words used interchangeably, they have different meanings. Sex relates to the biological component of the psychological and physical properties of a person. To put it another way, sex is the word used to biologically differentiate between men and women.

> Sex refers to biological differences between males and females while gender refers to the culturally specific ways of thinking, acting and feeling. Femininity and masculinity are thus gender terms, referring to the ways of thinking, acting and feeling considered appropriate in a society for females or males. (Longhurst et al. 1999:218)

Gender refers to the responsibilities, expectations, and attitudes that society assigns to women and men, and also includes certain psychological features that are societally correlated with an individual's biological structure. The definition of sex and gender is important in order to understand the relationship between Ashkar and Mısra. It is an open fact that Misra is crucial in Ashkar's development. Ashkar acts differently when he is a child, but when he grows up, he behaves differently. As a male child, he is likely to feel and behave according to his biological sex. For example, ''he was a member of a small body of young men who trained together as guerrillas'' (Farah, 114). This is the result of the values imposed by the society on Ashkar. It means that Ashkar's identity is created by the society.

As a national historical novel *Maps* sheds light on the viewpoints of various people on historical events. These views specifically address to male and female perceptions that are built into the patriarchal structure. Male and female ideas are interwoven with symbolic representations that characterize the nation and the relationship with the individual. The concepts of mother nation and the national hero are two important representational principles used to determine gender roles of the men and women.

The relationship between Askar and Misra is quite a complex one. She is the one who takes care of him and raises him as if he was her child. She builds a sincere, compassionate relationship with him and brings him up by allowing him enough space to form him to develop an independent, confident character. Although he was given to be looked after by her as part of her household duties in the compound where she serves a maidservant, she cherishes his existence and gives him the warmth of a mother.

Misra had been kidnapped from Ethiopia by some Somalian troops and had been brought to Kallafo in Ogaden. She becomes a servant in the compound of Uncle Qorrax eventually. Women in this society are already oppressed, they lack any sort of individuality, they have no saying against the males surrounding them, in line with the patriarchal society they live in. When it comes to Misra, she has an inferior role folded four times: She is an "outsider" from the enemy country, as a "single" "woman" and functioning as a "servant". These identities come together and generate a character of no worth. Only after the bringing up of Askar was assigned to her, does she gain a status. At least then she acquires a position of a simulacrum of "motherhood". Still, people corrected Askar's calling out to her as "mother", as it was highly inappropriate to accommodate these two together: "Some looked disfavourably upon my calling Misra 'Mother' and took the first opportunity to correct that." (Farah, 32) However Askar was conscious of his intimate relationship with Misra and in the age of the innocent childhood, away from the prejudices of the society, he wanted to call her whatever he wished. "I decided I would refrain Misra anything until we were in the privacy of our room, so she could address me, or I her, however each liked." (Farah, 32) It is remarkable to witness the changing of Askar's perspective towards Misra once he becomes an adolescent and filled with the ideas of society. He loses all the affection he carries for her and even stands against her. The only thing he'd long for would be her body's warmth.

The exploitation of Misra's body is an important motif in the novel. The priest (imam) Aw-Adan and Uncle Qorrax use her body for their sexual motives anytime they want. She is unable to resist them as they are the most important and dominant figures of the society, being a priest and the rich leader of the compound. Aw-Adan even gets jealous of Askar for Misra giving much of her time to Askar. Askar also claims his share from Misra's body. "…you moved about her body in the manner an insect crawls up a wall, even-legged, sure-footed and confident." (Farah, 18) Uncle Qorrax's beating up of his wives is another example of the exploitation of the female body. He uses their bodies both for sex and to vent his anger on them.

When Ashkar leaves Kallafo and starts a new life in Mogadiscio in Uncle Hilaal's house, he meets with a very different world from one he had in Kallafo. He met Cusmaan. The role played by Cusmaan was very important to Ashkar. He studied sociolinguistics at the National University of Somalia. It was notable that the person in charge of Askar's education studied on gender. Uncle Hilaal immediately informs him about Wolof language:

> there is hardly any indicator of gender. A man who otherwise speaks faultless French might, when speaking about his wife who is in front of you, and whom you can see display all her gender's paraphernalia, refer to her as "he". Likewise, the wife might refer to her husband as "she". (Farah, 169)

At this point, Farah talks about the effect of gender on language and draws the reader's attention in this direction. In this new world, Ashkar is completely stunned about gender codes because this new system breaks his gender taboos in every way. His uncle is quite different from the gender scheme he's used to. In a way, the one who breaks social taboos is his uncle. He tells Ashkar, they don't have children, he loves cooking even he's a man, and his wife doesn't like that, and this is very normal.

> We have no children … or rather, we did not have any before you joined us. That's right. We're not bothered by the fact that we didn't have any of our own. We love each other the way we are. The trouble is, other talk, they say terrible things about a woman who can't have children. There were complications. And Salaado had to undergo a serious operation in

> Europe. It was most painful and she suffered greatly … A most obligatory, painful operation for Salaado. (Farah, 150)

Hilaal's wife Salaado had undergone an operation, and after that, her ovaries were removed, and she could not bear a child in this way. Even the doctors advised Uncle Hilaal to look for another wife, but Hilaal opposed social impositions and chose to live with his wife but without a child. So, both remain together, surrounded by pure love. According to Farah, this situation does not comply with the gender norms.

> Society does not approve of a man who loves a woman who doesn't bear him children, a woman who doesn't cook his food, mind his home, wash his underthings. A woman who sits behind the wheel of a car driving when the man is a passenger –to our society, this is unpardonable. It is sex, sooner or later … This is why you don't see many people coming to, and going away from, our house. (Farah, 151)

Uncle Hilaal mentions that neighbors and friends do not go to their home very often because of gender perception. When people meet a world outside their own understanding, they respond with fear. Neighbors' attitude towards Uncle Hilaal was also in this direction. Uncle Hilaal was marginalized for adopting egalitarian gender roles. Society believed that woman was responsible for housework so Salaado was also in a marginal position in society.

Farah presents reverse gender representations as well as traditional ones in the novel. Askar's uncle Hilaal and his wife Salaado are portrayed as quite the opposite of the patriarchal codes. "… -that Hilaal cooked all meals, and Salado drove their only car and everything was in her name, bank accounts, land deeds, literally everything. He drove, yes, but only when necessary. And she was a terrible cook." (Farah, 25) Salado and Hilaal live according to their own rules. Of course, this attitude of them comes with a punishment. They are excluded from society. They have a circle of a small number of people. Hilaal's incapacity to bear a child is enough for her to be excluded from society. "The trouble is, others talk, they say terrible things about a woman who can't have children." (Farah, 157) Along with her, Hilaal, who refuses to abandon his wife for a fertile woman and goes a step further and undergoes through the operation of vasectomy is also excluded for supporting and being with Salaado.

It seems that problematic of gender has permeated into the Somalian society. Phenomenons like religion, traditionalism, colonization and economic underdevelopment cause the people of the society stick to the old values. Women are voiceless, oppressed, their identities are swept away and replaced by their gender roles. The suffocating social atmosphere does not have any room for women to have their say, to personalize, to have a career and to become independent. Even the men opposing the traditional norms are punished by exclusion from society.

3. CONCLUSION

Maps is a postcolonial novel, but it is not just a country that has been colonized; the men and women who make up this country have also been colonized by the masculine Western system; the roles of men and women have been defined in this context. People are affected by negative experiences of colonialism. Based on the shock of the colonial conquest, *Maps* depicts the traumatic complexity of everyday life for the colonized men and women of a post-indipendence national liberation movement under the repressive regime. Ashkar was born in such a society in which men who are so cruel and dominant, and women are subordinate and victims. Askar experiences and suffers from the constructed manhood that society attributes to him. Misra also suffers from, and is affected by, her inherent female sex and gender.

> I recall thinking that … the man pulled at the foreskin of my manhood, producing, first my groin, then in the remaining parts of my body, a pain so acute my ears were set ablaze with dolorous flames. These flames spread gradually –then my feet felt frozen, my eyes warm with tears, my cheeks moist with crying and my throat dry as the desert. It was only then that I looked and I saw blood –a pool of blood in whose waters I swam and which helped me cross to the other side so I would be a man—once and for all. (Farah, 93)

Ashkar, after circumcision, which is in accordance with his gender, unexpectedly starts to refuse Misra, his mother. He tries to define his identity by avoiding Misra and his caresses, and at this point, he understands what gender and sex mean. He begins to understand that being born as a boy means some forms of behavior which are not the same when born as a female. When Ashkar grows up, he evaluates the world

from a different perspective. Men must fight. War is where men demonstrate their physical strength. In fact, it is the men who started the war and took part in the war front. However, according to the gender norms, women exist only to bear children and meet the sexual needs of men.

The story of *Maps* is based firstly in Kallafo and then on Mogadiscio which is the capital of Somalia. In this novel, Farah draws basically two types of gender schemes. The first deals with the concept of nation and problematizes the identity of women oppressed under the hegemony of the masculine system. In other words, Farah reveals that the ideology of nationalism is a masculine system. In Farah's second scheme, there is the female figure who has been given roles by society.

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