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Farah  
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# Nuruddin Farah

(1945 - )

Ben, do you have  
the day & night?

Jacqueline Bardolph  
University of Nice universit  de Nice, France

BOOKS: *Why Die so Soon?* (Mogadishu, Somalia, 1965);  
*From A Crooked Rib* (London: Heinemann, 1970);  
*A Naked Needle* (London: Heinemann, 1976);  
*Sweet and Sour Milk* (London: Allison & Busby, 1979; London & Exeter, N. H.: Heinemann, 1980);  
*Sardines* (London: Allison & Busby, 1981);  
*Close Sesame* (London & New York: Allison & Busby, 1983);  
*Maps* (London: Pan, 1986; New York: Pantheon, 1986).  
*G avor* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1990) Swedish translation of *Gifts*, not yet published in English.  
PLAY PRODUCTIONS: *A Dagger in Vacuum*, Mogadishu, Somalia, 1969;  
*Yussuf and his Brothers*, Jos, Nigeria, University Theatre, 2 July 1982.

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~~London: Heinemann, 1982~~

RADIO: *A Spread of Butter*, BBC, 1978.

SELECTED PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS—  
UNCOLLECTED: *"Do You Speak German?"* *Okike* (22 September 1982): 33-38;  
"The Creative Writer and the African Politician," *Guardian* (Lagos) 7 September 1983, p. 11;  
"In Praise of Exile," *Third World Affairs* (1988);  
"Why I Write," *Third World Quarterly*, 10 (October 1988): 1591-1599.

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more details?

Nuruddin Farah's novels are an important contribution to African literature. He writes about his country, Somalia, a nation in the Horn of Africa with apparently no connection with the Commonwealth or the English-speaking world, so his books introduce readers to political turmoil in a new state and to a culture new to English fiction, but their interest is more than re-

"Childhood of My Schizophrenia"  
*Times Literary Supplement*,  
(23-29 November 1990), p. 1264

gional: they pursue the theme of individual freedom in the face of arbitrary power in a way that is relevant outside Africa as well, and they do so with an intellectual and poetic control that makes him one of the most stimulating prose writers in Africa today.

Born in 1945 in Baidoa, Farah was educated at first in the Ogaden, the Somali-populated area now in Ethiopia. His first languages as a child were Somali, Amharic, and Arabic, followed by Italian and English. From these early years one can see two important features that were to dominate his writing life. First, he was brought up in a tradition with a rich oral culture, in which poetry is a craft that takes years to master. Poetry enters political debates in a sophisticated manner, epic or satirical but also oblique and allusive, and plays an important social function. Some of Farah's relatives, including his mother, are known masters of the genre. Second, the history of colonization and borders gave him early access to a wide range of cultures: his travels and readings made him a cosmopolitan writer, a world nomad who was to write from a distance about Somalia, "my country in my mind."

In 1965 his novella *Why Die So Soon?* brought him to public attention in his country and into contact with the Canadian writer Margaret Laurence, then in Somalia. While a student at the University of Chandigarh in India (1966-1970) he wrote—in two months—*From a Crooked Rib* (1970), published in the Heinemann African Writers Series. In this slim novel a young Somali woman, Ebla, leaves her nomad community to avoid an arranged marriage, and, in her quest for independence she finally finds a kind of stability in the capital, Mogadishu, living with two men of her choice. The journey to freedom can be read as an allegory of the birth of Somalia as a new nation. But the attraction of the book lies in the sensitive portrayal of a young peasant woman, illiterate but not naive, and aware of her low status in society but always clear-eyed and resourceful. It came as a surprise to readers to realize how well the young writer, male and Muslim, could represent a woman's perception of herself, her body, and the world. This feat of characterization allows for great empathy as well as a discreet measure of irony, a light humor. One is spared all the moralizing clichés about the innocent young woman in the corrupting city. Hailed as one of the first feminist books to come out of Africa, this simple, attractive story has remained popular, and curiously, although never reviewed, it has remained available and is widely translated.

ask Jack to  
revise this sentence:  
it's too long &  
pretty awkward.

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not in italics

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In 1969 a coup gave power to the military regime of Siad Barre. Farah went back to Somalia with his Indian bride in 1970, taught, and finished his second novel, *A Naked Needle*. The publisher accepted it but agreed to hold it—till 1976—due to political uncertainty in Somalia. It describes the debates among the elite in the capital, the “privileged class,” and the tentative hopes in the new “revolution.” As its mood is questioning and skeptical, it was thought the novel might bring trouble to the writer. The text, being as intellectual and modernist as *From a Crooked Rib* was straightforward and understated, shows the young author had been reading works by Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf. A completely different facet of Farah’s talent appears. Later he rejected this early book as irrelevant and refused to have it reprinted: “It was not the answer to the tremendous challenge the tyrannical regime posed,” he says in “Why I Write” (1988).

not in italics

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In 1972 the Somali language was given an official transcription and dictionary; what was spoken by the whole nation could become a national literary language. It was for Farah the long-awaited opportunity to write fiction in his mother’s tongue and thereby speak directly to his people. He started the serialization of a novel in *Somali News*, but the series was interrupted by censorship. Farah then on a trip to the U.S.S.R., was advised not to run anymore risks. Thus in 1974 he began a long exile from his country.

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what was his novel? any idea?

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The following years saw him, like his nomadic forebears, traveling light and never staying long in any place. He lived in the United States and in various countries in Europe and Africa, occasionally teaching or being resident writer on a campus but most of the time concentrating on his writing, with the ambition of living from his pen, independent of institutions or regimes, a position most African writers find difficult to achieve.

His visit to the U.S.S.R. extended to a trip through Hungary, Egypt, and Greece in the days of the military regime. From this contact with various types of political power came his first major novel, *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979). It had to be written in English, since Farah could no longer be published at home. But this imposed language, implicitly creating an international readership, extended the scope of his fictional exploration of political themes. With this novel Farah started a trilogy he calls “Variations on the Theme of an Af-

rican Dictatorship," which has much relevance inside and outside Africa.

*Sweet and Sour Milk* is both simple in its outline and complex in its realization. A young intellectual, Soyaan, dies in the prologue, maybe poisoned by a milk drink. His twin brother, Loyaan, embarks on a sort of detective quest among friends and relatives to discover whether it was murder and whether family feud or the Special Police are behind it. The plot is spun out of this determined questioning by Loyaan, in a society where most would like the matter to lie undisturbed: Soyaan has been described officially as a national hero. Following Loyaan's footsteps, the reader discovers the mechanisms of fear in a country where everything is hushed up in case the "Dyonisian ear," the ear of the tyrant, might overhear. The rumors, hints, false news, and sudden silences create an uncertain web in the narrative. Truth seems to be more and more elusive, all the more so in a mostly nonliterate society, where bureaucratic measures and arrests leave no traces. The patriarchal power inside the family and the power of the "Father of the Nation" reinforce each other. As Loyaan contacts the friends of his dead brother, who are apparently involved in some kind of conspiracy against the president, he can never ascertain who is a friend, who is an informer, and who is a torturer. He seems to be getting to an elusive underground movement when he is suddenly forced by the president to leave for a country in the Eastern Block. Loyaan does not know if the order is a promotion or a threat.

As a thriller, the novel creates a distinctive menacing atmosphere, reminding one of works by Franz Kafka in its silent, absurd system of oppression. Farah denounces tyrannical power of any kind and the mixture of cowardice and vested interests on which it feeds. His application of the theories of Wilhelm Reich to a society deeply penetrated by Islam is new and stimulating. But Farah is also writing in the tradition of Somali poetry, which has always been political and prompt to attack and satirize but also ornate and rich in layers of meaning. Each chapter of *Sweet and Sour Milk* is headed by a short prose poem, which sets the mood and establishes a thematic pattern that connects family circles and cosmic cycles. Some strong metaphors about the national father, or the state as a devouring mother, are centered on feeding and poisoning; the pastoral vision of the nomad is made significant in modern terms. This type of metaphorical writing allows

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view and sensitivity.

For eight months in 1976 Farah had been resident writer at the Royal Court Theatre in London and had written plays for the BBC. In 1982 while teaching at the University of Jos in Nigeria, Farah wrote a play *Yussuf and His Brothers* which was produced on campus later that year. The play deals with the problems of exile and the value of heroic acts. The next year saw the publication of *Close Sesame*, the third novel in Farah's trilogy. This time the reader enters the consciousness of an old man, Deeriye, a pious Muslim who was jailed in the 1940s for his rebellion against Italian colonizers. As he meditates on the Koran and recites Somali epic poetry, he remembers the nationalist struggles of his people but also the many failures and betrayals. The small group of intellectuals now opposed to the regime is of the same generation as his children and the group seems to be dwindling, as one after the other disappears because of death, prison, or exile. The old man wonders whether violent action would be morally justified to revenge his son's death and eliminate an unjust ruler. But Deeriye's pathetic personal gesture proves ineffectual: the gun meant to shoot the president remains entangled in Deeriye's prayer beads. *Close Sesame* has a great unity, achieved through intense concentration on the protagonist. This pious, kind patriarch, seen with great empathy through his musings, memories, prayers is an unusual character in fiction. A tragic dimension is given to the novel by his attempt to find political and spiritual coherence, in vision and deeds, in a violently perturbed society. *Close Sesame* is a mature book in which the old man's outlook seems close to the pessimistic yet passionately involved stance of the exiled writer.

In the following years Farah attended several international conferences, where he aired his views on human rights, dictatorships, and the plight of women. "My novels," he says in the essay "In Praise of Exile" (1988), "are about states of exile: about women shivering in the cruel cold in a world ruled by men; about the commoner denied justice; about a torturer tortured by guilt, his own conscience; about a traitor betrayed." These topics are explored in his first trilogy.

After living in Gambia, Europe, and the Sudan, he started working on a new trilogy. The first volume, *Maps*, published in England and America in 1986, breaks new ground in many

ways: *Close Sesame* began with the morning prayers to Allah of the old Deeriye; *Maps* opens with the first perceptions and emotions of a newborn baby. The novel takes a young man, Askar ("Soldier"), through three stages; his first years in the Ogaden with his foster mother, the servant Misra; then his circumcision and the discovery both of writing and of the border war between Ethiopia and Somalia; and finally his adolescence in a middle-class home in Mogadishu, where he is riddled with indecision—will he join the Liberation Front in this protracted war? The title, *Maps*, obviously raises the question of Somali identity. But the questioning goes beyond the obvious political debate on frontiers and nationalism. With the plot of a thriller, the novel explores the uncertain bond between Askar, with his new national fervor, and Misra, born an Oromo (a Somali-speaking person in the Ogaden), and perhaps a traitor to the fighters of the Liberation Front. Identity is examined—not only the social identity defined by territory, blood, and language but also the tension it creates when it is opposed to a personal, emotive sense of self. *Maps* is an ambitious novel with a complex time construction and a dense weaving of violent metaphors connecting blood, wounds, and earth as the child discovers "the territory of pain." An allegorical reading is an obvious dimension, with Somalia as the mutilated Misra at the end—a great distance from the hopeful Ebla in *From a Crooked Rib*. *Maps* is also remarkable for the intimate sensuous reconstruction of the early bond between mother and child, which constitutes a relationship that for Farah is both the basis of identity and the limit to individual freedom.

Farah's complex novels are constructed like thrillers and describe to the English-speaking world a little-known country, Somalia, but they are in no way escapist, popular fiction. The complex structures and the rich metaphorical texture demand, and deserve, attention. He is held in high regard by other writers: Doris Lessing finds in him "the same compassionate rage as [in] Solzhenitsyn," and Salman Rushdie praises him for charting "the chasms of the soul." Farah's talent is rich and singular. Whether he will move even further into more demanding forms and a more limited readership remains to be seen. Much depends on whether an African writer in exile from a country that is not a member of the English-speaking Commonwealth can find a worldwide community to continue supporting his

creative activity.

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in fact like to  
have this way  
whenever possible

Ben:  
The DLB convention  
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5 (March 1995):

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- mosaico africano: Cinque scrittori neri dall'esilio*  
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# FOTO

Anita Schiffer-Fuchs  
The University of Austin  
To: Mr. Bernth Lindors  
Austin 78712  
USA

Im Eichenforst 9      8-6-89  
5000 Köln 80  
Telefon (0221) 68 72 46

Dear Bernth Lindfors,

thank you for your letter and here are the photos of Nurrudin Farah.  
I hope they are useful to you. If they will be published please send  
your normal publishing fee to my bank account written below.  
If you see Nurrudin please give him my best greetings.

With regards,

Anita Schiffer-Fuchs

FACULTÉ DES LETTRES ET SCIENCES HUMAINES

Nice, le 26 Avril 1989

Le Doyen de la Faculté des Lettres  
et Sciences Humaines

à

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Dear Bernitt

Here is a photograph my son has just brought from London. He took it three years ago. You can use it. I have a funny one of Nuruddin in my cherry tree, with his carpet slippers, but I do not think it would be right.

Amicalement.

Jacqueline

Nuruddin Farah

( 1945 - )  
~~1945~~

Jacqueline Bardolph

University of Nice

Novels

*Educational Books [African Writers Series, 80],*  
From A Crooked Rib (London: Heinemann, 1970);  
*Educational Books [African Writers Series, 184],*  
A Naked Needle (London: Heinemann, 1976);

Sweet and Sour Milk (London: Allison & Busby, 1979; London: Heinemann *Educational Books*  
*[African Writers Series, 226], 1980*);  
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*Educational Books [African Writers Series, 252]*  
Sardines (London: Allison & Busby, 1981; London: Heinemann, 1982);

Close Sesame (London: Allison & Busby, 1983);

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Plays

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A Danger in Vacuum, <sup>Mogadishu,</sup> ~~Mogadishu,~~ 1969-1970.

A Spread of Butter, BBC Radio, 1978.

Yussuf and his Brothers, University Theatre, Jos, Nigeria, 2-4 July 1982.

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Funsho Aijejina and Bob Fox, "Nuruddin Farah in Conversation with Funsho Aijejina and Bob Fox," Ife Studies in African Literature and the Arts, 2 (1984): 24-37.

Nuruddin Farah's novels are an important and original contribution to African literature. <sup>9</sup> He writes about his country, Somalia, a nation from the Horn of Africa with apparently no connection with the Commonwealth or the English-speaking world, <sup>so his</sup> the books introduce us to ~~the~~ political turmoils <sup>in</sup> a new state and to a culture new to English fiction, but their interest is more than regional: they pursue the theme of individual freedom in the face of arbitrary power in a way which is relevant <sup>as well</sup> outside Africa, and they do so ~~with~~ with an intellectual and poetic control, which makes <sup>him</sup> him one of the most stimulating prose writers in Africa today.

~~Nuruddin Farah~~ <sup>Farah was</sup> was born in 1945 in Baidoa, <sup>^</sup> educated at first in the Ogaden, the Somali populated area which is now in Ethiopia. His first languages as a child were Somali, Amharic, <sup>and</sup> Arabic, followed by Italian and English. From these early years one can see two important features which will dominate his writing life. First, he was brought up in a tradition which has a very rich oral culture, in which poetry is a craft <sup>that</sup> ~~poets~~ takes

years to master. <sup>poetry</sup> ~~It~~ enters ~~the~~ political debates in a sophisticated <sup>manner,</sup> ~~and~~ epic or satirical, but also oblique and allusive, and plays an important social function. Some of Farah's relatives, <sup>including</sup> his mother, are known masters of the genre. On the other hand, the history of colonization and borders gave him access very early to a wide range of cultures: his travels and readings will make of him a cosmopolitan writer, a world nomad who will write from a distance about Somalia, "my country in my mind".

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The following years ~~was~~ <sup>and in</sup> see him, like his nomadic forebears, travelling light and never staying long in any place. He lived in the USA, various countries in Europe and Africa, occasionally teaching or being resident writer on a campus, but most of the time concentrating on his writing, with

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The visit to <sup>the</sup> USSR extended to a trip <sup>through</sup> Hungary, Egypt, Greece in the days of the military regime. From this contact with various types of political power came ~~the project of~~ his first major novel, Sweet and Sour Milk (1979). It had to be written in English, since the exiled author could no longer be published at home. But this imposed language, implicitly creating an international readership, extended the scope of his fictional exploration of political themes. With this novel, Fereh started a trilogy, "Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship" which has much relevance inside and outside Africa.

Sweet and Sour Milk is both simple in its outline and complex in its realization. A young intellectual, Soyaan, dies in the prologue, maybe poisoned by a milk drink. His twin brother Loyaan will embark on a sort of detective quest among friends and relatives to discover whether it was murder, whether ~~the~~ family feuds or the Special Police are behind it. The plot is ~~completely controlled by~~ <sup>is spun out of</sup> this determined questioning of Loyaan, in a society where most would like the matter to lie undisturbed: has not Soyaan been described officially as a national hero? In Loyaan's footsteps, the reader <sup>s</sup> discovers the mechanisms of fear in a country where everything is hushed up in case the "cyonisian ear", the ear of the tyrant, might overhear. The <sup>\*</sup>rumours, hints, false news, sudden silences in all encounters create an uncertain web in the narrative. Truth seems to be more and more elusive, all the more so in a mostly non-literate society where bureaucratic measures and arrests leave no traces. Here the

patriarchal power inside the family and the power of the Father of the Nation reinforce each other. As Loyaan contacts the friends of his dead brother, <sup>who are</sup> apparently involved in some kind of conspiracy against the President, he can never ascertain who is a friend, who an informer, who a doctor or a torturer. He seems to be getting to an elusive underground movement when he is suddenly forced by the President to leave for a country in the Eastern block: a promotion or a threat?

As a thriller, the novel creates a distinctive menacing atmosphere, reminding one of Kafka in its silent, absurd system of oppression. Farah denounces tyrannical power of any kind, and the mixture of cowardice and vested interests on which it feeds. His application of the theories of Reich to a society deeply penetrated by Islam is new and stimulating. But Farah here is also in the tradition of Somali poetry which has always been political, prompt to attack and satirize, but also rich in layers of meaning, ornate, cosmic. Each chapter is headed by a short prose poem which sets the mood and establishes a thematic pattern that connects family circles and cosmic cycles. Some strong metaphors about the father, or the state as a devouring mother are centered around feeding, poisoning, cutting the umbilical cord; the pastoral vision of the nomad is made significant in modern terms. This type of metaphorical writing allows an exploration of the ambiguities around the themes of power and fear, freedom and identity, all this as a counterpoint to the more explicit analysis provided by the main characters. Altogether, the book ~~created~~ <sup>made</sup> a great impact, being noted by critics both for the vigor of its message and the originality of its format. It received the English Speaking Union Literary Award in 1980.

After living in England <sup>and</sup> in Italy, Farah finished the next novel at the University of Bayreuth <sup>in West Germany,</sup> Sardines (1981) <sup>another</sup> is ~~also~~ one of Farah's strikingly feminist novels. Its characters are connected in some ways to those of Sweet and Sour Milk, but the story is centered around the world of women hemmed in together in their houses like children hiding in closets when they play the game "sardines". Medina, a journalist, has decided that her daughter Ubax, aged eight, is not going to go through the ritual excision and infibulation which is performed on all Somali women according to custom. She is pitted against her ineffectual husband and the power of her mother and mother-in-law. The novel presents a wide range of women of all conditions and ages, a few of them trying to invent new roles in a new state still bound by tradition. For Medina, no immediate solution is forthcoming, but the many dialogues show active, articulate women coming to a better consciousness: they are not fighting against men but for the future of their children. Sardines once more shows Farah's nearly uncanny sensitivity in the portrayal <sup>al</sup> of women together, of mother and daughter relationships. Although ideological debates play an important part in ~~it~~ <sup>the story,</sup> the main weight of meaning is again carried by a dense metaphorical network; elemental images — fire, water, birds — show how the balance in the fertility cycles is broken by the socially enforced circumcision which is a deliberate maiming of women. Here again, the issue is not merely feminist, but connected with that of political oppression: "Like all good Somali poets I used women as a symbol for Somalia. Because when the women are free, then and only then can we talk about a free Somalia". In Sardines, Farah touches a subject covered by many taboos as a warning to his compatriots but also to all

Julie Kitchener, "Author in search of an identity" New African, December p:61.

countries where according to him the subjection of women paves the way for the establishment of tyranny. The novel is more static than Sweet and Sour Milk. It attracted attention by the way it deals with a burning issue in a moving and restrained manner, <sup>and</sup> ~~and what is new, in a topic often debated upon internationally,~~ from a Somali point of view and sensitivity.

In 1982, while working at the university of Jos, <sup>in</sup> Nigeria, Farah wrote a play, Yussuf and His Brothers, which was produced on the campus, in ~~1982~~.

He ~~had been~~ <sup>Farah had been</sup> for eight months in 1976 resident writer at the Royal Court Theatre in London, and had written plays for the BBC. This ~~was~~ <sup>play</sup> dealt with the problems of exile and the real value of heroic acts. The same year saw the publication of Close Sesame, the third novel in the trilogy. This time, the reader is made to enter the consciousness of an old man, Deeriye, a pious Muslim who was jailed for his rebellion against Italian colonizers <sup>Z</sup> in the forties. As he meditates on the Koran and recites Somali epic poetry, he remembers the nationalist struggles of his people, but also the many failures and betrayals. The small group of intellectuals opposed to the regime is <sup>of the same</sup> ~~the~~ generation <sup>as</sup> of his children. <sup>The group</sup> ~~It~~ seems to be dwindling, as one after the other disappears: death, prison, exile. The old man wonders whether violent action would be morally justified to revenge his son's death and eliminate an unjust ruler. But his pathetic personal gesture in the end proves ineffectual: the gun meant to shoot the President remains entangled in his prayer beads. Close Sesame has a great unity <sup>which is achieved</sup> through ~~the~~ intense concentration on the protagonist. This pious, kind patriarch, seen with great empathy through his musings, memories, prayers, is an unusual character

in fiction. A tragic dimension is given to the novel by his attempt to find political and spiritual coherence, in vision and deeds, in front of a violently perturbed society. Close Sesame is a mature book in which the old man's outlook feels close to the pessimistic, passionately involved stance of the exiled writer.

In the next years, Farah attended many international conferences, where he was able to air his views on human rights, dictatorships of all types, and the plight of women: "My novels, so to speak, are about states of exile: about women shivering in the cruel cold in a world ruled by men; about the commoner denied justice; about a torturer tortured by guilt, his own conscience; about a traitor betrayed". The position expressed in the trilogy "In praise of exile",

Off → After living in The had been made clear. He now lives in Gambia, Europe, Sudan, working and the he started Third World Affairs, 1 p.181.

on a new trilogy. The first volume, Maps, published in England and the USA in 1987, breaks new grounds in many ways: Close Sesame began with the morning prayers to Allah of the old Deeriye; Maps opens with the first perceptions and emotions of a newborn baby. The novel takes a young man, Askar ("soldier"), through three stages: his first years in the Ogaden in the bodily and emotional fusion with his foster mother, the servant Misra; then his circumcision and the discovery both of writing and of the border war between Ethiopia and Somalia; and finally in a middle class home in Mogadishu, riddled with indecision: will he join the Liberation Front in this protracted war? The title Maps obviously raises the question of Somali identity. But the questioning goes beyond the obvious political debate on frontiers and nationalism. With the plot of a thriller, the novel explores the uncertain bond between Askar, with his new national fervor, and Misra,

born an Oromo <sup>a</sup> (Somali-speaking <sup>person</sup> ~~people~~ in the Ogaden) and perhaps a traitor to the fighters of the Liberation Front. Identity is examined, <sup>not only</sup> the social identity defined by territory, blood, <sup>and</sup> language, <sup>but also</sup> ~~the~~ the tension it creates when it is opposed to a personal, emotive sense of self. Maps is an ambitious novel with a complex time construction, a dense weaving of violent metaphors connecting blood, wounds, <sup>and</sup> earth as the child discovers "the territory of pain". An allegorical reading is an obvious dimension, with Somalia as the mutilated Misra <sup>at</sup> ~~the~~ the end—a great distance from the hopeful Ebla of From a Crooked Rib. Maps is also remarkable for the intimate, sensuous reconstruction of the early bond between mother and child, this constituting <sup>a</sup> relationship, which for Farah is both the basis of identity and the limit to individual freedom.

Farah's complex novels are constructed like thrillers, and describe to the English-speaking world a little-known country, Somalia, but they are in no way escapist popular fiction. The complex structures and the rich metaphorical texture demand, and deserve, attention. He is held in high regard by other writers; Doris Lessing ~~who~~ <sup>g</sup> finds in him "the same compassionate rage as (in) Solzhenitsyn" <sup>and</sup> Salman Rushdie ~~who~~ <sup>g</sup> praises him for " (charting) the chasms of the soul".

His talent is rich and singular. ~~It remains to be seen~~ <sup>Whether</sup> he will move even further from the simplicity of his first text, <sup>(yet more)</sup> to a demanding ~~text~~ <sup>forms and a more</sup> remains to be seen. <sup>(Much depends on</sup> ~~whether~~ <sup>from a country that</sup> an African writer in exile ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> not a member of the English-speaking Commonwealth can find a world-wide community to go on supporting his creative activity.

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