# Regimes of motion and the politics of exile: A kinopolitical reading of Nuruddin Farah's *Dictatorship* trilogy

**Ritushmita Sharma and Nasmeem Farhin Akhtar***

**Abstract:** This paper offers a kinopolitical interpretation of Nuruddin Farah's *Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship* trilogy—*Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979), *Sardines* (1981), and *Close Sesame* (1983)—set against the backdrop of postcolonial Somalia to examine how authoritarian regimes regulate motion, silence voices, and expel dissidents, while simultaneously enabling new forms of resistance. Drawing on Thomas Nail's theory of 'kinopolitics', which reconceptualises societies as regimes of motion, the study argues that Farah's fiction situates the Somali migrant not as a marginal victim but as a central political and epistemic agent. Farah's exilic consciousness, informed by his own forced displacement, illuminates how dictatorship permeates both familial and state structures to immobilize bodies, memories, and discourse, yet also reveals how counter-flows emerge through exile, feminist defiance, and memory-work. By foregrounding exile as both rupture and resource, the paper demonstrates how Farah's trilogy envisions movement itself as the enduring condition of identity, critique, and survival in the Somali context.

**Keywords:** Nuruddin Farah, *Dictatorship*, kinopolitics, exile, migrancy, Somalia

## Introduction

Mass migration has emerged as one of the most significant phenomena of our time, prompting scholars to refer to the current age as "The Age of Migration" (Castles and Miller 1993, 5) or "the century of the migrant" (Nail 2015, 1). This unprecedented mobility—fuelled by intricate socio-political, economic, cultural, and environmental factors, including the aftermath of global conflicts and the rise of authoritarian regimes in postcolonial nations—has deeply transformed human experiences and common conceptions of 'identity'. While migration as

* Ritushmita Sharma; Nasmeem Farhin Akhtar ( ✉)
Department of English, Dibrugarh University, Assam, India
e-mail: ritushmitasharma@dibru.ac.in (corresponding author)

*AGATHOS*, Volume 17, Issue 1 (32): 327-340, DOI 10.5281/zenodo.19953075

a concept has been around for centuries, its modern implications span various fields, such as sociology, geography, and economics, reflecting its critical interdisciplinary importance. In the realm of literary studies, migration has surfaced as a crucial category of analysis, giving rise to the genre known as *migration literature*. This collection of works not only recounts experiences of displacement but also engages with a multitude of interconnected circumstances—such as diaspora, exile, deterritorialisation/reterritorialisation, inclusion and exclusion, refugee experiences, aterritoriality, borderlessness, and transnationalism. By highlighting these dynamics, migration literature contests long-standing indicators of identity, including place of origin, kinship, or permanent settlement. Instead, it promotes a fluid and dynamic view of selfhood shaped by mobility, disruption, and the navigation of multiple affiliations. Situated within this context, the current paper proposes a kinopolitical analysis of Nuruddin Farah's *Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship* trilogy, asserting that Farah's works shed light on the politics of movement and the transformative aspects of exilic consciousness. Grounded in Thomas Nail's concept of 'kinopolitics'—as discussed in *The Figure of the Migrant* (2015)—this study examines movement as a key lens for analysing social and political situations. Kinopolitics, along with its literary counterpart kinopoetics, places the migrant not as a secondary or marginal figure, but as a vital agent whose identity both arises from and challenges state histories and nationalist antagonisms.

Nuruddin Farah's personal story—shaped by forced exile and movement through various cultural landscapes—deeply intersects with Somalia's turbulent political landscape. His displacement is emblematic of a broader kinopolitical expulsion faced by Somalis under dictatorial regimes, while simultaneously serving as a site for privilege and critique. This paper argues that 'Kinopolitics' offers an essential interpretive framework for grasping Farah's exilic consciousness, demonstrating how exile and migrancy act as indicators of both individual identity and creative power. The two hypotheses guiding this exploration are: firstly, 'kinopolitics' as the politics of movement assesses the social, historical, and political contexts that shape migrant identity, positioning the migrant as a central figure of resistance against state narratives that strive to erase or dehistoricize them. Secondly, migrant authors like Farah utilize a movement-centered poetics that disputes fixed dialectics, questioning nationalist animosities and narratives of uniformity. While doing so, the study

aims to outline the theoretical foundation of 'Kinopolitics', and then delves into the fragile socio-political landscape of Somalia with an emphasis on the mechanisms of kinopolitical expulsion. It concludes with a kinopolitical interpretation of Farah's trilogy on dictatorship, examining its portrayals of state authority, biopolitics, and resistance, while underscoring the role of the migrant intellectual in challenging authoritarian narratives.

## Theoretical framework of kinopolitics and the context of Nuruddin Farah

The concept of 'kinopolitics', formulated by Thomas Nail, provides a productive theoretical lens for rethinking migration, exile, and displacement not as marginal aberrations but as constitutive forces within social and political life. Derived from the Greek term *kinesis*, meaning "movement," kinopolitics is defined by Nail (2015, 24) as "the theory and analysis of social motion: the politics of movement." Its central premise is that societies are not static structures organized exclusively around state sovereignty, territory, and fixed belonging; rather, they are "regimes of motion" constituted through dynamic processes of circulation, displacement, and transformation (Ibid, 25). Within this kinetic paradigm, the figure of the migrant ceases to be a derivative or secondary subject, and instead emerges as the central analytic through which we can apprehend the conditions of the contemporary world. Traditional migration discourses, as Nail (2016, 7) critiques, suffer from two foundational limitations. First, migrants have been defined exclusively in relation to the state—as immigrants, emigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers—each category reinforcing a statist epistemology that reduces migrant existence to a deficit in citizenship. Second, migrants have been deprived of history, since their experiences are rendered invisible or subsumed within the grand narratives of nation-states (Ibidem). Against these erasures, 'kinopolitics' insists that migrants are not failed or incomplete citizens but constructive agents who generate alternative histories, counter-memories, and new forms of social organization. As Nail (2015, 5) writes: "Kinopolitics allows us to conceptualize the emergence of the historical conditions that gave rise to the types of social expulsion that define the migrant. The major forms of kinetic social expulsion that define the twenty-first century did not emerge out of nowhere. They emerged historically…" This emphasis on historicity is crucial. Migrant identities are not ahistorical abstractions but emerge within

concrete conditions of social expulsion—political violence, economic dispossession, environmental precarity. Nail underscores that the apparent ahistoricity of the migrant is itself the result of sovereign violence. Kinopolitics therefore demands that we examine how migrants articulate their own counter-histories and resistances, producing epistemologies that exceed the frame of the state.

Although Nail does not explicitly cite postcolonial theorists, his theory resonates with Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity. For Bhabha, migrant identity inhabits an "in-between" space, disrupting cultural essentialism and producing new enunciations of belonging. In this sense, the migrant embodies hybridity as both epistemic and lived condition. Edward Said also contributes a complementary dimension with his reflections on exile. For Said, exile is a critical vantage point from which one can interrogate the world. He in his *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994, 39) emphasises that a migrant or an intellectual in exile is marked by perpetual restlessness: "Exile for the intellectual in this sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others. You cannot go back to some earlier and perhaps more stable condition of being at home; and, alas, you can never fully arrive, be at one with your new home or situation." Exile, then, becomes a condition of permanent in-betweenness that unsettles both the state and the self, while simultaneously generating a heightened sense of critical agency. While Bhabha and Edward Said discuss hybridity, cultural change, and exile, Nail's 'kinopolitics' offers a broader theoretical backdrop for comprehending these experiences. According to Nail, movement is not merely an unplanned interruption of fixed categories but the very essence of social existence. In this context, the migrant serves as a prime example of how identities are formed through mobility rather than stability. What postcolonial theorists refer to as in-betweenness or restlessness can thus be reinterpreted as forms of kinetic existence, in which belonging and identity develop from paths of displacement and ongoing circulation. Kinopolitics highlights that these conditions are not peripheral but crucial for grasping power, subjectivity, and community in contemporary society. In this manner, Nail's theory integrates and broadens the perspectives of postcolonial theory by situating hybridity, transformation, and exile within a framework of movement.

Nuruddin Farah's life and writing vividly embodies kinopolitical insights and the centrifugal dynamics of kinopolitical expulsion—the force that pushes individuals into exile. After the publication of his

second novel, *A Naked Needle* (1976), which openly condemned Barre's authoritarian regime, Farah was compelled into a life of permanent displacement. While in Rome, his elder brother's stark counsel—"Forget Somalia, consider it buried, dead, think of it as if it no longer exists for you"—marked a definitive rupture, transforming him from a homeward-bound writer into an exile (Farah 2000, 49). What followed were successive relocations of him to England, Italy, the United States, Sweden, Uganda, Nigeria, and South Africa, each reinforcing a condition of *aterritoriality* marked by rootlessness and instability. Farah's exile paralleled the experiences of many Somalis who, fearing persecution, embarked on precarious journeys of voluntary migration. He bore witness to the racial discrimination and marginalization Somali asylum seekers endured in Europe, where they were routinely denied recognition, cast as *vermin*, or pathologised under the stigmatising notion of "the clan as a malady." His own rejected settlement applications—dismissed on "racist" and "exclusivist" grounds—underscore the pervasive kinopowers that regulated belonging in host societies. This centrifugal expulsion shaped Farah's exilic consciousness and inspired his articulation of a "country in exile," a phrase that captures both Somalia's collective failure and its role as one of the world's principal refugee-producing nations (Farah 2000, 51). The interplay between colonial legacies and postcolonial authoritarianism thus represents two interlinked modalities of kinopower that have profoundly defined Somali migrant identity. As Farah himself observes, in Somalia "new empires are created in place of old ones, [and] a mass of humanity necessarily are made refugees" (Ibidem).

Nuruddin Farah initially experienced his displacement as rupture. Yet, as he later reflected in "In Praise of Exile" (2007, 82), distance enabled him to write more freely: "exile is a great learning experience… distance distills; it gives you a better, clearer perspective". His biography exemplifies Nail's (2015, 35) notion of "expansion by expulsion", which is applicable to the identities that are expelled from social, political, and territorial status, yet this very condition generates new spaces of identity, belonging, and possibility. Likewise, in the context of Farah, his forced displacement paradoxically expanded his creative and intellectual horizons.

Farah consistently frames exile not as marginalization but as the very condition of his creativity and agency. In interviews, he has described himself as a 'world citizen,' a position that resists both

nationalist fixity and diasporic nostalgia. Alessandra Di Maio in *Wor(l)ds in Progress: A Study of Contemporary Migrant Writings* (2010, 3) aptly observes that Farah embodies "multiplicity of centers and marginal areas," destabilising conventional dichotomies of centre and periphery. His literary works, spanning continents and languages, articulate a *kinopoetics* of deterritorialization—stories that refuse to be contained within national borders, even as they remain deeply engaged with Somali history and identity. Moreover, Farah's work illustrates how the migrant is not a derivative subject but a constitutive one: a figure of movement whose identity is continually formed through flows, junctions, and circulations of displacement. His exilic subject position does not negate belonging but reconfigures it, generating new forms of cultural identity and intellectual agency. In this sense, Farah exemplifies the transformative power of kinopoetics, where exile becomes not simply a condition to be endured but a dynamic ground for reimagining identity, history, and worldliness.

**Research methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive, and text-based methodology rooted in literary and cultural analysis. It employs a triangulated approach that brings together theory, text, and history. First, it draws on Thomas Nail's *The Figure of the Migrant* (2015), using 'kinopolitics' as the central interpretive framework to situate migration within wider debates on displacement, identity, and power. Second, it undertakes close readings of Nuruddin Farah's *Dictatorship* trilogy, examining how the novels— *Sweet and Sour Milk* (1979), *Sardines* (1981), and *Close Sesame* (1983)—portray dictatorship as a regime of arrested motion and enforced expulsion while simultaneously dramatising counter-kinopolitical practices of resistance. This includes attention to the metaphors of surveillance and imprisonment, the gendered regulation of bodies, and exile as an alternative mode of circulation. Finally, the analysis situates Farah's fiction within biographical and historical contexts, tracing how his own trajectory of forced exile resonates with Somalia's political history under Siad Barre and illuminates the interplay between lived displacement and literary imagination. Together, these three dimensions provide a rigorous kinopolitical account of Farah's work, highlighting the intersections of motion, power, and resistance.

## Analysis

In Farah's *Dictatorship* trilogy, Somalia under the regime of Siad Barre emerges not only as a sovereign dictatorship but as a kinopolitical regime of motion. The regime led by the General in *Sweet and Sour Milk* has partitioned Mogadishu into sectors and keeps a record of every inhabitant; it goes beyond mere observation and manages both movement and stasis. Residents are documented, their absence is met with punishment, and their physical presence is perpetually scrutinized through what Soyaan refers to as the "whisper network of oppression," where even quiet utterances are relayed word for word by illiterate informants (Farah 1979, 36). This is a clear case of what Nail (2015, 16) calls 'kinopolitical arrest': a regime's attempt to channel, immobilize, or block motion.

Somalia is figured as a carceral space, a prison-like network where surveillance restricts flows of people and ideas. Farah intensifies this image through metaphors of enclosure: Somalia is "a prison," its citizens "prisoners," and the General "the Grand Warder" (1979, 193). In *Sweet and Sour Milk*, the first book of the trilogy, Soyaan's mysterious death epitomises what Thomas Nail terms as 'kinopolitical expulsion': the regime not only ends his life but also confiscates his memory, erasing his circulation within the society. The government's cover-up transforms him into a propaganda figure, redirecting his story into official discourse. Soyaan's brother Loyaan's search for the truth demonstrates how dictatorship orchestrates motion—allowing certain narratives to circulate while immobilising others. Hence, Farah explicitly depicts Mogadishu as a carceral landscape of surveillance: "Mogadiscio has been divided into cells, in each of which there are residents who must account for their presence at their residence, twice every six weeks, on pain of losing their jobs. In this sense, the country is a prison" (*Sweet and Sour Milk* 1979, 36). Here the regime organises society through movement-control: presence must be continuously registered; absence is punished; circulation is surveilled. In Foucauldian terms, this is disciplinary biopolitics, as the regime does not simply watch them—it arrests the very possibility of unmonitored movement, substituting circulation with stagnation under surveillance (Foucault 1978, 176).

In *Sweet and Sour Milk*, the aspect of 'fear' is crucial in the sense that it structures the regime's kinopolitical order, functioning as an internalized arrest of motion. Farah (1979, 39) notes: "Everyone whispered, for fear that walls had ears, and ears had tongues". Here

speech itself, the most elemental form of social circulation, is curtailed and immobilized. Language loses its ability to move freely in the public sphere; it is reduced to whispers, halting flows of communication under the constant threat of betrayal. Nail's notion of the "arrest of flows" is vividly illustrated here: dictatorship interrupts not only physical movement but also the symbolic circulation of discourse, ensuring that even the smallest act of communication is captured and redirected into instruments of control. Loyaan's own trajectory embodies the kinopolitical consequences of this suffocating environment. After his fruitless investigation into Soyaan's death, Loyaan recognises that "I will leave, because here the truth dies with the dead" (Farah 1979, 176). Exile becomes his only viable form of motion, underscoring the dictatorship's reliance on centrifugal expulsion as a political strategy. Dissidents are not only silenced within the nation but are actively pushed outward, transformed into exiles whose departure preserves the regime's immobilising grip at home. Yet exile also reconfigures Loyaan's role: though displaced, he becomes a custodian of memory, carrying fragments of truth beyond Somalia's borders. This reflects Nail's (2015, 31) formulation of "expansion by expulsion," whereby the very act of being pushed out generates new spaces for agency, critique, and creative movement. Exile, in this sense, is simultaneously the product of authoritarian expulsion and the seed of resistance that persists in diasporic circulation.

The novel further aligns familial patriarchy with state dictatorship, revealing the intimate entanglement of kinship and power as regimes of motion. Keynaan, the father, asserts: "If I decide 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" (Farah 1979, 108). This is more than a declaration of patriarchal authority—it mirrors the General's sovereign claim to absolute power. Kinship becomes a microcosm of the dictatorship: a structure that regulates circulation within the family, determining who may speak, inherit, or move freely. Farah underscores this parallel explicitly when Loyaan equates the two figures: "The General is my father, and my father is the General" (Ibid, 112). This identification demonstrates how authoritarianism pervades both public and private domains, producing a dual kinopolitical arrest where familial and state structures reinforce one another to constrain motion. The family, like the nation, becomes a prison, its flows regulated by patriarchal decree. Hence, it is to be noted that dictatorship is represented not only as a

sovereign force over life and death but as a comprehensive kinopolitical system that immobilises bodies, interrupts language, confiscates memory, and redirects trajectories into exile. Soyaan's silencing, Loyaan's expulsion, and Keynaan's authoritarian paternalism together illustrate the multifaceted ways in which motion is arrested and manipulated. At the same time, the novel hints at the persistence of counter-movements: Loyaan's departure transforms immobilization into circulation abroad, inaugurating exile as both consequence of dictatorship and space of resistance.

If *Sweet and Sour Milk* foregrounds the regime's orchestration of disappearance, surveillance, and silenced lives, *Sardines* dramatises resistance as a form of alternative motion, most vividly articulated through female agency. Farah structures the novel around his female protagonist Medina, a journalist who refuses to succumb either to the authoritarian grip of the General or to the patriarchal traditions embodied by her mother-in-law, Idil. In doing so, the text displaces the conventional figure of the male dissident—arrested, executed, or expelled—and repositions women as the primary bearers of counter-kinopolitics. Medina's banning order exemplifies how dictatorship immobilises dissident voices. As she is barred from her editorial work on the pretext of her critiquing the regime of Siad Barre, her public presence is erased, her professional movement curtailed. This act of silencing is not only biopolitical but kinopolitical: her voice is forcibly withdrawn from circulation in the public sphere. Yet Farah shows that such immobilization is never complete. Medina resists by reconfiguring the spaces available to her, redirecting her agency into both domestic and intellectual domains.

It is interesting to note that Keynaan, Loyaan's father in *Sweet and Sour Milk* and Idil in *Sardines* embody parallel forms of domestic authoritarianism that mirror the General's dictatorship. Both operate as microcosmic figures of power: Keynaan proclaims himself "the Grand Patriarch" (Farah 1979, 108), while Idil insists on perpetuating circumcision of Ubax, Medina's daughter, thereby enforcing patriarchal control over female bodies (Farah 1981, 154). In different registers—paternal and maternal—both function as extensions of the state's immobilising apparatus, ensuring that authoritarian power circulates through the intimate spaces of kinship as much as through public politics. In Sardines, the conflict between Medina and Idil encapsulates intergenerational struggle, as Idil insists on perpetuating female circumcision, aligning with the General's broader project of

regulating and immobilising female bodies. Medina, however, identifies the two figures as equivalent, declaring: "The General and Idil are one and the same person" (Ibidem). This recognition links familial patriarchy with state dictatorship as mutually reinforcing regimes of motion, both seeking to immobilize women's agency. Medina's refusal to subject Ubax to circumcision disrupts the inherited cycle of patriarchal violence, breaking the continuity of domination that passes through generations. In doing so, she reorients kinship itself toward the possibility of resistance, where maternal agency in the context of Medina becomes a counter-kinopolitical act. Farah extends this logic into the political realm through the 'Group of Ten', a clandestine circle of intellectuals including Nasser and Dulman. Their underground circulation of pamphlets demonstrates another mode of alternative motion, challenging the state's monopolization of discourse. Nasser captures the suffocating reality of dictatorship when he laments, "This city has turned into a fascist prison camp" (Farah 1981, 34). His words encapsulate the immobilization of everyday life under authoritarian rule. Yet his clandestine writings, though ultimately leading to his execution, represent resistance as the creation of counter-circuits—fragile but necessary flows of truth that evade state capture.

Medina figures her struggle with the General in distinctly kinetic terms, likening their conflict to "two lizards engaged in a varanian dance of death" (Farah 1981, 151). The imagery of circling reptiles reframes authoritarian power not as a fixed or monolithic force but as a precarious contest of movement, where domination and resistance continually respond to one another. This metaphor exposes dictatorship as a shifting field of motion: even under conditions of near-total surveillance and repression, counter-forces like—acts of refusal, defiance, and resistance—continue to circulate, unsettling the regime's attempts at absolute control. In *Sardines*, then, Farah displaces the center of resistance away from traditional political actors and toward women, whose agency lies in disrupting cycles of violence, protecting future generations, and sustaining alternative flows of discourse. The novel insists that even under conditions of near-total arrest, movement persists—not in grand public revolts, but in the subtle and stubborn acts of defiance embodied by Medina and other marginalized figures. *Sardines* thus reveals resistance itself as a kinopolitical practice: the re-routing of flows, the interruption of oppressive circulations, and the creation of new trajectories of possibility under authoritarian rule.

*Close Sesame* extends the trilogy's exploration of dictatorship by revealing authoritarianism not as static domination, but as an ongoing struggle over the control, restriction, and redirection of movement. Farah stages Deeriye's body and memory as the novel's primary sites where kinopolitical dynamics—arrest, slow circulation, and subterranean resistance—are most painfully visible. Farah repeatedly uses Deeriye's frail, asthmatic body to make literal the idea that power can arrest even the most elemental forms of existence. The novel insists that imprisonment has not only scarred his history but throttled his physiology: Deeriye's long incarceration is described as having "cost him twelve years of his life" and left him wheezing as "each breath of air he drew wheezed in and out of his chest with great difficulty" (Farah 1983, 31). This bodily constriction is not merely metaphorical: it is the most intimate register of state suffocation. The political prison becomes a machine that not only confines limbs but also compresses time and breath, turning the simple act of inhalation into an index of subjection and precarity. Paradoxically, Farah presents detention as a space where motion is both violently interrupted and, at the same time, rendered reflective and transmissible. Deeriye's memory-work — what he calls the sustained, inner lens of conscience — is produced in the "dark room of isolation" and the "twelve years in dark caves," passages that emphasize how enforced immobility cultivates a different kind of circulation: the movement of memory and moral sight (Ibid, 30). Farah writes that after years in detention "one thing remained framed, like a picture, in his mind: that one's conscience is the lens which helps one to see, judge and then gives one enough confidence to press the button of one's reason of being" (Ibid, 31). Here the metaphor is kinetic in a subtle way: even when limbs and public speech are arrested, conscience continues to circulate images, judgments, and reasons across time; it becomes a portable flow that can be transmitted beyond prison walls. The "dark caves" thus function as paradoxical incubators — they interrupt social circulation but intensify inner circulation, producing a moral carrier (Deeriye's testimony) that can later re-enter public motion as memory, testimony, and pedagogical warning (Ibid, 30).

One of *Close Sesame*'s most consequential reframings is its relocation of the political adversary from an obvious external colonizer to an insidious internal wound. In a charged exchange with Mursal, Deeriye diagnoses the postcolonial danger as an inward disease: "Between national and colonial governments there is this major

difference … the enemy is within: a cankerous tumour. You die of it gradually; bloodless, pale and unmourned" (Farah 1983, 166). This image of neo-colonial power as a tumour that spreads internally re-orients kinopolitical analysis. Whereas classical accounts of sovereignty emphasize visible instruments (soldiers, prisons, decrees), Farah insists that dictatorship moves through social relations, kinship networks, patronage and memory: it seeps, metastasizes, and thereby constrains movement from the inside out. The metaphor conveys temporality as much as mechanism: the regime's destructiveness is not always spectacular; often it is a slow, systemic blocking of healthy social circulation until the polity's motion is arrested from within. Under 'Kinopolitics', therefore, the primary battlefield becomes the social tissues through which motion ordinarily flows—families, universities, workplaces—not only the spectacular sites of repression.

The novel's portrait of Mogadishu makes visible the socio-kinetic consequences of long-term authoritarian rule. As Farah points out, "The city of Mogadiscio has aged before it teethed; it is no city for the elderly or the very small … The old if they go into the city after seven in the evening, run the risk of being mugged or simply pushed aside", dramatises the urban as a landscape of expulsions where vulnerable bodies are physically and socially removed from circulation (Farah 1983, 90). This is kinopolitical expulsion in its quotidian form: the city no longer facilitates diverse flows of life; it channels some people (the strong, the complicit) into circulation while structurally marginalising and ejecting others. The spatial politics of the novel thus show how regimes manage motion by reworking urban rhythms, policing bodies' presence in time and space, and making certain lives effectively irrevivable.

When viewed together, Farah's *Dictatorship* trilogy illustrates that understanding authoritarianism in Somalia requires more than just recognising it as the enforcement of sovereign power or the creation of 'bare' existence; it also involves a contest over movement itself—regarding who has the right to speak, act, remember, or inherit. By analysing these works through a 'kinopolitical' lens, we observe how the regime aimed to restrict bodies and silence voices, yet Farah's characters continue to create counter-flows of resistance through exile, memory, and also via feminist defiance in their own respective ways. It is noteworthy that Farah's *Dictatorship* trilogy depicts how even in the face of oppression, the act of movement remains the most resilient expression of political life.

## Conclusion

A kinopolitical analysis of Nuruddin Farah's *Dictatorship* trilogy shows that authoritarian governments function not only through sovereign pronouncements or overt brutality but also by controlling movement—restricting circulation, stifling expression, and removing dissenting individuals. However, as Farah's narratives illustrate, exile and displacement do not solely represent a state of loss; they also generate new ways of knowing, identities, and forms of resistance. Exile emerges as the contradictory foundation where stasis morphs into movement, allowing muted voices to re-enter the narrative thereby enacting resistance. By placing the migrant at the forefront rather than on the fringe, Farah's work supports Thomas Nail's assertion that motion is foundational to political and social existence. Ultimately, the trilogy emphasises that movement—whether through exile, the dissemination of counter-discourse, and resistance across generations—continues to be the most enduring manifestation of life under oppressive regimes.

Beyond its literary significance, this study contributes to broader debates in migration studies, postcolonial theory, and 'kinopolitics' by showing how Farah's texts foreground the migrant intellectual as both witness and critic of authoritarian regimes. His work reminds us that migration literature is not only about displacement but also about the creation of new modes of belonging and critique. Future research may extend this kinopolitical approach to other African and diasporic writers, tracing how exile continues to function as both wound and resource in articulating the conditions of contemporary global mobility. In this sense, Farah's trilogy has not only restricted itself to narrating only Somali history, but it also offered a framework for rethinking the politics of movement in world literature at large.

## References:

Castles, Stephen, and Mark J. Miller. 1993. *The Age of Migration*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Di Maio, Alessandra. 2010. *Wor(l)ds in Progress: A Study of Contemporary Migrant Writings*. Milan: Mimesis Edizioni.

Farah, Nuruddin. 1979. *Sweet and Sour Milk*. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press.

Farah, Nuruddin. 1981. *Sardines*. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press.

Farah, Nuruddin. 1983. *Close Sesame*. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press.

Farah, Nuruddin. 1998. A Country in Exile. *World Literature Today*, Vol. 72, No. 4: 713–15.

Farah, Nuruddin. 2000. *Yesterday, Tomorrow: Voices from the Somali Diaspora*. London: Cassell.

Farah, Nuruddin. 2007. "In Praise of Exile." In Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson (Eds.), *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, pp. 366-373. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Foucault, Michel. 1978. *The History of Sexuality*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Random House.

Nail, Thomas. 2015. *The Figure of the Migrant*. California: Stanford University Press.

Nail, Thomas. 2016. *Theory of the Border*. Oxford University Press.

Said, Edward. 1994. *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures*. New York: Vintage.