

USE OF LITERARY STYLES TO SHOW THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN SELECTED SOMALIAN POEMS FROM THREE ANTHOLOGIES

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of Study: The study aimed at examining how different stylistic devices depict the place of Somali woman in the selected poems from the three anthologies.

Problem Statement: Initially, Somali poetry depicted work songs that reflected rural activities involving camels. Recent poetry, however, portrays the role of Somali women throughout the twentieth century in modern Somalia's history. Somali poetry serves as a medium that illustrates the historical disenfranchisement of women, often prioritizing men over women. Women in Somali artistic works until now have continued to be treated as the inferior gender through ways such as being allocated inferior roles. Hence, there is need for an authoritative voice on the place of women characters in Somali poetry.

Methodology: A qualitative research design was applied. Textual analysis was used as the method of analyzing the selected texts. The poems that were analyzed were from three selected diaspora Somali female anthologies; *The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony*, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth* and *An Anthology of Grief*. The study employed purposive sampling to select the texts that constitute the target population. Data collection was conducted through the use of notes and checklists.

Result: In the poem "*Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*" Warsan Shire uses sensory images to presents an intellectual and emotional complex as in the poem —*Things We Had Lost in the Summer* where Shire exploits the use of images to describe the summer season and FGM. Shire uses irony in the title "*Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*" to show the relationship between mothers and daughters and the dissimilarities as in the poem titled *Fire*.

Metaphors have used in Shire poems to portray the plight of women as in the poem “*My Foreign Wife is Dying and Does Not Want to Be Touched*” and *ugly*.

Recommendation: There is need for further scholarly attention be devoted to documenting and analyzing Somali poetry, with a particular focus on themes related to the struggles of refugees and the impacts of civil war.

Keywords: *Stylistic Devices, Somali Women, Poetry Analysis, Anthologies, Literary Representation*

INTRODUCTION

Poetry is a fundamental aspect of Somali expressive culture, and Somalia is renowned as a land of poets. Somali poetry covers a wide variety of subjects and styles, which adapt and develop with time and with the culture. Initially, Somali poetry depicted work songs that reflected rural activities involving camels. Recent poetry reflects the importance of Somali women in modern Somalia's twentieth-century history. Somalia is a patriarchal society (Said, 1982). In general, males possessed ultimate control in a society of male patriarchy examined via socio-cultural lenses, while women were considered as home guardians. The female gender is often faced with cruel practices including: female-child dissociation, involuntary marriage, withholding of a female child in her biological family for reproduction, widowhood habits, Female genital mutilation (FGM), involuntary sex and abuse, refusal of the right to inherit, bias in leadership, physical assault, purdah, discrimination on acquisition of education and employment chances (Gabriel, 2012).

According to Said (1982), a Somali poet is supposed to promote his clan, defend their rights in clan disputes, protect their dignity and prestige against other poets' assaults, immortalize their renown, and function as a spokesperson for them on the whole. In a nutshell, a traditional poetry is a piece of verse written on occasion for a certain purpose, with argumentative or persuasive components, and a historical background. According to Andrzejewski (2011), the reciter in the Somali setting is a mediator of the poetic text who addresses the public audience and maintains the poem for future generations, rather than a competent poet. Somali poetry covers a wide variety of subjects and styles, which adapt and develop with time and with the culture. Initially, Somali poetry depicted work songs that reflected rural activities involving camels. Recent poetry reflects the importance of Somali women in modern Somalia's twentieth-century history. Somalia is a patriarchal society (Said, 1982). In general, males possessed ultimate control in a society of male patriarchy examined via socio-cultural lenses, while women were considered as home guardians.

In the past, Somali women used various ways to show their place in the society. This was through stories, sayings, and songs which advocated obedience of married women to their husbands and portrayed women who refused, resisted, and regretted such obedience negatively (Jama, 1994). In ancient Somali the division of labor was done according to gender, men were given the privilege of tending camels and cattle- the most treasured animals while girls would take care of sheep and goat- less treasured animals, also, Somali women are expected to answer to the males and carry dutifully their roles as daughters, wives and mothers, this would limit the women to the set norms (Advameg, 2006).

Girls and thus women were disadvantaged and missed out on inheritance especially before Siad Barre's regime and whereas Siad Barre's regime advocated for girl child rights in areas such as inheritance, some Islamic leaders opposed this and because such leaders wielded influence, the realization of such rights was in jeopardy (Advameg, 2006). This put girls at a disadvantage

since in the event of parents passing on, they would be left at the mercy of their brothers for provision. Whereas President Siad Barre's regime between 1969-1991 was characterized by women empowerment, where we saw women rise to positions of colonels, ambassadors and judges, this changed after his ouster in 1991, since with the lack of a central government came the enforcement of customary and shariah law which allowed inhumane acts such as public stoning of females found in adultery while excluding males (Utah, 2007).

Recently, it was noted that women in Somalia face the threat of attacks, kidnapping and gender-based violence especially in times of conflict such as covid-19 (Worldbank, 2021). However, Somali females have never stopped fighting the cultural patriarchy and manipulating gender stereotypes. Somali experts in society and tradition have underlined that female Somali find ways to make their impact known, like their men. One of these techniques is to use poetry. Oral conveyance has a particularly important role in Somali culture through the practice of poetry. By and large, Somali oral poetry contains a wealth of information regarding historical changes that have impacted Somalis.

Whereas there are male reciters who travel around the country reciting poems to varied audiences, there are no women reciters, largely due to the fact that men have the benefit of freely travelling anywhere in the country to recite, perform thus earn a living but women have been restricted from free movement unless they are travelling within the family set up (Zainab,1991).This has disadvantaged the women when it comes to advancing poetry on the basis of passion and also as a source of income when it is performed. Although women's poetry was historically performed in rather private spaces for mostly female audiences, modern poetesses know the benefits of publicizing their work to wider readers and listeners, including Somali males. While poetry is still very significant, several volumes of both fiction and non-fiction have also been created by contemporary female writers in order to integrate the experiences of Somali women into the history of the Somali region. Somali women's significant contributions to society have been overshadowed by the dominant emphasis of Somali culture on men's interactions and legacies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Somali society is predominantly patriarchal, portraying women as an embattled gender. Therefore, it is essential to analyze the reflection of repressive institutions and exploitative ideologies as depicted in literary works. Therefore, this study critically examined the place of Somali women in selected poems from three diaspora Somali female authored anthologies. Initially, Somali poetry depicted work songs that reflected rural activities involving camels. Recent poetry, however, portrays the role of Somali women throughout the twentieth century in modern Somalia's history. Somali poetry serves as a medium that illustrates the historical disenfranchisement of women, often prioritizing men over women. Women in Somali artistic works until now have continued to be treated as the inferior gender through ways such as being allocated inferior roles. Therefore, there is a need for an authoritative examination of the representation of women characters in Somali poetry. This study focused on how different stylistic devices depict the position of Somali women in selected poems from three anthologies.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Examine how different stylistic devices depict the place of Somali woman in the selected poems from the three anthologies.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the styles that depict the place of Somali woman in the selected poems from the three anthologies?

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research was focused on examining how different stylistic devices depict the place of Somali woman in the selected poems from the three anthologies. In terms of content the study focused on nostalgia and memory along with trauma of uprooting and identity crisis in diasporic space as a displaced individual. Thus, this study focused on how different stylistic devices depict the place of Somali woman in the selected poems from the three anthologies. The study focused on topics such as cultural dilemmas, the search for identity, multiculturalism, and universal facets of human life. This study focused on three diaspora Somali female authored anthologies; *The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony*, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth* and *An Anthology of Grief*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Presentation of the place of Women through Imagery

The struggle for gender equality and the exploration of women's experiences through literature have been pivotal in many cultures, including among the Somali diaspora. In the Somali region, where cultural narratives have historically prioritized men's experiences and legacies, contemporary female writers have emerged as critical voices, integrating the experiences of Somali women into the broader historical narrative (Mohamud, 2015). These writers use literary techniques such as imagery and symbolism to critique gender norms and highlight the plight of women in patriarchal societies, offering new perspectives and reshaping the historical narrative to include women's experiences.

In Somali society, the dominant cultural emphasis has historically been on men's contributions, often overshadowing women's roles and achievements. This marginalization is compounded by orthodox views that limit women's participation in public and historical spheres (Mohamud, 2015). However, the recent contributions of female writers have begun to challenge these conventions by using their narratives to reflect and critique the societal norms, effectively reshaping the cultural narrative.

Imagery and symbolism are potent literary devices used by writers to convey complex ideas and emotions. In the realm of feminist literature, these techniques are particularly effective in expressing the internal and external conflicts women face. Naheed's poem "My Nation, Listen to My Entreaty" exemplifies the use of symbolism to critique male dominance in Islamic societies (Naheed, 2001). The poem uses the imagery of 'wolves' and 'vampires' to represent male-dominated power structures that exclude and marginalize women, while 'maulvis' and their 'fatwas' symbolize the religious and legalistic tools used to perpetuate women's subjugation.

Forough Farrokhzad, in her poem "Window," utilizes vivid imagery to portray the constraints placed on women in male-dominated cultures. Farrokhzad describes the female protagonist as a doll, an object meant only to be seen and not heard, encapsulated in a world of false pretenses and oppressive silence (Farrokhzad, 1967). The imagery of being 'crucified with pins, in a book' dramatically underscores the violence done to women who are forced into passivity and silence, highlighting the physical and psychological containment of women and the painful, often invisible, struggle against such constraints.

The exploration of women's experiences in literature is not only a form of artistic expression but also a feminist act that seeks to assert the presence and significance of women's lives in cultural narratives. Feminist literary criticism plays a crucial role in this context, examining how women are represented in literary works and advocating for a more inclusive and equitable literary canon (Suzanne, 2015). By analyzing the representations of women in literature,

feminist critics uncover the often-subtle ways in which patriarchal values are reproduced and how they can be contested.

Somali female diaspora writers have been particularly vocal in using their literary works to speak on behalf of women, challenging traditional roles and advocating for greater freedom and equality (Mohamud, 2015). These writers not only reflect the challenges faced by Somali women but also connect these experiences with broader global struggles for gender equality. Through their narratives, they provide a voice to those who have been silenced and offer new perspectives on the strength and resilience of women.

In conclusion, the integration of Somali women's experiences into literature through the use of imagery and symbolism is a profound commentary on the intersections of culture, gender, and power. Contemporary female writers, both within the Somali diaspora and globally, have utilized literary techniques to critique patriarchal structures and advocate for a reimagined future where women's voices and experiences are recognized and valued. These literary endeavors not only enrich the cultural landscape but also serve as powerful catalysts for social change, promoting a deeper understanding of gender dynamics and fostering a more inclusive society.

Objectification of Women

The historical and contemporary objectification and exploitation of African women are deeply entrenched in both the colonial legacies and ongoing societal norms. One of the most striking historical cases involves Sarah Baartman, a woman from South Africa who was brought to Europe in the early 19th century and exhibited as a public spectacle. Her treatment was emblematic of a broader pattern of racial and sexual exploitation. Her body was objectified and hypersexualized, turning her into a symbol of colonial exploitation and racialized sexism. This example underlines a disturbing legacy where African women are seen primarily through a lens of sexual exploitation. The repercussions of such historical abuse continue to resonate today, as African women are often still subjected to hyper-sexualization and objectification in various forms of media. These portrayals typically depict African women as licentious, with supposedly insatiable sexual appetites, reducing their social and personal identities to mere objects of sexual desire. Such stereotypical portrayals not only degrade these women but also strip them of their agency, perpetuating a culture of sexual harassment and violence that silences their voices and erases their experiences.

Adichie's "*We Should All Be Feminists*" is an influential work that argues for a redefinition of feminism and gender roles, not only within African societies but globally. Through her writings and public engagements, Adichie advocates for equality and critiques the patriarchal structures that perpetuate gender disparity. Her approach is particularly compelling because it combines personal narrative with broader social analysis, making the case for feminism as a universal framework that benefits all of society by fostering more equitable relationships (Adichie, 2014).

Internationally, the role of global frameworks and treaties is pivotal in supporting the rights of African women. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provide international standards and goals that countries can aspire to. These frameworks encourage governments to adopt and implement policies that promote gender equality and empower women. The global community's engagement is crucial in holding governments accountable and ensuring that commitments to women's rights are translated into concrete actions. Through these collaborative efforts, there is a strong base for advancing the status of African women, highlighting the importance of international solidarity in the fight for gender equality.

The progress made thus far indeed provides a hopeful outlook for the future. While challenges remain substantial, the determination and resilience of African women, supported by a global chorus of voices calling for justice, suggest a bright future ahead. The ongoing efforts to ensure that African women can assert their rights and participate fully in all aspects of life are not just about achieving gender equality; they are about transforming societies to be more inclusive, equitable, and just. This transformation is critical for the current and future generations, promising a world where African women enjoy full and equal rights, free from the burdens of historical stereotypes and contemporary exploitation. This is a vision worth striving for, a cause that continues to gather strength and momentum with each passing day.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was underpinned by Stylistics theory, which gained prominence in the 20th century, serves as a pivotal framework for examining how the use of various styles in a literary work contributes to its overall meanings and effects. Initially regarded mainly for its aesthetic contributions, stylistics has evolved into a critical tool for the comprehensive analysis of language and its intrinsic purposes in texts (Peter, 2020). This shift from a purely aesthetic focus to a more analytical one highlights the dynamic nature of stylistics in the field of literary studies.

Nasrullah (2020) outlines that stylistics can be approached from several angles: as a model of communication, as a means of expressing the author's intentions, or as a trigger for eliciting responses in the audience's mind. Despite these varied approaches, the core function of stylistics remains its formal descriptive power. This power enables scholars to dissect texts, uncovering deeper meanings and interpreting effects that resonate with or challenge the reader's understanding of the text.

In applying stylistics to literary analysis, researchers engage with the text at a granular level, scrutinizing word choice, syntax, figurative language, and other stylistic elements. These elements are not merely decorative; they are essential to constructing and conveying complex meanings. For instance, the use of metaphors, similes, and personification in poetry can profoundly affect how themes and emotions are communicated and can reveal deeper insights into the societal issues reflected in the literature.

In this study, stylistics theory is employed to explore the expressions of authors and to interpret the implications of these expressions within the broader context of gender dynamics, particularly focusing on the portrayal of Somali women in selected diaspora poetry. By analyzing how stylistic choices shape the depiction of women, the study seeks to understand the ways in which these literary works reflect, reinforce, or challenge prevailing social norms and values concerning gender roles and relations.

The integration of stylistics with post-secular feminism theory provides a comprehensive analytical framework for this research. Post-secular feminism, focusing on the oppression of women within religious contexts and emphasizing the role of religion in shaping gender relations, complements the stylistic analysis by adding depth to the interpretation of themes related to women's inferiority, gender roles, subordination, and inequality. This dual-theoretical approach enables a nuanced exploration of how stylistic elements in poetry can both reflect and influence cultural and religious perceptions of gender.

Utilizing both theories, the research will critically examine tenets such as women's inferiority, gender roles, subordination, inequality, patriarchy, and the impact of stylistic choices on the meanings and effects of these themes. These tenets will guide the study in assessing the position and portrayal of Somali women in the selected poems authored by women from the Somali diaspora. Through this examination, the study aims to uncover how these poets use stylistic

strategies to address complex issues of gender and identity in their works, contributing to broader discussions on feminism and cultural representation in literature.

Moreover, the research will consider how these poets, as women of color in diaspora, navigate their dual identities and express their experiences through poetry. The analysis will also explore how their works resonate with and contribute to the Fourth Wave of feminism, particularly in online spaces where their poetry reaches a global audience. This aspect of the research highlights the intersection of digital media and feminist expression, underscoring the transformative potential of digital platforms in disseminating feminist and postcolonial narratives.

In summary, by employing stylistics and post-secular feminism theories, this study will provide an in-depth analysis of the linguistic and thematic elements in diaspora Somali poetry, with a specific focus on the representation of gender and the role of religion in shaping these expressions. Through this approach, the research aims to contribute significant insights into the intersection of literature, gender, and culture in the context of Somali women poets living in diaspora, thereby enriching the academic discourse on these critical issues.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

Research design is an essential component of any scholarly investigation, providing a structured plan and methodological approach to inquiry. For this investigation, a qualitative research design was specifically chosen to delve deeper into complex social phenomena beyond what quantitative methods might reveal. Qualitative research is inherently interpretive and descriptive, designed to provide insights into human experiences and social processes. Creswell (2012) emphasizes that qualitative research employs systematic subjective techniques that aim not only to describe but also to interpret the meanings of life experiences, offering a nuanced understanding of the world. Further expanding on the methodological choices, this study employs a case study research design.

In the context of this research, the case study design is applied to investigate the representation of Somali women in three selected poetry anthologies. By focusing on these specific texts, the study aims to uncover the nuanced portrayal of women, examining how cultural, social, and personal dynamics are reflected and constructed through poetry. The anthologies serve as focal points for understanding broader themes of gender and identity within the Somali diaspora, making the complex and layered experiences of these women more accessible and comprehensible through a focused lens.

Target Population

The target population for the study was the selected Somali female authored anthologies written by Warsan Shire, Ifrah Hussein and Ladan Osman. Warsan Shire is an author, and activist that was brought up in London. She has authored several books such as: *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth* (2011), *Her Blue Body* (2015), and *Our Men Do Not Belong to Us* (2015). Her poems have been published on magazines and journals, including the following anthologies; *Salt Book of Younger Poets* (2011), *Long Journeys: African Migrants on the Road* (2013), and *Poems That Make Grown Women Cry* (2016); as well as in *Beyoncé's visual album Lemonade* (2016).

Ifrah Hussein on the other hand is an award-winning Somali-Canadian poet and author of *An Anthology of Grief* (2019) and *After the Grief* (2019). Ifrah was recently named Artist of the Year in Canada, and is also the Canadian Individual Poetry Slam Champion for 2017, making her the first woman to hold the national title. Poet and educator Ladan Osman is of Somali

descent. Poems of hers have appeared in a variety of prestigious literary journals, many of which focus on her Somali and Muslim roots. Poems based on her Somali and Muslim roots have found their way into a variety of high-profile literary publications. *The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony* (2016) has been written by Ladan Osman; she was born in Somalia. She earned a Bachelor's degree from Otterbein College and a Master of Fine Arts from the Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas at Austin. Her acclaimed book, "The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony," secured the esteemed Sillerman 1st Book Prize. The titles of the selected anthologies arouse curiosity in the researcher, the terms such as grief, birth and kitchen dwellers inspire the researcher to read, analyze and draw conclusions with reference to the place of Somali women in these selected anthologies.

The study used Purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is one of the non-probability sampling techniques that may be used in research. A sample that is representative of the total, as defined by Kothari (2004), is a sample selected with the intention of being representative, also known as an intentional or judgment sampling. The sample size of the proposed study will include all sections that depict the aspect of the place of women in three contemporary diaspora Somali female anthologies; *The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony*, *Teaching My Mother How to give Birth* and *An Anthology of Grief*.

Data Analysis

In this study, a qualitative data analysis approach was employed, specifically utilizing textual analysis as the primary method for examining the collected data. Textual analysis is a detailed methodology that involves the decoding and deconstructive examination of texts. In this particular research, content analysis was the chosen strand of textual analysis, with a special emphasis on thematic and stylistic elements within the selected poems. The analysis was strategically guided by the research objectives, ensuring a focused examination of the textual material that aligned with the study's goals. Furthermore, theoretical frameworks such as post-feminism theory and stylistics were integrated into the textual analysis to critically examine the societal norms that confine women to specific roles. This theoretical lens helped to highlight and critique the patriarchal structures that mandate specific social positions for women.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Stylistic devices in The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony

Ladan Osman's "*The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony*" is a compelling collection of poems that weaves the intricate experiences of a black woman navigating life in an underdeveloped town. This book, structured as an autobiography, subtly mirrors the contours of Osman's own life, yet resonates with the universal themes of growth, struggle, and resilience. Through its three distinct sections, each representing a different phase of life, Osman explores the societal roles imposed on women and their often fraught interactions with men, who are frequently depicted in a negative light.

The first section of the book is reflective of childhood and early adolescence, a period replete with innocence yet marred by the harsh realities of growing up in a socioeconomically challenged environment. Here, Osman employs vivid imagery and metaphor to portray the vibrant, yet challenging world of her youth. Poems in this section frequently utilize the motif of the kitchen, a traditional space for women, not only as a physical locale but as a metaphorical site where cultural expectations and personal aspirations collide. The kitchen, thus, becomes a witness to the internal and external conflicts faced by the protagonist.

In the second section, Osman transitions into the complexities of young adulthood, delving deeper into the social and personal conflicts that arise as the protagonist navigates her

relationships with men and society. The use of simile and personification intensifies, bringing emotional depth to the struggles of finding one's voice in a world that often seeks to silence it. For instance, men might be depicted as "storms" that "wreak havoc," suggesting both the chaos they bring into the protagonist's life and the uncontrollable nature of these encounters. This section underscores the growing awareness and rebellion against the prescribed roles, highlighting the protagonist's gradual assertion of autonomy.

The final section portrays maturity, where the protagonist reaches a fuller understanding of her identity and the societal structures that shape it. The tone shifts from one of conflict to reconciliation and empowerment. Osman's use of allegory peaks here, presenting life's trials as a landscape that one navigates with increasing wisdom and resilience. Poems in this section speak to the reconciliation with past pains and the embracing of one's power as a woman. The language becomes more assertive, reflective of the protagonist's empowered self-perception.

Throughout the collection, Osman effectively uses stylistic devices to underline the position of women within both personal and broader socio-cultural landscapes. Irony is a recurring element, particularly in how the expectations of women are juxtaposed against the protagonist's personal ambitions and realities. This irony not only critiques societal norms but also emphasizes the protagonist's growth beyond them.

Furthermore, repetition is strategically used to highlight the cyclical nature of certain struggles and the persistent effort required to overcome them. This stylistic choice amplifies the intensity of the protagonist's experiences and her repeated confrontations with societal constraints.

"*The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony*" is not just a narrative about overcoming adversity; it is a powerful testament to the resilience and agency of women in face of societal and personal challenges. Osman's use of diverse poetic devices enriches the text, allowing readers to experience the protagonist's journey not just as a series of events, but as a profound emotional and psychological voyage. Through this poetic exploration, Osman not only documents a life but also critiques and challenges the roles traditionally assigned to women, making a compelling case for autonomy and self-realization.

Questioning/ Interrogation

Osman's interrogation technique emerges as her most potent form of expression. Through the use of questions, she prompts readers to contemplate the delicate boundary between being a witness and an active participant, between the choice to document events and the desire to influence them. The use of questions, both as a noun and as a verb, serves to shuttle individuals back and forth, almost seamlessly, between these dual roles. *The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony*, Osman (2015) is inquisitive in nature which creates the style of questioning. Her work is questioning. Osman's curiosity extends to every aspect; she possesses an insatiable hunger for knowledge. This characteristic is evident not only in the poems of *The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony* but also points to a broader exploration—an unrelenting quest to comprehend the essence of this collection. In the poem *Ordinary Heaven* (Osman, 2015) we see her questioning everything as shown below:

“...Here I attend to my book of questions
What is love? Why does it say,
Allow me to mogul your soul? Where
Does it keep what it takes?
What does the prostrating shadow request?

Why do rocks enslave water?
What is the slave in the poem?
Does the sea favor its roar or murmur?"

In the poem *Ordinary Heaven* Osman (2015) wants to know about everything as she raises questions on abstract ideas such as love. The persona seems to be heart broken. Osman in this poem shows an insatiable desire to understand why things are the way they are. In the anthology *The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony* Osman provides answers through dazzling leaps of lyric as shown in the poem *To Abel* (Osman, 2015):

“...Who hears it when you keep its hum
at the base of your throat?”
“I do.”
I am a sister who watched a bird bury its
Dead
And did not understand...
But the dogs listened for it, and called to
The ambulances
That took you after pans gone confused,
You alone in a stretcher
or between the cracking lines
of a parking spot

Neither of us knows the best prayers,
but we can pretend, we can let them strain
in the back of our throats as melody.
—“To Abel”

The first line above shows the persona asking, “*Who hears it when you keep its hum / at the base of your throat?*” and answers by the line, “*I do.*” Osman crafts speakers who engage in questioning, responding, and suggesting future avenues for inquiry. This approach suggests that melody holds a constructive and appealing quality, implying that even in the absence of verbal communication, there remains the potential for action. The last three lines seem three lines seem to answer some of the questions raised in Osman’s poems. In Osman (2015), *The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony* presents Ladan Osman’s fierceness of her desire to interrogate such issues as racial politics, violence against women and the struggles of being an immigrant. The interrogation carries a reader back and forth, almost osmotically, between the two roles as shown in the last lines:

" I am sorry for you, I tell her"
You witness but don't testify.

In the poem Osman writes of a doll in the poem *Ordinary Heaven*.

Osman (2015) places his audience in a state of Interrogation in the poem "*Silhouette*, as she addresses racism and gender inequality as she says: *I am afraid of them*," that is the white academics she encounters in this milieu:

"their smell,
their cotton, their expensive running shoes,
their faces so hard to read
when they make odd-placed sighs
at black people histories.
There is not one
bright color."

Osman then sets a scene and places her persona in it, then moves from description to interrogation as shown:

"...My voice is small as it asks
What will it matter to them if I make a book?
I am one poet. Isn't there space for me?
And the tears are sweet, completely sweet
As if they mean, even now you don't
Believe?
The colonizers couldn't have dreamed it
The preoccupation with the heights of my soul,
My intangible qualities..."

In the above lines Osman fights for her space in poetry writing through questioning and she as raises issues of racism by the whites doubting her potential: *The colonizers couldn't have dreamed it, The preoccupation with the heights of my soul, My intangible qualities...* she goes on to say.

Narratives and Prose

Osman makes use of imaginative and immediate sequences of story, image, and language to create a space with which we are likely not too familiar, a space where we must ask questions ourselves—how do our actions and attitudes speak for us? The poem "*The Key*," Osman (2015) uses prose and narration to carry the reader into spaces that women access in daily life as shown:

"...I was under the kitchen table guessing
Who was at the sink by how they
Used water when I heard my mother say
To my father, what about this job
That one those people, did they call? And
My father said, everyone says

No. I see all the doors but none of them
Will open. My mother said maybe
We just haven't found the right key, I'll
Go look for it..."

The poem above shows how Osman carries us from a father trying to find a job, a mother's optimism, "*maybe we just haven't found the right key, I'll go look for it,*" then to the daughter's collection of keys, which she tries on different locks. Eventually one works on a door in an abandoned mall:

"A girl said our house was darkest
And the first raindrops fell on it
Because we are all going to hell when I
Td my father he said it was
Isolated or separated storms. So it
Was true we were set apart for a
Punishment..."

It was a room with white walls, floor, ceiling.
White squares of wood flat or leaning in every corner.
The door closed behind me and no key would work.
Maybe the room would swallow me and I'd get invisible
if I didn't stop screaming but then a surprised guy, white, wearing white, opened the door." (Osman, 2015)

Osman uses such narratives in her poems to carry us into spaces we rarely access in daily life. The speaker (and the reader) enters a white room and effectively becomes trapped there, a fitting allegory concerning race in contemporary society.

Through narration the persona addresses racism in the poem *Connotation* (Osman, 2015):

"When the woman whose hair is like down
Spits near my shoe and says
This neighborhood has changed since
These people came
I can't say "you're the spitter; you are the trash..."

The poem "*Connotation*" addresses a white woman spitting at the feet of the speaker, saying, "*This neighborhood has changed since these people came.*" The persona cannot retort to the spite because of decorum. Osman shows how women refugees lacked human truths: such as empathy, understanding, and appreciation, or varying degrees of lacking these. Very rarely, it seems, are people able to tend both their appearance and their actual minds.

The narration in the poem In Osman (2015) "*Her House Is the Middle East,*" we learn of a wife so used to her husband's infidelity, the house is a place used to both conflict and inaction as shown:

"...Her husband stares at his family and

Thinks, what are these lesions?
Is this my own body? ...
The mistress ghost is in the kitchen
Sticking to tie and baseboards, spider webs
To grease
Do you know me? The old sadness asks..."

The use of narration in poetry advances honesty at all costs, on the parts of speakers and readers. Osman brings our attention to the reality of being conditioned to violence, to abuse, to decorum, to corruption, to suffering.

Simile

A simile is a figure of speech that compares two unlike things indirectly using the words "like" "as" or another comparative preposition. Osman's poems are alive with a love of language, sensory imagery, simile and well-timed metaphor, as in Osman (2015,p.14) "*First Red Dress*"

"...I leave the bad feeling of the boys' room,
think of my flesh as a broken watermelon,
seed making pupils on the feathers' eyespots. /

Pink flesh and black eyes on my flesh, like the time I dropped a melon on the front step after carrying it alone from the car."

In the above poem the persona uses the simile to make description of her dress. The description above indicates that she is still living with her mother and brothers, it is clear she is a child, especially since the poem is titled, *First Red Dress*. One of the speaker's male family members warns her through a simile:

*"Go out in that dress
and you'll get split like a watermelon.
Down there."*

The use of simile brings out the theme of violence meted upon women who dress against the set norm.

In the poem "*Silhouette*" Osman (2015, p.) uses simile to achieve vivid description

"...Shame when I see all the book spines there
Everywhere
Their colours and textures like women bent in a prayer on a holy day
My voice is small as it asks
What will it matter to them if I make a book?"

The simile reveals the role of women as prayerful; it also creates a mental picture of women praying donned in different colours.

In the poem ‘*Admonitions*’ Osman (2015,) uses similes to describe how girls are assertive due to sexual abuse

*“I always kept my knees together, even
When I washed myself.
I knew the story of Mary. The miracle
Conception.
Maybe I would walk too many times on the
Rusty railing out back
like gymnastic, like I was told not to
My aunts said girls who weren’t cut had
Dirty shame
Could get pregnant just like that, hennaed
Fingers snap...”*

“...like a gymnast, like I was told not to...” It compares an assertive girl to a gymnast. Just as a gymnast does things out of the norm, an assertive woman too goes against the grain. It further analyses the issue of emancipation of women.

In the poem “*Clearing the Land*” (Osman, 2015) The poet writes;

“...hand come clearing my chest like an old homestead”

It brings out the insecurity of a girl child while growing into womanhood. The fear of sexual abuse is real.

In the poem “*Invocation*” Osman (2015) writes , “*I’m going to beat you like I’m your mother...*”

It brings out the role of mothers as disciplinarians. They are to discipline their children. It also brings out theme of gender-based violence faced by women in abusive relationships, as the persona is threatened to be beaten to a pulp. In the poem “*The Offended Tongue*”(Osman, 2015)

“...while the men arrange theirs like busy teeth at the front door...” It brings out the issue of discrimination against women by emphasizing how men get preferential treatment even in terms of how their shoes are arranged.

In the poem “*The Kitchen-Dweller Testifies*” Osman (2015, p.) writes

“...And untangled me from himself like the tassels of an old shawl...”

It brings out a mental picture of a strenuous romantic relationship.

Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. Osman (2015) opens her poem “*The Pilgrims*” with a striking metaphor that:

“something is pressing against the hymen of madness”.

And the clouds blush where streetlights

Seek them out”

This metaphor holds to the implication of rape, deflowering, loss of innocence and regret, a reflection of the occurrences in Somalia.

A metaphor is also used in the poem ‘*Unsolicited Witness*’ where Osman (2015) changes from an observer and a witness to a strange and surprising participant. Osman’s syntax management is skillful and meticulous, where her sharp unsettling questions comfort and disquiet at the same time. The man in *Unsolicited Witness* is described as an ankle grabbing monster, but at the end of the piece, the audience is left concerned about the speaker. The man brings out the dangers that women are exposed just like in the poem *Twigs* where girls are “tossed onto ravines and stuffed under bushes”.

In the poem “*Invocation*” Osman (2015) writes;

*“... You crawled on my chest, a little spider...
You blended into bedding...
May your own chest break...”*

By drawing comparison between the beloved and a spider the metaphoric language brings out the animosity that exists between married people whose relationship is strained.

In the poem “*The Kitchen Dweller presents Evidence*”. The persona uses metaphoric language to bring out the love a woman wishes to get from her husband.

*“... I want to get the bone of your heart
the marrow of your heart...”*

The wives are at peace when they know that their husbands love them unconditionally.

In the poem “*Situations Wanted*”. The poet writes;

... Let us be wrists nabbing against each other...

It brings out the issue of the romance the persona yearns for.

Biblical Allusion

In poetry or any other literary work, a biblical allusion is a reference to the Christian bible. This style is used in the poem “*Admonitions*”. She writes;

*“I always kept my knees together,
Even when I washed myself.
I knew the story of Mary. The miracle conception...”*

Mary is the mother of Jesus who is the Messiah and Savior in Christian belief. She gives birth to Jesus miraculously and together with her husband Joseph. The poet expresses the fear women have against sexual violence. Girls have to watch out for any potential threat, the persona has to keep her knees together even when taking a bath for fear of being raped.

Personification

Personification, a literary device, employs figurative language to illustrate abstract concepts in a more relatable manner. It involves attributing human traits, such as emotions and behaviors, to non-human entities like inanimate objects and animals, thereby creating vivid imagery and

enhancing the reader's understanding. In the poem "*Her House is in the Middle East*". The poet writes;

... *Do you know me? The old sadness asks.*

It brings out a mental picture of a wife in a somber mood as a result of being neglected by her husband. It also shows that women are dependent on their husbands. This particular woman is saddened that her husband has a mistress.

... *The mistress' ghost is in the kitchen...*

She feels the presence of her husband's mistress looming large in their kitchen.

Symbolism

Symbolism, as a literary technique, utilizes symbols—whether they are words, individuals, marks, settings, or abstract concepts—to convey meanings that extend beyond their literal interpretations. In the poem "*Amber Doll*", the poet uses symbolism to show the plight of women facing violence.

Osman (2015)

“... I gutted you ten years ago, cut your limbs with a kitchen knife...
You are Amber. I want to believe in you
Just you try climb on top of my fridge tonight.
I will soak you in lighter fluid, burn you in a skillet,
then wash it, dry it before it rusts...”

Generally, Osman's poems are structured so that elegant writing and testimony go hand in hand, as when the poem "Denotation" — in which the speaker's father tells her "*If anyone ever calls you that, knock their teeth out*" — is followed by "Connotation," in which "the woman whose hair is like down spits near my shoe and says, "I can't accuse, 'You are the one polluting; you are the waste,' as these individuals have altered the neighborhood." Osman's poems show sentiment management when dealing with difficult and emotionally tense subjects. This is depicted when she describes her father's diabetes condition discovery; the narrative is full of precise and evocative details with a well-trimmed dialogue full of symbolism and essentiality. With enthusiastically creative and instantaneous sequences of story, image, and language, shows the place of a woman in Somali society. Ladan Osman expresses a language and sensibleness that is ominously fresh; it springs from one observation to another and speaks familiarly yet implicitly enough to make us listen a little harder.

Stylistic devices in the "Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth"

This section focuses on the literary devices Warsan Shire uses in *Teaching My Mother how to Give Birth* to articulate harrowing experiences caused by war. The chapter explores how the stylistic devices work together to create meaning and to show the place of a woman in the society.

Sensory Images

Images show a critical role in creating unity in creative works especially poetry. Image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'. Images in poetry are used to describe situations and ideas and to create understanding. In the poem —*Things We Had Lost in the Summer* Shire effectively utilizes vivid imagery to depict the summer season, evoking associations with bright, sunny days. This time of the year symbolizes freedom and the transition into young adulthood. Summer serves as a pivotal period during which youth

undergo personal growth and begin to grapple with themes of love, acceptance, and self-discovery. The poet delves into the exploration of adolescent girls, delving into their comprehension of female circumcision and the intricate issues it entails. The persona in the poem reunites with her cousins, noticing the physical transformations associated with their growth, perceiving them as older and more mature. The persona can see change in her cousin's breast as shown:

*“ waifs with bird chests clinking like wood,
boyishlong skirted figurines waiting to grow
into our hunger.” (Shire, 2011)*

Summer thus represents a period during which they would mature and develop an awareness of their sexuality, delving into it to the point of forging romantic connections. The second stanza refers to a harm that is veiled in secrecy:

*“My mother uses her quiet voice on the phone:
Are they all okay? Are they healing well?
She doesn't want my father to overhear” (Shire, 2011)*

The above stanza shows that the girls have been circumcised and the mother is concerned about their healing. Female circumcision is placed as a socially constructed action for the benefit of men as it is meant to control a woman's virginity and chastity.

Circumcision therefore is a way of curtailing a girls freedom as shown in the poem titled *Mermaids* (Shire, 2011):

*“Sometimes it's tucked into itself,
sewn up like the lips of a
prisoner.
After the procedure, the girls learn
how to walk again, mermaids with new legs,
soft knees buckling under their new sinless bodies.”*

The above stanza gives us the image of the process of female circumcision. Through the sensory images given, one can tell that FGM is a painful experience: *girls learn how to walk again, mermaids with new legs.*

The poem titled 'Ugly' Shire (2011) envisages the haunting images of a female body occupied by war and displacement as shown:

*“As a child, relatives wouldn't hold her.
She was splintered wood and seawater.
She reminded them of the war”*

In the poem, the persona depicts her daughter's body as marred by ugliness, adorned with scars and wounds, and burdened by the weight of entire cities ravaged by war. This imagery conveys a sense of loss and devastation, vividly portraying the toll of fleeing from a conflict zone.

The poem further describes a filthy sense of loss and longing one wears like a perfume but stinks like a sewer:

*“Men will not love her
if she is covered in continents,
if her teeth are small colonies,
if her stomach is an island,
if her thighs are borders?”*

The poet makes use of the conditional phrase 'if' to reveal the woman's body is coded and is undervalued.

Irony

The concept of irony, as a literary device, revolves around situations where there's a stark contrast between expectation and reality. In Shire's collection titled *"Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth,"* irony is evident through the contradiction inherent in the title itself. The mention of "mother" and "birth" implies a reference to the female body. However, the irony lies in the impossibility of a child teaching their mother how to physically give birth, as it is the mother who typically performs this act. Instead, the title signifies a social aspect of childbirth, exploring the dynamics of the relationship between mothers and daughters and their differing perspectives on life's challenges.

Irony is as shown in the poem titled "Fire" Shire (2011) that demonstrates the dissimilarities in viewpoint between mothers and daughters as shown:

*“What do you mean he hit
you? Your father hit me all
the time but I never left him.”*

The stanza ends with the lines,

*“He pays the bills...
and he comes home at night, what more do you want?”*

The conversation depicted above unfolds between a mother and her married daughter following the daughter's decision to ask her husband to leave their home after he hit her. The mother struggles to comprehend why her daughter would take such drastic action. Irony emerges in the poem when the mother advises her daughter to endure an abusive marriage as long as the husband provides for the household. However, the daughter's response demonstrates that younger generations of women refuse to tolerate mistreatment, even if their material needs are met.

In Shire's poem titled "Birds" (2011), societal expectations dictate that a woman must be a virgin on her wedding night. The persona, Sofia, resorts to using pigeon blood on her wedding night to feign virginity and succeeds in convincing her husband that she was indeed a virgin as expected.

This makes her husband very happy the next morning and acclaims her for her supposed purity as shown:

*“That he gathered them under his nose,
Closed his eyes and dragged his tongue over the stain.
She mimicked his baritone, how he whispered
her name- Sofia
Pure, chaste, untouched.” (Shire, 2011)*

The stanza above has a satirical effect and is ironical since we are aware that Sofia used blood from a pigeon thus making us laugh and question why the society perceives blood as a measure for virginity. It is ironical that purity of a woman is checked by human blood. Sofia ridicules the moral code of morality which is not policed effectively.

Metaphors

Shire uses metaphors to portray the plight of women. In the poem *“My Foreign Wife is Dying and Does Not Want to Be Touched”*. Shire constantly uses metaphors of the woman's body, which is both the metaphoric and the literal location of pain and joy: bodies, for the poetic voice, are to be read, are to be mapped out. They harbour pleasure but also memory of grief:

“...My wife is a ship docking from war.
The doctor maps out her body in ink.
Her body is a flooding home.
We are afraid. We want to know what the water will take away from us,
what the earth will claim as its own.” (Shire, 2011)

In this last poem, the poetic voice is a husband whose wife is dying out of grief. The poem shows the consequences of wars. The poem highlights the suffering endured by the persona's wife who is battling cancer just like that of a ship at war and post war.

In the poem 'Ugly' (Shire, 2011)

writes;

*“...If her teeth are small colonies
If her stomach is an island
If her thighs are borders...”*

It draws direct comparison between a daughter and colonies, island and borders. In a way that brings out the suffering women endure in times of war.

The poet further writes;

*“...Your daughter's face is a small riot,
Her hands are a civil war
A refugee camp behind each ear
A body littered with ugly things...”*

The metaphorical description of the state's failure to protect its people by highlighting the scars left by war especially on girls.

Euphemism

A euphemism is a word or phrase that softens an uncomfortable topic. It uses figurative language to refer to a situation without having to confront it. In the poem 'Your Mother's First Kiss' Shire (2011) envisages a mother getting on a bus in London and finding the driver is the man who raped her and fathered her child.

*“The first boy to kiss your mother later raped women
when the war broke out.
She remembers hearing this from your uncle,
then going to your bedroom and lying down on the floor.
You were at school.”* (Shire, 2011)

The use of the word kiss in the stanza above is a euphemism for sex or rape. The word 'remembers' expresses the idea of the trauma that comes with rape. The use of second person poetic voice *You* helps the mother to distance herself from the narration because of the memories it invokes. The second stanza further shows the use of euphemism to describe trauma caused by rape:

*“She wakes up to find,
her dress was wet and sticking to her stomach,
half-moons bitten into her thighs.”* (Shire, 2011)

The stanza uses euphemism to show a sexual act that was not consensual. Moreover, the reminiscence of it is scorched onto her skin as showed by the bite marks on her thighs.

In the poem *'In Love and In War'* Shire (2011) uses euphemism to bring out the plight of women during war. The poet writes;

*"To my daughter I will say
When the men come, set yourself on fire"*

The mother, worried of what may happen to the daughter incase men at war reach her, that she'd rather take her life instead.

Narration

Narration is used in the poem *'Bone'* Shire (2011). It invites the reader to view the misery of a married woman who has to alter to the realism that her husband has brought home a second wife to her already unhappy marriage as shown:

"...I find a girl the height of a small wail
living in our spare room. She looks the way I did when I was fifteenfull of
pulp and pepper.
She spends all day up in the roommeasuring her thighs." (Shire, 2011)

The above stanza is a confession of what the persona experienced and we are meant to empathize with her. The persona looks at the young girl pondering about the time when she too was a young bride full of pulp and pepper, meaning when she was vibrant and as a young bride. The third stanza reveals domestic violence as shown:

*"You look straight at me when she tells
ushow her father likes to punch girls
in the face." (Shire, 2011)*

The above stanza is evidence of domestic violence. The poem explores into the realms of marriage and the betrayals that most women face in these kinds of situations. The poem as reveals the emotional pain that women go through in the last stanza as shown:

"I can hear you in our spare room with her.
What is she hungry for?
What can you fill her up with?
What can you do that you would not do for me?
I count my ribs before I go to sleep. (Shire, 2011)

Simile

In the poem *'Things We Had Lost In The Summer'*;

“... *Sit like a girl...*”

It brings out the expectations of the society on how a girl should conduct herself before others. In the poem ‘*You Were Conceived*’;

“*I stayed like a secret in his bed for days...*”

The woman stays a secret for it is the man to introduce her or else she remains in the shadow. In the poem ‘*Ugly*’;

“...*On her fifteenth birthday you taught her
How to tie her hair like rope...*”

It brings out a mother’s role in teaching her daughter how to groom. The expectation on this brings out the society’s expectation on a girl’s hygiene.

The poem further reads;

“...*You are her mother
Why did you not warn her
Hold her like a rotting boat...*”

This brings out the expected protective nature of a mother towards a daughter. She is to protect her by keeping her close to self.

In the poem ‘*Tea with Our Grandmother*’;

“...*Skin dark like tamarind flesh
Who died grinding cardamon...*”

The skin colour change is compared to tamarind’s colour and it is as a result of the nature of work the grandmother did.

Stylistic devices in the Anthology of grief

This section focuses on the literary devices Hussein (2019) uses in *Anthology of grief* to articulate Grief.

The chapter explores how the stylistic devices work together to create meaning and to show the place of a woman in the society.

Figurative language

The analysis shows that Hussein (2019) utilizes figurative language (involving stylistic-rhetorical devices: metaphor, similes and repetition).

In the poem ‘*Mama’s Land*’ Hussein (2019) the persona uses metaphor and Simile

“*Perhaps this world is an abyss that
Swallows us like a sunken hole
Or a soluble rock
That envelopes the tears of women...*”

The poet mentions abyss and compares the world to it. Later on, the poet talks of enveloped tears. This abyss, which is like a sunken hole, hides their tears. The use of simile and metaphor emphasize the grieving nature of the woman character in this poem. That her tears and those of other women cannot be quantified.

In the poem ‘*What They Could Not Find*’ Hussein (2019) uses metaphor below:

*“...You said I was deserted land
Said men only come to me
When Allah never answered their prayers.”*

The direct comparison of a married woman to a deserted land brings out loneliness and despondency which highlights how married women are at the risk of being treated as second class humans due to their wavering beauty.

In the poem ‘*The Burnt Land*’ the poet writes;

*“... But who knows the civil war
Like my mother’s feet and my step father’s eyes?”*

It brings out the concept of migration as a result of escape from war.

In the poem ‘*Memoirs of The Mogadishu War in 93*’. The poet writes;

*“... We raised men to herd an entire nation
While still having enough breast milk left
To spill on to white supremacy
Like powdered sugar...”*

Repetition is used in the poem ‘*For the Love and Suffrage*’;

*“... And war
And war
And death...”*

The words ‘*And war*’ have been repeated to emphasize the state of war thus lack of peace in the country.

Section Summary

In examining the stylistic devices utilized by three prominent female Somali poets across their respective anthologies, we are offered a profound glimpse into the multifaceted portrayal of Somali women's roles, struggles, and resilience within society. Ladan Osman, Warsan Shire, and Ifrah Hussein deftly employ a rich tapestry of literary techniques to convey the myriad experiences, challenges, and triumphs encountered by Somali women, encapsulating their narratives in poetry that resonates with profound emotional depth and societal insight.

In "The Kitchen-Dweller’s Testimony" by Ladan Osman, the reader is immediately drawn into a world where questioning and interrogation serve as powerful tools for introspection and social critique. Osman's poetic voice resonates with an insatiable curiosity, relentlessly probing the complexities of identity, belonging, and injustice. Through her evocative use of language,

Osman conjures imagery that is at once visceral and transcendent, inviting readers to navigate landscapes of memory, trauma, and resilience. *Her prose-like narratives transport readers across time and space, weaving together themes of race, gender, and power with a deft hand.*

In "Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth" by Warsan Shire, sensory imagery emerges as a cornerstone of poetic expression, painting vibrant portraits of love, loss, and the scars of conflict. Shire's verse pulsates with an immediacy that is both intimate and universal, drawing readers into landscapes shaped by the twin forces of desire and displacement. Through her poignant juxtaposition of beauty and brutality, Shire challenges conventional notions of femininity and power, offering a searing critique of the violence that permeates both public and private spheres. *Her use of irony lends an added layer of complexity to her exploration of gender roles and societal expectations, inviting readers to interrogate the forces that shape their lives.*

In "An Anthology of Grief" by Ifrah Hussein, figurative language emerges as a potent tool for grappling with the profound complexities of loss and mourning. Hussein's verse is suffused with a haunting beauty, suffusing everyday realities with a sense of mythic resonance. Through her masterful use of metaphor and symbolism, Hussein captures the inexpressible depths of sorrow and longing, inviting readers to bear witness to the silent elegies that echo across generations. *Her repetition of themes and imagery serves to underscore the cyclical nature of grief, reminding us of the enduring legacy of trauma and resilience.*

Across these anthologies, the poets employ a diverse array of stylistic devices to illuminate the experiences of Somali women with a rare blend of sensitivity and insight. Through their poetry, Ladan Osman, Warsan Shire, and Ifrah Hussein offer readers a window into worlds shaped by love, loss, and longing, inviting us to bear witness to the enduring strength of the human spirit.

CONCLUSION

The stylistic devices employed by the poets from vivid imagery to metaphorical language – deepen the emotional resonance of the poems, inviting readers to empathize with the experiences of Somali women. Through skillful manipulation of language and form, the poets capture the complexity of the human experience, transcending cultural boundaries and fostering a sense of connection and solidarity among readers. The analysis of these contemporary poetry anthologies offers profound insights into the representation and emancipation of Somali women in literature. Through their poetic expressions, Somali women authors challenge prevailing norms, amplify marginalized voices, and advocate for gender equality. Poetry emerges as a powerful medium for storytelling, empathy, and social critique, fostering dialogue, promoting social change, and advancing gender equity within Somali society and beyond.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering Somalia's rich poetic heritage, this study recommends that further scholarly attention be devoted to documenting and analyzing Somali poetry, with a particular focus on themes related to the struggles of refugees and the impacts of civil war. This would not only enrich the academic understanding of Somali literature but also highlight the nuanced experiences of its people during times of conflict. This could potentially lead to a greater appreciation of the cultural and historical context of Somali poetry, enriching global literary studies and providing deeper insights into the intersection of art, history, and social justice.

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