



WOMEN AND THE PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY IN THE POETICAL BOOK “ESMİ LAİTHA SA’ABĀ” BY FATİMA NAOOT

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ABSTRACT

The expression of the women’s issues and proposition of their freedom and rights are amongst the important issues frequently dealt with in the contemporary literature. Such a subject as the women’s rights was posited more than ever before, after Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt and the evolutions that were subsequently brought about in Arabic countries; the literary works dealt with the women’s freedom and their social-political demands. Although such an issue was posited in the poems by the male poets and authors, the female poets, as well, have given it the highest priority in their compositions since then. Fatima Naoot (born in 1964) is one of the contemporary Egyptian literary women and poets giving a special position in their compositions. In all the poems by Naoot, traces of the Egyptian women’s issues, problems and concerns can be seen. The concerns and problems put forth by Naoot about the women’s issues are loneliness, maternal concerns, lack of freedom, wastage of rights, lack of having a proper social position and stance, dominance of the matriarchal perspectives and so forth. This study has made efforts to extract and categorize and subsequently analyze the thoughts and perspectives of Fatima Naoot about the women’s issues based on her poetry book called “Esmi Laitha Sa’abā”. This study was a theoretical research carried out based on a descriptive-analytical method; the data have been collected through library research.

Keywords: Fatima Naoot, Egypt, Women’s image, Loneliness, Freedom.

INTRODUCTION

Many of the traditional communities have been accused of patriarchy and the subsequent divestment of some of the women’s rights and freedoms and this situation is still going on in some of the oriental countries. In such kinds of communities, men enjoy more social benefits, including power, wealth, veneration and so forth (Abbot, 2001, p.324). Egypt is amongst the third world countries having a very ancient history and a well-rooted and rich culture; however, some of the ancient habits, customs and traditions have caused the marginalization of the women in their social interactions in this ancient land. In fact, Egypt has always been envisioned as a scale for the general statuses in the entire Arab world for its cultural, historical, geographical and social properties; and, the situation of the Egyptian women who have been under the influence of patriarchal and despotic system and suffered from the ancient chains and restrictions and improper imitative traditions marks the status of the women in the Arab world (see also Sa’adavi, 1980, p.304). After Napoleon’s attack on Egypt, a series of the political and social situations in the society caused the wakefulness of enlightened minds and literary figures of that territory following which such issues as women’s freedom and women’s rights were proposed in such a way that many of the then poets, authors and the literary figures dealt with

such subjects as women, women's rights and women's freedoms in their works. These fights are still being continued for women's achievement of the position and stance they deserve; although the leading women and enlightened female minds have somewhat stabilized their position in the area of culture and literature in the today's society of Egypt (see also Afshinnasab, 2017), the Egypt's traditional society which is interlaced in its texture with ancient and rigid beliefs and bigotries has always blocked the women's way in this meandering path. Fatima Naoot (born in 1964) was one of the Egyptian poets and literary women given a special position in their compositions to such a subject as women. This Egyptian poet, critic and translator has been repeatedly severely criticized by the conservatives and the traditional social class of Egypt for her explicit and courageous assertions about the limitations imposed on the women. Several poetical collections have been published by her and the traces of the feministic approaches towards the peripheral world and quotations about the oriental women's issues, problems and concerns in the patriarchal communities can be seen in all of her works. But, she has dealt with such ideas in her poetical collection named "Esmī Laitha Sa'abā" more than her other works; therein, she explicitly and implicitly, through cues and clues, reminds of women-related topics such as a wife's concerns in respect to her life partner, maternal worries, objection to the women's social and civil freedoms and wastage of some of the women's initial rights (see also Heidari et al, 2019, pp.213-214). Meanwhile investigating the themes in the poetical book "Esmī Laitha Sa'abā", the present study endeavored to analyze the image and personality of the woman and the issues and problems of the women in Egypt's traditional and patriarchal society from the perspective of Fatima Naoot. In order to achieve this goal, all of the subjects expressed in these compositions in relation to the Egyptian women's nostalgias, concerns, sensitivities, problems and restrictions have been extracted and subjected to the classification and further analysis so that a clear-cut image can be eventually obtained of the women's visage and their problems and demands in the Egyptian community from the perspective of Fatima Naoot in her poetry collection "Esmī Laitha Sa'abā". It is natural that efforts would be made in the analysis of the poems to investigate the codes, symbols and other elements that have been effective in the literary creation and the thoughts' expression by the poet.

Background of the Study

There are many dissertations and articles written about the women's personality and image in the poetry and literature.

- The article "women's countenance in the poems by Forugh Farrokhzad and Qadeh Al-Samkan" (2013) written by Nader Ebrahimian and published in the journal of Roshd, Persian Language and Literature Instruction, expressed the poems by the two poets and their perspectives regarding the women's rights in the patriarchal society.
- The article "a glance at the image of women in the poems by the contemporary Arab poets" (2010) by Tayyebeh Sadat Hosseini has dealt with the investigation of the women's status in the poems by a number of Arab poets after the movement (1902 on) and concluded that the poems by the contemporary poets pay attention to the women's education and their freedoms.
- The article "Tasvir Al-Mar'e Fi She'er Ahmad Shawqi" (2011) has dealt with Shawqi's classical look at women in the introduction of the extoling odes as well as his romantic approach towards the women in his plas.



- The article “Surat Al-Mar’e Fi She’er Nazzar Ghabani va Hussein Monzavi” comparatively investigated the women’s visage in the poems by these two poets.

There are also researches, even though a few, on Fatima Naoot and her works the most important of which have been mentioned in the following:

- A dissertation called the explication of the statuses and investigation of the social themes in two poetical books of “Noqreh Esba’ā” and “Esmī Laitha Sa’abā” (2015) has been authored by Rahman Akbarzadeh, which dealt with such subjects as politics, love, homeland and so forth in these two poetical collections.
- An article titled “investigation of various kinds of affectionate feelings in the poetical book ‘Al-Awqād Lā Yasma’ūn Al-Mūsīqī’” (2017) by Farhad Rajabi and Amir Farhangdust.
- An article written by Ali Heidari, Ruhollah Mahdian Torghabeh and Maryam Jalilian under the title of “Al-Wahdah Fi Esmī Laitha Sa’abā Li Fatima Naoot”, which had published in the journal of Kollyah Al-Eslāmiyyeh Al-Jāme’ah, Najaf Ashraf, concentrated on such a subject as loneliness in the poetical collection “Esmī Laitha Sa’abā”.
- An article called the “function of symbols and signs in the poetical book ‘Esmī Laitha Sa’abā’” (2017) has been written by Ruhollah Mahdian Torghabeh and Ali Heidari who have dealt with the investigation and analysis of the signs and functions of symbols in this poetical collection.
- A dissertation has been authored under the title “structure, style and themes of the poems by Fatima Naoot” (2017) by Amir Farhangdust in Gilan University.

However, no independent researches has been carried out regarding the women’s image in the poems by Naoot, especially in respect to the poetical collection “Esmī Laitha Sa’abā” as found in a search by the present study’s author.

Introducing the Poet

Being enumerated amongst the prominent contemporary Egyptian literary women and enlightened female minds, Fatima Naoot has been able to present herself as a literary thinker woman through offering valuable works and corrective notions during the recent years in the media and the press. This poet, author, journalist, translator and engineer was born in Cairo in 1964. She finished schooling in 1987 in BA in Eyn Al-Shams Engineering University. Alongside poetry and literature, she was also interested in journalism and published her works and articles in Arabic newspapers like “Al-Mesrī Al-Yawm”, “Al-Yawm Al-Sābe’e”, “7 Ayyām Al-Mesriyyeh”, “24 Al-Imārāt”, “Al-Watan”, “Nesf Al-Donya Al-Mesriyyeh”, “Al-Hayāt Al-Madaniyyeh” and so forth (Rajabi and Farhangdust, 2016, p.1). She has also translated books and novels from contemporary western writers like Virginia Wolf (1882-1941), Philip Roth (1933-till now) and Chinua Achebe (1930-2013). She has also received numerous awards in international arena; the most important of the awards she has received are Hong Kong Poetry Award in 2006 and the global Gibran Khalil Gibran Award, in Sydney, Australia, in 2014. Naoot’s poems can be divided into three parts of poetry, translation and criticism. Her poetical collections are “Noqreh Esba’a” (2003), “Alā Ba’ada Centimeter Wāhed Min Al-Arz” (2002), “Qitā’a Tūli Fi Al-Zākerah” (2003), “Fawqa Kaff Emra’ah” (2004), “Heikal Al-Zahr” (2007),



“Qarūreh Samq” (2008), “Esmī Laitha Sa’abā” (2009), “Sāne’e Al-Farah” (2012) and “Al-Awqād Lā Yasma’ūn Al-Mūsīqī” (2016). In most of these compositions, traces of her feministic approach towards the peripheral world and quotations about the women’s problems, issues and loneliness in the oriental patriarchal society can be found. Some of the translations by Fatima Naoot into Arabic are “Mashjūj Bi Fa’as” (2003), “Al-Mash-y Bi Al-Qolūb” (204), “Qatl Al-Arāneb” (2005), “Joyūb Mithqalah Bi Al-Hejārah” (2005), “Nesf Shams Safrā’a” (2009), “Athar Alā Al-Hā’et” (2009), “Abnā’a Al-Shams Al-Khāmesah” (2010), “Al-Wasmah Al-Bashariyah” (2013) and “Lemāzā Nahb, Tabi’ah Al-Hobb Wa Kīmīā’a” (2015). She has also translated works from Arabic to English, including “Al-Quran Bain Al-Wa’ay Al-Shafāhī wa Al-Wa’ay Al-Kītābī” by Manī Talabeh and “Al-Naza’ah Al-Ensānīyah Fi Al-Falsafah Al-Eslāmīyyeh” by Anwar Moqith. In criticism, as well, there are also works published from Fatima Naoot, including “Al-Kītāb Bi Al-Tabāshīr” (2005), “Al-Rasm Bi Al-Tabāshīr” (2009), “Al-Moqnī Wa Al-Hakā’a” (2009), “Al-Malā’ekah Tahbet Fi Sydney” (2014), “Hazār An Tasādīq Sharbal Bi Aynī” (2015) and “Hawār Ma’a Sadīqī Al-Motatarrif” (2017).

Introducing the Poetical Book “Esmī Laitha Sa’abā”

The collection “Esmī Laitha Sa’abā” is amongst the poetical works by Fatima Naoot that was published in 2009. This collection is consisted of forty poetical segments in 105 pages. The poet has dedicated this poetical collection to her mother “Sahir” as mentioned in the page “Al-Ehdā’a”. In this poetical collection, themes like politics, love, homeland and women and so forth have been presented but the woman-related issues are mostly found in every corner thereof, including about freedom, loneliness, lack of enjoying a proper position, oppression of the women and their deprivation of some of their social rights. But, the issue that has been most frequently stated in this poetical collection is the women’s loneliness. The poet has presented this subject via the expression of various concepts and words so as to be able to transfer the women’s loneliness and its importance in the today’s society to her audience.

WOMEN AND PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY IN THE POETICAL COLLECTION “ESMĪ LAITHA SA’ABĀ”

Nowadays, the Arab communities exhibit contradictory behaviors in their interactions with the women. These communities’ males realize women in the role of mothers as the source of love, affection, dignity and chastity, on the one hand, and consider the female gender with its inherent seductiveness and iniquity as the cause of corruption and depravity and/or manifestation of inability and weakness and ignorance, on the other hand (Al-Heidari, 2003, p.14). During the recent century, many men and women have made efforts in the area of literature to give the women back their proper position in this sick and biased system and, undoubtedly, Fatima Naoot has been viewed as one of them. Being enumerated amongst the new generation of the activists in the area of the women’s rights, she has been able to express in poetical language the thing for the obtainment of which the women are fighting, i.e. the very utopia wherein the women play a role equal to men in the society and enjoy rights also identical to theirs” (Afshinnasab, 2017).

Next, the most important critical manifestations of the women's issues in the patriarchal society of Egypt posited in the poetical collection of "Esmī Laitha Sa'abā" has been investigated as the following:

Deprivation of a Proper Position and Stance

Amongst the problems with which women are coping is their being deprived of an appropriate social situation in such a way that many of them cannot even read and write. Fatima Naoot has compared in a poem with a small girl who has a cat under her arm and is wandering in the streets with ragged clothes and shaggy hair. Using these expressions, the poet points to the plainness and superficiality of the Egyptian woman, her being not taken serious by the society and her deprivation of the instructions required for confronting with the various issues. Also, in an image she offered of Naoot, belief in superstitions and incorrect opinions of the general public can be also seen:

"... Wa Tabtale'e Ebtēsāmāt Al-Māreh Hīna Lā Ta'aref Askharīyyeh.../Tahmalo Qat'ahā Fawqa Sadrahā/Tajūbo Tarqāt Al-Baladehī Bi Jalbābehā Wa She'erehā Al-Manfūsh/Wa Min Jaybehā Al-Mamzūq Yasqat Qeshr Al-Fūl wa Kasr Khabzen Jāf/Asnānehā Saqatat Min Farte Al-Zahak/Fa Ebtala'atahā Li Anna Laitha Lahā Omm/Allamtahā Taqas Al-Shams/Li Anna Ajūzan Allamtahā Anna Ebtelā'a Al-Zers Yanbeto Qairahū" (P.33).

(... and she swallows (tolerates) the smiles of the passersby while not knowing if they are ridiculing her or not/... she carries her cat on her chest/she walks in the city's streets while wearing ragged clothes and shaggy hair/and legumes' skin and pieces of dry bread fall down from her torn pocket/her teeth fell out of extreme laughter/so, she swallowed them for she had no mother/to teach her the ways and traditions of the sun/because an old woman ... taught her that swallowing of the teeth causes another to grow).

In another poem, the poet believes that even marriage does not assist the women achieve a suitable social position and that the women are practically worthy of no responsibility. She wants to say that women are carefully supervised in the family and marriages awakens some hope in them that they may gain more freedom but they find themselves out of the pan into the fire in practice. The poet finds the marriage ring as just a game that neither brings any position for the women nor makes them happy.

"Hāzā Al-Khātām/Asbah Mozhakā/Khatam Al-Ors Ayzan/Bi Vos'ehā An Ta'ūdū Mobayyanah Li Al-Majhūl/Lā Mahalla Lahā Min Al-Benser Aw Al-Farah" 9p.36).

"This ring/became preposterous/even the marriage rings/they can be forced to marriage to an anonymous person/while having no relationships with the finger and/or happiness".

In another segment, the poet proposes the lack of valuing the women's positions and this is while the women's position is so high as stated in the Islamic narrations that the prophet (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny the best of His regards) ordered that "heavens are under the mothers' footsteps". But, no special position and prestige can be seen in the Islamic communities that should be role-models of the other communities in regard of valuing the women and the lofty rank of the women and mothers and heightening the prestige of their rank and status. As an Egyptian (oriental) woman, "Naoot" described the women as valueless in some of the cases and compared them as a worthless cigarette or a dried snail in an arid and grassless desert. In a poetical segment named "Misr Li Al-Tayrān", the poet says: "... Wa A'araf/Anna Al-



Kawn/Awsa'a Mimmā Ehtamel/Wa Al-Wahdah-Aksa Kolle Shay'en/Bāleqahū Al-Itqān/Bāleqahū Al-Kamāl/Wa Ennanī/Qawqa'ahū Jaffah/Marmiyyah Fi Jadab" (p.62).

"... and I know/the world is vaster than what I imagine/and loneliness-is not like all the things/in the end, persistence and certitude/and, finally perfection/and, verily I/[like] a dried snail/thrown [abandoned] in the [fruitless] desert".

In this simile, the two phrases "dried snail" and "fruitless desert" both indicate the women's possession of no proper position and stance. Although she saw herself as an industrious woman performing a lot of social actions, Naoot believed that she is worthless in the society because the society does not authenticate any proper position and stance for the women and does not define a deserving position for them. Elsewhere, Naoot said: "... Hazā Khasrī/Methla Sayajārahū Mahmelah/Lam Yahno Awāno Jofafah/Wa Lā Asābe'eī Jamodat/... Ta'araf Asābe'ei Lā Tazāl/Kayfa Tashiro Elā Zaqaneka/Elā Aynayk" (p.15-16).

"...this is my back (side)/like a valueless and abandoned cigarette/its dryness time has not yet come/and my fingers have not become dry and motionless/...my fingers still know/how to point to your chin/to your eyes".

She sees that she has no value in the society and compares her existential value in a beautiful simile to a valueless cigarette that, though not having become dry, it is guided by the society's thoughts towards dryness.

Oppression of the Women

In the patriarchal culture, men look for the ways of benefiting from their own superior position in the social system and this superiority-seeking of the men is well evident in both the family and the other social institutions. Amongst the outcomes of this culture's dominance over the social system is the collapse of the sense of self-confidence and independency of the female identity against the male identity in such a way that the women are constantly feeling inferiority and abasement before the men (Ne'emati Qazvini, 2017, p.568). In poems known as "Qoba'ah" (hat), she realized the suppression and oppression and battery of the women that accumulate and become dense in the course of their lifetimes as being like the enlargement of the head and thickening of a tree's diameter. She stated that in the same way that a tree's diameter and the human head's circumference become larger day by day out, the tyranny and suppression towards the women are accumulated and become denser with the pass of time in the soul and mind of them but the women are obliged to sink in this rooted oppression and tolerate it: "Lā Bodda An Ra'asī Yakbar Milimetran Kolla Ām Fi Aqalle Taqdīr/Zāka An Al-Qoba'āt Lā Tasqor Hattā Telka Al-Wāse'ah .../Al-Wahīdah Al-Lafī Qabelto An Tahshor Ra'asī Dākhelahā Dūna An Taqfaz Elā Fawq Ka Al-Mentād/Aqsad An Yakbera Ra'asi Kolla Yawm Millimeteran Alā Al-Aqal/Wa Ellā Ayna Tazhabo Kollo Al-Safa'āt wa Al-Sod'e.../Mithlamā Al-Sanavāt Tatarakom Davā'er wa Halaqāt Hawla Nasq Al-Shajarah" (p.65).

"My head incumbently becomes at least one millimeter larger/because the hats do not become smaller even those that are large.../my head accepts one and sinks into it without being able to fly like a balloon/I mean that my head becomes at least one millimeter bigger every day/otherwise where could the slaps and headaches go.../like the years that are added in the form of circles and rings around the tree's trunk".



Women, Victims of the Capricious Men

Amongst the social problems and issues existent in many of the communities is the sexual look at women. Of course, this issue is exhibited strongly or weakly in various societies. Fatima Naoot saw the oriental (Egyptian) woman as a bewitched human being victimized by such a sex-stricken approach. The poet wanted to express the depth of catastrophe and the suppression and abuse of the women; thus, she began with crying; a crying that is from the bottom of the poet's soul and a sign of her compassion for her fellow kind in the society. She assumed herself as the same victim and stated that "2-Ahtāj An Abki/Na'am/Ana Al-Bent Al-Lati/Takhlāt Fi Al-Shawāre'e/... Salbahā Rajolon Alā Sāqīyehī Al-Baladah/Wa Estawledhā Teflah..." (pp.32-33) "I need to cry/yes/I am the girl/who mixes in the streets/... a man crucified her at the side of the village's ditch/and brought a child out of her into the existence ..."

In one of her poems, Naoot spoke of the lustful men who play with many women and make them deviated: "Tamodda Yadahā Elā Sadrehā/Li Tata'akkad/Wa Lammā Lā Tajeda Qalban Fi Al-Qafas/Ta'araf/Anna Rajolan Fi Al-Ba'eid/Yūda'a Al-Ān Qalbain Fi Darj Al-Maktab/Yaqlaqahū Jaidā" (P.70). "She stretches her hand on her chest/to make sure/and, when she does not find a heart in the cage/she finds out that/there is a man in a distant place/now, she puts two hearts in the drawer of the desk/and closes it firmly".

In fact, the poet proposed the playing with the women's emotions by depicting such an image. These are the women whose love and interests are ignored and these are the women who are deceived in an instant.

Moreover, in a poem called "Masūqāt", Naoot spoke of a young mother whose young child was coping with tuberculosis. In order to cure her child, she was forced to sell her marriage bracelet and she incumbently went to a capricious old man. But, the devilish old man was not influenced even by the cold tear running down from the woman's eyes on her cheeks:

"Lehayyah Al-Sheikh/Lam Tamna'a Al-Sheikh/Min Jassa Rosq Al-Sabiyah/Bedorbahe Al-Mohannakīn/Wa Hya Takhla'a Asāvera Orosehā/Li Takhtaf Walīdehā Min Al-Ribā'a/Wa Lā Dam'atahā Al-Lafī Baraqat Ka Ra'ad/Kasarat Sahma Al-Shahwah Fi Aynayhe/Kānat Al-Hayyahū Bayzā'a" (p.71).

"The old man's beard/does not prevent him/from touching the wrist of the young girl/with the skillfulness of the sophisticated individuals/while she is pulling out her wedding bangles/to save her infant from tuberculosis/nor her tear that shone like the thunderbolt/could break the arrow of lust in the old man's eyes/yes, that beard was white".

Freedom of Egyptian Women in Comparison to that of Western Women

In a poem named "Hafanah Arz", Fatima Naoot made a comparison between the women in her country with the women in European countries. In this poem, she saw the women from the western countries as free and fearless of the annoyance and disturbance by their families and societies even when they are alone. But, she did not find the women of her country as free and liberated rather they were realized as having no social security and being obliged to stay at home out of fearfulness because, as opined by the poet, these women were afraid of being gagged and treaded under feet hence they couldn't move freely and comfortably in the cities and streets.

"Al-Sayyedah Al-Lati Bebbaqā'on Ketfohā/Tatajūlo Amām Mesrah Rotterdam/Yarkezo Hawlohā Kalābon Thalathah/wa Jarvon Marbūt Fi Yadehā/wa Fi Al-Okhrā Hafnah Arz Tantherohā/...



Al-Yamāmāt Fi Al-Qarb Tamshī Alā Al-Arz/... Lā Takhāf Al-Dahs Aw Al-Khaneq/Al-Yamāmāt Fi Beladi Takhāf” (p.89).

“The woman who has a parrot on her shoulder/walks in front of the theater hall in Rotterdam/three dogs are walking about her/and a puppy is tied to her hand/and, a handful of rice that she spreads on her other hand/... pigeons walk on the ground in the west/... they are not afraid of being treaded and suffocated/pigeons of my country are afraid”.

The poet compares the pigeons (women) of her land with those of the European countries and she uses the word “pigeon” to actually refer to the women and compares their freedom status in both of the territories.

Women and Cumbersome Activities

The women’s presence in the house as the foundation and essence of the Islamic family is an important point largely emphasized in the traditional Egyptian society. However, Islam has never enumerated housework and performing of revenue-earning tasks amongst the women’s duties; instead, based on the canonical regulations, women can ask for a wage in the exchange for the activities they perform at home. But, the conditions are indeed different and the traditional communities’ women perform things in their daily lives a lot more than their common duties. In such settings, women have accepted that their activities cannot be necessarily aligned with their goals, interests and desires rather all their existence should be dedicated to satisfaction of their wives and children’s wants. This would cost women economic, social and emotional dependency in the family structure and beyond it (Abbot, 2001, p. 72). In a poetical segment of “Sha’ereh Al-Ashirah”, the poet realized the Egyptian women as the tribal girls and village-born females who were chaste and noble and did the housework inside the house and worked outside the home alongside their husbands in utmost serenity and sincerity and pureness without expecting anything in return. She recounted a woman’s tasks in a range from cleaning the house and cotton-spinning to grazing the sheep and guarding them. Naoot also portrayed herself as the poet of the trine in this industrious rural life; with a heart full of light and brightness, she saw the women of the society as active individuals who worked in all the grounds by the side of their men.

“Shā’erah Al-Ashirah/Tastaqbal Al-Noor Be’adde Khorafehā/Li Tatma’enna Anna Al-Ze’eb Lam Yazarhā Fi Al-Masā’a/Taknes Al-Dār/Tat’am Al-Sabāreh/Wa Tahlab Al-Laban/Li Tablol Behi Qet’ah Qetn/Tamsado Behā Al-Benser Al-Maqrūh/Al-Shā’erah Qalbohā Noor ...” (p.29-30).

“The female poet of the tribe/who welcomes the morning light by counting the sheep/so as to ensure that the wolf has not gone to see them at night/she brooms the house/she feeds the cactus/and milks [the cow]/so as to drench a cotton with it/and tie her injured finger with it/the female poet has a heart full of light ...”

Woman Wishing for the Lover’s Felicity

Sacrificing their life for the felicity of their husbands and the children and their honor in the society is amongst the properties of the women. In a poetical segment called “Cheesecake”, Fatima Naoot wished the sun as the sign of love and messenger of friendship and illumination and freedom for her lover and, although he was away from her, she put it in a suitcase and sent it to him. In this way, the poet wished the light, heat of life, serenity and sincerity for her lover



because all those phenomena come to life and remain living by the means of the sun and its light and heat.

“... Al-Hekāyah/Ennanī Orsel Al-Shams Elayk/Kollo Yawmen Min Honā/Kay Tahot Alā Keffoka Honāk/Li Tovashvesh Fi Ozonak/An Hālī/Fi Al-Layl Haresahū Al-Shajar/Wa Enda Al-Sobh/A’abbe’e Al-Shams Fi Haqqā’eb/Li Ab’atthehā Elayk” (p.10-11).

“This is the story/I send the sun to you/everyday, from here to the land down on your shoulder/and whisper of my status and whereabouts in your ears/I guard the tree at night/and, in the morning/I cramp the sun inside the briefcase/to send it to you”.

In fact, the poet is saying that although she is away from her lover, she is thinking about her anyway and wishes the best for her.

The poet likes her lover to call her name in the same way that she expresses her emotions. In the segment “Methla Fer’own Yanqasahū Sūlajān”, she stated “... Wa Lemāzā Hina Tashū Sawtaka Lā Yahmal Esmī?/Esmī Sahl/Eshal Min Varaqaten/... Jarrab/Ta’allamto An Ahmel Sawtaka/Fi Salti Al-Khūs/Akhrejahū Fi Khalvatī/Audbalej Horūf Esmī/Baina Nasījehī/Hayyan Esmī Laitha Sa’abā ...” (pp.78-79).

“... And, why your voice does not have my name with it when you wake up/my name is easy/easier than a leaf/... experience it/I have learnt to have your voice with me/in my straw basket/in my loneliness, I bring it out/I translate the letters of my name/in between its knots/hurry up/my name is not difficult”.

In the poetical segment of “Resālah Tahta Atabah Al-Bāb”, the poet knew the women of her land as pure and plain. These women had an identical face and conduct and their appearance was not deceitful. Quoting them, Naoot said “... Wa Hā Anta Tarā/Annanī Lā Omleko Shāmmah Fi Khasrī/Wa Lā Aze’e Mākīājā/Wa She’erī Al-Moja’ad/Atrakahū Moja’add/... Thomma Annanī Lā Ekhla’a Nezārāti Al-Tabiyeh/Hattā Fi Lahazāt Al-Hobb” (p.98).

“... And, now you see/that I do not have a spot on my back/and, I do not put on makeup/my hair is curly/and, I leave it that way/... more importantly, I do not remove my glasses/even when I am making love”.

The things the poet said about her apparent characteristics were all indicative of the pureness and honesty of the women before their lovers and this was against the traditional image of the beloved in the oriental literature that introduced her as keeping no promise and breaching the commitment and ignoring the lover.

The poet realized the women as wishful and zealous human beings always interested in meeting their lovers in such a way that such a zeal and desire was vividly discernable from their faces and all their existence; in their lips, skins, tongues, ears and all their body organs and all these body members ardently and fervently wished to reveal the women’s love and desire for their lovers.

“... Ayanāy Tazdādān Bariqā/Ez Tafteshān An Ghesmātek/... Wa Lesānī Yasīr Arqī/... Wa Ozonay/Lammā Toshaveqān Sawtaka Al-Shomālī/... Hattā Shaftī/Hina Tahann Elā Tamtahe Horūf Esmak/Takūn Ka Al-Tefl Yobsar Al-Ālam/Kay Yohebbahū/Wa Hazā Jeldī/Ez Yahfū Lam Lams Jeldek” (pp.11-12).

“.., The brilliance of my eyes is increased/when they search for the signs of your face/... and my tongue becomes more expressive/... and my ears/when they become wishful of your northern voice/... even my lips/when they become impatient to whisper the letters of your



name/they are like a child who sees the world/to love it/and, this is my skin/when it craves to experience a touch on your skin”.

In these expressions, the poet wanted to portray the desire of a woman for finding a trace of her lover.

In the poetical segment “Thamahū Kaff Āqelah Fi Tarf Thawbek”, the poet used very beautiful renderings of the mothers’ devotions and sacrifices for their children; but, the thing that distinguished this segment was that the poet saw the mothers as being hugely in debt of their children inter alia for the millions of the amorous kisses and embracing of them. The poet never demanded the fulfillment of this right because she did not want her mother to be freed of such a debt rather she wanted her mother to be always in debt to her for providing her with the beautiful sense of being a mother:

“Ejhad An Azkor/Kay Zedd Raqadatak/Fa Ansī/Laitha Li Anna Mā Sabaqa Mā Kān/Bal Li Annahū Kathiran Kān/Lāken Al-Zākerah Methla Ommahātenā/Mota’ammerah/Thommahū Doyūnon Yajeb An Astared Daynī Madinah Anta Li/Bi Million Qablahū Wa Zammahū Wa Hanū/Wa Ashrah Malā’in: Yā Habibatī/Madinah Bi Ashrayn Āman Min Al-Farh/Wa Ana Lā Anwāy An Astared Dayni/Kaylā Tataharrarī Wa Tatīrī” (p.85).

“I try to remember/so as to become strong before your sleep/so, I forget/not that what I said has not happened/but because it has happened many times/but, memory-like our mothers/is conspirator/there are debts that have to be fulfilled/you owe me (your child)/for a million kisses and for embracing and desire/and, ten million: my dear!”, you owe me 20 years of happiness/and, I do not want to get back my debt/so that you might not be freed and fly away”. The property of this poetical image of the child-mother relationship was that it artistically manifested the mutuality of this relationship, i.e. it showed that in the same way that the children enjoy the love, affectionate feelings and compassion of the mothers, the same way the mothers feel the beautiful sense of being a mother and gain an internal motivation and force for keeping on the living.

Injured Feelings of the Women

In the matriarchal system, marriage causes the continuation of the subjugation and more dependency of the women in economic, legal and emotional terms meaning that the men are found constantly seeking for proving their superior and particular position in the new family to which the women are newly accepted as spouses and that men’s scale is still heavier in the balance of power, respect and credibility (see also, Moshirzadeh, 2003, p.283). One of the factors largely influencing the women’s spirits and feelings is the distrust in the husbands. The women who are the sources of feelings and affections and generators of tranquility in the family would be severely irritated and inflicted with distrust with the smallest wrong action by their husbands. Such women may be found happy but they are feeling deep sorrow and grief inside for such a reason as the unpleasant sense of victimization by their spouses’ betrayal. In fact, the women are at full service of their families and lovers and try to draw the attentions of their husbands by doing anything; when they see that their life partners are sharing their love and affectionate feelings with individuals other than them; they are intensively aroused or severely depressed in such a way that they can be found sad even when making love with their husbands:

“Na’am!/Tamassanī/Torraf Ajneha/Tazammanī/Yanshaqq Al-Jobb Wa Tabzaq



Zohreh/Asābe'aka Bi She'eri/Hattā Al-Janādeb Toqannī/Lāken Thoqban Fi Al-Qalb/Yasqat Menho Al-Farah” (p.39).

“Yes!/you touch me/feathers start winging/you hug me/the well is cleaved and a flower grows/your fingers in my lock of hair/even the locusts are singing/but, there is an infiltration in the heart/from which the happiness collapses”.

In another poetical segment, she says: “... Wa Emra'ah Tahmal Asrāran Kathirah/Wa Azābāt/Lāken Mahalla Al-Qalb Kharzah Rezqā'a” (p.23). “... And, a woman who has a lot of secrets with herself/and, the sufferings (tortures)/but, there is a blue bezel in the place of heart”. The poet mentioned that the women have been filled with blue beads in lieu of the heart and, in fact, there is no light of hope in their hearts but they tolerate the sufferings. The poet's reference in this section was to one of the other attributes of the women which was the idea that the women always have a lot of things to say about their emotions and feelings locked in their chests. The women are the shoulders to cry on in families and they are the grantor of light and cause of the happiness and comfort of the household; although women are accused of being not trustable and disclosing of this and that person's secrets, the heart of every woman is per se a treasure of untellable secrets.

CONCLUSION

The present study has dealt with the “image of women in the poetical book ‘Esmī Laitha Sa'abā” by Fatima Naoot, a contemporary Egyptian poet. The following results were attained following the analysis and investigation of this poetical collection's compositions:

1. In this poetical collection, Fatima Naoot expressed the subjects related to women's rights, concerns, issues and problems in the contemporary Egyptian society more than before. The problems and issues with which Naoot has directly or indirectly posited on the loneliness, lack of freedom, wastage of the women's rights, female gender's lack of a high value, women's oppression, submission to the wrong traditions and customs of the society, negative approaches towards women and so forth.
2. In Naoot's poems, women have various countenances; they are sometimes alone, sometimes have nowhere to refuge in and are unsupported; occasionally waiting and expecting something to happen and sometimes imprisoned in the house and away from their lovers. Of course, even with all these mistreatments, women are industrious and family-supporting, punctilious, devoted and socially active persons with the lowest expectations and, in order to revere the women's positions, Naoot used the term “Al-Seyedeh” that is equivalent to “lady” wherever she spoke of them.
3. As a social activist and, before that, as a woman, Fatima Naoot followed the problems of her society's women with a special fuss and she wore their shoes and sympathized with them and said “Ana Al-Bent Al-Lati ...” which means “I am the daughter that ...” and she tried to direct the attentions of her addressees to their feelings and emotions as well as their different world and also their pains and sufferings.
4. As a woman, Naoot showed in her poems that the patriarchal Egyptian society did not value women so much and the decision-making power and independence meant nothing to the women in this society. In Naoot's poems, women have even complained about their names' not being run on their lovers' tongues and she realized it as a sort of disrespect to the women and their human rank.



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