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A Feminist Mythological Reading of Olive Dargan’s Play “Semiramis”

ABSTRACT

This study presents a feminist reading of Olive Dargan’s play “Semiramis” through the lens of mythology. It also sheds the light on theory of Sojourner Truth and Abolitionist movement and how women’s rights were focused on by this movement and its pioneers. The relation between this theory and the play of Semiramis is presented and how the writer concentrates on the role of women and how they can take various responsibilities like men , the idea which is represented in the play. It examines the portrayal of the female protagonist, Samiramis, in the context of ancient myths and legends, and explores how Dargan’s interpretation challenges traditional gender roles and power dynamics. Drawing on feminist literary theory and mythological studies, the paper analyzes Semiramis’ agency, relationships, and societal influence within the play, highlighting themes of female empowerment, autonomy, and resistance to patriarchal norms. By deconstructing the mythological elements in Dargan’s work, this paper aims to shed light on the intersection of feminism and mythology in literature, and contribute to a deeper understanding of the representation of women in the context of ancient narratives. It tries to answer the question whether the author is feminist or anti-feminist?

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النوع الاجتماعي والسلطة والبنية الاجتماعية في "نساء القمة" لكاريل تشرشل

الخلاصة:

تقدم هذه الدراسة قراءة نسوية لمسرحية "سميراميس" لأوليف دارغان من خلال منظور الأساطير. كما تسلط الضوء على نظرية سوجورنر تروث وحركة الإلغاء وكيف ركزت هذه الحركة وروادها على حقوق المرأة. يتم تقديم العلاقة بين هذه النظرية ومسرحية "سميراميس" وكيف تم التركيز على دور النساء وتحملهن مسؤوليات متنوعة مثل الرجال، وهي الفكرة التي تمثل في المسرحية. تحلل الورقة تصوير البطلة الأنثوية، سميراميس، في سياق الأساطير القديمة، وتستكشف كيفية تحدي تفسير دارغان الأدوار الجنسية التقليدية وديناميات السلطة. باستخدام نظرية الأدب النسوي ودراسات الأساطير، تحلل الورقة وكالة ساميراميس وعلاقاتها وتأثيرها على المجتمع ضمن سياق المسرحية، مسلطة الضوء على مواضيع تمكين المرأة واستقلاليتها ومقاومتها للقيم الأبوية والذكورية. من خلال تفكيك العناصر الأسطورية في عمل دارغان، تهدف هذه الورقة إلى إلقاء الضوء على تقاطع النسوية والأساطير في الأدب، والمساهمة في فهم أعمق لتمثيل المرأة في سياق السرد القديم. تحاول الورقة الإجابة على سؤال ما إذا كان الكاتب نسويًا أم معاديًا للنساء؟

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Introduction

Literary speaking, Semiramis is a play written by Olive Tilford Daragan who concentrated on an Eastern character "Semiramis" and the importance of women's role in different aspects of life. Semiramis or as she was called Shammuramat is regarded an example of a historical beautiful and intelligent woman who ruled in a wise way. The whole world heard her name but not many people know her legend, her story or works. Many mythical narrations are about her legend but the most famous one is that she was a daughter of a nymph Derceto of Ascalon in Assyria who was found by doves and they took it to take care of. A beautiful baby was out of the egg. Doves began feeding her by taking food from a place where the farmers put their milk and cheese (Bertman, 2007: 243).

Samiramis's influence was notable and she had a great fame and power during her life and after. Her special power is the secret that reveals how she could hold the throne after her husband's death. The nation was provided with stability by Semiramis who terrified many people because she was an exceptional case. She had her own obelisk since she was powerful enough to have it which was inscribed and put in prominence in the city of Ashur (Von Soden, 1994: 104).

Her son was given a stable and powerful empire because she gave him a secure and sizeable nation and established a great military. Her buildings made Babylon impressive and it became one of the most

beautiful cities in the ancient world. She built great walls and gates which were considered one of the seven wonders of the world (Bertman, ۲۰۰۷:۲۶۰).

She conquered much of Asia and restored Babylon with making a protection for it by building a high brick wall that surrounded the city. She built many places in Persia. She could control many places such as Syria and it was believed that she reached India (Mieroop, ۲۰۰۶:۳۷۳).

Methodology

The term feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Feminism involves political and sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of gender difference, as well as a movement that advocates gender equality for women and campaigns for women's rights and interests. Although the terms "feminism" and "feminist" did not gain widespread use until the ۱۹۷۰s, they were already being used in the public parlance much earlier; for instance, Katherine Hepburn speaks of the "feminist movement" in the ۱۹۴۲ film *Woman of the Year*. According to Maggie Humm and Rebecca Walker, the history of feminism can be divided into three waves. The first feminist wave was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the second was in the ۱۹۶۰s and ۱۹۷۰s, and the third extends from the ۱۹۹۰s to the present. Feminist theory emerged from these feminist movements. It is manifest in a variety of disciplines such as feminist geography, feminist history

and feminist literary criticism. (Humm & Walker, 1990)

Feminism has altered predominant perspectives in a wide range of areas within Western society, ranging from culture to law. Feminist activists have campaigned for women's legal rights (rights of contract, property rights, voting rights); for women's right to bodily integrity and autonomy, for abortion rights, and for reproductive rights (including access to contraception and quality prenatal care); for protection of women and girls from domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape; for workplace rights, including maternity leave and equal pay; against misogyny; and against other forms of gender-specific discrimination against women. During much of its history, most feminist movements and theories had leaders who were predominantly middle-class white women from Western Europe and North America. However, at least since Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech to American feminists, women of other races have proposed alternative feminisms. This trend accelerated in the 1960s with the Civil Rights movement in the United States and the collapse of European colonialism in Africa, the Caribbean, parts of Latin America and Southeast Asia. Since that time, women in former European colonies and the Third World have proposed "Post-colonial" and "Third World" feminisms. Some Postcolonial Feminists, such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, are critical of Western feminism for being ethnocentric. Black feminists, such as Angela Davis and Alice Walker, share this view. (Humm & Walker, 1990)

This paper presents the feminist mythological study in the play of Semiramis which is written by Olive Tilford Dargan. Feminist theory encompasses various perspectives that analyze and advocate for the rights and equality of women. It explores issues such as gender roles, patriarchy and discrimination. Different branches, like liberal feminism, radical feminism and intersectional, offer diverse approaches to understanding and understanding gender-based inequalities.

Feminism means a woman's movement to gain autonomy and freedom of self-determination and it represents the belief that women should have political, social and economic equality to men. The adopted theory is the theory of Sojourner Truth, an African abolitionist, whose speech is "Ain't I woman?" ,addressing racial and gender inequalities. She is a strong contributor to the movement of abolition and woman's rights. (Truth, 1998). The Abolitionist movement was comprised of organized groups of white and black people who sought to end slavery prior to the Civil War. So that this theory matches the play of Semiramis and history of how she took the political actions and responsibility. One of the main points that presented through the play is women's political position and leadership. Dargan focused on this point and introduces it as an important idea that should be discussed through literature and other domains. She presents Semiramis as a main character who aims at getting a special position in the kingdom. First, she leads the army of Assyria toward victory by using her intelligence and wisdom. In spite of that her father is a

strong general but he returns back from the field and Semiramis becomes the person who tries to encourage him. Then, she succeeds to be the queen of Assyria who doesn't abdicate her position for a lover or her dignity in most difficult situations. Dargan reflects this character from the real queen Semiramis in Mesopotamia who was a symbol of the eastern strong queen who succeeded to rule a great empire and led it to be the most developed one in the world. So, he encourages the women to take an important position and to share men their views and leadership. The study follows Ansam Almaarroof and Aasha Aamer's model of feminist writer to determine whether Dargan is a feminist or an anti-feminist writer. They said that to be a feminist writer is to show empowerment at the end of the literary text to the good-strong women and not to any other kind of women. (Almaarroof & Aamer, ۲۰۱۷)

O.T. Dargan's Semiramis

Semiramis is one of Dargan's plays which was published in ۱۹۰۴. This play is a kind of play that represents a historical figure in a specific way, but this figure is from a different area of the writer herself. This area is the East from which Semiramis legend and story appeared. The main figure of the play is Semiramis's character on which this play is based. It is introduced through the suspense factor to what will happen. It consists of four acts that differ from each other with their scenes, events and characters.

An overview on the Play

The scene of the first act of the play begins within the tent of Menones on the plain before Nineveh , during the events of a war between Armenia and Assriya. It starts with a conversation between Sola and guards. She tries to know anything about her husband 'Artavan' who is fighting, expressing her concern because of the war which lasts for a long period. Then, Semiramis enters the place through curtains after hearing her brother's voice who returns and tells her that their father is wounded and he doesn't know anything about him. She asked him to go to look for their father and give her brother a paper of directions to give it to their father without telling him exactly its details. When her brother asked her to let him see his wife before going, Semiramis refuses telling him that he needs power not tears of a woman. His wife knows that her husband went without seeing her. She begins blaming Semiramis telling her that she does not think, just in war and glory without paying attention to feelings and this is a strange thing for a beautiful woman like Semiramis. After that, they hear a sound of a chariot. Her father enters, livid and trembling. He enters in large and mighty form in spite of his age. When he sits, Semiramis asks him about the reason of his return and going back to the field of the war but he tells her that is too late and he should fly. She tries to encourage him to go because her brother there and he cannot lead the battle without their father but he tells her that he cannot because of fear. Then she decides to go by herself to the battle with her brother.

When Semiramis left the place, Menones hears a sound and he knows that the king comes to his tent.

Ninus decides to stay in this tent not only for waiting or the news of the war but he has more important reason to stay. He asks about Semiramis and they tell him that she joined the battle. He tells them that she is brave and she deserve to be a queen because of her spirit. Menones appears after hearing that but when the king sees him he becomes angry because of leaving the battle. Menones tells him that he is sick but the king decides to kill him. Menones asks the king to let him and not to hurt his daughter because he will offend the gods and he tells him her story and how she was given life. The king tries to believe the story but his guard tells him that this is a lie. Semiramis's woman tells him that is a true story and she asks him to save Semiramis's life. Menones died because of fear but the king decides to keep his sword and his body with him to use them later. He reveals that he will get Semiramis's love and deserves to be the queen Assyria. Then, his guard tell him that Semiramis succeeded and she leads the battle well to the victory and the people ejaculate her name.

When Semiramis arrives , she meets the kings who expresses his joy and she tells him that she will tell her father about the battle but her joy is missing because her brother is lost. Sola blames her again because she lost her husband. Then, Semiramis enters to meet Khosrove who becomes a prisoner. She begins asking him about her brother and tells he her that his father will not hurt him. He asks her to let him escape promising her that her brother will be safe but she refuses. The conversation between them develops to reach a point in which he expresses his love. She becomes angry telling him that he doesn't know with

whom he is talking " with Ninus's future wife and queen". Semiramis tells the king that Khosrove became their prisoner. He asks the guards to bind him with chains and to kill him in order to take his revenge from his father but Semiramis asks him to let him because she wants to save her brother's life. Ninus tells her that he cannot accept her demands and she should choose either to save her father or her brother's life and she chooses her father's life.

When Semiramis enters to see her father to tell him that that they won and the king forgave him, she found him dead. Then she asks Ninus to save her brother he refuses because she took her choice before and she asks too much. When she heard that, she becomes angry telling him that she demands not asks because her courage is the reason of their victory and the hearts of all people in Assyria now are her own. She tells him that he should promise her to let Khosrove go to his father.

The second act begins in the great palace of the king in Nineveh where Ninus with his guards try to hide Khosrove's torture and how Semiramis is sad and worried about her brother. Semiramis enters and asks Ninus about Khosrove because she knew that they are tantalize him. Ninus admits that Khosrove is maimed and she should not think about anything but her love to her husband. She tells him that she wants to make Assyria brave and he must deserve her love. Then, Ninus tells her that the kingdom needs a governor but she informs him that it should be delayed and suggests that Sumbat is a good option because she was her father's assistant and adviser and she knows everything

about the safety of the kingdom. After that, Sola enters and asks Semiramis about her husband. Semiramis tells her that Ninus is the king and he will find and save him as when he forgave her father but Sola tells her that he cannot. Semiramis is shocked when Sola tells her that Ninus fooled her because he knew that her father was dead and he doomed him to death before her coming. When Ninus entered Semiramis expresses her concern about Khosrove but he tells her that the queen should not be troubled by anything. She tells him that Khosrove is so brave, proud and fair. Ninus becomes angry and begins to blame himself and how he is foolish. He tells her that there is something between Semiramis and Khosrove.

Semiramis: That noble prince? So brave, so proud, so fair.

Ninus: What do you say? O, you changed eyes with him!

Semiramis: My Lord.

Ninus: That's your grief! Your brother ha!

Semiramis: Your Majesty.

Ninus Not Majesty- Fool! Fool.(Gargan, Act I)

Then Ninus decides to bring Khosrove in front of Semiramis to see him and how he is maimed. An officer came and tells them that the queen's brother is here. Ninus asks how he could escape and come. They

tell him that Husak freed Artavan when he heard that his son is free. When they go out the hall, Semiramis gains on the body but she is shocked when she discovered that this man is not Khosrove. Ninus returns back and the man who they think that Artavan enters. The surprise is that this man is not Artavan but he is Khosrove. Semiramis Knew that there is something strange. Ninus tells them that Artavan will be the governor. Semiramis tries to prevent that but she cannot because Ninus insists on that.

Semiramis asks Khosrove how he could get out the prison. He tells her that Sumbat helped him and the guards took another one. He promises Semiramis that he will save her brother and he will not hurt their kingdom but Semiramis expresses her fear because he is their enemy.

***Khosrove: Not Now! No more a foe, but
truest friend!***

For in my heart you are Assyria.

He assures that he regards Assyria as Semiramis in his heart. Here he expresses his love for Semiramis who asks him to go. Then, an officer entered and tells them that there is a man saying that he is the queen's brother. When that man enters, Ninus asks Semiramis about him but she denies and this man is foolish. Artavan tells them that he has the paper of directions which was given to him by Semiramis to give it to their father and helped him to come back. When everyone goes out, Semiramis tells her brother that she will save him but

he tells her that she forgets everything in order to be the queen.

The officers enter and inform the king that the Army of Armenia is near to look for Khosrove and the governor change the way of their army. Semiramis is shocked and tells the king that the man who became the governor is Khosrove and Artavan is the man who came to tell them that he is her brother. They feel at this moment that Assyria is lost but then they hear Khosrove's voice telling them that Assyria and Artavan are saved.

Khosrove: Hear all Nineveh! Hear the decree of Ninus, King and god! That Artavan is the brother of the queen shall freely live (Dargan, act I)

Act ۳ begins in the gardens over the lake where a wide bridge extends from the bank to the lake. The scene starts with a discussion between the king and Sumbat about Khosrove's promise and if he will keep his word. The king assures that they have no foe because Semiramis has made all people and enemies as friends even Khosrove and Assyria and Armenia become as one.

Then the dancers enter and pass through arch. Following them, Semiramis who wears her simple white robe with a dove nestles on her bosom with her women. She asks about Khosrove and how she wishes that he will not come. Sumbat enters and she asks him about the king. She expresses her fear of the king and her brother's destiny but Sumbat tells her that she

should trust the king because he is changed and he will keep his word.

Semiramis: Khrosve should trust him too.

Sumbat: He Knows that you would warn him if there lay a danger here.

Semiramis: I warn him? But suppose the warning false? (Dargan, Act I)

After that, Sola enters . Semiramis asks her about the reason that made her running. She tells her that she is afraid because of the king and wants to look for Artavan to save him from the king. Semiramis says that he is kind but Sola tells her that she heard him under the bridge. He told his guard " Vassin" who did not go out of Nineveh to kill Khorsove when he returns.

Semiramis: so kind a king?

Sola: O, kind! As death, or plague, or leprosy!

*"Tis he has taken revenge on Artavan"
and He'll kill the prince when he comes.(Dargan Act II)*

The king enters and tells Semiramis that everyone is ready for their wedding except her. She tells him that is a compliment for him but he became angry and tells her that she insults him and he will bring Khosrove to see her splendor because she did not care for him and their wedding.

The King: What means these simple robes?

Semiramis: A compliment unto your majesty.

The King: It shows more like affront! I would have Khorsove see splendor here

Unpainted in the daring of this dream and thou the star of it! A merchant's daughter would robe her handmaid with more care- lend her a pearl or two.(Dargan, act II)

Then she answered him that she was sad because of the war and this simple robe is a symbol of glory and victory. Here she could convince him and he asks her to forgive him. An officer enters and informs the king that Khosrove comes. When Semiramis heard that she tells the king that she wants to tell him the truth that gods may work some harm to Artavan. After that, Khorsove enters and the king and Semiramis thank him for his trust.

Semiramis: O, Khorsove thou art lured to death and I have been thy traitorous star!

Ninus: Thou art welcome and we thank thee for thy trust.(Dargan, Act II)

After that, the celebration of the wedding begins with wonderful scene in which dancing maidens in white robes, each with a dove resting on her hand enter and reach the center of the stage. As the maidens describe

circles in the dance, the doves rise and fly in similar circles above their heads and re-alight on their on their extended hands. This scene reflects Olive's vision of peace in the play and Semiramis's legend.

In this celebration, the events of the play has fully changed and everything becomes a shock for the audience because Semiramis makes a strong revolution against the king who declare her as a queen but she asked him to be the king instead of him. The king agrees and threatens anyone who refuses that. Then, Semiramis begins to give her order to the king. She orders that Khorsove should be honored over Ninus because he deserves that and even in his heart he is above Ninus. Everyone was amazed. When the guards took Ninus, he fell into the lake and died.

Sem: It hath much troubled me

*That Khosrove should be honored over
you,*

Lord of the Revels.

King, if 't please you!

I've laid my purple by, but I have still

*The royal color in my heart. Think'st
thou*

To sit above Assyria, who wearest not

*The brave investment of the gods? who
hold'st*

*Thy sceptre still from warrior chiefs, not
from*

Anointed kings?

Khos: Because my race is proud!

Too proud to kneel to any earthly king

*And take the sacred vestment from his
hands!*

*Sem: You see, my lord, that even in his
heart*

He ranks himself above you!

Nin: But, my love—

*Khos: Farewell! Thou didst me service
once, and here*

I thought to thank thee, but—

Nin: Stay, Khosrove, stay!

Khos: Farewell, with all my heart!

Nin: Nay—

Sem: O, my lord.

*Let him depart. He mocks our glory, and
bears*

A challenge in his proud simplicity

That puts our splendor to defense.

Khos:Nay, madam!

I came to lay my duty at your feet,

*And lift my eyes no higher than your
hand*

*Without your royal leave! But now I'll
cast*

My gaze upon the stars, forgetting that

You walk beneath them! (Going)

You'll stay, O Khosrove?

Khos: Ay,

On one condition.

Nin: Name it!

Khos: That you will take

Our seat at feast.

Sem:That is our command!

Nin: No, no!

Sem: We'll have it so!

Nin: I'll not consent!

*Sem: It is our royal order! Guards for
Ninus!*

Nin: What do you mean?

Sem:To have our way! Guards here!

You shall not do this wrong to your high self!

*We'll look unto your honor! (To guards)
Bear him in!(Dargan, Act III)*

This is a dialogue exchange between Semiramis, Ninus, and Khosrove. Semiramis expresses her discontent that Khosrove is being honored over Ninus, asserting that he lacks the royal investment and does not wear the purple of kings. Khosrove, in turn, asserts his pride and refuses to kneel before any earthly king. Semiramis observes that Khosrove ranks himself above Ninus, and when Ninus attempts to intervene and persuade Khosrove to stay, Semiramis insists that he should depart. It is possible to interpret feminist implications within the context of the play. Semiramis challenges traditional gender roles by actively asserting her authority and making decisions that affect the power dynamics within the kingdom. She demonstrates agency and takes control of the situation, asserting her own vision of honor and glory. This portrayal of Semiramis as a powerful and assertive character can align with feminist readings that emphasize women's agency, challenging patriarchal structures and norms.

Then, Vassin comes and Semiramis tells him that he is the killer of the king and he couldn't save him. Khosrove decides to return back to his country because his father is sick. Semiramis expresses her concern of the accident of the Ninus's death and Khosrove tells her that she is innocent. She says that Vassin didn't save the king but Khosrove was ready to go to death. Then, an officer enters giving Semiramis a report and she

reads it loudly. The report is from Husak informing her that he is ready for the war. Semiramis asks Khosrove if she will meet him at the field of the war but he tells her that he couldn't because he loves her. He tells her that she should make him a head of Assyria in order to be as one country without war. When semiramis heard that, She became angry and tells him that she was mistaken and she will never trust any man.

*Khos: I'll prove it is not so! See here—
the dove—That nestles at your breast!
Why is it here?*

*Sem: Because I was a woman once—and
dreamed*

*On foolish, woman things! (Frees bird
from her bosom)*

Fly! fly!

And as I pluck thee out I pluck away

*All thought of mortal love, and stand
alone*

Beneath Assyria's crown!

*Khos:(Gazes at her in despair) Then I'll
be gone!*

I lead my father's troops!

Sem: I lead my own!(Dargan, Act III)

This quotation aligns with a feminist mythological reading, since, Khosrove questions why a dove is

nestled at Semiramis' breast, to which she responds that it represents her past as a woman and her dreams of romantic love. Semiramis then frees the bird, symbolically letting go of thoughts of mortal love and asserting her independence. She declares that she stands alone beneath Assyria's crown. This quotation highlights Semiramis' rejection of traditional gender roles and expectations. She renounces the notion of being defined solely by her relationships with men and asserts her autonomy and authority. By emphasizing her leadership and stating that she leads her own troops, Semiramis challenges patriarchal norms that typically associate power and military leadership with men. This portrayal of Semiramis as a strong and independent leader who transcends conventional notions of femininity supports a feminist reading of the play. It emphasizes female empowerment, the rejection of societal constraints, and the assertion of agency and self-determination. When Khosrove exists, she looks after him without moving until he passes out of sight. The moonlight is less bright. Herdove flies over her head. She starts and looks after it. The bird alights. She watches it eagerly and waits. It circles about her, then darts to her bosom. With an exultant moan she clasps it to her breast. The Scene of the last act of the play begins within Husak's tent. Husak orders his guard to bring the widow and he means by the widow Semiramis who became his prisoner. He thinks that he will insult her and tells his son that Assyria becomes under his feet expressing his pride and revenge of Semiramis and her Kingdom.

Husak: Bring in the widow!

Now, my son, thou'lt see

Assyria at thy feet. Ay, she who scorned

*To match her crown with thine, shall low
as earth*

Cry up for favor!(Dargan, Act III)

Husak orders for the widow to be brought in, and he assures his son that Assyria, who previously refused to match her crown with his, will now beg for his favor. It focuses on power dynamics, pride, and the reversal of fortunes. Semiramis enters the tent proudly not looking at Husak with her robe and crown and her arms fettered with golden chains. She looks at Khosrove telling him that they meet each other again in the field not as he told her that his father sick and love should blunt his sword. Husak tells her that his sword is sharp enough to kill Sumbat . Semiramis says that Khosrove was playing with her feelings and deceived her and he swore that she is dearer than thing even the crown. Husak tries to insult her by his speech but Semiramis shocks him and still strong . So, he orders his son to take and kill her because her pride kills his mercy. Khosrove refuses that and tells Semiramis that she is free and she can go to Nineveh . When Husak heard that, he became angry telling Semiramis to go and he decides to kill his son. Semiramis asks him to kill her but he tells her that she should go alone without anything and anyone who tries to help her will be killed. Semiramis goes alone with her grief and sad because her lover will die. She blames herself because she ignored the true feelings of love toward her beloved

and the person who sacrificed his life for her sake. Then, she Sees Khosrove's cloak upon the floor, and kneels by it, taking it in her hands.

*My Khosrove!... Methought a god struck
off my chains*

*So strong and fair he seemed, yet strove to
hide*

The beauty of his act, as might a star

Shrink in its own sweet light!

Buries her face in the folds of the cloak)

O, noble prince,(Dargan, Act III)

It primarily focuses on Semiramis's emotions and her perception of Khosrove's qualities. It shows the authentic nature of a women.As she walks alone, she hears the sounds of her troops but she doesn't feel the happiness of victory because she is sad and hopeless.

*That noise confused—hoarse shouts—
shrieks—pawing steeds—*

*And rumbling chariots! Those are the
tones*

Of battle! O, the bloody work! 'Tis war!

Did it delight me once?... Assyrian cries!

*My troops! my troops! They've rallied!
How they cheer!.*

While this quotation captures Semiramis' involvement in warfare and her excitement at the sounds of battle, it address feminist themes or perspectives to show that women are just like men can endure and have interest in war and strength issues and they are not wear. In this sense, it focuses on the experience of war and Semiramis' feelings towards it rather than exploring gender dynamics or challenging traditional gender roles.

After that, Artavan comes to her. She is surprised when she sees him and asks him how he could be alive. He tells her that the death of Ninus freed him and he gathered the troops to look for her and he finds her At the suitable time but she tells him that that he is too late. He is shocked when sees her like that telling her that Husak and his son has been taken and her crown in their hands. She doesn't care for that news asking him about Sola who is dearer than anything to Artavan even the crown. Artavai is amazed and thinks that she is crazed because it is the first time that Semiramis shows her carless for the authirotty.

Sem: A crown. For such a thing

Wouldst give thy Sola?

Art: She is dear to me,

But ay, by Heaven, I would!

Sem: You would? I know

A greater thing than this.

Art: What, sister?

Sem: (Letting the crown fall) Love.

Art: O, she is crazed! This is some evil work!

Bring in the captive Husak! He shall speak!

Sem: O, brother, once I thought thy love was truest

That ever husband gave to wife, but now

It showeth dark against my lover's truth!

Art: Semiramis ... sweet sister ... What dost mean? (Dargan, Act III)

In this excerpt, Semiramis and Art (presumably Semiramis' brother or husband) are engaged in a conversation. Semiramis suggests that Art would give up Sola, who is dear to him, for a crown. However, she counters by stating that there is something greater than a crown, which is love. Semiramis' assertion that love is a greater thing than a crown challenges the traditional power structures and values associated with monarchy and rulership. It emphasizes the importance of personal connections, emotions, and relationships, rather than material wealth or political power. By prioritizing love over a crown, Semiramis asserts her agency and values the emotional bonds between individuals. This quotation reflects a feminist perspective by highlighting the significance of love and personal relationships in the face of patriarchal systems that prioritize power and material gain. It subverts traditional gender roles that

often depict women as objects or prizes to be exchanged for power or status.

During their debate, he tells her that Khosrove is alive and they found him in chains but they didn't bound or kill him because he saved Artavan's life. Everything is changed for Semiramis who asks him to give her the crown. She feels that she is alive again.

I am Semiramis! Give me my crown!

Now this small circlet seems to me the world,

And it is mine—to wear—or give away!(Dargan, Act VI)

In this excerpt, Semiramis boldly declares, "I am Semiramis! Give me my crown!" She asserts her right to the crown and states that even this small circlet represents the entire world to her. She emphasizes her ownership and agency over the crown, stating that she can choose to wear it or give it away. It aligns with a feminist reading by showcasing Semiramis as a powerful and assertive character who claims her rightful place as a ruler. She challenges traditional gender roles and norms by asserting her authority and autonomy. It emphasizes the importance of women's agency and their ability to wield power and make decisions for themselves. By demanding her crown and recognizing its significance, Semiramis symbolizes a feminist perspective that challenges patriarchal structures and notions of power. It portrays her as a strong and independent leader who is unafraid to assert her rightful place and take control of her own destiny.

The Soldiers enter with Husak and Khosrove. Semiramis tells them that Assyria and Armenia should be friends and united to get the peace over all the east. Husak expresses his remorse because he has spent a childless hour and asks her to kill him instead of Khosrove. She tells him that she remembers everything but now is the time to be bound with love not chains.

These are his chains—(Putting her arms about his neck)

his prison deathless love,

And here I pray that he will wear this crown,

And hold with me the great Assyrian throne!

... (calls) My chariot!

Khos:My queen! my queen!

Sem:Wilt thou

Consent?

(The royal chariot appears, rear. They step in)

Sem: (Giving the reins to Khosrove) To Nineveh!(Dargan, Act III)

Semiramis declares her love for Khosrove and embraces him, referring to his chains as his prison. She then expresses her desire for Khosrove to wear the crown and join her in ruling the great Assyrian throne.

Semiramis calls for her chariot, and they both step in, with Semiramis giving the reins to Khosrove. They set off for Nineveh together. The above quotation aligns with a feminist reading by showcasing Semiramis as a powerful and assertive character who defies societal norms and expectations. She challenges traditional gender roles by actively pursuing and expressing her love for Khosrove, taking the initiative in their relationship, and sharing the throne with him. This portrayal emphasizes the importance of love, partnership, and shared power in the face of patriarchal structures. Semiramis' decision to give the reins to Khosrove symbolizes her trust and belief in his capabilities as a leader, further challenging gender stereotypes. It reinforces the idea of a collaborative and equal partnership, where both individuals contribute to the governance and success of Assyria. So, the play ends with the queen and the new king happily with their royal love.

Conclusion

Olive is a feminist writer because she relates all features of the third wave in her play especially women's political position and leadership and this is one of the main points that presented through the play. Dargan focused on this point and introduces it as an important idea that should be discussed through literature and other domains. She presents Semiramis as a title of the play and as the main character who aims at getting a special position in the kingdom. First, she leads the army of Assyria toward victory by using her intelligence and wisdom. In spite of that her father is a strong general but he returns back from the field and

Semiramis becomes the person who tries to encourage him. Then, she succeeds to be the queen of Assyria who doesn't abdicate her position for a lover or her dignity in most difficult situations.

Dargan reflects this character from the real queen Semiramis in Mesopotamia who was a symbol of the eastern strong queen who succeeded to rule a great empire and led it to be the most developed one in the world. So, Dargan encourages the women to take an important position and to share men their views and leadership. Dargan is a feminist writer according to the followed model put by Almaarof and Amer (2017) because the play ends happily with a good strong woman who has the wisdom to rule her country peacefully and to keep her love relation smartly.

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