

# Representation of Global Terrorism in Nuruddin's Imperfect Trilogy of *Hiding, Knots, Links and Cross*

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**Abstract**— *The increasing number of foreigners to the Shabab numbers mirrors a global dilemma in the fight against terrorism. Radicalization is no longer a preserve for the Islam or the Somalis alone in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Overtly, it is apparent that the process of radicalization has a taken new twists and turns because of the new and surprising numbers of Britons and Americans that have Joined Shabab fighters. Nuruddin in his imperfect trilogy of Knots, Cross, Links and Hiding portray succinctly the nature of global terrorism. The postcolonial theory as envisioned in Said's Orientalism is an intentional and bold investigation on the colonized cultures. However, the theory does not just analyze the culture of the orient but also the power contestation that exists between the Oriental and the Occident world. The global market marked with a skewed economic contestation has created a distinct gap between the rich and the poor. We posit that the current global dimension of terrorism is a reaction to marginalization and oppression of a section of the community and that Nuruddin in Knots, Cross, Links and Hiding creates a platform for a literary interrogation of global terrorism.*

**Keywords**—*globalization, identity, radicalization, religion, terrorism.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The antiterrorism war in the contemporary times has been frustrated by the ever mutating nature of terrorism. Terror is no longer a preserve of specific communities that are often considered barbaric, uncouth and religious zealots (Bobe, 2011). There is an increasing number of wealthy and educated youths from the Western world that are joining Shabab ranks such as Samantha Leithwhite popularly referred to as the White lady and currently on the American bounty list for her involvement in the Shabab Westgate's attack in Kenya in (give the year) . The radicalized lady is believed to be a sophisticated dangerous warrior who leads and organizes terrorist

attacks (Harper, 2016). This is a clear demonstrations of the infiltration of non-Somalis to Shabab fighters. Their presence posits a challenge in the fight against terror because they inject fresh ideas and techniques to the Shabab. Most of the foreign fighters are educated and wealthy persons who are able to operate improvised devices such as bombs and land mines. The need to interpret and demystify the motivating force that drives one to commit terror activities has remained intriguing. The Somali based Shabab continues to gain new impetus because the attraction they have received from foreign Jihadists. The objective of this paper is to analyze the facet of global terrorism in the works of Nuruddin *Knots, Links, Cross and Hiding*.

## II. METHOD

The conflating point of global terrorism cannot be assumed anymore. There is an urgent need to relook the narrative of contemporary terrorism. Through critical literary analysis, we posit that a postcolonial lens as advanced by Said locates the growth and sustenance of the Somali base Shabab. Postcolonial tenet of power contestation dissects globalization as a double edge sword of both economic advancement and marginalization. The Shabab is a reaction to global economic imbalance. Somalis are an angry people who feel isolated by the Western world (Elleke, 2010). Nurudin aptly captures the multifaceted nature of terrorist in *Knots, Hiding, Cross and Links*. This research employs literary analysis method to critique the presentation of radicalism in the text.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Nuruddin mirrors this dilemma in his text *Crossbones*. When we first meet Ahl in the texts, he is coming back to Somalia after a decade of absence in search for his stepson Taxhill who has escaped to Somalia. He is an American- Somali with no background of the Somali culture having been born and raised up in America. Ahl

tells us that Taxhill, his stepson has been gone for more than six months and is suspected to be somewhere in Somalia (*Crossbones*, 34). Taxhill represents the growing trend among the Somali youth to join the self-declared religionist movement. In an earlier rumor, the runaway youth is spotted in Kismayo, a Coastal City that is the hands of Shabab and deemed too dangerous to visit (*Crossbones*, 36). Nuruddin, uses the character of Taxhill to expose the reality of global terrorism. He raises serious questions in regard to what motivates youths in comfortable zones of life to join terror organizations. Taxhill being a Somali-American is expected to jealously safeguard his new found American heritage. However, his decision to join Shabab refreshes the narrative of global terrorism. Nuruddin posits the intrigues that underpins radicalization. He succinctly exposes the paradoxes that describes the allure of radicalization. Taxhill's emigration to Kismayo which is billed by the United States Security department as the most dangerous part of Somalia by underscores the strong network of Shabab group. Nuruddin, further in the constructions of Taxhill recruitment to Shabab movement mirrors the soft underbelly of security system. The United States of America often boasts of a formidable security structure coupled with stringent cross boarder policies. Nuruddin, scorns the American doctrine of antiterrorism and asserts that America has aided the process of radicalization.

Nuruddin, lays bare the weakness of American policy that preach for equality among human races but at the same time perpetuates covert enterprise of racial tensions. The American preaching about human fairness is seen as an overt hypocritical public relation exercise. Beneath the American outward projection of a civilized modern nation that respect human rights is a soft underbelly that runs an oppressive machine that thrives on ethnic profiling. Africans that have acquired American citizenship are subjected to painful realities of ethnic profiling and discriminations in America. The areas of stereotyping ranges from colour to religion where the oriental Muslim community is perceived as potential terror recruits. The narrative that runs in the White American society is that Africans and oriental Muslim community living in the United States of America have inherent genes of violence. This stereotyping carries the same vein of thoughts that run the colonial empires where the imperial masters considered Africans and the oriental worlds as potentially wired terrorist. The argument then was that Africans were potentials murderous because it is in the genetic makeup of Africans to act as savages. White Americans have sustained this narrative in spite of the end of slavery which actually ended in paper but is still institutionalized in the Americans' daily lives.

The perception of the Muslim community as potential terrorists makes them potential target of the Western global fight against terrorism. Nuruddin, in the selected texts for this study, argues that terrorists have been given a global impetus by the ever evolving facet of ethnic isolation. The underlying racial tensions in America have created mistrust, bitterness and revenge against America. The Muslim community is living on the edge because of the tension that is created by a Western world that subjects them to arbitrary arrests. They have been constructed as prime suspects for any terror activity and this has created a sense of resentment towards the Americans and their allies. The Islam community in the face of outright profiling and arrests reacts towards their predicament by being radicalized and creating large scale destructions as way of avenging their horrific situations.

Nuruddin sustains a narrative that appropriates the rise of terror and radicalization to the insolence of United States of America. He indicts racial profiling as a lead cause of global terrorism. The seclusion and the injustices met on Somali-Americans creates a sense of trauma and frustrations as a result of the surreal and painful deaths met on Somali-Americans based on stereotyping and assumption that Somalis are terrorists. The radicalization of Taxhill mirrors the resentment that runs deep in the oriental world that has been a victim of American stereotyping and covert oppression. Taxhill has become a victim of brutality after his friend Samir joined the Alshabab as means of avenging his parents' death. Nuruddin, narrated the pain Samir was subjected into by the brutal American forces who murdered his parents and grandparents as he watched the horrendous deaths helplessly. He became hardened and acquired a new and forceful resentment towards the Americans. The incident happened when Samir flew out to Bagdad with his father for the first time since the American takeover. Nuruddin describes the ugly murder of Samir's parents in a surreal manner. He says:

His father helped grandma in regaining possession of her walker and held his hand out to her as she shakily stepped out of the vehicle. Meanwhile, his uncle bent down to assist Grandpa, who was still in the car, in retrieving his cane and he took a long time, half his body hidden from view. Panicking that one of the two men would shoot him, the young Marine opened fire killing everyone except Samir (*Crossbones*, 35)

Nuruddin from the above passage provides an eagle eye description of the underlying racial tensions that exists between the Orient and the Americans. He speaks of the covert and subtle racial discriminations that defines the modern global world. Americans holds the view that every Muslim is a potential terror within the global prism.

The writer points out that Samir and his family have visited Bagdad which is now in the hands of the Americans. The visit mirrors the destructions that Americans have created in Iraq which is a metaphor of global creation of terrorism. Samir, vividly describes the horrendous massacre of his parents by the Marine who suspected that Samir's parents were preparing to shoot at him. He opened fire to everyone sparing only the young Samir. Nuruddin interprets the Marine's actions as rooted on stereotyping and a narrative that all Muslims are terrorists.

This fallacy of generalization is the engine behind global radicalization which has captured two warring factions where America is the strong predator whereas the Orient is weak and the victim. The senseless actions of the Marines mirrors the global racial profiling where the Muslim community is viewed as potential terrorist. Nuruddin mocks the young Marine's actions of killing very old grandparents of Samir; and the product of the killings is outright resentment. The writer deconstructs through the murder of Samir's parents the creation of battle-hard terrorist groups. Samir is wounded and left an orphan. He embeds in his mind a picture of a violent and senseless America that is trigger-happy and also deconstructs the basis of global radicalization which is rooted in global racial profiling. The incident affects Samir deeply and prompts him to join Alshabab movement as a way of rewriting his story.

Nuruddin, describes Samir's fluid character after the senseless murder of his parents. He is depressed and full of resentment towards the American society. Samir spends the better part of his time planning on how to join the Shabab movement which identifies with his suffering. The American brutality and profiling of the Somali-Americans succeeds in creating a pathetic attitude towards the American society. The Americans succeed in creating a wall between them and the Islamic society. After the death of his parents, Samir becomes morose and lost interest in life which mirrors the psychological trauma that victims of American brutality undergoes. Nuruddin describes Samir psychological dispensation as follows:

Back in the twin Cities, Samir became morose. The two friends still spent time together, but their life lacked the fun and ambition they had previously shared. Then Samir began to speak of attending to his "religious responsibilities" and shortly thereafter he vanished from sight. A month or so later, his photo appeared in the star Tribute caption reading local boy turns Baghdad suicide bomber (*Crossbones*, 40).

Samir disappearance from America and his eventual radicalization mirrors the global impact of terrorism. He

speaks of the trauma that precedes radicalization as a result of American ethnic profiling of the Islamic community. The senseless Marine's murder of his parents altered and reworked on Samir's personality who eventually became a Nihilist. He became paranoid and constructed America as a metaphor of death and terror. Samir bemoans the collective pain of the Islamic community and feels that he has higher duty of liberating his people from the Americans servitude. Nuruddin, succeeds in formulating and reflecting the intrigues of global radicalization. He indicts and castigates Americans for their role in creating global terror while riding on the caveat of war against terror. Samir thus represents the disenfranchised Islamic community that is viewed by the world as enemies of humanity.

The West has peddled this weak argument for too long and Nuruddin as a voice of the Somalis attempts to rewrite the narrative of Somalis as terrorists. The writers advance a discourse that depicts Islamic radicalization as a tool of announcing to the world their frustrations. Indeed, in the face of humiliation and frustrations, the Islamic community gangs up against the West as the only means of protecting themselves from the Americans destructions. The actions of the American marine succeeds in hardening the youth and creating a soft ground for global radicalization.

Nuruddin also locates the predicament of Taxhil as tied to the American oppressive system. After the disappearance of Samir coupled with the news that he has turned into a suicide bomber, Taxhill and his family became the target of the American police. The entire Somali diaspora neighborhood became victims of American police brutality since they are viewed to have been part of Samir's scheme. The writer says that the FBI came early in the morning and brutalized them with unnecessary force. Nuruddin, deconstructs and lays bare the tragedy of the Somalis living in diaspora. He echoes and reflects the painful traumatic journey of being a Somali-American where one is subjected to prejudice and discriminations. However, the Americans are blind to the reality that their excessiveness and profiling succeeds in only creating resentment from the Islamic community. This resentment builds an overwhelming anger that leads to vengeance packaged in the form of radicalization. The FBI'S brutality radicalized Taxhill who thereafter escaped to Somalia where he feels part of a larger purpose of liberating the Islamic community from the American oppression. Indeed, Americans blurred the line of who are actually terrorists between them and the Somalis because the irrational sense of profiling has created a fertile ground for radicalization.

The radicalized groups such as the Somali Alshabab capitalize on resentment and family dysfunctions.

Nurudin describes Taxhill eventual radicalization as resulting from America's racial profiling and social exclusion. He succinctly describes this brutality in the depiction of FBI'S grouping of Taxhil's family as sympathetic to terrorist activities because of their Islamic orientation. He says;

The FBI came early the next morning and descended with unnecessary force on Taxhill, Ahl and Yusr as if they had detonated the bomb that caused the death of the soldier. They were taken in separate vehicles and fingerprinted their histories together and separately goes over and over again. Taxhil was made to endure longer hours of interrogation with repeated threats. The FBI showed keen interest in Ahl as well because of his birthplace and because he, Yusr and Taxhil now lived in a house close to potential escape routes along the Mississippi. An FBI officer accused him of being a talent spotter for radical groups in the Muslim World (*Crossbones*, 45).

Nuruddin from the above excerpt captures the tragedy of being a Somali-American. He underpins the myriad challenges of Somali diaspora where stereotyping and social harassment is the order of the day. Ahl is shocked by the humiliation meted on them by the FBI. They were descended upon with unnecessary force which succeeded in radicalizing Taxhil. The writer indicates that Taxhill was made to endure more hours because he is a Muslim youth. The American security system does not realize that their oppressive methods of reacting to terror activities do not deter terrorist but simply embolden radicalization. Nurruddin observes that profiling and harassing innocent Muslims succeeds in aiding radicalization because victims of police brutality react to their predicament by joining organized terror groups. Ahl, from the writer's perspective became an FBI'S subject of interest because of his birth place. The identity and the location of Ahl as Somali became a sufficient reason for him to become a suspect of terror. The FBI'S harassment of Ahl mirrors the global profiling of Somalis. The perception across the world is that Somalis are prone to terror and radicalization making them the most dangerous community globally.

The open profiling and condemnation of Somalis has created global radicalization. The Americans have managed to create sympathy towards terrorists organizations because of their brutality disguised in their fight against terrorism. The American insensitivity towards the Oriental world aids in the constructions of global terror because of the attendant frustrations and trauma that victims of American brutality are subjected through the horrors of racial discrimination. The overt discrimination plays out in the differential treatment of Yusr who is not a Somali-American. The officers cast

Yusr in to the role of a witness where they handled her with kindness in light of her history (*Crossbones*, 46). This stands in contrast with the handling of Taxhil and Ahl in the same contexts,

The FBI'S brutal handling of Taxhil on the suspicion that he is a member of terrorist organization eventually led to his radicalization. Nurudin, observed that the next time misfortune called, Taxhil was ready to follow. The writer asserts that Taxhil immediately after the harassment flew to Somalia, He said:

The next time misfortune called, Taxhill was ready to follow. It took him back to Somalia, his route an enigma, the source of the funds that paid for his ticket a mystery, his handlers a puzzle, the talent spotters who recruited him a riddle (*Crossbones*, 42)

The above textual excerpts reflects the American role in the creation of terrorism. Taxhill, is more an American than a Somali however America has turned the soft Taxhil to a hardened terrorist. His mistreatment created a sense of isolation and disenfranchisement in the larger American mainstream society. His rejection constructs a fragmented and alienated individual who becomes a fertile ground for radicalization. Ahl later learnt that Taxhil has joined the volunteer Somali youth brigade recruited from within Somali communities in the diaspora and earmarked to train as Jihadist (*Crossbones*, 42). Taxhil recruitment mirrors the global aspect of terrorism where the network of terror has infiltrated to the Western world where Somali in diaspora are attracted to the Shabab. The case of Taxhil reflects the increasing number of homegrown terror which involves radicalization of Somali diaspora. Nuruddin, castigates the West in their role of creating a fertile ground for terrorism through ethnic profiling and discrimination.

Nuruddin, further argues that foreign Jihadism has become the latest face of terrorism. The ever evolving facet of terrorism is a reflection of the new challenges that terrorism posits in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The global framework of terrorism has created a network of funding where Somali diaspora remits money to the Shabab. They send money to their respective clans disguised as relatives but in the actual sense are dangerous organized militia. The ex-military militia who was travelling with Jeebleh upon his arrival to Somalia complains that the movement is broke and in dire need of money from relatives in the diaspora. He says "The movement is broke and we need to raise funds from the usual sources, our clansmen in the United States of America" (*Links*, 26). Jeebleh in links illuminates the complexity of modern terrorism. He succinctly describes the role of the Somali diaspora in funding and aiding terrorist's activities. The Somali clansmen in the United States of America contribute money for purchasing of guns and battle wagons. Jeebleh

in *Links* recalled in a very sad way how his clan elders upon arrival to Somalia visited him with an intention of soliciting money to repair the broken battlewagon (*Links*, 48). The soliciting of funds from the diaspora reflects the global role in aiding terrorism across the world. Nuruddin exposes the labyrinth nature of global terrorism where many actors are involved in the funding of terror activities across the world. This has ensured the flourishing of global radicalization.

The instability of Somali has continued to create a strong wave of emigration to the West where they arrive as illegal emigrants or refugees. However, here they are treated with suspicion and are harassed before being allowed entry into the West. Nurudin in *knots* examines the tragedy of Somali emigrants which eventually lead them into radicalization. The writer observed that plane loads of Somalis land at major airports everywhere in the world, including Toronto, nearly all of them declaring themselves as stateless. Arda deconstructs the difficulty of Somalia emigrants who target Canada as their destination. She acknowledges the tall order of regularizing citizenship because of racial profiling where most Somalis are considered terrorists. She says: "I have it from good authority that Somalis wanting to come to Canada will find it difficult to obtain Visas, temporary or long term (*Knots*, 265). Nuruddin unravels the suspicion that surrounds Somali emigrants and out of which makes it difficult for them to emigrate. The difficulty created by ethnic profiling leads to radicalizations as a tool of acquiring a sense of belonging in Somalia.

There is a close symbiotic relations between Foreign Jihadists and the local fighters. They both have common interest which is to fight the Americans that they consider enemies of Islam. The Shabab considers Americans as robbers who rape and plunder their resources. Nurudin deconstructs the intrigues that characterize the war against terror. He locates these complexities within a wider of globalization which involves rich men such as Ma-Gabade in *Crossbones* that bankrolls a string of terror activities with an intention of protecting his political interests. The Somali based Al-shabab has witnessed a great expansion because of the huge support that they have received from foreign fighters. Essentially the expansions of Shabab recruits to include Yemeni and Pakistani fighters mirrors the global nature of terrorism. Nuruddin, succinctly projects terror organization to have transcended the local level to an international realm. He says:

Ma-Cabade is allegedly bankrolling a string of activities in which his men collaborate with a Shabab unit charged with bringing Yemenis and Pakistanis operatives into Somalia by boat. He is rumored that the pirates bring the foreign Jihadist

into the Somalia peninsula and in exchange receive weapons and protection in the coastal area under Shabab control (*Crossbones*, 186).

Nuruddin from the above excerpt critically examines the place of terrorism in a global world. He unravels the nuances that constructs modern day terrorism across the world. The writer acknowledges that the presence of foreign Jihadist in Somalia based Shabab has made it difficult to weed out the organization.

The complexity of global geopolitics has indeed complicated the fight against terrorism because of the close collaboration that exists between different terrorist cells. Nuruddin further acknowledges that nobody is so sure of the whereabouts of the more than thirty Somali-American youths who have vanished from their homes in various parts of the United States (*Crossbones*, 36). The writer argues that this Somali-American youths have been recruited to various terror cells across the world. The reality of global terrorism cannot be overlooked any further and indeed Nurudin has succeeded in unraveling the labyrinth nature of global terrorism in the selected texts for this study.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

From the above discussions, it can be concluded that Nuruddin in *Knots*, *Hiding*, *Cross* and *Links* succeeds in representing the Somali based Shabab as a product of globalization. The fight for resources and the stereotyping of Somali have created a Somali who is bitter and vengeful. Terrorism, has become a means of writing the Somali narrative. Shabab which basically means the youth is an expression of anger and resentment towards the global enterprise which has predominant powers rape and plunder resources from the Somali nation. Further, Nuruddin in a nude manner unravels the question of racial profiling and the interconnectedness with the Shabab which offers a refreshing insight on the Somali war.

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