

**THE USE OF ALLEGORY IN PRESENTATION OF DISINTEGRATION IN  
NURUDDIN FARAH'S *HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT* AND *CROSSBONES***

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby solemnly declare that the work presented in this project is my original work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other University.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Jackson Aligula, who taught me the virtue of hard work.

To my mother and teacher, Grace Adega whose prayers and constant belief in my capabilities have seen me weather storms.

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## ABSTRACT

Somalia is a nation that has been reeling in civil strife for more than two decades after the overthrow of Said Barre's government in 1991. This study examines the use of allegory in presentation of Somalia's disintegration in Nuruddin Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones*. The study presupposes and that there are textual metaphorical elements in the two novels. The metaphorical elements examined in the two texts include character typology, style and plot structure. In *Hiding in Plain Sight*, the study establishes that Farah uses these allegorical elements to demonstrate that civil strife and colonial legacy has led to displacement of Somalis from Somalia. The study focuses on the plight of global Somali citizens as they grapple with the question of what it means to be a Somali within and without Somalia and in so doing, explore not only the fragmentation of Somalism but also expose the reasons behind the disintegration and reconstitution of Somali nationalism.

In *Crossbones*, the study examines the rippling effects of Somalia's fragmentation along sexual, political, religious and ethnic lines. The disintegration has resulted in the breakdown of communities, families and individuals. Notably, the breakdown of the nation has resulted in negative nationalism which has seen the rise of global terrorism, illegal businesses and piracy. The study establishes that the allegorical elements are not only consistent in representing the fragmentation but also reconstitution of Somalia's nationalism. This study examines the reasons behind the fragmentation and reconstitution of Somalia's nationalism.

## CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

This study examined the use of allegory in Nuruddin Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones*. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines allegory as "a story, a play, picture etc. in which the characters and events are meant as symbols, representing e.g. patience, truth or envy" (30). Meyer Abram in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* defines allegory as

a narrative, whether in prose or verse, in which the agents and actions, and sometimes the setting as well, are contrived by the author to make coherent sense on the "literal," or primary, level of signification, and at the same time to signify a second, correlated order of signification. (5)

Allegory is the use of a symbol to represent an idea, a concept or an issue. Abram goes on to identify two types of allegory. First is the historical and political allegory. Historical and political allegory, he explains, comprises "characters and actions that are signified literally in their turn represent, or 'allegorize', historical personages and events" (5). The second type is the allegory of ideas where "the literal characters represent concepts and the plot allegorizes an abstract doctrine or thesis" (5). Both forms of allegory can be maintained throughout a work or deployed as an episode in a non-allegoric work but Abram suggests that "only the second type, the sustained allegory of ideas, the central device is the personification of abstract entities such as virtues, vices, states of mind, modes of life, and types of character" (6).

He further points out that an allegory is a narrative strategy that can be used in any work of art. Hugh Webb also defines allegory as "a narrative in which the details of the presented world possess plurisignificance" (67). He observes that an allegory is organized in such a way that it makes sense on its own as well as signify an associated meaning which could be a concept or an event. He states that in allegory the narration of one coherent set of circumstances implicitly carries forward that other level of comprehension. These levels of comprehension could be "abstract entities such as concepts, vices, virtues, states of mind or even attitudes of life" (67).

The use of allegory is not a new concept in African literature. Marjorie Oludhe Mcgoeye in *Coming to Birth*, uses Paulina as a metaphor of Kenya as a young nation trying to chart its own path.



Chimamanda Ngozi in *Half of a Yellow Sun* allegorizes her characters in the novel to narrate Nigeria's fragmented history, which involves circumstances that led to the calls for secession by the Eastern Nigerians and the advent of the Biafran war. John Coetzee in *Disgrace* deploys extended metaphor to demonstrate the pain and frustration the White South Africans have to tolerate in the new post-apartheid South Africa in which the black South Africans are in charge of the nation.

Notable Western critics like Fredric Jameson argue that African literature is imbued with allegory. He asserts that all third world texts are necessarily allegories and that they should be read as what he terms national allegories. Jameson adds that "the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third world culture and society" (69). However, postcolonial critics such as Abdul Jan Mohammed argues that the deployment of extended metaphor in the Third World literature is informed by the need to counter imperialist ideologies in which the colonized are depicted as backward and uncivilized. Mohammed says that literature from the western world has imposed stereotypes on third world peoples and "that the Third World is therefore perceived as uncontrollable, chaotic, unattainable and ultimately evil" (18). Aijaz Ahmad in *Jameson On the Rhetoric of Otherness* contends that Jameson's categorization of the world into three classes based on their economic development and political inclination is oversimplification of what the third world literature is all about. Aijaz argues that the binary opposition which Jameson constructs between a "capitalist first world and a presumably pre- or non-capitalist third world is empirically ungrounded" (7). He contends that the problem of the Third World literature stems from the publishers who only publish a few postcolonial writers who can write in the language of the Metropolis or simply translate a few to get a representative of the third world literature. Aijaz claims that Jameson's assertion is based on two assumptions: Firstly, that literature from the first world is superior to third world literature. Secondly, all the writers from developing countries have a common experience.

However, Robert Strongman argues that most narratives are based on one's experience or both external and internal environments. The narrator does not exist in isolation but writes on what is happening to the society that he or she is part of. This means a narrative is a mirror of what is happening in the society since the narrator is part of that very society. This implies that one cannot write about himself or herself without writing the nation and hence disputes Jameson's claim that

in the Capital world there is no link between an individual's public life and private life. Strongman avers that:

The self is articulated jointly with the nation because, in order to exist as an integral and contained formation, the boundaries of the self-need to be defined. The best way for these boundaries to be drawn is against the national or communal background. The nation frames the subject, delineating its temporal and spatial borders as a temporally finite and spatially positioned being. Conversely, the nation requires the subject because national narratives aggrandize personal narratives to build their own. (18)

Thus, this study focused on how Farah has employed elements of allegory in *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* to show the disintegration of Somalia with regard to political, geographical and cultural point of view. The use of character typology and elements of style show the collapse of Somalia's nationalism but equally depict the reconstitution of this nationalism owing to the hostility resulting from within and without Somalia's nationalism. In *Hiding in Plain Sight*, I examined the plight of hybrid Somali citizens at the global and local levels and Farah's vision of tolerance and appreciation of differences. In *Crossbones*, I explore the negative impact of disintegration of Somalia's nationalism as well as the search for Somalia's nationalism and the reasons for this collapse and reconstitution of Somalia's nationalism.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

This study examines the use of allegory in Nuruddin Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* in the narration of Somalia's disintegration.

## **1.3 Objectives**

This study aims at

- i) interrogating the textual elements of allegory present in Nuruddin Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* and
- ii) examining how the textual elements of allegory present in *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* are consistent in representing a fragmented Somalia.

## **1.4 Hypotheses**

This study presupposed that

- i) there are different textual elements of allegory in *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* and
- ii) the textual elements of allegory present in *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* are consistent in representing Somalia's disintegration.

## **1.5 Justification**

No one has comparatively investigated the use of allegory in *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* is justification for this study.

## **1.6 Scope and Limitation**

The study is focused on interrogating the allegories present in Nuruddin Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* and how these are consistent in representing Somalia. To effectively execute this, I employed a close reading of the texts and a review of journals, historical documents and interviews with the author. The study has employed Formalism and Post-Colonial theories as the prisms for understanding Farah's treatment of allegories to represent Somalia.

## **1.7 Literature Review**

This literature review examines whether any study has been done with regard to the use of allegory in the presentation of disintegration in Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones*. Pauline Katiyo in *Returning to Somalia in Nuruddin Farah's Links and Crossbones* focuses on Jeebleh as the major character in both novels to demonstrate the changes that Somalia has gone through over the years.

In *Links*, she avers that Jeebleh's major reasons for returning to Somalia after several years in exile is to, apart from avenging his childhood rival Caloosha, who is presumably responsible for his imprisonment for indulging in subversive activities during the reign of Said Barre, Jeebleh is out to rescue Bile's niece, Raasta and her friend Makka who are suspected to have been kidnapped by Caloosha. She argues that Makka's status as an orphan signifies the orphaned status of the

Somalia nation especially after the collapse of the Somali government and the advent of the civil war which has wedged deep divisions among the Somalis along clan lines.

In *Crossbones*, Katiyo focuses on Jeebleh's return to Somalia in the company of his son-in-law, Malik. Jeebleh in this instance is back in Somalia after ten years when the Islamic Courts Union are controlling most parts of Mogadiscio which is in ruins. She argues that Jeebleh's inability to recognize the city or relate with anything including the metamorphosis of the Bakhaaraha market which apparently embodies the corruption and the rot of the religionists such as Big Beard who profiteers from the crisis in Somalia. Jeebleh is unable to draw a similarity between the Mogadiscio of his youth and the Mogadiscio of today in which apart from the near total destruction of the city has lost its cosmopolitanism. She says that the "more complex geopolitics of the twenty-first century, the innocence Farah saw in the promise of return is a lost innocence" (80). This innocence was lost when the Barre government was overthrown, the nation broke into a civil war which led to the disintegration of Somalia which saw emergence of two autonomous states, Somaliland and Puntland. She focuses her study on the undesirability of Somalia and especially Mogadiscio owing to the civil wars. The war having been majorly clan based has made the city lose its cosmopolitanism, apart from causing hatred, fear, deaths, destruction of property and displacement of people.

Moolla Fiona in *Postnational Paradoxes: Nuruddin Farah's Recent Novels and Two Life Narratives in Counterpoint* argues that *Hiding in Plain Sight* "highlights the impacts of globalization and transnationalism on subject formation, personal and family relations, and opens up questions of sexuality in a postnational context" (63). She argues that *Hiding in Plain Sight* presents characters in a utopian world in which cosmopolitanism, transnational movements, digital mass communication, hyper-mobility and hybridity have taken root. Although *Crossbones* highlights piracy, terrorism and environmental degradation as challenges associated with globalization, Moolla asserts that "Postnationalism is presented almost as a 'technology' that in its elision of boundaries automatically produces the ideal citizen" (77). Moolla argues that the global citizens in both novels are ideal characters who have conquered the oppressive geographical, cultural and national boundaries owing to globalization.

She proves that *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* are post-national novels through illustrations from the texts based on her definition. Some of the trends which are associated with post-nationalism and cosmopolitanism are, firstly, transnational movements which she argues does “challenge nation-state sovereignty and wear down the impermeability of national territorial borders” demonstrated by characters shuttling from one part of the world to another” (67), and, “Brazilianization” which she defines as the part-time employment of individuals in various parts of the world as opposed to full time employment of individuals in a fixed locale, and, thirdly, world families as a premise of post-nationalism. World families is a situation in which characters have family members dispersed across different parts of the world as shown in Aar’s family in which he lives and works in Somalia, his sister lives in Rome, his children are in Nairobi while his fiancée is a Swede who lives and works in Nairobi. In such a set-up, the “normalized and naturalized assumptions about the family and the individual contained within the nation” are shattered (69).

Globalization and mass communication as presented through the presence of global food outlets, a variety of cuisines, some global brands such as McDonalds and Coca -Cola which she says show “Africa has been drawn into global networks of consumption mainly through representation of food ways” (68). The presence of Japanese cars, the construction of roads and the outsourcing of management of traffic jams along those roads by Chinese companies she says indicate global geopolitics in which Kenya is playing a role. The globalized mass communication portrayed through emails, mass media and social media not only enhance communication but also facilitates consumption of global entertainment. In summary, she avers that postnationalism is linked with “global financial flows and networks, individual and mass migration, cross-national militarization, mass electronic and digital communication and global consumerism” (67).

With regard to sexuality, Moolla argues that Valerie’s lesbianism is a symbol of “individual liberation from patriarchy and heterosexuality with which post nationalism” (71) such that when looked at the realist perspective she says it shows the flexibility of postnational borders. She therefore does not assert whether lesbianism is an acceptable sexual orientation or not in the text but argues that Bella’s discussion with Salif and Dahaba concerning lesbianism is didactic. Moolla argues the discussion is didactic since Bella offers a cosmopolitan perspective on the matter in which she argues that lesbianism should be treated as a private matter. This cosmopolitan view

Moolla argues resides among people around cities whom she says are in the middle and the upper middle classes. Xenophobia and homophobia, she says is an opinion held by people outside the city whose views she says are shaped by a “long history of colonialism, apartheid, and the often-masked injustices and inequalities of globalization” (72).

She argues that whereas *Hiding in Plain Sight* presents the utopian life of cosmopolitans, *Crossbones* presents the “negative cosmopolitanisms of crime and terrorism that also operate postnationally” (76). However, she finds *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* to be insufficient texts to use to not only examine the challenges and dangers facing postnationals but also the impact of globalization in the spread of crime and terror networks. She does not delve into the challenges faced by postnations within and without the confines of their native home in the two novels.

To contrast the utopian life led by cosmopolitans in *Hiding in Plain Sight*, Moolla delves into the life narrative of a Somali residing in the diaspora. She examines Jonny Steinberg’s biography *A Man of Good Hope* in which Steinberg narrates about Asad, a Somali refugee who fled Somalia in 1991 when Somalia plunged into a civil war. Asad moved to Ogaden, to Addis Ababa and then to Cape Town in South Africa. It is a life of difficulty which is further aggravated by xenophobia which Moolla argues is presented by Steinberg not as a result of tribalism but as a consequence of a dark past characterized by colonialism and apartheid. She says it is “a consequence of the historical destruction of the moralities of affiliation” (80). The constant brutal attacks and the need to move from one refugee camp to another force Asad to move to Kansas City in the United States for which his entire life depended on members of his clan.

Contrasting *A Man of Good Hope* and *Hiding in Plain Sight*, Moolla argues that hanging onto one’s nation is not the cause of the problems facing cosmopolitans. Instead, she argues that it is “mindless affiliation to that Asad regards as the source of violence in the South Africans he finds himself among” (80). She contends that Bella in *Hiding in Plain Sight* reconciles with her Africanness and Somaliness when she identifies herself as an African woman and a Somali and thus a paradox and therefore the novel “is ambiguous and ambivalent” (81) as a thorough going postnational novel.

Additionally, she contends that Omar Nasiri's *Inside the Global Jihad* similarly captures the life of a cosmopolitan national but underscores "the dark side of the valorization of hybridity and mobility as ethical ideals" (77). The story relates the spread of jihadism as a counter current against the spread of Western globalization. Nasiri displays cosmopolitanism owing to his movements across Asian, European and African countries and has his family in different parts of the world. The story reveals the dark side of cosmopolitanism in which characters are isolated from both their native culture and hybrid culture. The global citizens end up living a life of misery and bitterness.

Moolla's argument that *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* are post-national novels is undisputable. Her demonstration of the characters as cosmopolitans who exhibit normalization of global trends with regard to mass communication, hypermobility, food, brazilianization and world families is convincing. Moolla presents *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* as postnational novels in which characters' uprootedness from their national heritage she says eventually "paradoxically, creates a reconstructed version of national affiliation" (81).

Although I agree with Moolla's postulations that *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* are postnational novels and that the novels present cosmopolitan characters who demonstrate collapse and reconstitution with regard to national affiliation, in this study I investigate reasons behind the collapse and reconstitution of national affiliation. Additionally, the study confines itself to the study of both novels as the basis for the examination of challenges and problems that face Somali postnational characters in diaspora and therefore disagrees with Moolla's assertion that "Postnationalism is presented almost as a 'technology' that in its elision of boundaries automatically produces the ideal citizen" (77). The study examines the use of allegory in presentation of disintegration and in so doing exposes reasons behind the fragmentation and reconstitution of Somalia's nationalism which is an area that has not been investigated before.

A study into the use of allegory in presentation of disintegration in Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* has not been done.

## **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

Formalism and Post-colonial theories form the interpretive grid for this study. Charles Bressler asserts that Formalism emphasizes that the author's biographical information, mental state and worldview are irrelevant and unnecessary when it comes to an interpretation of a literary text. He says that for formalists, literature should be divorced from "religious, political, sociological or philosophical ideas" (51). Formalists base their work on Ferdinand de Saussure, the French linguist who argued that language was composed of signs (signifiers) which are autonomous from what they signify (signified). De Saussure suggests that meaning is not inherent in a sign or word, but is arbitrarily attributed to it in terms of its paradigmatic relationship with other words whose meaning is different. This idea of the autonomy of the sign, the word, or language, laid the foundation for the formalists' separation of the text from the context, taking it as an autonomous object. To de Saussure, language (*langue*), not content, is the centre of attention. This gives rise to the formalists' concern with the form rather than the content of the text, which in that case was poetry.

For formalists, therefore, the key to proper study of literature as stated by Robert DiYanni is "with the work itself rather than with literary history, the life of the author, or a work's social and historical contexts" (1893). He argues that one can only study literature correctly by looking solely at the text and not the biography of the author, his or her society, culture or prevailing issues of his or her time. The formalists' major textual study is on the use of language in the conveyance of meaning. The formalists' focus on language involves an investigation into the author's use of metaphor, symbolism, irony or imagery.

DiYanni observes that formalists emphasize that a "literary work exists independent of any particular reader, that is, that literary work exists independent of any reader's recreation of it in the act of reading" (1894).

DiYanni further suggests that for formalists, "the greatest literary works are 'universal', their wholeness and aesthetic harmony transcending the specific particularities they describe" (1894). There is truth in this since the major approach applied by formalists is a close reading of the text in which the focus is on the employment of literary devices in the critical analysis of the issues therein without any use of the biographical information, culture or society of the author.



I have interpreted the meaning in Farah's two novels through the deployment of allegory. This is consistent with formalism in which literary language is different from the everyday use of language. This is because the special use of language foregrounds itself and in a way makes strange what is familiar or ordinary. The formalists define this special use of language as defamiliarization. According to Charles Bressler, "defamiliarization slows down the act of perceiving everyday words or objects, forcing the listener or reader to re-examine the image" (52). Central to the principles of formalism is Viktor Shlovsky's declaration that the structure of a narrative has two parts: the *fabula*, which is the story and the *syuzhet* which is the plot. Whereas the *fabula* is identified as "the writer's working outline that contains the chronological series of events in the story, the *syuzhet* is the literary devices the writer uses to convert the *fabula* into a plot" (52). According to DiYanni these literary devices consist of aspects such as "plot, character, setting, diction, imagery, structure and point of view" (1893).

This study focuses on how Farah uses not only characters as elements of allegory and thus create tension due to the plurality in meaning and interpretations of the novels but also the plot structure, setting, elements of style and language as allegorical elements in showing the disintegration of Somalia.

Furthermore, this study was pegged on the post-colonial theories. The earliest proponent of Post-colonial theories is Frantz Fanon who in *Black Skin, White Masks* argues that both the oppressor and the oppressed are affected psychologically by oppression of the colonizer. The colonized are affected to the extent that when they are introduced to the European languages, they tend to assume that black is evil and inferior to the white which they are made to believe is pure, good and superior to anything black. Moreover, Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* suggests that there is a need for a radical shift in the world's perspective with regard to what is black and what is white. This is because black is associated with evil while white is associated with good. More importantly, Fanon in the *Wretched of the Earth* is interested with the low-class peoples - the peasants whose condition he argues is worsened when the native bourgeoisie take over from the colonial masters. In this study, I have examined the political and socio-economic status of the colonized in *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones*.

Bressler asserts that Edward Said in *Orientalism* argues that Europeans came up with stereotypes so as to justify colonialism. The stereotypes defined the non-Europeans as “indolent, thoughtless, sexually immoral, unreliable, and demented” (240). Said notes that Europeans viewed knowledge from a subjective viewpoint and inadvertently exposed their “unconscious desires for power, wealth, and domination, not the nature of the colonized subjects” (240). This parochial view of humanity led to the definition of the colonized as the “others” while the colonizers were defined as the “West”. According to him, the colonized should change this subjective view of their world and enforce “a historical view that emphasizes the variety of human experiences in all cultures” (240). In this study, using this strand of post-colonial theory, I have focused on how Farah deconstructs the stereotypes peddled against the Somali people and exposes the socio-economic exploitation that emanates from the subjective viewpoints.

Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* argues that the colonized subject demonstrates double identity owing to the exposure of both his or her own people’s culture and the Western culture. Therefore, in a way, the subject is caught between two cultures and is consequently homeless since he or she cannot fully belong to any of these two cultures. Bhabha is against lumping the colonized people into a homogenous identity due to the varied colonial experiences. In this study, using this post-colonial strand I have delved into how the colonial subjects grapple with the reality of having their culture dominated by the Western culture.

### **1.9 Research Methodology**

The study has employed formalism and post-colonial theories as its theoretical framework. From a formalist perspective, I have examined the use of characters as allegories of a nation. To achieve this, I identified major and minor characters in the novels, what they represent and how they are related. I have looked into the setting of the novels and how they relate to the characters and whether it is symbolic. Apart from investigating on how the narrator reveals the characters to the readers, I have looked into the language Farah uses in the two novels and more importantly, the allegories inherent in both novels, their functions and the meaning thereof.

Furthermore, from the Post-colonialist’s perspective I have looked into what happens when two cultures meet of which, one deems itself superior to another. I have examined how allegory shows how the colonized peoples in the two novels view themselves and whether there is any change by

the end of the two novels. In addition, the study has explored the language of the two cultures and most importantly how not only the language of the colonized is silenced but also how the colonized culture is silenced. Furthermore, I have investigated how gender, race and social class function in the colonial and postcolonial elements of the novels.

### **1.10 Chapter Outline**

Chapter I is an introduction to the study itself. This chapter consists of a background to the study, a statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses, justification, literature review, theoretical framework and research methodology.

Chapter II focuses on identifying the allegories present in the novel *Hiding in Plain Sight* and what they mean in relation to the understanding of Somalia's history as history of a disintegrating nation

Chapter III focuses on identifying allegories present in the novel *Crossbones* and what they mean in relation to the understanding of Somalia's history as history of a disintegrating nation.

Chapter IV focuses on a comparison of the forms of allegories present in the novels *Crossbones* and *Hiding in Plain Sight* and what they mean in relation to the understanding of Somalia's history as history of a disintegrating nation. Chapter four is the conclusion of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ALLEGORICAL ELEMENTS IN NURRUDIN FARAH'S *HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT*

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I investigate allegorical elements present in *Hiding in Plain Sight*. The allegorical elements I focus on in this chapter are character typology, elements of style and the plot structure. This chapter seeks to examine the use of allegorical elements in the presentation of Somalia's post independent history which despite being a homogenous nation owing to its people having a common origin, ancestry, culture and language has disintegrated. The chapter examines the plight of hybrid Somalis with regard to their loss of "Somaliness" and the struggle to recover this Somaliness owing to hostility from both their local and global civilization. The chapter seeks to demonstrate how loss of Somaliness leads to conflict and isolation of these global citizens and Farah's message of tolerance as an antidote to conflict and hostility that results from differences that arise from disintegration and reconstruction of Somalia's nationalism.

#### 2.2 Character Typology

Aar's dream in the prologue is a mirror of his past life after the departure of his wife. The dream foreshadows the conflict that arises shortly after his murder at the United Nations' headquarters in Somalia. It is after Aar's death that Bella, who is the protagonist in the story, travels from Rome in Italy to Nairobi to take care of his brother's children. Bella apparently is a fully developed character for which we get to know the other characters. For instance, it is after her brother's death that her parents are introduced in the story. Her mother is an Italian educated university lecturer whom we are told left Somalia for Kenya as a refugee and then moved to Toronto where she died. Aar's mother was married to Digaaleh, a lecturer at the faculty of law in a Somalian University. He is a sickly and impotent man. Hurdo had a clandestine relationship with Fiori, a "Dante scholar on the faculty of letters" (3). Fiori came to Somalia after Somalia's independence as part of a delegation that came to check on the possibility of Somalia having its own University. Somalia had been colonized by Ethiopia and three European powers.

The affair between Hurdo and Fiori leads to the birth of two children, Aar and Bella of which Marcella played the midwifery role at their birth. Although Digaaleh suspected that he might not be the father of the two children he neither accused his wife nor take any notice despite the rumours

and public humiliation he suffered. He “treated Aar and Bella equally as his offspring and behaved civilly to Giorgio Fiori” (33). It is only Fiori’s wife, with whom he had a son, that “filed for a divorce within a year of his return to Italy” (33). Aar and Bella’s birth demonstrate the creation of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland which resulted from the colonial process. Marcella’s midwifery role when the two children were born indicates Italy’s trusteeship role played between 1956 and 1960 when Somalia had just been granted internal self-rule until she gained full independence in 1962 in which, British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland merged to form the Somali Democratic republic. The colonization of Somalia led to the emergence of nationalism in Somalia spearheaded by Mohammed Abdille who rose up in arms against the British and was defeated. Digaaleh, Hurdo’s husband, is impotent and sickly. His impotence and sickly nature one would argue portrays the inability and failure of the patriarchal and dictatorial Somalia society to resist the influence of the Western culture owing to the colonial process.

Hurdo is a strong and determined woman who, having been empowered through education, makes a choice to have children through an affair considering her husband’s impotence and sickly nature. Having been educated at a university in Bologna, Italy, Hurdo’s exposure and interaction with Western culture has influenced her not only at a personal level but also the way she brings up her children. Bella remembers her as being tolerant and open to other people’s ideas and opinion. She says that her mother “appreciated the things that set people apart. She was never one for monotony” (180).

To choose to love and even have children with Fiori shows Hurdo’s tolerance and appreciation of foreign culture, religion and race. Hurdo embraces and tolerates a man of another culture and faith to the extent of influencing Bella to believe that even if she is a cultural Muslim, whose “mother is born and raised a Muslim and a father born in Italy to Catholic parents and brought up a Christian, she believed she had the undisputed authority to choose her faith” (10). Bella thinks that reason she became a Muslim was that she was raised in a Muslim country. She later on does not consider herself a true Muslim, to every sense of the word.

The Western culture as portrayed seems to be more sophisticated, refined and forward looking as compared to the Somali culture which is portrayed as being backward and lacking in refinement. The backwardness and outdated nature of the Somali culture is demonstrated through Digaaleh,

who tries to dissuade his daughter from indulging in modelling as he equates it to prostitution and argues that as a Muslim and a Somali, modelling is not only immoral but also against the religious and cultural values of her people. Nonetheless, Hurdo seems to demonstrate hybridity when she contends that Bella is free to make personal decisions and argues that Digaaleh is not Bella's father, after all. Hurdo repudiates the African culture for its chauvinism since it disallows women to make choices in career and dress. Such are the issues that make Hurdo insinuate that Digaaleh is old fashioned and lacks refinement. Apparently, Digaaleh is considered a conservative and traditional Somali man who is resistant to change. Nevertheless, Digaaleh maintains that the Western culture is immoral and corrupt. The civil unrest in Somalia makes Hurdo and the children to move to Kenya as refugees and later on move to Italy. Digaaleh "who had remained in Mogadiscio, had surgery on his prostate. Half a year later he would be dead" (29).

The collapse of the Somalia government of Somalia in 1991 and the civil war that ensued in Somalia is evidence of the existence of differences in opinion, interest, taste and preferences among a people of the same religion, culture, ancestry, origin and language. There is a conflict between Hurdo and Digaaleh over how the children shall be brought up. Digaaleh, who is loyal to the African values and culture is deemed retrogressive, while his wife who holds onto globalization is painted as forward looking. The wife is literally in love with all that is Western, while the husband who is a metaphor for Somali nationalism rejects imposition of global values and hybridity in totality. The differences lead to a conflict between a husband and wife owing to a difference in perspective with regard to appropriation of Western values.

Bella fully appropriates Western cultural values when she flees to Europe and later on to North America when Somalia plunges into a civil war. She picks new habits such as chain-smoking and dressing in whatever she wants. Her smoking habit and manner of dress are deemed both provocative and offensive by the Somalis she meets in the cities she visits such as Rome or Toronto. The narrator says they "found such habits provocative and offensive in equal measure" (36). Digaaleh resists Bella's interest and choice in modelling and photography as career paths because he believes that not only are they against the Islamic religion and Somali culture and compared "Bella's work and the exploitation of her image to prostitution" (35). Apparently, Bella's interest in photography and modelling indulges her in pornography and promiscuity. Whereas Bella's photography involves taking photographs of her lovers in the nude before making

love to them, modelling involves women posing in the nude as their photographs are taken and, in most cases, she takes photographs of men in the nude which she confesses gives her power over the subjects. She wanted to have power over men. The narrator says “the truth is, Bella did photograph her lovers in the nude before she was intimate with them, but she will never discuss this. She believes this affirms her power over them” (42).

It is through various assignments in photography that the narrator reveals not only the second romantic trope but also show Bella’s promiscuity. Bella’s promiscuity is deviant since it is strange for a Somali woman to be involved with three men. She first meets Handsome Boy Ngulu while on an assignment in Kenya. She also meets Humboldt, a Brazilian of an African descent in Toronto while on a visit to her brother. Moreover, she meets her Malian lover while attending Cisse Drahme’s lecture in New York. She engages in some kind of sexual orgy as she shuffles from one city to another meeting her sexual partners. Bella’s increased sexual activities heightens after she eventually moves to Italy after the collapse of the Said Barre government which marked the onset of the civil war which necessitated her emigration from the country. The narrator says “nothing else mattered much, and neither of them had the desire to enter into a long- term relationship. Since then, they meet as their schedules permit in hotels in various cities, for a week for a day” (40). The subjugation of the Somali culture is further demonstrated through Bella’s liberal choices in dress, career, multilingualism and promiscuity. Bella has come out differently when compared to her female Somali counterparts owing to her exposure to the Western world. In so doing, her individual values which she heavily borrowed from the Western culture, are in conflict with her societal values, culture and religion. Hybrid Somali women such as Bella are targets of extreme Somali nationalists. They are usually condemned and punished for moving about “with their heads uncovered” (xv). Bella’s career in photography demanded that she travel from one country to another undertaking various assignments for which she meets Somali refugees in the different parts of the world. The narrator says “she has been travelling from Rome to several European countries where Somali refugee populations abound, and then to North America, including the cities of Toronto, Ottawa, Minneapolis, Columbus, and San Diego” (18). Bella’s transnational movements and job assignments not only reveals existence of Somali refugees in various parts of the world but also demonstrates the disintegration of the nation which results in total rejection of liberal citizens like Bella and Aar. That the nation plunges in a civil war but Digaaleh, a university lecturer remains, while, Hurdo and the hybrid children leave indicates the rejection of moderates. When

Aar goes to work in Somalia he “expected threats from Shabaab to come his way the day he arrived in Mogadiscio”(xii).

Bella’s interest in photography and modelling stems from the need to refocus her obsession with her brother, with whom she has a nearly incestuous relationship. Bella was hostile towards other girls and she clung on the brother just the way Somalia craved to have a greater Somalia. The strong incestuous love within the Somali nation is so strong but like Aar and Bella who cannot marry since they are a brother and a sister, the aspiration for a greater Somalia have been hampered by the artificial boundaries set by colonialism. The incestuous love between Aar and Bella alienate her from her friends. She is mean, jealous and hostile since she does not want to share her brother’s attention with anybody else to the extent of making Hurdo get worried that “the intensity of Bella’s feelings for her brother were such that she might never allow herself to fall in love with anyone else” (35).

Bella’s incestuous love and hostility towards her friends is a symbol of Somalia’s hostility and aggression towards her neighbouring nations. Somalia got into conflict with her neighbouring nations such as Ethiopia and Kenya owing to the need to have a unified political nation state for all Somalis. The quest for a greater Somalia was hampered by artificial colonial boundaries which has maintained the geographical disintegration of Somalia. Britain colonized Northern Somalia, France colonized Djibouti, while Italy colonized Southern Somalia. The colonizers’ division of Somalia into colonies led to the creation of Italian Somaliland, French Somaliland and British Somaliland. The romantic trope involving Hurdo and Fiori, an Italian man, one may argue is a symbol of the relationship between Somalia and her colonial masters. In so doing, Fiori is a symbol of the colonial powers such as France, Italy and Britain who subjugated Somalia through the colonial process of which Somalia gained her independence in 1962. The independence was preceded by the United Nation’s resolution to have Italy play a trusteeship role between 1956 to 1960 in which Somalia was divided was divided into five parts. The Ogaden province was retained by Ethiopia while the North Frontier District was retained by Kenya. Djibouti, which was a French colony gained her independence in 1977 and hence remained autonomous.

However, the incestuous love is cut off when Aar falls in love with Valerie. The reality crushes Bella as the narrator says she lost her appetite and became anorexic. One can equate Bella’s



frustration to Somalia's frustration at the failure to attain a greater Somalia as the North Frontier District was retained by Kenya while the Ogaden province in the west was retained by Ethiopia. Djibouti which remained a French colony until 1977 remained autonomous. The failure to monopolize her brother's attention is a traumatizing experience for Bella who plunges into modelling and photography. Her frustration and trauma owing to Aar's love for Valerie shows her lack of independence. Somalia's government is overthrown when it unsuccessfully invades Ethiopia in order to repossess the Ogaden province which Ethiopia annexed from it during the colonial period. It is after the overthrow of Said Barre's government that Hurdo and her children move to Kenya as refugees and later on seek asylum in Canada that Digaaleh shortly dies. Bella's frustration at the failure to monopolize her brother's attention shows that she was not strong on her own as a person and thus an indication that Somalia became a weak nation state when the pursuit for a greater Somalia was prioritized at the expense of developing a strong nation state. The civil war in Somalia resulted into mass emigration of Somalis such as Bella's family who formed a Somali society in African, European and North American nations and thus demonstrating the disintegration of Somalia. The civil war divided Somalis into local and diaspora Somalis for which there are feelings of hatred and resentment between the native Somalis and the Somalis in the cosmopolitan world owing to their chauvinism and undemocratic nature. Bella's Christian and Italian father's influence upon her makes her think that there are no "people on earth more narrow-minded or chauvinistic than Somalis" (48) whose lack of democracy is compared to Idi Amin's autocratic rule in Uganda. She views the Somali nationalists as dictatorial since they do not embrace freedom of choice with regard to religion, dress, and sexual orientation. She argues that they are violent, inhumane and brutal. She compares their brutality to Uganda's "blood thirsty Lord's Resistance Army"(61) rebels whose leader is Joseph Kony.

Another romantic trope in the novel involves Aar and Valerie, a woman born of British parents. They hastily get married despite protestations from Bella. They hastily get married because Valerie was pregnant. The couple eventually manage to have two children, Salif and Dahaba. Valerie's British heritage and Aar's Italian heritage viewed as national allegories would make one suggest that Valerie as a character stands for Northern Somalia while Aar embodies Southern Somalia. This is because Northern Somalia as earlier mentioned was colonized by Britain while Southern Somalia was colonized by Italy. The two Somalilands formed a hasty union which led to the formation of the Somalia Democratic State. Aar signifies the Italian Somaliland that was hastily

unified with British Somaliland only because there was a prospect of forming a state. Their marriage however faces serious challenges since the couple are not fully integrated. Their marriage is out of convenience rather than out of love. Their marriage, one would argue, reflects the Somalia nation which was formed at the prospect of the establishment of a state despite the lack of full integration of the two Somalilands which had ultimately grown apart owing to their varied colonial experience.

Valerie descends from a family in which she had endured sexual abuse from her father. Valerie's mother, upon discovering her daughter's sexual abuse is infuriated and makes her join a boarding school and insists the father should pay her school fees. Although she joins a boarding school, Valerie still maintains a secret liaison with her abusive father. Consequently, Valerie exposes herself to further manipulation and sexual abuse which shows that women, both in native African societies and in the cosmopolitan world, are vulnerable to oppression. She maintained the secret liaison "until when she met Padmini in school" (152). Valerie's manipulation and sexual abuse portrays her as a metaphor of the weak and marginalized gender which is being oppressed in a patriarchal society. Valerie's maintenance of a secret liaison with her father is an extended metaphor for Bella's argument that Africans lack democratic leadership not because such leaders do not exist, but because such Africans themselves are undemocratic. That is, Africans deserve the poor leadership they have. She says the "choices individuals make in their private lives are just as important as the choices they make at the ballot box" (21).

Additionally, the strict cultural and religious nature of Somali which isolates hybrid citizens like Bella is presented through an undeveloped female character whom Bella meets on the plane while traveling to Nairobi. The Allemanic-speaking woman is dressed in a shirt which is "promoting love in all forms, in German and English" (20). Bella imagines that suppose the woman was traveling to Somalia she would have been "stoned on sight" (20). Apparently, Somalia's lack of democracy is highlighted through Mahdi, who as an editor of a newspaper in Somalia, is forced into exile for being so critical of Said Barre's dictatorial government. He, as a journalist, writes to criticize the direction the nation was taking. The narrator says he was forced to "quit the country before he was detained and, together with a few close friends who had similarly fallen out of favor set up a trucking business in Zambia" (187). Although Mahdi often thinks of going and establishing a daily newspaper in Somalia even after the collapse of Said Barre's government, his

wife Fatima is against wasting their “hard-earned income into such a shaky venture” (188). She considers the venture wasteful since the Islamists in Somalia are just as intolerant and dictatorial like Said Barre and thus a discouragement to moderate’s investment.

Valerie and Aar’s marriage comes to the rocks when the two ultimately separate. Valerie, a woman married to a cultural Muslim, abandons her matrimonial home and instead moves in with Padmini, an Afro-Asian Briton woman, born in Uganda but grew up in Britain. Padmini had been married to Rajiv, a neighbour’s son when she was barely fifteen years old. Although she protested and tried to tell them that she was a lesbian when she says “you don’t know I am like” (105), she was misunderstood. After school she was forced to enter into an arranged marriage which did not work out. It did not work out because her voice of protestations had been silenced by a patriarchal culture which never listened to women like her. Valerie had moved from one boyfriend to another before eventually settling with Aar with whom they decided to hastily get married when Valerie got pregnant. Despite Bella’s protestations when she told Aar “I have a visceral dislike of the woman and would advise against your marrying her” (106). The marriage failed due to the hasty way the couple were united in a matrimonial union. Valerie’s pregnancy prompted the two to get married hence indicating that they got married out of convenience rather than out of love. They had not yet fully integrated.

Their disintegration, as earlier discussed is rooted in their multilingualism, financial priorities, and personalities. Valerie is only fluent in English while Aar is a polyglot. He is versed in languages such as English, German, Somali, and French. Aar had learnt these languages in the different parts of the world he had lived. For instance, he “acquired Italian in Somalia, English in Canada, and French in Geneva” (108). Valerie was not interested in learning any new language. Aar’s interest in learning new languages meant that he was accommodative and pragmatic whereas, Valerie’s disinterest in learning new languages shows that she is static and intolerant of other people’s culture which results in fragmentation of cosmopolitan relationships.

Valerie is depicted as pretentious and quarrelsome when she opens a catering business in which embassies, United Nations’ organizations and consulates were her target market. However, the narrator says that despite the business doing well she “was always fighting with her employees and firing them” (107). She was firing them because she was not only quarrelsome and stubborn

but the business was only a pretext for her to spend more time with Padmini. She had a secret liaison with her. She abandoned most of her wifely duties and became irresponsible. She spent most of her time with Padmini at the expense of her children who kept on complaining. She was paying less attention to them for which Aar discovered that Valerie was involved in an unnatural relationship with Padmini. Bella describes Valerie as being non-committal since she always never works hard to accomplish any project that she initiates, including her own marriage. She says “Aar used to say that Valerie would start on a project with great enthusiasm but wouldn’t follow it to its end. Even having the children was such a project embarked on with passion but abandoned in the end” (165). Valerie became cold towards Aar and continued going out more often with Padmini, until when she finally left. Aar was tolerant and patient with Valerie even when she denied him his conjugal rights.

Valerie is irresponsible and opportunistic and untrustworthy. Bella decides to keep her most treasured documents under lock and key when she imagines “Valerie using the upstairs bathroom, making an unsuspected entry into the room and ghosting out with his booty in her possession” (135). She fears this might happen since Valerie has ever used Aar’s credit card after she forged his signature. Whereas Valerie is depicted as opportunistic and irresponsible to the extent of encouraging Salif at one point to steal from a supermarket, Aar is described as having been “a thoroughly secular man, cosmopolitan in his temperament, very modern in his thinking soft spoken and unassumingly humble” (215). Valerie is an ungrateful person who instead of appreciating Bella for settling her legal and hotel bills, insults her. The differences in character, language, upbringing and personal qualities outlined above are displayed as lines of weakness in the marriage between the couple. The separation of the couple is not only a metaphor for fragmentation of relationships between a couple who are hybrids of different cultures, but is also an allegory of internal conflict and confusion within hybrid Somalis who are trying to discover themselves owing to their suspense in third space.

Valerie’s undesirable qualities with regard to her character when she was married to Aar indicate that she was weird and unnatural. She is queer since despite Aar’s admirable qualities, she does not make a good wife. She was not suitable for a love relationship with a man in a society which cherishes heterosexual relationships and frowns upon lesbianism. Her lesbian relationship is unnatural when considered with regard to cultural Islam and Somali traditions and hence attracts

hostility not only from Aar's family but also from his friends and society. The hostility she faces from Aar's family and friends one would argue synchronizes with lack of democracy in Somalia for which Bella says "we are undemocratic, just like our governments" (180). Mogadiscio has been divided into fiefdoms along religious and clan factions for which Bella says "We are ill informed about the world, ill-educated, intolerant of the views of others when they do not agree with ours" (180). Valerie has irreconcilable differences with her husband owing to her sexual orientation which is a metaphor for fragmentation of Somalia.

Valerie's close association with Padmini, an Indian woman, a daughter of a dukawallah who was expelled by the Idi Amin government from Uganda provides an historical allusion. The Dukawallahs are small businessmen who came from India and mostly came to Africa during the construction of the Uganda railway. They started businesses in rural parts of the country for which "as they thrived, they moved to the bigger cities. Idi Amin ejected them from Uganda in 1972, but in Kenya they still account for ten percent of the population" (99). They lost their property when most of their private property, mostly amassed during the colonial period, were nationalized. The nationalization process as demonstrated in the text is an historical injustice. Padmini loses her property despite being a Ugandan by birth not only because she was a woman and an Asian, but also because she was a lesbian. She says "I went to repossess our family property. But once they discovered that we were gay in a country where it is a criminal offense to be gay, the man we were in litigation with hired goons and spies amass sufficient evidence to have us put behind bars" (119). Bella and Gunilla manage to step in time to get Valerie and Padmini out of the police cells in Uganda. Bella was afraid that the reaction of the Muslims in Uganda would be to buy for her blood the moment information leaks out that despite having lost her husband recently, she is engaging in a lesbian relationship. Padmini is afraid that since Somalis are intolerant they would relish in burning them at a stake as a punishment for having indulged in lesbianism which is considered an abomination. She says "Somalis are bigots, every single one of them. They would delight in burning us at the stake. They see us as deviants, worse than devil worshippers, and they believe we deserve commensurate punishments" (236). Valerie's decision shows the changing nature of the Somali nation. Lesbianism in the novel one may argue demonstrates a variance in culture, and a variance in culture means a redefinition or disintegration of Somaliness. Padmini's plight in Uganda is a metaphor of the fragmentation of the nation due to racial, sexual and gender differences but also shows the hostility and intolerance of Somali nationalism to hybrid citizens

such as Bella. The historical allusion in which Idi Amin ejects Asians out of Somalia is a metaphor for the challenges global citizens face in the world.

Nevertheless, the happiness and joy that one may expect Valerie to enjoy in her arrangement with Padmini is checkered with instances of aggression and violence. The two have a history of having fought at one of their visits in South Africa where they had gone to participate in a Gay Pride Week in Cape Town. They fought when Padmini found out that Valerie was cheating on her with other partners. Moreover, Padmini is suspicious that Valerie must have cheated on her with Ulrika who sought refuge in their room when she was being pursued by the police. Valerie's infidelity is a possible cause of fragmentation of their lesbian relationship. Bella thinks that "the poor woman will say enough is enough and she will leave Valerie. That is the damage that divided loyalty does, and the signs of an inevitable split are there" (308). The existence of tension and instability of relations within the lesbian marriage owing to infidelity shows that hybrid citizens do not have an ideal life free from conflict.

According to queer theorists, identity is in a constant state of fluidity such that there is constant switching from homosexuality to heterosexuality. According to Peter Barry in *Beginning Theory*, heterosexuality only exists as a result of the nonexistence of homosexuality and thus as mentioned lesbianism is not a stable state due to the constant state of contest and revision. He says "identity can become a site of contest and revision" (98). This constant state of revision and re-switching resonates with Somalia's state of affairs but with individuals such as Valerie. Valerie's lesbian sexual relationship mirrors not only the state of instability in Somalia but also the state of uncertainty in the country. There is a near eternal sense of instability in which different factions take power but before long they are driven out of power, consequently, a sense of uncertainty revolves around the nation. Since independence, Somalia has been in a constant state of instability, in two levels, politically and culturally. Politically, Somalia as a nation-state has been stateless for more than two decades hence the instability as demonstrated through Valerie's and Padmini's lesbianism when they engage in heterosexual marriages only to walk out and move together in a homosexual marriage. However, Valerie is unfaithful and is equally unhappy and unfulfilled just the way she was when she was married with Aar. The unhappiness and unfulfillment is a metaphor for the condition of hybrid Somalis who are unhappy and unfulfilled despite their clandestine

affairs with other cultures which apparently has attracted scorn from both their fellow hybrid citizens and the Somali nationalists. They face rejection from both worlds.

In addition, Aar and Valerie's problematic marriage owing to multilingualism is a microcosm of what was taking place in Somalia. Somalia failed to establish the Somali language as a lingua franca till 1972. This did not help in enhancing the nation's integration and eradication of differences brought about by colonial experience. That is, whereas Northern Somalia at first used English as its official language, Southern Somalia embraced Italian as its official language. The confusion and the disconnect emanating from the use of the foreign languages shows that the use of the colonizer's language was oppressive until when the native language was standardized in 1972. Nonetheless, the standardization of Somali language did not factor in diversity of all the clans in Somalia. The narrator says: "Aar argued that those who had known the language only in its spoken form felt a great disconnect between the tongue they spoke and the one they were beginning to learn to write" (172). The disconnect between the written and the spoken Somali is a clear indication that there are schisms in Somalia and hence a major cause of disintegration of Somalia.

Additionally, Valerie's abhorrence of the Muslims stems from an incident in which her grandfather was sodomized by militia men in North Africa, Sodomy is unheard of in Muslim cultures and societies at large, and so by the narrator highlighting this isolated case, he is revealing the hostility and violence that one is likely to encounter owing to repudiation of the protective and comforting superintendence of his nation. The sodomy suffered by Valerie's grandfather is a metaphor for the dangers that Somali nationalism poses to non-Muslims, but, ironically reveals the dangers of digressing from the reach of protective superintendence of one's own nation and therefore encourages nationalism. This provides the reason for collapsing and reconstitution of nationalism as demonstrated by Valerie. The persecution and "corrective rape" in Cape Town show rejection of hybrid nationals within other cultures for which Bella calls for tolerance.

Valerie meets Ulrika, a lesbian woman of German descent, who is running a bar named "Bar in Heaven" in collaboration with a Kenyan. Under the disguise of a masseuse and a bar, Ulrika and her business partners are actually setting up young African girls with lesbians from European countries at a fee. The bar is at a point raided by the police for which Padmini suggests that it might be because Ulrika "hasn't made the payoffs the authorities demand" (312). However, Bella

argues that the raid is unjustified and unfair since young teenagers in African coastal towns and cities are openly allowed to practice heterosexual prostitution with elderly men and women from European nations. She deems the raid as infringement on the rights of the homosexual community. She says ‘‘Scandinavian women chased male teenagers in Gambia and Cape Town’’ (312). The incident equally reveals the hostility and resultant difference and hostility that people of different nationality face within other countries. Ulrika’s business is raided since she is running lesbian prostitution. This is a metaphor for the discrimination that global Somali citizens face owing to disintegration of society along ethnicity and nationalities. Bella gives an instance in which Somalis face discrimination in Kenya where they are ‘‘harassed from the moment they present their papers to the immigration officials and are asked relentlessly embarrassing questions’’(22).The discrimination against Somalis in Kenya exposes the façade and the soft underbelly of globalization in which despite progress in digital mass communication, transport and cosmopolitanism of Nairobi and other cities in the world as illustrated by foreign cuisines and global food outlets , Bella seems to lament that still tribal and clan differences are a reality.

### **2.3 The Plot Structure**

After the breakdown of Somalia, Somali’s move to diaspora countries such as Kenya and Canada. Bella and her mother move to Kenya as refugees and later on to Italy where Hurdo, her mother and brother Aar move to Canada. Bella moves with her mother to Canada but relocates to Rome in Italy to pursue her career in photography. Aar gets a job with International Organization for Migration in Canada and eventually the United Nations where he works in various cities in Europe such as Geneva, Vienna and his last station is in Mogadiscio where he was a logistics officer before he is murdered. After Aar’s death, Bella moves to Kenya to care of her niece and nephew since their grandmother is in London and their mother is an estranged wife who is running a restaurant in Pondicherry, India. Despite Bella’s sophisticated lifestyle in which her super hybrid family is scattered across the world, and she shuttles from one part of the world in various work assignments and is familiar with several languages, she is still among a group people who are isolated both at her native country and abroad. Her global outlook and perceptions do not prevent her from racist and tribal stereotypes. The isolation of Somalis in Kenya is highlighted through a number of stereotypes. The narrator highlights and then deconstructs the stereotypes. The exclusionism explored reveals the isolation of a section of a group of people from another based-on religion and



tribe. The isolation of the Somalis ironically points to not only the fragmentation of Somalia nation into its various tribal nations but also how the Somalis are loosely held onto each other. The Somalis hold onto each other despite existence of differences among them with regard to observance of social norms, tradition and religion. The writer explores the fragmentation of Kenya based on its diverse culture, tribes, culture and race as a reflection of Somalia which is divided into sub groups based on their sectarian interests.

The narrator depicts three factions of Somalis in terms of subscription to the Islam religion. Firstly, we have radicals such as the Shabaab. Secondly, we have moderates who include Mahdi and Fatima and thirdly we have secularists where Aar, Bella and Salif fall. The radical Muslims who are also known as Islamists make up a category in which there is strict observance of the Koran, and other socio-cultural practices and are quite intolerant to secularists and non-Muslims. Moderates such as Mahdi and Fatima are quite tolerant towards other faiths but still observe the Koran. Secularists like Aar and Bella, despite claiming to be culturally Muslims are quite liberal, as at times they drink alcohol, dress in whatever manner they want and even smoke, which is unexpected of Muslims. This points to the schisms in the observance and practice of the Muslim religion which is one of the core tenets of Somali nationalism. The narrator's demonstration of characters contravening religious and socio-cultural practices previously associated with a Somali nationalism points not only to the disintegration of the nation along the primacy of religion but also along the primacy of clan hence confirming that it is possible for a given people to have differences among them no matter how homogenous they might be perceived. The disintegration of Somalia into the primacy of the clan or religion has led to conflicts in some parts of Mogadiscio owing to conflict of interest with regard to control of resources. The big clans in Mogadiscio are harassing the smaller clans through monopolization of resources.

The narrator demonstrates how the Islamists in authority undermine other Somalis by locking out a major section of the citizenry from engaging in any meaningful economic activity. The alienation of other communities in economic activities such as land ownership has led to creation of a crisis in the city. Secularists such as Bella and Aar cannot settle in some parts of Somalia. Aar says "I am uncomfortable affiliating myself with a country broken into fiefdoms, where there is no room for someone like you or me" (128). Bella is such one person who is discriminated against because

of her religious beliefs and clan. She is a moderate Muslim. She complains of how she can neither access nor invest in Mogadiscio just because she does not belong to the ruling clan.

Bella laments that the civil war instigated by religious difference and clan politics has led to stagnation of socio-economic development, apart from curtailing individual freedoms. The curtailing of individual freedoms has led to not only the death of individuals such as Aar, but also the stagnation of socio-economic development in areas such as education, health and social services. The Islamists are engaged in a fight against the transitional federal government over the control of Mogadiscio. Moderate Muslims such as Aar feel disenfranchised from national psyche. He says “I am not comfortable in Mogadiscio run by a confederacy of clans that are in cahoots with religious renegades” (128). The conflict has led to displacement of people, destruction of property and loss of lives. The religious renegades are carrying out terrorist activities against non-Muslims all over the world and thus stir religious animosity. The narrator mentions that Muslims as well non-Muslims loss their lives in some terror activities carried out “in the name of Islam” (xi).

Bella meets her brother’s teenage children at Mrs. Kariuki’s home. Having lost their father recently, they are emotionally disturbed and irritable. For instance, they get into a conflict over who should sit on the passenger’s seat of their father’s car. The seat is a constant cause of the chaos and we are shown some of the memorable moments which saw the rivalry between the two siblings escalate. Whereas Bella feels hopeless and thinks it is the responsibility of Salif being the elder of the two to act maturely, the two siblings are at the adolescence stage and therefore seem to be in a state of confusion. They feel lost because at one time they are treated as adults but another time they are perceived as young children. Aar before his death used a wait - and - see approach and would let the two children squabble and did not interfere with the hope they would grow up to know when to fight or even just outgrow such unnecessary wrangles. The narrator says that Aar was of the opinion that “as part of growing up children had to acquire for themselves the skills of learning when to fight and when to accommodate” (82). He argues that such a skill cannot be taught and it can only come with age. Salif being the elder of the two seems to bully the younger sister. The sibling rivalry between Salif and Dahaba suggests natural differences among members of the same family. Dahaba and Salif’s differences and constant squabbles are rooted in their selfish interests and intolerance of each other.

Dahaba is at one point portrayed as maturing into a fully-grown woman as evidenced by her menstrual periods and at one-point states that she is not a baby, when Bella and Salif treat her as the immature member of the family. She poses serious questions that are shrouded in innocence and thus sound quite impolite or insensitive. For instance, she puts Valerie to task to provide an explanation for her decision to abandon the family. The mother breaks down and is unable to give a substantial answer. Dahaba demands an explanation for Salif's failure to show her the YouTube video that captures their mother and Padmini in uncompromising situation. Salif insists that he meant to protect her from the agony that may arise from watching it but she curtly remarks that she is not a baby. Salif demonstrates similar tendencies of immaturity although in some occasions he seems responsible and capable of taking care of the sister. He helps around the house through cooking, setting up the alarm of the house and comforts both Dahaba and Bella at various circumstances. Aar, it is even revealed, had entrusted him with the passwords of his laptops hence showing some level of expectation and trust. They are suspended between the adult stage and teenage stage and hence at most times they are in conflict with adult members of the family if not with each other.

Salif's sense of Somali socio-cultural values that are synchronized with Muslim moral code are diluted with the Western values. For instance, Bella finds it strange that although Salif claims to be a Muslim, his favourite meal is bacon which he insists on having for both breakfast and supper. Salif defiantly asserts that he is not only proud of being a cultural Muslim but is also proud of eating bacon. Apparently, his father used to have a glass of wine at birthday parties when having meals and during other celebrations and yet, he still insisted that he was a cultural Muslim. Although Aar was a secular Moslem he was tolerant and "respectful to other people's faith, just as he was their way of life: Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and the lot" (255). Salif finds him an example to emulate with regard to religious and cultural tolerance.

Salif, by virtue of being a student in Kenya, is said to have some basic knowledge of local Kenyan languages, such as Swahili and Gikuyu, which shows some level of integration in the Kenyan society which is a departure from the rest of the Somali community. The narrator ironically says that when the young Somalis are conversing about issues such as "cigarettes, food, cinema money, or cash for mobile phone minutes", they converse in Somali. But when they talk about issues such as "jazz, literature, or anything serious they speak in English" (227). Additionally, Salif

appreciates European football as he is shown following an update of scores between Arsenal, which is an English side, and Bayern Munich, a German football club. He is a fan of all varieties of African music and has a low regard for European or American music, while his friend Qamar does not appreciate Somali music let alone any African music. On the contrary, she prefers jazz and was only made to listen to Somali music when her parents played music in the car or in the house. The narrator shows the teenagers as having appropriated the Western culture as portrayed through their taste for music, habits, language, leisure, food and art which reveals not only hybridity or rather double consciousness of the African subject but also a variance in the taste and preference in the appreciation of aesthetics. The teenagers too are divided when it comes to art, food and language. Some teenagers prefer African music to Western music, while others prefer certain European football clubs to others even though these teenagers have abandoned the ancient paths held loosely by their parents.

Salif's development of the smoking habit shows not only the repudiation of the Somali culture but also a growing sense of rebellion to the old ways among the young people who are expected to not only learn about the Somali culture but also pass on the lessons learnt to the next generation. The rebellion is exacerbated when Qamar questions her parent's way of life when she asks: "Have we become our own persons?" (228). The question expresses a desire to have her way of life by making independent decisions and do whatever she would like to do and thus in a way portray her dissonance with how her parents attempt at shoving some 'Somalism' deep down her throat. She recounts a scenario in which one of her uncles tries to make a request in Somali but she turns down the offer rather than being forced to make the request in Somali. Salif expresses his frustration with his status as a hybrid in which his parents cannot offer the original experience of true 'Somalism'. He argues that his parents are not proper role models since they do not reflect what it means to be a true Somali. He says, "it's too bad we Somali offspring are unable to have direct knowledge of the country and its cultural nuances. The very parents who want us to become and remain Somali tell us it is unsafe to go there" (229). The dissonance of expressing "Somalism" has developed into a rebellion that is expressed through smoking, multilingualism, food and music. The narrator demonstrates Dahaba and Salif as being suspended in third space owing to the exposure of both Somali and Western socio-cultural values. The two however, just like their friends Qamar and Zubair, do experience, appreciate and borrow different habits and attitudes which make them different from each other. Salif's advise to Qamar about becoming her own

person expresses the writer's vision: tolerance to other people's decisions and choices "when you are your own person" (228).

In spite of being close family friends Salif and Dahaba are not accommodated in Mahdi's house upon Aar's death since Fatima was bedridden and had flown to England for a medical procedure, as she is suffering from breast cancer. The narrator says she has lost her hair owing to a combination of chemotherapy and related treatment. Fatima's skin is described as looking "pallid with a worrying patchiness, which Bella associates with taking of drugs" (194).

Mahdi and Fatima are Aar's old friends who left Somalia at a relatively young age. They managed to crookedly acquire Kenyan citizenship. Mahdi was sent into exile by Said Barre for criticizing his erroneous government practices. Bella when exposed to the reality of Fatima's suffering is nostalgic about the "happier days, when Aar was alive and the children were young and all of them looked forward to a future uncomplicated by deaths, diseases, civil wars, and other sorrows" (195), which Somalia is facing today. Bella's feelings of nostalgia point not only to the early years before disintegration of Somalia's nation state but also before fragmentation of Somalia's nationalism. Fatima who is suffering from cancer is sickly and weak. The incurable disease has affected negatively both her and the entire family. In the midst of the struggles and the pain, she finds the support of her family and friends quite useful. Mahdi appreciates that his wife and Aar were classmates who were always good at whatever they did. The dialogue between Mahdi, Fatima and Bella reveals the differences between Aar and Bella. That while Bella promiscuous, Aar was a collected individual who shunned all the girls who came or were brought in his way. He says that whenever a country such as theirs goes into ruin, it takes the best people with it. The narrator portrays the warmth and comfort one finds among his people whenever they are in trouble. Fatima is surrounded by her Somali friends and family and hence reconstitution of Somali nationalism in Kenya.

The narrator points out three categories of Somalis in Kenya. Firstly, there are Kenyan native Somalis who mostly reside in the North Eastern part of Kenya, formerly referred to as the North Frontier District. Secondly, there are Somalis who came to Kenya as refugees owing to the civil war after the collapse of the Said Barre government. Thirdly, there are Somalis who had earlier come to Kenya to seek asylum. The latter category includes Mahdi and Fatima, who having been

in exile in Kenya even before the onset of the civil war, finally settle in Kenya, in a cosmopolitan neighbourhood characterized with various races and tribes. The narrator through a vivid description paints Nairobi and thus Kenya in general as a heterogeneous society. In Mahdi's neighbourhood the narrator shows two elderly Asian women cross the road with the assistance of two African women. Moreover, he mentions Bella capturing the sight of "a white woman in the doorway of one of the houses bending down to tie the shoelaces of a dark-skinned child who is fidgeting and raring to be off" (190). Although this scenario seems to suggest some sense of harmony among the races and tribes that make up Kenya, the narrator ironically depicts the Somalis to be a homogenous and closely knitted society in a heterogeneous Kenyan society where they are perceived to be isolated and thus struggling to integrate with other communities in Kenya.

Kenya, as evident from the diverse peoples Bella meets and interacts with, is a heterogeneous nation. For instance, there is a Kalenjin taxi driver from Eldoret, and a Maasai driver who picks Bella from the airport. Mr. Kariuki the school principal and his wife are Kikuyus. The Somalis make up six percent of the population while Asians make up ten percent of the country. Kenya is thus a heterogeneous society owing to the existence of peoples from different tribes, cultures, race, religion and nationalities who speak diverse languages and thus dispute Mahdi's argument that Kenya's cuisine is "bland peasant cooking" (315). We are told that Kenya has several Chinese, Ethiopian and Indian restaurants which offer cuisines from other parts of the world, an indication that Kenya is a cosmopolitan state. The exclusion of the Somali and their isolationist tendencies is ironic to the extent that it demonstrates the irony of a disintegrated nation excluding an integrated people. It is ironical that the Somalis are regarded as a fragmented nation and yet they support and love one another in a foreign nation. This love and support are demonstrated through Bella and Aar's visit to Fatima.

To demonstrate the isolation and hostility the Somalis suffer in Kenya as well as their rejection from their mother country the narrator employs the use of stereotypes about Somalis. To begin with, when Mrs. Kariuki meets Bella in her home, she warmly welcomes Bella and then comforts her for the loss of her brother. This hospitality is interrupted by her dog which barks at Bella. The dog might be barking owing to its natural instinct as Bella is a stranger to the home and Kariuki calms it and tells it "Quiet, you silly thing. It is Bella" (68). The dog disappears and comes back with its leash in its teeth and wants to be taken out for a walk. Mrs. Kariuki ignores it at first but it

persists by barking quite fiercely. The dog in this case as Mrs. Kariuki puts it, is demanding her rights. She says: “Now dogs insist on their rights? Dogs?” (68). In Kenya dogs are usually kept in order to enhance security and so, the presence of a dog in the novel points to the sense of insecurity in Kenya owing to the frequent terror attacks in Kenya carried out by Shabaab operatives based in Somalia. This insecurity is further highlighted when Salif keeps making sure that the alarm is set. Bella kept on wondering at Aar’s decision to buy a house in Nairobi as compared to Mogadiscio which she perceives as being safer. Kenya is perceived as insecure and unstable due to the post-election violence witnessed in 2008 in which the narrator alleges half a million Kenyans lost their lives and approximately “three million people joined the ranks of the internally displaced” (207). The post-election violence was largely due to inter-nation tensions aggravated by political differences.

Bella has a nasty encounter with a hawker in Village Market where she had gone to a café and meets a couple who grapples with the curiosity of finding out whether she is a Somali, Ethiopian or Eritrean. The husband believes that Bella is Somali while the wife thinks otherwise. The significance of this incident serves two purposes: Firstly, the inability of the couple to figure out whether Bella is a Somali or not purely from her physical appearance and can only determine this when she converses in Somali, can be construed to be the narrator’s definition of who a true Somali is. According to Hilaal, a character in *Maps*, the true definition of a Somali is anyone who can speak Somali as a mother tongue regardless of their physical features. He says: “A Somali ... is a man, woman or child whose mother tongue is Somali. Here, mother tongue is important, very important. Not what one looks like. That is, features have nothing to do with a Somalia’s Somaliness or no” (166). Secondly, the incident presents to the reader the stereotype about the Somalis being a threat to security hence their exclusion. The man is hawking wood carvings but is seemingly frustrated by Bella’s refusal to buy one as she is dissuaded by the couple from buying any since they know a better place to purchase such items. They advise her against buying from the hawker because they did not want a fellow Somali to be exploited. The peddler turns hostile and being aware of their origin, resorts to insults. He says: “Terrorists, the lot of you, who have no right to be here! Blowing up our malls, terrorizing our nation. Go back where you come from!” (58)

There is another instance of stereotype in the United Nations office in Gigiri. Immaculata wants to know first whether Bella is Catholic and discovers that she is not since Bella tells her that she was brought up a Muslim. Immaculata expects her to be dressed in a body armour. Although Immaculata reveals that Somalis are all over the country including the refugee camps and some parts of the country she exposes her ignorance about them. To get to know whether the Somalis ever get to interact with the rest of the Kenyan society, Bella wants to know how Somalis behave. She opines that Somalis are proud and full of themselves. Bella is ticked off since it is obvious Immaculata is simply expressing stereotypes against Somalis. This is further exposed when Immaculata says that she has never talked to any Somali since they are too proud to talk to someone of a lower status such as a tea girl and accuses them of being terrorists and a threat to security. She says: “Guns, lawlessness, and daily murders of their kith and kin, you name it...They’ve brought guns into our country across the border. They bomb our churches and they bomb their mosques. But of course, you are not like them” (159). This generalization shows the superficial nature of relationships between Somalis and other people in Kenya.

The stereotypes that Bella encounters not only touch on Somalis in general but some are directed specifically towards Somali women. In a restaurant in town, Bella when meeting with Valerie and Padmini for dinner, a waiter alleges that Somalis never visit any other restaurant apart from the ones near their neighbourhood, and that Somali women are never known to visit any restaurant. Valerie in this particular evening demonstrates her presupposition that all Somali women have undergone female circumcision and thus denied sexual pleasure. Bella acknowledges that female circumcision is “a most terrible barbarity to which our Somali society subjects women” (269). The dialogue shows that not all cultural practices should be tolerated and respected. Valerie resents Somali cultural practices that undermine women.

In spite of being married to a Somali she generalizes that all Somalis are violent and terrorists. The first time Valerie meets her son Salif, who insists on speaking Somali, she gets quite impressed. Dahaba on realizing this, informs her that their best friends are Somalis although Valerie cautions them to be careful to avoid friends who may introduce them into a violence culture of using guns. The instances indicate that differences which lead to disintegration of a society results from misjudgments of people in a society owing to the existence of stereotypes and fear of the unknown.



The people make decisions and conclusions about other groups of people based on generalizations which are mostly untrue.

Bella subscribes to the view that the Kenyan Somalis are hostile and have isolated themselves as a reaction to the mistreatment they have received from the rest of Kenyans. She reasons that the Kenyan Somalis have been marginalized and live as if they are the third-class citizens. These mistreatments, she says, has made them to propagate terrorist activities. Despite forming a formidable percentage of the Kenyan population, they have been marginalized just as much as the Somalis in refugee camps who came to Kenya following the collapse of their government. The Somalis would like to belong and assume the national identity like the rest of Kenyans who consist of Asians, Europeans and the native Kenyan tribes but they still feel left out. On a trip to Naivasha, coincidentally scheduled during a public holiday in Kenya, Salif observes that there is no traffic due to the holiday. Bella wants to know what the holiday commemorates but then none of the persons in the car is aware. Dahaba theorizes that they would not be able to know what the holiday is all about since they feel they are not Kenyans enough. She argues that they as Somalis, despite having a sizeable population in Kenya, feel isolated and marginalized. She categorically states: “one can’t remember what the holidays are for when one is not entirely in sync with the national psyche” (252). One of the reasons Salif provides for the Somali’s lack of sense of belonging is that “Somalis feel politically disenfranchised, alienated from the country’s body politic” (252). This dialogue in a way exposes the pain and frustration the Somalis have with regard to the mistreatment they have been subjected to as a result of not only being perceived as being different but also closely associated with violence and terrorism which are perpetrated by religious extremists.

The narrator is pointing out what it actually means to be marginalized and alienated from your very own society either as a result of ethnocentrism and religion. Moderate Somalis are feeling resentful and unpatriotic to an African society which is isolating and discriminating against them. The discrimination has been caused by the terror and criminal activities of the Somali religious zealots. He seems to point out the meaning of belonging and what makes one to really belong to a particular nation. In addition, the narrator is ironical to the extent that he shows the Somalia people disintegrating owing to the collapse of the government, the two decades of civil war in which presently the federal government is at conflict with religious zealots. However, at the same time,

the Somalia society in Kenya, despite the socio-cultural change it is undergoing, appears to be cohesive, strong and resistant to change. It is so closely knitted that it stands out among the many other communities present in Kenya owing to its unique traits which has distinguished it from the rest of the communities which ironically are not in harmony as evidenced by the post-election violence experienced in 2008. The narrator tries to demonstrate that just as there is no perfect harmony and stability in Kenya, so is the situation in Somalia which has individuals and groups of people with diverse opinions, tastes, preference and interests be it economic, religious, political or social. In other words, there is no complete fragmentation of Somali nationalism but rather a reconstruction as a result of resentment and dislike by the rest of the Kenyans.

#### **2.4 Elements of Style**

*Hiding in Plain Sight* begins with a prologue in which Aar dreams that he is “trying to corral a dozen ground squirrels into his apartment”(vii). The exercise is quite involving as illustrated by the number of times he fails and the immense effort and patience it takes for him to get the animals into the apartment. However, when he is just about to get the very last squirrel into the apartment, Valerie, his estranged wife appears and disrupts this exercise. She not only distracts his attention but also attracts the animals towards her when she “begins extracting seeds, nuts, dead insects, nuts, dead insects and other tidbits that she feeds to the rodents”(viii). Aar is enraged and feels powerless as his efforts are being rendered futile as Valerie sabotages his efforts and this makes him to “utter a few choice expletives under his breath”(viii). Confusion and chaos ensue as the squirrels scatter everywhere with most getting out of the apartment since while Aar is trying to get them in, Valerie is making them get out. The couple had separated ten years ago. However, Bella’s appearance at the scene brings the competition to an end. She is carrying a camera for which she wants to take Valerie a photo. But then, Valerie hates “having her picture taken when she hasn’t prepared for it”(ix).

Consequently, Valerie runs away to avoid her photo taken and thus leave Aar to finish his task; getting the squirrels into the apartment. In the dream, Aar is surprised and unsettled to see Valerie who abandoned him and his two children ten years ago. Her appearance has stirred chaos and confusion in his mind. Valerie’s presence stirs chaos because it reminds him of his relationship with her. He thinks of “their relationship as being like a rug: beautiful when first purchased but

gone threadbare over time and then utterly disintegrating”(xvii). The chaos follows Valerie’s abandonment of their marriage. She abandoned her husband and two children went away with Padmini, into a homosexual relationship. Her presence equally stirs confusion since Aar “does not know what to tell them, how to explain that their mother evidently valued the love she shared with Padmini over the love she had for them”(xvii). The dream therefore is a metaphor for Valerie’s sexual orientation, which is largely associated with chaos, confusion and trouble. She is deemed troublesome and chaotic since she is a lesbian whose existence has created dissonance in Aar’s family and society. The fear to have her photos taken shows that she is a pretentious homosexual who fears exposure. She does not want her true self exposed to the public.

Apparently, in an interview with a journalist of a daily newspaper Bella explains how photography is a tool of power. The journalist had wanted to find out whether Bella believes that “photography is a matter of power, with the photographer lording it over the subject?” (40). Bella replies that she presumes “her subjects are as powerless as a rabbit caught in the headlights of an oncoming car” (40). She goes on to explain how photography has been previously used by colonizers to subjugate colonized peoples in places like Africa, Latin America and Australia. She says: “how the colonized Asians, Africans, North American Indians, and Australian Aborigines had been eroticized and trivialized by their colonizers. And just as American photographers produced naked portraits of Native Americans or Africans for the tourist trade, women photographed in the nude were put to similar service” (41). Bella is hereby demonstrating how women, colonized peoples and marginalized groups of people such as homosexuals are being denigrated when they have no voice. She is arguing that such marginalized people are painted negatively through photography. Valerie’s fear of being photographed is a metaphor for her fear to come out and identify herself as a lesbian. Valerie, just like Bella, whom she thinks is circumcised and therefore hiding in plain sight, “is in the closet” (110). When Valerie decides to leave for Pondicherry, she says:

Many things that ordinary people view as normal, including saying goodbye, are foreign to my nature. I have several selves, in fact: a private self that I am comfortable with and a public self that I find as demanding and exhausting a speaking a foreign tongue that I am barely familiar with. No doubt, you all think that I am rather unusual, uncouth in my outlook, ungrateful when I should be grateful. (322)

Valerie's acknowledgement that she cannot respond to issues the way a normal person would have reacted in normal circumstances implies that she is conceding that she is actually queer. Although she is finding it difficult to get used with how the public perceives her, she declares that she is comfortable and happy with who she is, even if the public might possibly misjudge and misunderstand her. Bella's ambition is to use photography to eliminate manual labor among women and is careful not to use photography to undermine women and children. Bella like Padmini share in the trouble of tolerating and appreciating Valerie for who she is, weird. The narrator says "Bella sees Padmini with new eyes, as an ally. The woman is no quitter, and her patience and tenderness towards Valerie seem to know no limits, even if Valerie is less constant in her loving" (265). Valerie's lesbianism and fear for photography is a metaphor for the vulnerability of hybrid Somalis who are in constant risk of being persecuted by Islamists and people of other ethnic affiliation and hence the solidarity among the Somali is suggested as a reaction to these risks.

Bella's gift to Salif and Dahaba are digital cameras for which she goes to the extent of setting them a dark room so that they can process photos. The gifts are meant to not only empower them to tell their stories, but also tell other peoples' stories. However, she equips them with knowledge of tolerance towards people who might be different from them. She scolds them when they use language unknown to people around them. She also teaches them about being considerate and tolerant towards others. For instance, she advises them to be tolerant with other people's sexual orientation. She says "In much of Africa being gay is considered an abomination. I hope you are more advanced in your own views and are more tolerant of other people's choices. What other people do and who they do with it is their own private affair" (179). Bella feels proud that her generous deed of settling Valerie and Padmini's hotel bill has helped keep Ulrika out of prison. She wonders whether she should join the gay movement in which she thinks needs as much support as it can actually get. She thinks that she might as well join the movement since 'here in Africa gays are victimized, harassed and harangued, they could do with all the help they can get' (309). In a dialogue with Salif and Dahaba she tells them that most people in Africa are ill-educated and misinformed about other people who are different from them. The resultant misinformation and intolerance have made Africans just as undemocratic as their governments. She says "sex is a personal matter that our societies and governments have no business with" (180). The writer is

foregrounding the rights of the vulnerable and minority people in African societies by giving them a voice.

In a dialogue, at a dinner prepared in Aar's house, Mahdi stirs a debate about Kenya's cuisine. He solicits for Mrs. Kariuki's description for the Kenyan cuisine which he says a chef he once met described it as '... nothing more than bland peasant cooking' (315). Mrs. Kariuki disagrees with Mahdi to the extent that Kenyan cuisine is entirely bland since according to her coastal cooking is not bland. She argues that even if coastal cooking may not necessarily be a representative of the indigenous food eaten in Kenya before the entry of foreign influences it tastes spectacular since it tastes like Yemeni and Indian cuisine. Mrs. Kariuki insists its Kenyan but Mahdi holds that it is only a representative of a tiny section of the country. To get a clearer understanding of Mahdi's argument, Mrs. Kariuki solicits his definition of peasant cooking for which he says it is "a cuisine lacking cosmopolitan influence, where the main purpose is to satiate hunger" (316). He goes on to argue that 'in a place, a city, a country, or a region where there is a crosscurrent of cultures feeding off one another the kitchen becomes an amalgam of tastes' (316). Mahdi in this case is arguing that sophistication of a cuisine in a particular nation is dependent on the diversity of people of that particular country with regard to race, culture, religion and population. For instance, he argues that India has a great cuisine simply because it "is a subcontinent with an ancient civilization a huge population and diverse cultures and faiths. I would say the cuisine reflects this multiculturalism" (316). Mahdi goes on to argue that Britain is a homogeneous nation whose influx of immigrants from India and Italy have led to diversity of cooking habits and taste buds which has led to the improvement of its cuisine. Somalia, he says, has benefitted from the cultural crosscurrents that happens in the urban areas. These cultural cross currents have improved Somalia's cooking majorly at the coastal urban areas although much change has not taken place in the interior parts of the country which are rural areas. The enrichment of the cuisine has been fronted through interaction with foreigners from Arabia, India, and Italy who not only introduced new food varieties but also necessitated the use of spices and ingredients which were not initially used in the preparation of indigenous foods. He says "In cosmopolitan cooking, there is a variety of ways you can use the same ingredients to prepare a meal; peasant tend to eat the same food day in and day out" (316-17).

Mahdi's argument in this debate is that the quality of a nation's cuisine is dependent to the extent to which the natives of the said country have interacted with foreign cultures, languages, religions, races and people. From the debate, India is regarded as having a spectacular cuisine owing to its diverse peoples, races, religion and culture as compared to Kenya and Somalia which have only experienced foreign influences in its major cities and towns. Britain is said to have a bland cuisine but is quickly having an improvement in its cuisine owing to an influx of an immigrant population. The sophistication of a country's cuisine in this dialogue is a metaphor for diversity of a nation's people and tolerance of differences among the people. It is feelings of intolerance against Muslim and the Black race in England that makes Salif feel more connected to Kenya and his African nationality and thus refusal to relocate to England for studies. Salif underscores the race prejudice in England where he says he could "end up in a detention cell for being black, male, young, and for bearing a Muslim name" (271).

Additionally, Bella demonstrates a reconnection with her African identity when she identifies herself not only as a woman but a "Somali one at that" (40) despite her hybrid status. She contemplates exploring Kenya together "with children and learn to love it with them and think of it as her own" (214). She promises herself to encourage the children to enhance their proficiency in Swahili and "think of themselves as citizens of Kenya" (215). The hybrid Somalis having been uprooted from their pure Somali nationhood but rejected in diaspora for their impure status as Europeans are reconnecting with Somali nationalism and thus African nationality in Kenya which can be described to be a mixture of African nationalities.

Bella's experience at the chaotic traffic jam on her way to Gigiri, at the United Nations' headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya shows the different kinds of people on earth. That despite the traffic jam leading to time wastage, some people have become accustomed to it. Meanwhile, some even manage to benefit from it. Some people benefit from it by hawking airtime, newspapers and other items. Some use the time to make calls while others use the time to groom by checking themselves on the mirror. Indiscipline, impunity and pride among individual motorists who deem themselves superior and better than other road users also is identified as the major cause of the traffic jam. A culture of narcissism and lack of respect for others in which each driver wants to have their way leads to chaos. The narrator says that the "traffic is such a chronic condition that

people have grown accustomed to it and serenely rely on it” (151). The traffic jam is an extended metaphor of Kenyan people who always cause chaos and crisis as a result of their egocentric attitude in which they view themselves as better than people. One may argue that similarly, there are people who would like the chaos to last as long as it can since they thrive in chaos and crisis.

Apparently, Bella and Valerie are fighting over who should control the execution of Aar’s will. Valerie wants to control the execution owing to her personal interest and thus benefit from the misfortune that has befallen her children and her sister-in-law. Bella is expected to take Dahaba and Salif through life after the death of their father until when they mature and achieve some sense of stability. However, Valerie makes a bid to sway the children her way but this proves difficult since the children do not trust her and is not the recognized executor of Aar’s will. Valerie and Bella’s tussle over the execution of Aar’s will reveals the struggle for economic power in the family and thus the need to have control for the orphaned children. However, Bella is identified as the sole executioner of Aar’s will and Valerie does not get anything. The attorney says Valerie and Aar “were married out of community of property, and Valerie is not legally entitled to anything” (296). Aar’s death and the wrangle’s in his family demonstrates the ripple effects of the disintegration of his marriage which has dehumanized not only the entire family but also individuals in the family. The heightened conflict and tension in this family one may argue confirms that the civil war in Somalia is a consequence of greed for power and economic resources. Bella who represents the unstable transitional federal government enjoys the support of Gunilla who epitomizes the United Nations. Bella steps in to take care of the orphaned children who denote Somalia’s statelessness which becomes fatherless owing to the toppling of the Said Barre government in 1991. The cause of the crisis and conflict in this family and therefore in Somalia according to the narrator is economic. There are factions who are at first warlords who fight for power and control over Somalia, but then the Islamic Courts Union, supported by the Shabaab strongly advance their agenda mostly through engaging the transitional federal government.

Bella dreams meeting stray dogs which seemingly are keen on attacking her. Luckily, she stumbles on a bag full of bones from which she scatters the bones so as to distract the attention of the dogs from her. The dogs scramble for the bones but when she tries to escape she is pursued by a big dog which apparently is disinterested in the bones and seems keen on tearing her apart. She

instinctively realizes that it's her necklace made of bones that has attracted the bloodhound. The narrator says "she unclasps the chain and throws it to the bloodhound, and at last lets her leave" (282). The dream therefore points to the bloody scramble for not only the economic resources but also the clamor for power as evidenced by the big bloodhound which was only keen on Bella's chain. Aar had bought only two necklaces for Bella and Gunilla. She therefore as an employee of the United Nations one could assert indicates the support the United Nations through the African Mission on Somalia gives to the transitional federal government which is weak and unstable as shown by Bella who, despite playing a transitory role for the children after the death of their father, is morally weak owing to her promiscuity.

The United Nations' strong support for Somalia's transitional federal government as denoted through Gunilla's allegiance to Bella and Valerie's decision to go back to India opens a room for possibilities. Valerie's decision to return to India denotes a move towards a position of alienation or exclusion. Apart from failing to win back the love and support of her children, she had also failed to get control over the financial resources. Valerie's bid to set up a trust fund in which she is the sole trustee and custodian shows a desire to have power and control over economic resources but she is unable owing to lack of support from Gunilla. Her return to India is due to the conflict between the women in which despite being a family, they have conflicting interest. They fail to agree on who should have custody of the children. Valerie feels justified to have children since she is their biological mother while Bella on her part believes she is legally endowed with the responsibility of not only executing Aar's will but also have custody of her brother's children. She deems herself more responsible since she was at least available for them than their mother ever was. Valerie's move back to India does not however mean conceding defeat. She refuses to bid them goodbye since it is so painful for her to walk out of the lives of her own children. She however appreciates that her children are in safe hands as indicated by Bella's establishment of the darkroom. The dark room to Valerie, shows Bella's dedication to the children as she would "share the most important parts of" her life (322). These move back to isolation is ironical since it takes place when a family reunion has just taken place. The family reunites for it to again disintegrate.

The separation and disagreement of individuals of the same family one may argue demonstrates how any given nation, community or family has individuals with diverse opinions, viewpoints and



beliefs which always leads to a conflict of interest. It is this diverse opinions or differences that has led to Northern Somalia seceding to form the autonomous Somaliland state. The North Eastern clans also secede to form the Puntland state. Valerie's failure to come up with the trust fund one may argue is a metaphor for wealth and material interest as a cause of conflict in a family or even a society. For instance, in the novel, Valerie's and Bella's conflict is synonymous with the Islamists conflict with the transitional federal government. Bella is an impediment to Valerie's quest to have control and power over Aar's wealth and children. The transitional government is equally an impediment to the Islamist's bid to not only acquire power but also have control over economic resources in Mogadiscio.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In this Chapter I have looked at elements of allegory employed in Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight*. I have established that metaphorical elements present in *Hiding in Plain Sight* include: characters typology, element of style and the plot structure. I have shown how Farah in *Hiding in Plain Sight* employs these metaphorical elements to show how hybrid Somalis are treated in Somalia and elsewhere. The chapter establishes that it is impossible to recreate or create a society in which its people are fully integrated. There will always be differences among people with regard to gender, race, sexual orientation, language, ancestry, culture, social class and religion. The chapter establishes that the novel revolves around Bella as a fully developed character whose family depicts not only disintegration of Somali nationalism and Somalia's nation-state but also the disintegration of the hybrid Somalis who, are in a crisis owing to uprootedness from their culture, and hostility and violence from within and without their people. This is because a people with a common religion, culture or language will be further disintegrated by either their view points, multilingualism or even adherence to the common religion or culture. The chapter examines Somali nation with a view of exploring the differences which have resulted in the nation's disintegration, for which paradoxically, it's still held together. I examine the reasons for the collapse and reconstitution of Somalia nationalism.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ALLEGORICAL ELEMENTS IN NURUDDIN FARAH'S *CROSSBONES*

#### 3.1 Introduction

This Chapter examines metaphorical elements present in Nuruddin Farah's *Crossbones*. I examine the character typology and elements of style as metaphorical elements in presentation of disintegration in *Crossbones*. The novel revolves around Jeebleh, Malik and Ahl. It is grounded on a series of conversations and interviews conducted by Ahl and Malik on their visit to Somalia. Ahl is out to seek his stepson who has voluntarily joined the terror group Al Shabaab, while Malik apart from helping his brother find his stepson, is in the country as a freelance journalist to write about Somalia as she prepares for war against Ethiopia. Jeebleh, Malik's father-in-law, apart from visiting his childhood friend Bile, is acting as a guide. Ahl is a diaspora Somali whose search of his step-son, is a metaphor for Somalia's search for its lost nationalism. Additionally, Malik's search for a story, about Somalia's preparation for a war against Ethiopia, I argue is a metaphor for the negative nationalism of Somalia which is not only destructive to Somalis locally and globally, but also destructive to the non-Somalis. In this Chapter I examine the reasons for both fragmentation and reconstitution of Somalia's nationalism.

#### 3.2 Character Typology

Malik and Jeebleh land in Mogadiscio, in Southern Somalia. Ahl first visits Bosaso in Djibouti before proceeding to Puntland, one of Somalia's autonomous states. Ahl is in search of Taxliil, his stepson who despite being treated as a true son, runs away from their home in Toronto, Canada. He runs away from home so as to go and join the Al Shabaab in Somalia, which under the control of the Islamic Courts Union, is in war against Ethiopia. The nation has been reeling under a civil war for more than two decades and most of her citizens have moved to other countries in Africa and Europe. Some have sought refuge in Canada and the United States where they have established Somali societies such as the one in Toronto, Canada. Jeebleh is visiting his ancestral land, Mogadiscio, for the first time in a decade. Malik is a journalist based in New York while Ahl is a researcher based in Toronto Canada. The three are part of the many Somalis who live in the diaspora owing to a civil war that has been going on for close to three decades. The civil war erupted after a military coup in 1990 when Said Barre's government was overthrown. After the coup, there was a power vacuum left behind since the rebels and the opposition did not manage to

form a government. The rebels and the opposition broke along the primacy of the clans which were led by warlords. The warlords were financed by the government of the United States. They were supported so as to have a unified government formed. This proved unsuccessful. On the contrary, it escalated the conflict.

The disintegration of Somalia government and the rise of warlords in early nineties led to the suffering, destruction of property, looting, loss of lives and displacement of people. The conflict saw many Somalis turning into refugees in foreign nations such as Canada and Kenya. The existence of Somali societies in Toronto and in other major cities in African countries is a testimony of the disintegration of Somalia.

The Somali society in Toronto maintains the dictates of the life in Somalia. In spite of being made up of people who share a common language, religion, culture and origin, it is evident that it is disintegrated owing to its patriarchal nature. It is divided between men and women. The weaker members of this society which comprises women and children are disenfranchised. The society is characterized by men who not only neglect their manly duties such as providing for their families but also impose all manner of abuse on their women. The society has gender roles in which women not only endure sexual and physical violence but also take up the role of providing for the family. The children endure violence both at home and school. The narrator says that Taxliil “was aware, life was a chore: punishments at home; humiliation at school; mothers never assisted with the children, fathers seldom involved in raising their offspring” (39).

The mistreatment of women and the carefree, irresponsible life of husbands is demonstrated in Yusur’s family. Her husband neglects the responsibility of providing for his family. Instead, he spends most of his time chewing *qaat* (khat) while Yusur, like other women, toils and works hard to provide for the family. The little money these women manage to make is taken away by their husbands. Yusur works hard so as to enroll in part-time studies and hence forced to hire a house help for which she finds quite expensive. She does not get discouraged but, then “her husband’s bad behavior reached new depths when he was arrested for sexually assaulting the babysitter” (38). The husband is arrested and taken to court and her in laws demand that she pays the legal

fees for which she refuses and when he is released she adamantly refuses to have him for which “her in-laws made physical threats against her” (39).

The Somali society in Toronto is increasingly violent, immoral and oppressive to women and children. It is insecure and inhabitable for both women and children. The women are raped, violent gangs have sprouted, corruption has taken root, and drugs are circulating. Both women and children are being suppressed. It is evident that both Ahl and Taxliil are aware that “For most Somali children in the diaspora, he was aware, life was a chore: punishments at home, humiliation at school; mothers not assisted with the children, fathers seldom involved in raising their offspring.” (39). Taxliil and his mother Yusur exemplify the oppression of women and children in this patriarchal society. It is the oppression of Yusur which leads to the termination of their marriage. She separates with the husband for not only mistreating her but for also undermining her when he rapes their house help. The sexual assault on the house help shows that the society is divided between men and women. The men being the stronger sex imposes its will on the weaker sex. The differences between men and women in the society leads to the disintegration of families as shown when Yusur becomes impatient with her husband’s infidelity and resolutely decides to separate with her husband.

The society in Somalia is divided between the rich and the poor. In an interview with Malik, Muusa Ibrahim (Maarduf), there is a high mortality rate where Maarduf’s family live. Five of his siblings died before they were four years old. They die of curable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and common cough especially because there are no doctors. Maarduf says one had to be very strong in order to survive. The narrator describes Maarduf as being “of medium height, with a broad chest and the fists of a pugilist. Veins run all over the back of his hands, and they move as he gesticulates. He is soft-spoken though, for a man his size, and his smile is disarming.” (297-29).

It is from such a family that has continually been impoverished by diseases and war that Kaahin, his young brother, managed to survive but succumbs to the dictates of a faulty religious doctrine. He is persuaded by his sister and brother to go to school but he declines so as to join the Shabaab. Big Beard shoots him in cold blood. Kaahin is one of the young people who is hopeless and finds

life meaningless due to the environment he is born in. He is born in an environment where poverty is so pervasive as demonstrated by the high infant mortality rate and the constant chaos and civil war that has gripped the nation owing to the division of the country between the moderate and radical Muslims. To find meaning in life, he joins the Shabaab where he is indoctrinated that killing innocent people for a national cause is godly but failure to execute the murderous plans as instructed lands him in trouble with his superiors.

The young people such as Taxliil, Kaahin and Saifullah are caught in between the disintegration of the nation, and the struggles between the moderate Muslims and the radical Islamists. These young people voluntarily join the Shabaab, a terror group associated with the Islamic Court's union. There is a divided opinion between the people in Somalia. The Islamists are a sectarian group of people who are advocating for the establishment of an Islamic state in Somalia. They are up in arms against the federal government which has installed a secular system of government which accommodates all the people regardless of their religion or clan. The federal government has attracted a lot of support from the African Union which has its troops in Somalia. The religionists, however, are intolerant and hostile to other religions. The hostility is shown when the Islamists declare war against Ethiopia which is largely a Christian nation. Ahl watches a television interview in his room in which, an interviewee says "We, as mujahideen martyrs of Islam are ready to lay down our lives in the name of Allah. We'll help defeat Ethiopia and America, the enemies of Islam" (99).

The declaration of war against Ethiopia divides opinion among the people in Mogadiscio. In spite of being supportive of the Islamists leadership and control over some parts of Somalia, Dajjal does not support the declaration of war against Ethiopia. He believes that the declaration is not only self-destructive but ultimately leads to self-inflicted pain and suffering. The religionists according to him are set for failure even before the war starts. He believes that Ethiopia has a stronger army and presumably better equipped and armed. His opinion is however disputed by Gumaad who believes that the Islamists will ultimately win the war against Ethiopia. The pro-war Somalis believe that they will win the war by making the war a holy jihad in which all the Muslims all over the world will be involved. The Islamists' spokesperson is so confident that they shall win the war and actually says that 'I promise that with God's will, the army of the Faithful will conquer

Ethiopia in less than three weeks, and it being Ramadhan, the holy month, we will break our fast in Addis Ababa” (200).

Somalia’s declaration of war against Ethiopia is not new. Said Barre, Somalia’s president in 1977, declared war against Ethiopia in a quest to have a bigger Somalia by having the Ogaden province in Ethiopia as part of its territory. It is a war in which Dajaaal was Libaan’s commanding officer. Libaan was “recruited into the National Army as a noncommissioned officer” (320). Somalia was yearning to have Ogaden which was annexed by Ethiopia during Somalia’s colonization. Somalia was colonized by three European powers and Ethiopia. Britain took up Northern Somalia which later became British Somaliland. It also took the North Frontier District which after colonization remained as the North Eastern province of Kenya. Italy took up Southern Somalia which is popularly known as the Italian Somaliland. France took up Djibouti which became an autonomous nation when it gained independence in 1977 and “continues to exist and fight for its corner in its own wily ways” (57). Somalia gained independence in 1962 of which British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland unified to form the Somalia Democratic republic. Said Barre became Somalia’s president with the promise of having a greater Somalia. He tried to fulfill this by declaring a war against Ethiopia in 1977 so as to regain the Ogaden province. However, the Russians, who at the time was Somalia’s ally, decided to support her enemy, Ethiopia. The betrayal of the Russians, and Cuba’s support to Ethiopia made Somalia lose the war. Russia betrayed Somalia when they “changed sides and the Cubans intervened, chasing the Somalis out of the Somali speaking Ogaden region in Ethiopia” (174). The war against Ethiopia was more nationalistic as it was religious. The loss of the war ultimately led to feelings of disillusionment which developed into a rebellion to Barre’s government. The Somalian government was overthrown in 1990 and this created a power vacuum in which the warlords who were at the time funded by the United States through the United Nations for Somalia (UNOSOM). The warlords however turned against the United States army which had come to Somalia for a peace keeping mission. The death of American soldiers and the debasement of their bodies made the Americans leave Somalia. The mediation processes have so far been unfruitful and hence Somalia’s statelessness which has led to further fragmentation of the nation. Apart from Djibouti attaining its independence and “continues to exist and fight for its corner in its own wily ways” (57), British Somaliland declared itself an autonomous state. It is in Somaliland that Malik’s father actually resides. He says “my

old man is living somewhere in the breakaway Republic of Somaliland, tending to his camels, married to a much younger woman and raising a new brood of kids’’ (72).

The violence and aggression against the American soldiers are believed to have been instigated by national and religious resentment. The Somalis having lost their loved ones felt deeply aggrieved not only because the Americans responsible for their deaths were not only White people but also because they were Christians. This hatred led to the desecration of the Christian cemeteries which is not only inhumane but also against the Islam doctrine. According to Qasiir, there are two reasons the businessmen, who are largely Islamists, are supporting the war. He says firstly it is because they do not want to pay tax. Secondly, he says they want to unseat the president who hails from Puntland which is also another fragment of the larger Somalia. Qasiir says:

There are a number of reasons why the Bakhaaraha are aiding the insurgency. You see, no businessman will show eagerness in welcoming a government that is bound to levy tax on his business. They would rather there was no government; they would rather not pay tax. The second reason is they do not like the interim president, who hails from Puntland, and whom they accuse not only of having bought along thousands of trained soldiers from the autonomous state, but also having invited the Ethiopians to invade. (324)

The oppression of women and children both at home and school according to Kala Saar has resulted in alienation of the young people. The young people do not have proper role models in society. The teachers and parents are no longer role models and hence the rebellion of young people who have turned to strange imams and gurus for guidance. However, these imams and gurus mislead them by converting them into either insurgents or terrorists. Kala avers that both the insurgents and terrorists are evil since they both cause loss of human life and thus unhappiness which develops into self-hate. It is this self-hatred that Kala says ‘‘results in the nation murdering itself, and in the process of doing so, the individual committing suicide becomes a metaphor for the death culture’’ (312). Taxliil’s decision to join the Shabaab despite the opportunities to change the course of his destiny through education indicates the crisis in his family and society. Apparently, Taxliil risks spending the rest of his life in jail. Saifullah is another young Somali citizen who is recruited to work for the Islamic Courts Union. He is misguided by aunt Zaituun who is submissive to religious dogma and male chauvinism. He runs away from home so as to

undergo training in detonating explosives. He dies at a youthful age as a suicide bomber. His suicide mission leads to the death of eleven other people near the Federal government's headquarters.

Another young person who is caught in the struggle to find her space in the patriarchal society is Willa, Maarduf's sister. She is a stewardess. Willa meets Ahl in Bosaso where one of the pilots describes her as 'fat arsed, lazy and weepy' as she was mourning the death of Kaahin, her brother. Later on, Ahl realizes that Willa whom the narrator describes as 'a young woman, demurely dressed, head covered, face veiled, but only cursorily' (26), says that despite being "decked out in traditional garb, her bearing takes him back to the nightclub in Djibouti, where a prostitute tried to chat him up. Willa has the same knowingness" (266). Although she is a stewardess, she indulges in prostitution so as to make an extra cash and be able to survive. She practices prostitution owing to economic hardships. Indulgence in prostitution exposes her to the risk of being infected with sexually transmitted diseases, suffering humiliation and violence. Ahl is surprised that she offers herself to such an activity in a country known for its religiosity. Willa, like the prostitute Ahl met in a night club in Djibouti, is promiscuous and hypocritical. Fidno tried offering her to Ahl.

There is a clear difference in personality and character between the Islamists and the moderates such as Dajaal and Qasiir. Gumaad and Big Beard are stereotypes who demonstrate the nature of the Islamists. Big Beard is portrayed as a brutal and corrupt customs officer. He is a businessman at the Bakhaaraha market who Gumaad says "is the rising star among those who have been inducted into the intelligence division of the military wing of the courts" (19). He is responsible for setting up safe houses from which the Islamists launch attacks against the transitional government. Apart from being a violent and brutal as shown when he beats up Kaahin for being ineffective and unable to carry out instructions as given in a mission to consecrate a house in which they would launch attacks against the transitional government and Ethiopian army, Big Beard is full of hatred and is inhumane since he orders the murder of Dhoore. He orders the murder of Dhoore whose only mistake is to have two sons of which one "has declared himself a secularist and has often militated against the group in radio interviews" (65). His other son is a minister in the Transitional Federal Government and thus an enemy of the Shabaab. Big Beard is a brutal murderer who orders TruthTeller to shoot Kaahin in cold blood for having spared Dhoore's life.



Gumaad is an unpublished journalist who doubles up as an informant of the Court's union who helps in the execution of foreign journalists covering the situation in Somalia. Cambara warns Malik against informants such as Gumaad whom she says work 'in cahoots with the religionists and others with foreign forces intent on destabilizing an already destabilized country' (77). The foreign journalists, local journalists and individuals with independent views and contrary opinion such as Dajaal and Qasiir are executed. Malik is targeted but survives an attack. Gumaad later serves as the Islamic Courts union's spokesperson although he can only express himself only in Somali and has a basic knowledge of the English language. It is alleged that he had moved to Asmara in an entourage that comprised of the Sheikh and other leaders of the Islamic court's union when the war breaks out. This decision to stir up chaos and crisis and then flee from Mogadiscio depicts the union's leadership as being not only incompetent and hypocritical but also selfish. The Islamists are incompetent political players for three major reasons. Firstly, the Islamists are intolerant and hostile to dissenting opinions. The Islamists' intolerance is demonstrated through the assassinations of various journalists. For instance, a roadside device that "blew up the car carrying Malik and his fellow journalists on the way back from Shire's funeral claimed the lives of three of them" (333). The dissenting voices such as Dajaal's and Qasiir's are silenced when the two are killed. Malik also witnesses the burial of several journalists. Secondly, the Islamists' incompetence is shown when they fail to capitalize on their control and power in Mogadiscio to deliver peace and stability probably by establishing a functional government. Instead, the leadership of the union declares war on Ethiopia and thus erode the gains made. Thirdly, the Islamists are incompetent owing to their reactionary and sectarian nature. Kala Saar says "I do not approve of Shabaab's actions. They are not fighting for liberty but to gain power. They are not fighting for the national interest, they are fighting for sectional interest, insofar as they are fighting on behalf of a specific segment of Somali society, the radical fringe" (314). Consequently, Gumaad's incompetence as a journalist symbolizes the incompetence of the Islamists. Gumaad as a metaphor for the Islamist's confusion and incompetence is further captured through his shabby dressing. The narrator describes him as having dressed in "a motley combination of colours: his trousers a faded pink, shoes almost emerald green, the buttons of his shirt ranging from dark brown to orange and green. Yet neither Gumaad nor his mates seem aware of the clownlike clash of colors" (155).

To accomplish their sectarian interests, naïve and misguided teenagers such as Young Thing and Saifullah are used and then brutally murdered. The recruitment and martyring of the young people show the Islamists as being hypocritical since they are neither willing to sacrifice themselves nor their own children. Kala Saar says: “No priest is ready to pay the ultimate price for Islam through self-sacrifice himself. Nor do any of them put their own children to die for the cause for which they claim to be fighting; only other people’s brothers and sons” (313-14). These young people entrust the destiny of their lives to self- seeking religionists who care less about their welfare. Ahl observes that “there is no despair as profound as that of a teenager whose innocence has led him to place his trust unwisely” (351). Big Beard is an opportunist who thrives in the chaos created in Mogadiscio since he actively participates in the destabilization of Somalia when he consecrates a house in which attacks against Transitional federal government shall be launched. He is a businessman in Bakharaaha market in which there is ‘selling and hiding weapons and providing intelligence to the insurgency’ (323). Big Beared, like every other single businessman in this market want the war to escalate so as to sabotage the establishment of “a government that is bound to levy tax on his business” (324).

Apart from being brutal, Big Beard is hostile and hypocritical and at a certain instance threatens Dajaal and confiscates Malik’s laptop for which he infects it with a deadly virus, deletes several files including Malik’s desktop background which is his daughter’s photo. The reason behind this latter act is that he has been “charged with ensuring that no objectionable computer software or pornographic material is imported into the country, in breach of the Islamic code of conduct” (21). Ironically, as much as the religious renegades are trying to impede entry of any immoral things from gaining entry in Somalia, it is they who are maintaining an immoral system in which women are raped, extortion is rife, piracy is flourishing and extortion is the order of the day as symbolized by the deadly virus he infects in Malik’s laptop. The culture of impunity is therefore perpetuated by the very people who claim to be custodians of morality and therefore the chances of tranquility and justice taking root in Somalia is very minimal.

The confiscation of Malik’s laptop indicates the hostility meted on the diaspora Somalis visiting Somalia. Apart from being assassinated for having different opinions from the one held by the

Islamists, the diaspora Somalis are exploited whenever they buy anything in Somalia. Ahl is overcharged in the hotel he spends in Bosaso. They are treated with suspicion whenever they are getting into the country at the airports as evidenced by the extra scrutiny that their documents are examined. Malik is exploited when he goes to buy another laptop at the Bakhaaraha market . Although they had agreed on a particular prize, Big Beared interferes with the agreement Malik has to pay “ten dollars more than what was previously agreed...” (159).

The declaration and support for the war against Ethiopia is not only based on religious reasons but also due to economic reasons. The Islamists do not want the establishment of a government because since they are businessmen they will be forced to pay taxes. Payment of taxes implies that they will get reduced profits. For instance, Big Beard is a custom’s officer and a businessman at the Bakhaaraha market in which he deals in selling laptops and other accessories.

Qasiir says “They would rather there was no government; they would rather not pay taxes” (324).

The decision to declare war against Ethiopia disrupts the harmony and tranquility which was slowly setting in Somalia. Apparently, there has been several attempts to have a stable Somalia. The first attempt was after independence in which Somalia’s first president was overthrown due to his corruption and inability to realize the hopes and aspirations of his citizens at independence. Said Barre took over and led Somalia to a war against Ethiopia in 1977. Losing the war prompted a rebellion as it refocused the disillusioned nation on the problems facing it. The nation was reeling under a dictatorship in which “censorship was at its severest; when former telephone tapping was common; when one handed over his passport to the immigration officer on returning from abroad and was expected to collect it from the Ministry of the interior a week later” (31). Jeebleh observes that the religionists are replicating trends witnessed during Barre’s dictatorship government. The religionists are allegedly presiding over “target assassination of several military army officers, peace activists killed at home late at night in full view of their wives and children, intellectuals eliminated...” (31). The Said Barre government was ousted in 1990 and this resulted in a civil war. The warlords thrived. The warlords led to the fragmentation of Somalia into several autonomous states. British Somaliland formed Somaliland, while the Western Somalia formed the Puntland state. Southern Somalia whose capital city is Mogadiscio is partly under the control of the Islamic courts union. Big Beard’s childlessness even after marrying five women indicates the

inability of the nation to form a stable government even after various factions have taken control over Mogadiscio severally. The conflict of interest between the religious zealots and the moderates have failed to deliver the much-coveted leadership and stability in Somalia.

When the situation in Somalia worsens, Jeebleh flies to Nairobi from where he will move to North America. He cuts short his visit to Bile who is sick. Bile is suffering from prostate cancer and Cambara notes that Bile easily gets tired due to his old age and sickness which drains his energy. Bile is a medical doctor who had been imprisoned for some time during the regime of the Said Barre for allegedly engaging in subversive activities only to be released two days before the onset of the civil war in 1991. His last few years towards the end of his term in prison were in solitary confinement which greatly affected his health. Bile met Dajaal when he was released from prison. Dajaal rescued him from a gang of men who wanted to rob him. Bile is said to have been a lively young man who was broken and weighed down by the long stint in prison and the civil war which erupted just after being released. The narrator says “Bile is often off-kilter, prone to mood changes when he takes medicine and sick like a dog when he does not” (118). Bile is a metaphor of a nation which is suffering from cancer. Although Bile is a medical doctor he cannot treat himself and is therefore helpless.

Cambara feels that Bile has reduced her to a nurse rather than a lover and is experiencing some sense of internal conflict. She feels jealous that Bile is only ecstatic when he is sharing his childhood and youthful memories nostalgically with Jeebleh. She believes that Bile is happier and more alive when chatting with Jeebleh and this makes her think that Bile must have found her company quite irritating and unfulfilling. Whenever she is left alone with him, they talk only about everyday things and his health. Bile finds the memories of earlier days when Somalia had just gained independence more intriguing and refreshing than the days when Said Barre took over power and started eliminating dissenting opinions. Bile and Jeebleh are old friends who existed when Somalia had just gained independence. They share a common history owing to a common experience during the regime of Said Barre. They were both educated at Universities in Europe and served their country for some time before they started having divergent opinions from the ones held by the ruling elite. They were arrested and “served long prison terms as well, the last few years of Bile’s in solitary confinement” (118). It is Dajaal who rescues Bile from a gang of men

and thus demonstrate how the moderates are humane and kind since they protect the weak in society. The Islamists kill, maim and rape women who are weak. Bile, Dajaal and Jeebleh bring out the difference between the Somalis who left Somalia for diaspora countries and the Somalis who remained. Bile's sickly condition demonstrates the difficult life he has had to endure in Somalia. Dajaal on the other hand shows the poverty the Somalis who remained have to put up with. Jeebleh having moved to diaspora seems more successful among the three friends.

Apparently, Cambara and Bile are lovebirds who live together but unmarried at least by the religious standards. This has made them attract disdain and criticism from the Islamists. Cambara is said to have moved from Toronto Canada where she trained as an actress and a make-up artist. Having lost her only son and her second marriage just broken, of which both were abusive, Cambara according to Seamus, became suicidal and murderous. Despite Jeebleh's suggestion that she solemnize her marriage with Bile she remains adamant and is thus in a way a bigamist since her last marriage was not terminated. Jeebleh is afraid that Cambara might contemplate walking out on Bile since she is young. Cambara's refusal reminds Jeebleh of a friend's wife who opted out their marriage and engaged in a lesbian relationship. The woman later explained that "she dreaded submitting to her husband's insatiable advances and felt it would be easier with other women" (77).

Nonetheless, Cambara is resolute, determined and steadfast in her interaction with the Islamists who are against her staging plays, save for the one she staged on arrival from Canada. The religious zealots have denied women freedom to choose their way of dressing and expect them to cover their heads with a veil and put on hijabs. Women are barred from putting on brassieres. The women are forced to cover their hair and cannot put on trousers so "that the men in whom fires of lust are burning may not be tempted into sin" (77-78). These restrictions reveal the patriarchal nature of the Islamists. The moderate women find the restrictions oppressive. These restrictions are strange since they are not part of the original Somali culture.

The patriarchal society in Somalia is oppressive to women. It is oppressive because sexual abuse is tolerated. Cambara is attacked by a gang of men who nearly rape her. It is at the onset of the

civil war in 1991 when the incident occurs. Fortunately for her, Dajjal rescues her from these men who wanted to rape her. Dajjal also helps her to get back her property from a minor warlord who had appropriated it during the civil war. The incident shows the difference between the nature of the moderates and the Islamists. That while a thirteen-year-old girl is raped in a mosque while the Imams are watching, Dajjal rescues Cambara from rapists. Xalan is raped by a gang of Islamists men when she maintains her liberal ideas, mannerisms and convictions. She is raped “in a mosque as three imams looked on and did nothing to stop the defilers” (306). Nevertheless, this does not make Warsame divorce her as expected of the men in society in which a woman who is sexually abused is stigmatized. Xalan on her part like Cambara is steadfast and determined despite the stigma that she suffers from the very Islamists who allows shameful acts such as rape to thrive.

Nevertheless, there are women who support the oppressive nature of the Islamists. Zaituun actively indulges in the maintenance of oppressive religious and traditional practices that undermine fellow women. She is so much indoctrinated to the extent that she collaborates with the oppressive religious zealots who seek strict adherence, obedience and compliance to religious practices which not only dehumanize women but also render women devoid of their feelings and individual identities. She does not see eye to eye with her sister owing to their “differences in character and outlook, the one very devout and uncompromising when it comes to her faith, the other of a secular cast of mind” (305). Zaituun identifies Xalan’s secularist ways as the cause of the rape that she (Xalan) suffered and that she could have another “rape and worse coming to her unless she changed” (306). The society in Somalia has sister turning against not only against sister but also family owing to their religious beliefs.

Zaituun’s childhood life is demonstrated as to have been characterized with some sense of liberality since she not only used to play football with boys but was also quite rebellious in school. She was at constant loggerheads with her teachers, a nature she embraced in her marriage as she was always quarreling with husband. However, at the onset of the civil war her husband is killed in a shoot-out and she first moved to Kenya and later on to Canada as a refugee. She undergoes a remarkable transformation when she decides “to dedicate her life to the study of the Holy Scripture” (307). This change can be attributed to the crisis in Somalia in which women are

stripped off their independent volition and instead their lives become controlled and regulated by oppressive religious and social norms. The transformation in her character and personality can be said to be as a result of two factors. Firstly, the breakdown of the Somalia government which led to a civil war in which the warlords and later the Islamists came into power. They introduce stricter laws which undermine and oppress women. Secondly, the death of her husband at the onset of the civil war could have contributed significantly to her mortification. She becomes imbued in religion as a way of seeking solace and protection from a hostile patriarchal society. Living in a patriarchal society in which any form of rebellion is punished through death or rape could have made her fear and thus comply with a religious doctrine that undermines her fellow women. The compliance to these oppressive patriarchal and religious doctrines is in a way commission of death since she is no longer her true self. She becomes what the society wants her to be while her personality and characters is smothered. She has undergone an incredible transformation of being a rebellious young woman who used to play “soccer with the boys and broke every school rule, challenging her teachers and correcting them when they were wrong” (306). On the contrary, she has become submissive and loyal to the dictates of a highly religious and patriarchal society which undermines women. There is a different approach taken by women in the society divided between the radicals and the secularists. Cambara and Xalan are women who are rebellious and resistant to the oppressive religious practices that undermine women while Zaituun is a woman who becomes submissive to the religious and traditional practices that undermine women. The Islamists have a system in which there is regulation of life’s routines, violence, fear and sense of loss. The secularists are different since they advocate for freedom to thought, opinion, tranquility and orderliness.

The narrator is undoubtedly condemning the use of religion in the suppression of not only women but also the society in its entirety. The imams preside over the oppression of the citizenry in Somalia. The imams are portrayed as having appropriated the religion to create some fanatic followers such as Big Beard who can kill, maim, burn, loot and even kill to have their agenda fulfilled.

The Islamists have no intention of establishing a functional government and hence the hostility towards the transitional federal government. The Islamists do not want establishment of a

functional government for two major reasons. Firstly, it's evident that these Islamists are beneficiaries of the chaos prevalent in Somalia as exemplified by the businessmen in Bakharaarah market who fear that establishment of a functional government will ensure payment of taxes, something which they are not willing to do. Secondly, they cannot come to a common decision. Kala Saar says "they cannot agree among themselves" (121).

There is some level of order in the two autonomous states in Puntland, in the North East, and Somaliland. Southern Somalia is largely chaotic and the Islamic Courts Union has a working relation with the Shabaab. They preside over the injustices meted on women for instance the thirteen-year-old girl who is raped by a gang of men but is stoned for being immoral while the men go scot free. The same is replicated when they recruit young teenagers such as Saifullah and Taxliil as suicide bombers and hence take their life which causes damages, deaths, and unnecessary grief to their families yet they themselves do not participate in these suicidal missions. They are hypocritical and dishonest since they do not offer themselves as martyrs neither 'do any of them put forward their own children to die for a cause for which they claim to be fighting; only other people's sons and brothers'" (313-14).

The physical and sexual humiliation of women demonstrate a highly oppressive society, in which a section of its members is marginalized. Women such as Xalan, Yusur and Cambara have been physically and sexually assaulted and have had troubled marriages in which they had to divorce their husbands. The separation or divorce indicates that the disintegration of society stems from the breakdown of the family institution. The divorce also is a metaphor for of the fragmentation Somalia has undergone as a result of the civil wars which has resulted in displacement of her people such as Jeebleh who moves to Canada. Bile's sickly nature symbolizes the crisis and chaos in Somalia owing to the more than two decades of a civil war which seems to have no end just like cancer which is incurable.

### **3.3 Elements of Style**

Jeebleh stirs in his dream owing to a frightening dream in which he hears horses neighing and donkeys braying. He registers cows mooing in a night in which he is accompanied by Malik who is conducting an interview. He finds himself in the middle of Mogadiscio which he mistakes for a



village. Its houses have been levelled down “the roads gutted, the pavements reduced to rotted ravines, with unexploded mines scattered in the rubble” (164). He gets to see a technical which has probably been recently used since its warm and is still emitting smoke. Jeebleh observes that there are corpses lying in a heap. Some of them, owing to their uniform are Ethiopians but the rest are bodies of young Somalis. Though when he starts walking around he feels nostalgic since he is walking through his childhood city, he can hardly recognize it owing to not only his emigration from the city as a youth when he went abroad for studies but also due to the civil war which has resulted in the city being ravaged to the ground. The city not only arouses in him childhood memories of which he truly treasures, but also reminds him the mortal enemies such as Caloosha, whom he truly despised but eventually “got what he deserved, dying a miserable death” (109).

Jeebleh visualizes dead Somali youths come back to life and thereby replay the events that led to their death. In the dream he perceives these young people dig up an arms cache, in which there are sorts of weaponry and at the same time they receive training and instructions from a seemingly incompetent trainer on how to use the weapons. In the dream, Jeebleh visualizes the extent to which Mogadiscio has been reduced to some kind of a village and thinks of it as “a featureless as a ground down cog in a broken machine” (165). Jeebleh in the dream observes that the city is no longer a metropolis and its residents have been drafted into the fighting force. He notices that the people are emaciated and run down by diseases, hunger, starvation, and fear. We are told that they “seem exhausted, inarticulate with fear and vigilance, which imposes a further formlessness” (165).

These martyrs are wiped away when a mine detonates and most of them die while others are seriously injured. The most intriguing part of this dream is that Jeebleh realizes that most of the people who die as a result of the explosion are the young people. Jeebleh observes that the old are spared and when he puts this to the recruiter, the recruiter argues that it is exemplary to die for one’s country and that these martyrs’ blood is what helps keep the nation alive. “Without that, there will be no country” (165). Jeebleh is not amused that the young are forced to die for a religious cause they may not necessarily believe in and that the hypocritical Islamist does not even bother to help in the burying of the bodies of these young people in a mass grave. Instead the

fellow walks way and sits in a manner of prayer. As Jeebleh walks away he sees a house which has caved in with bodies of people hanging from the roof.

This dream in itself shows the fate of not only the young people in Somalia but of the entire population which has been forced into war. The young people have been forced into a fighting force. They are radicalized and made to fight a meaningless war in which their recruiters are merely using them to serve their reactionary goals. The recruitment and radicalization of the young people into a fighting force and their ultimate fate indicates that there is stratification of the Islamists and the Shabaab. The young people are mere pawns who are misused by the hypocritical older men to achieve their sectarian interest. The Islamists and their leaders are hypocritical because they misuse religion to coerce the young people to be part of a fighting force against Ethiopia and the federal government yet they and their families flee to Eritrea or seek asylum in foreign nations. Gumaad is said to have boarded a plane with the Sheikh to seek asylum in Asmara. The departure of “The Sheikh and The Other Sheikh and almost all the members of Courts’ Executive Board...” soon after the bombing prompts the arrival of the Interim president into Mogadiscio.

In addition, the dream motif portrays the suffering imposed on the poor members of not only the Islamists but also the general population. The children die due to malnutrition and starvation, mothers and sons are killed while their sons are hanged on rafters. The city is razed to the ground due to the air strikes, mines and bombs. Majority of the population has been displaced with most fleeing to neighbouring countries such as Kenya and Canada as refugees. Saifullah who dies as a suicide bomber and Kaahin who is shot dead in cold blood are examples of the young people who are radicalized and thus give their lives for the interest of the Islamists. Taxliil chickened out. He risks being arrested and jailed in Guantanamo bay. The dream motif in which Jeebleh visualizes heaps of corpses come into life and enact the circumstances and activities that led to their death shows the reactionary tendencies and hypocrisy of the Shabaab and the Islamic Courts Union. The heaps of corpses and the sight of dead people hanging on the rafters of a house which Jeebleh helps to bury in a mass grave shows that it is the poor people in society who suffer the effects of war. Jeebleh looks around and sees “destitute men, women, and children in near rags wearily trudge by, many of them emaciated, their bellies swollen with undiagnosed illnesses, their eyes host to

swarms of roaming flies’’ (165). The hypocritical religionists such as the old man misuse the young recruits to cause destruction death, fear and suffering.

In an argument with Gumaad over the necessity of triggering a war against the Transitional government and Ethiopia, Dajjal at some point isolates himself from Gumaad since he wanted to be alone with his thoughts. He wants to be alone so as to reminisce his involvement in three wars. He visualizes this image:

The image in forefront of his mind is of cattle running amok, chased by unseen lions; of goats driven by powers invisible from a place where peace reigns to a scrubland where nothing, absolutely nothing not even a cacti grow-a scrubland so barren and so waterless that the goats feed on stones that they dig from the drought-dry land. Close by a short distance from where the cattle have now gathered to graze in the fenced off brushwood there are mines buried in the ground, mines planted by the various factions fighting for control of the scrubland. Now and then the goats unearth the mines and they blow up, slaughtering the goats that unearth them, as well as stray cattle; now and again, the mines blow up in the faces of humans, too. (156)

The images that appear in Dajjal’s mind are an extended metaphor to what is happening in Somalia. The goats and the cattle are symbols which depict ordinary people in Somalia being victims of predators. They are forced to not only run for their lives but also move from a life of tranquility, stability and prosperity to a life of misery as symbolized by the drought dry land which has mines that pose constant risk to their lives. The images of goats and cattle running for their lives is a metaphor for the different classes of people in society. The goats and cattle are grazers which are always at the risk of being eaten by the lions. The lions and the invisible forces are symbols of people in Somalia who thrive on the misfortune of the ordinary citizens. The statement that ‘‘mines were planted by the various factions fighting for the scrubland’’ (156) means that Somalia is already in a destabilized state but still, more problems are heaped onto her with an ‘intent on destabilizing an already destabilized country’’ (77). The nation was destabilized after the coup in which Somalia became stateless. The rise of the various factions is a hindrance to the establishment of a stable government which can at least ensure amelioration of the people.

Malik in another dream motif is shown having a bad sleep when he dreams bed bugs have invaded his bed. Malik says: “I had a rash of dreams, a nightmare of allergies. In my dream, I broke out in eruptions, felt violated, intruded upon, invaded; the more the dreams infringed on my mind, the fiercer I scratched” (110). Malik scratches himself literally and thus show the extent to which Somali citizens are uneasy owing to the state of unrest, displacement, made homelessness and destruction of properties. The bedbugs that make Malik scratch himself symbolize the activities which have led to physical and economic deprivation of the people. For instance, when civil war broke out some of his former military colleagues “made off with money stashed away when they looted the central bank of Somalia” (320). In addition, Ma-Gabadeh says that at the advent of Somalia’s civil war after the collapse of Said Barre’s government, he took a license and struck a partnership with an Italian fishing firm. He relocates to Mogadiscio and establishes another partnership with a Warlord-Strongman South.

Ma-Gabadeh is said to have established and funded an armed militia based in Xarardheere whose main preoccupation is piracy. It is revealed that he took the licenses way before the coup was instigated and says he obviously knew about the plot to overthrow the very government he was serving. He says he helped overthrow it so as to profiteer from the chaos that resulted after the coup. He made a profit when he “issued a backdated license that was to be valid for three years” (182). This demonstrates that the elites who are described as greedy and corrupt have given entry to neocolonial masters through illegitimate businesses. The neocolonial masters include the Chinese and Italian firms whom he has a partnership in the fishing and piracy business. Somalia’s leadership system is compared to diseased gums which provide a conducive environment in which “germs find homes” (112). The diseased gums indicate a society which has an elitist class of people at the helm of power and therefore a breeding ground for all manner of criminal activities. He says such diseased gums are characterized by a category of people who not only kill their own people but betray them. They are a breeding ground for all manner of criminal acts such as piracy, drug and human trafficking. The dream motif shows that these religious zealots and Somalia’s warlords are parasitic.

The clamor for economic resources is shown through Jibleeh’s reminiscence of the Dangal Night club in which subtle prostitution at the heart of Mogadiscio takes place. The club is located in

bushes in which patrons sit under acacia trees in semi darkness in the company of a woman and are served with waiters who are conscious of the need to allow the couple enjoy casual sex. The Dungal, known for the best lamb dish in Mogadiscio, is under new management and is patronized by top ranking religionists. The change in the management of this club, which is known for not only its lamb dish and prostitution which Dajjal describes as “fooling around in the bushes, necking or making love on the quick” (83) is a symbol of the change in leadership in Somalia. The religionists’ control, management and patronage of the Dungal Night club denotes Islamists sectarian power and control of some parts of the city. The control and power over Mogadiscio and Southern Somalia give these Islamists entitlement to the best lamb dish being served in Mogadiscio, in this case, economic resources. The patronage of the club by Islamists meant that the prostitution reduced. The Islamists are puritans who do not condone such activities unlike the secularists who managed the club before them.

The dialogue between Ahl and Fidno demonstrates oppressive relationship between the militants and their neocolonial masters who fund piracy. Fidno argues that owing to the collapse of state structures in 1991, foreign nations such as Korea, Israel, Japan and China have disenfranchised the Somali people in two ways. Firstly, the foreign vessels not only fish illegally in the Somali coastline but also use illegal fishing methods on the Somali waters. Secondly, Fidno asserts that some of these foreign vessels cause environmental damage around Somalia since they dump chemical wastes along the Somali coastline. He says that Somali pirates should be viewed “as conscientious avengers fighting to save our waters from total plunder” (211). Fidno in an interview argues that Somalis established piracy as a means of not only protecting their coastline from illegal fishing and chemical dumping but also as a necessity for survival.

Consequently, the fishermen in Somalia, together with other professionals, engage in piracy so as to survive and make a living after their livelihood is threatened. But they also seek to protect their natural resource from foreign exploitation and destruction. Nonetheless, it is established that piracy in Somalia is funded by the elites in Somalia who in a way have some capital and only use it as a tool for making money at the expense of local fishermen and pirates. They engage in piracy with the support of elitist individuals and companies from Europe and North America. This relationship between elites in Somalia and their partners in Europe is presented in *Crossbones* as clandestine

affairs in which the elites from Somalia are portrayed as some sorts of middlemen who profiteer from their mutual affair with their neocolonial masters. Such a case is presented through Fidno.

Fidno trained as a medical doctor in Germany. After training, he established his own private practice in Berlin but ruined his business when he started having affairs with two of his patients' wives. One of the women being his wife's friend, made his wife report him to the medical board and was charged for malpractice. Fidno's wife filed for divorce after emptying their joint account and this forced him to move to Abu Dhabi. In Abu Dhabi, he also messed up again by having an affair with his colleague's wife and had to flee to Somalia to avoid being charged for the malpractice "where the punishment would be severe" (210).

Fidno's malpractices as a doctor, in which he has clandestine affairs with his patients is a symbol of the corrosive relationship between the neocolonialists who partner with the elites in Somalia in the plundering of the nation's natural resources. That is, Fidno as a medical doctor is an extended metaphor of a doctor who is supposed to help alleviate the suffering of his patients. However, he uses his position and expertise to take advantage of his patients. He takes advantage of the trust and responsibility accorded to him.

Fidno's promiscuity and opportunism as a medical doctor is a metaphor of his exploitation of pirates and former fishermen in Somalia. Fidno and the middlemen who have positioned themselves in European capitals and negotiators benefit from piracy at the expense of the Somali pirates. They usually take the lions share from the ransoms they demand from European nations whose ship have been captured along the coast in Somalia. The pirates are short changed and therefore end up with peanuts from lots of dollars made. Most of the ransom money, according to Fidno remains in these western capitals.

Ma-Gabadeh in a dialogue with Malik admits to have been one of the people who stirred up trouble during the reign of Said Barre and hence benefitted from the chaos and civil war that ensued after the collapse of Barre's government. He argues that "turbulence upsets things, sends the dregs to the top" (186). The destabilization of the government for him ensures that they do not pay tax. Ma Gabadeh in the interview says that when a government is unstable, it is not only easy for parliament

to issue decrees, but also simple for a dictatorial president to pass edicts. The resultant draconian measures, for him as a businessman, are “the ideal situation for growth of capital” (186).

Ma-Gabadeh says that at the advent of Somalia’s civil war after the collapse of Said Barre’s government, he took a license and struck a partnership with an Italian fishing firm. He relocates to Mogadiscio and establishes another partnership with a Warlord-Strongman South. Ma-Gabadeh is said to have established and funded an armed militia based in Xarardheere whose main preoccupation is piracy. Apart from many other illegal ventures, Ma-Gabadeh is said to have invested in importation of *qaat* and exportation of charcoal. According to Gumaad, Ma-Gabadeh is a strong supporter of the Courts of which he often “offers his thousand –strong armed militia whenever he is called upon to do so” (182). Apparently, Ma-Gabadeh is dishonest, elusive and non-committal on whether he funds the Shabaab or not. However, according to Fee-Jigan Ma-Gabadeh enriched himself by funding pirates, offering protection money to the Shabaab and is said to be an important link “connecting the pirates to the Shabaab, and Shabaab to the foreign jihad” (191). Ma-Gabadeh says that it is corruption, opportunism and illegal businesses which sustain piracy and fund Shabaab operations.

Ma-Gabadeh is a local middleman in the global piracy business. He shows the character of illegal businessmen who exploit the local fishermen and pirates in Somalia. Isha says: “It is a case of thieves situated in different dens located in different continents swindling small thieves, whose local middlemen and contacts have been bought” (360). Ma-Gabadeh’s business partners from Italy, Britain and China portray the neo-colonial powers who in collaboration with middlemen such as Ma-Gabadeh and Fidno profiteer in illegal businesses that impoverishes the local people. The destruction and impoverishment caused owing to extortion and exploitation of the common citizenry is more or less like the terrorist activities carried out by the Shabaab.

Nonetheless, there are Somalis who as much as they take advantage of the crisis, practice legitimate business. Such a person is Uncle Libaan, a former military officer who served under Dajjal in the Ogaden war and says at the advent of the civil war engaged in export and import business but currently manages a fleet of buses in which he organizes the security. During the interview with Malik, the narrator describes him to have been “comfortable enough to take off his

flip-flops, and that the man's toe nails are perilous as weapons – long, with jagged ends'' (319). Libaan is a businessman who does a legal business which does not involve extortion or corruption. He is different from his former colleagues who “made off with money stashed away when they looted the Central Bank of Somalia’’ (320).

In the interview between Malik and Libaan we can deduce that Somalis are treated differently depending on whether they are Kenyan Somalis, Somalis with Somali passports or Somalis with foreign passports. Libaan says that Kenyan Somalis get fast and efficient services at the Kenyan border. Somalis with Somali foreign passports go through a thorough and vigorous exercise which includes filling forms in triplicate and facing three separate interviews. The process is tedious since its slow and demanding. They form and stand in long queues under the scorching sun. Libaan maintains that in the interviews, most of the questions revolve around terrorism, Islamists and source of funding of terror activities. The interviews are presumably conducted by a Kenyan, an American and a Briton. From the interview, it is revealed that there are Somalis with foreign passports who seek refuge with pure intentions while some move to foreign nations with ulterior motives. The latter move to foreign nations with an intention of propagating terror activities. For instance, Hasan Ali Robleh is a recruiter of martyrs such as Saifullah and Taxliil. He deems other Somalis with pure intentions as traitors to the Islamist cause. He is exposed and is incarcerated in Guantanamo. Although most Somalis move to foreign nations to seek refuge and better life, a few of them such as Robleh who “lived on welfare in Canada’’ (323) stirs trouble and earns “a ticket to Guantanamo’’ (323).

The Islamist's declaration of a religious war against Ethiopia, which is mainly a Christian nation, is historical and thus demonstrate the story as itself as an element of allegory. Somalia which was colonized by three European powers, that is Britain, Italy and France which are majorly Christian nations created not only racial but also religious tensions. It is said that Mohammed Said, Somalia's father of nationalism declared a jihad against the Britain, whom he referred to as Christian colonizers in 1906, so as to reclaim the land which belonged to the Muslim Somalia. Farah argues that Somalia's land initially belonged to the clan families dwelling in Somalia but when Islam was embraced by these clans, the land then belonged to Allah and all the Muslims who dwelt in Somalia. To fight colonialism, and in so doing reclaim the land from the Christian



colonizers, Mohammed found it easy to amalgamate all the support he could from these clans by uniting them through religion and hence a declaration of a jihad against the Britons. The Islamists declaration of a jihad therefore not only replicates what Mohammed Said did but is a sure way of inviting more allies and support from the Muslim world who are in a way linked to the Shabaab. The hope that they could encourage more support and allies by converting the conflict in Somalia into a religious war makes them believe they are invincible and hence a belief that they will break their fast in Ethiopia. They assert that Somalia is a Muslim country and it is a mistake for the federal government to invite Ethiopia, their traditional enemies. Dajaal as a moderate Muslim and a voice of reason, differs with this opinion and wonders why the Zealots have triggered the fury of their nearby bully. One of the Islamists says they “will defeat the invaders the moment they set foot on our soil, a Muslim soil” (154).

Jeebleh remembers that the war against Ethiopia will be the third time the foreign powers have helped Ethiopia attack Somalia. Through a soliloquy Jeebleh notes that the first time Ethiopia was helped to defeat Somalia was in the sixteenth century and in the Seventies during the Ogaden war in which the Russians turned against Somalia and the Cubans intervened to help defeat Somalia in the Ogaden.

The enmity that led to the war between Somalia and Ethiopia is a colonial legacy. France, Italy and Britain divided Somalia into five parts. They had Northern Somalia colonized by Britain. Britain annexed Northern Frontier District for itself and made it part of their territory in Kenya. The French took Djibouti while Italy occupied Southern Somalia. These three European powers had an agreement with Ethiopia to have it occupy the Ogaden Province through a treaty. The treaty, according to Somalis, was agreed upon owing to Ethiopia’s affiliation to Christianity. The three powers being Christian, sympathized with Ethiopia, which is a Christian nation. Somalia was a Muslim nation at the time. When Somalia gained independence, the Ogaden Province was retained by Ethiopia. The North Frontier District remained part of Kenya. This explains the existence of Kenyan Somalis. The Somalis invaded Ethiopia in order to regain Ogaden, which they hold to be part of Somalia. Dajaal says that this war was what led to the breakdown of the Said Barre government which saw Somalia plunge in a civil war. The cracks in Barre’s government saw Somalia descend into clan politics which led to the Said Barre government being overthrown in 1991. The breakdown of the Said Barre government created a power vacuum which gave room to

the rise and emergence of warlords. It is in this civil war that Qasiir took an active role and explains that their main preoccupation was to safeguard the interest of the clan which in truth it was the warlords who profited. Malik in his notes says:

*This conflict has nothing to do with clan or religious rivalries. Rather, it has everything to do with economics. There is a Somali wisdom that it is best the drum belongs to you, so that you may beat it the way you please. If not, the second-best thing is for the drum to belong to someone close, like a relative, who will share it with you. In other words, the Somali civil war has a lot to do with personal gains and personality conflicts. (297)*

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have examined how the narrator uses element of style and character typology as extended metaphorical elements in presentation of fragmentation in Somalia. In the chapter I have established that it is the existence of differences among a given people of the same society that lead to disintegration of a nation. The differences can be with regard to religion, language, gender, age, class, values, clan, race, ideology and culture. The study establishes that disintegration of Somalia can be attributed to not only differences in colonial experience but also differences in economic interests and world perspective. The differences among the Somali have led to the breakdown of not only the entire society but also families and individuals. The narrator shows how Somalia's disintegration has had rippling effects to both local and diaspora Somalis at family and individuals with devastating results. The character typology and elements of style used in the novel show how colonial legacy and economic interests are the main reasons behind fragmentation of Somalia's nation state. Additionally, the study establishes that global crime and terror, illegal fishing, piracy, civil war and environmental degradation in Somalia are negative effects of fragmentation of Somalia's nationalism and nation-state. However, the metaphorical elements, the study establishes, are ironically used to show how the global crime, civil war and terror associated with Somali pirates and Islamists underscore the re-establishment of nationalism in Somalia. That is, the Somali piracy, terrorism and nationalist wars are as a result of reconstitution of nationalism in Somalia in which the nationalists are out to avenge the perceived injustice owing to geographical fragmentation, illegal fishing and environmental degradation along the Somalian coastline by foreign nations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 4.0 Summary

The first Chapter of this project introduced the study itself. It provided a background to the study, a statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses, justification, literature review, theoretical framework and research methodology.

Chapter Two focused on identifying metaphorical elements present in *Hiding in Plain Sight* and what they mean in relation to the understanding of Somalia's disintegration.

Chapter Three focused on identifying elements of allegory present in the novel *Crossbones* and what they mean in relation to the understanding of Somalia's disintegration. This particular chapter provides a summary and conclusion of the entire study.

#### 4.1 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the use of allegory in Nuruddin Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* in narration of Somalia's history. There were two objectives of the study. The first aim of the study was to interrogate the textual elements of allegory present in Nuruddin Farah's *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones*. The second aim of the study was to examine how textual elements of allegory in *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* are consistent in representing a fragmenting Somalia.

The study presupposes that there are not only different textual allegorical elements in *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* but that the allegorical elements in *Hiding in Plain Sight* and *Crossbones* are also consistent in representing a fragmenting Somalia. The study established that there are textual allegorical elements in the two novels. The textual metaphorical elements in the two novels include character typology, style and plot structure.

The study established that the narrator uses character typologies to reveal oppression of women in a highly patriarchal society as one of the causes of disintegration of Somali nationalism. The narrator deploys a romantic trope to represent the Somali nation during the colonial period. Hurdo

is in a clandestine affair with Fiori, an Italian Law Professor at a University in Somalia. This relationship not only shows the subjugation of the nation through the colonization process but also the submission of the African culture and its values to the Western culture and its values. The relationship affair leads to the birth of two children, Bella and Aar who are metaphors of Somalia's disintegration owing to colonial legacy. The birth of the two children owing to the clandestine affair between the Italian and the Italian-educated Somali woman indicates that colonization results into hybridity in Somalia. Digaaleh, Hurdo's husband, is sickly and omnipotent and thus symbolize the inability of the patriarchal Somali society in forging a Somali nationalism at the advent of colonization.

After Somalia plunges in a civil war, the family seeks refuge in Kenya then Italy before settling in Canada. This movement to Italy as much as it is physical, is equally psychological, social, cultural and educational. Bella moves to Italy and chooses a career in photography. Digaaleh is apprehensive and worried about Fiori's influence over the children while Hurdo is contented that Bella is free to make choices in career, dress and character. Apparently, Digaaleh, an embodiment of the African culture demonstrates the nature of the African culture which is patriarchal, dictatorial, old fashioned and oppressive to women. Hurdo scoffs at some of its traditions such as female circumcision which is oppressive to women and thus disintegration owing to oppression of the female gender.

Digaaleh argues that the Western culture is defined by immorality and relates photography, which Bella has opted to pursue as immoral since it is closely associated with pornography. Bella affords care free life when she moves to Western capitals such as Toronto and Rome where she dresses as she pleases, an indication that she is westernized. She acquires habits such as smoking which is unheard off in a traditional Somali community. Later we see Bella speaking not only the Somali language but also other Western languages such as Portuguese and English, a clear indication that she is a hybrid Somali who demonstrates not only linguistic and but also cultural disintegration. Bella shuffles from one city to another carrying out various assignments while meeting her three lovers from three different nations.

Bella's career in photography which leads her to promiscuity stems from the need to divert her attention from her brother Aar who apparently is in love with Valerie, a Somali born woman, whose parents are British. Aar's marriage to Valerie indicates the solidification of transnational marriages and thus breakdown of Somali's nationalism.

The marriage is said to have been as a result of Valerie's unexpected pregnancy. The marriage breaks down not only due to language barrier, financial and personality differences but also due to Valerie's decision to move with Padmini in a lesbian relationship. The romantic trope between Valerie and Aar is a metaphor of the fragmentation of Somalia owing to the hasty unification of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland which formed the republic of Somalia. However, Somalia broke down due to varied colonial experience such that, while lingua franca at the north was English, Italian was at the south. The failure to standardize Somali language fostered disintegration in Somalia.

Valerie abandons her marriage and gets involved in a lesbian relationship with Padmini. The homosexual relationship between Valerie and Padmini reveals fragmentation of society. That is, though the majority of members in the society subscribe to heterosexual relationships, there is a minority who subscribe to homosexual relationships. The variance with regard to sexual orientation has led to tensions both in Aar's family and society in which the minority are stigmatized. Apparently, Padmini is an Afro-Asian woman who was born in Uganda but brought up in England. She is a daughter of a Dukawallah who was expelled from Uganda by the dictatorial regime of Idi Amin. The expulsions of the Dukawallahs and the subsequent nationalization of their property demonstrates the marginalization and exploitation of a minority race owing to racial and cultural differences. Valerie's and Padmini's sexual orientation are metaphors for not only cultural disintegration of Somalia but also shows that disintegration, violence and hostility within societies are due to economic interests.

Additionally, there are conflicts among different factions in the Somali nation. There is a coup in which the Said Barre government is overthrown. The overthrow of the government creates a power vacuum which leads to a civil war in which war lords amass power and wealth. The nation collapses into a civil war in such a way that the nation disintegrates with regard to the primacy of

the clans. Apparently, there is establishment of a federal government which despite being liberal is unstable. Somalia is torn between transitional federal government and the national Islamists who want the establishment of an Islamic state.

In *Crossbones*, disintegration of Somalia is brought out through deployment of plot structure. That Somalis are divided between the diaspora Somalis and the local Somalis demonstrates the impact of the breakdown of the Somalia nation after the ouster of president Said Barre. There is a Somali community in Toronto, Canada which came to seek refuge. The society is highly patriarchal. Men impose sexual, financial and physical abuse upon women. For instance, Xalan works hard to provide for the family while her husband spends most of his time chewing khat. The height of the oppression of women is demonstrated when he sexually assaults their house help which results in their separation when the husband is arrested and she refuses to pay his fine despite the coercion from her in laws. It is such physical abuse on the children, both at home and school and lack of parental love that makes Taxliil and other young people to ultimately despise and turn against hybrid Somali society and desire pure Somalism which they believe can be offered by Imams. The Islamists are Somali nationalists who are vouching for expulsion of Ethiopia, Americans and other non-Somalis and establishment of an Islamic state in Somalia which is in synchrony with Somali national values.

In *Hiding in Plain Sight*, Somali teenagers smoke cigarettes and engage in other habits such as alcoholism and change of diet and thus indicate the rebellion to not only Islam but also the traditional Somali national values. However, the teenagers feel that Somalis in Kenya have been disenfranchised politically despite making up about six percent of the population and thus a growing sense of nationalism within Somali community. The isolation of Somalis is further brought out through stereotypes against Somalis which Bella affirms enhances reconstitution of nationalism amongst Somalis in diaspora.

In *Crossbones*, the rebellion of the children from their parents is due to lack of proper role models as a result of the collapse of the Somali nation. The collapse of the nation has a rippling effect such that there is the breakdown of the communities, families and the individuals in these particular families. For instance, the negative breakdown of the Somali society in diaspora is seen through

the high number of criminal activities such as rape, drug dealing and money laundering. The breakdown of the Somali results to an oppressive society which leads to further breakdown of the family as exemplified by Yusr's. However, there is reconstitution of nationalism as seen through young adults such as Taxliil and Saifullah. The decision to join the Shabaab movement is a result of the frustration and bitterness owing to cultural uprootedness and the in-depth desire to associate with national values.

The decision shows the reason behind reconstitution of Somali nationalism which in this case is negative nationalism. The imams, who are nationalists are in opposition to the transitional government, insist that their intent is to provide an alternative government, an Islamic state. The Islamists instigate war against Ethiopia and the Americans whom they argue are not only national but also religious enemies. However, through character typologies such as Gumaad, Big Beard and Fidno, the Islamists thrive in crisis since they not only avoid paying tax but also protect illegal businesses such as piracy and illegal fishing. Nationalism in Somalia has led to growth of global terror and piracy which they argue is due to the need to protect Somalia's coastline from illegal fishing and environmental degradation. The economic interests ultimately lead to the disintegration of Somalia into three autonomous states. Somaliland and Puntland are autonomous states.

The Islamists deny women fundamental freedoms such as the choice of dress and association. Cambara is nearly raped by a gang of men at the onset of the civil war but Dajaal rescues her and thus provide a reason for disintegration of Somali nationalism. Somali nationalism is highly patriarchal and oppressive to women such as Cambara and Xalan, who is raped by a gang of men due to her liberal Islamic ways. The same is true for a thirteen-year-old girl who is raped by a gang of men in a Mosque while three imams watch. Defilement of women such as Xalan and the thirteen-year-old girl show oppression of women as a result of negative reconstitution of Somalia. The defilement of women characters is a metaphor for defilement of the nation through corruption, piracy, illegal fishing and businesses which is presided by nationalist imams and hybrid Somalis which results in impoverishment of the citizenry in Somalia. Zaituun's unconceivable transformation from a liberal Muslim to an extremist Muslim is due to the pain of losing her husband at the hands of the non-Muslims. The tension and animosity between Zaituun and her

sister are a metaphor of hostilities between hybrid Somalis and nationalists which results in individual, family and national fragmentation.

The conflict over natural resources in both novels is presented in both novels through elements of style. In *Crossbones*, the narrator demonstrates the reactionary tendencies among the Islamists through a dream motif. Jeebleh visualizes the dead Somali youths come back to life and replay the events that lead to their death. In the dream he perceives these young people dig up an arms cache, in which there are sorts of weaponry and at the same time they receive training and instructions from a seemingly incompetent trainer on how to use the weapons. In the dream, Jeebleh observes destruction and reduction of Mogadiscio into its former self. Jeebleh in the dream observes that the city is no longer a metropolis and its residents have been drafted into the fighting force. The people are disheveled, emaciated and run down by diseases, hunger, starvation, and fear. The condition in Mogadiscio is presented as dystopic since the people are utterly caught in between the greed and selfish ambitions of religious extremists and the transitional federal government. These dreams reveal not only the negative impact of disintegration and nationalism in Somalia but also reveals that greed and selfish economic interests as the reasons for the collapse and reconstitution of Somalia's nationalism.

Similarly, in *Hiding in Plain Sight*, the narrator employs elements of style to present the genesis of the conflict among members of the same family and in Somalia. Bella dreams that she meets dogs in which she manages to get away when she throws them bones and they scramble for the bones and she managed to get away. However, the biggest hound among the dogs does impede her progress. It is not interested in the bones but in her necklace, which is made of bones. This dream motif is a metaphor that reveals that the cause of disintegration of Somalia has a lot to do with the struggle for power to control the natural resources. After Aar's death, there is a mounting tension and conflict between Valerie his wife and Bella his sister. The two are contending over the control over his two children and execution of his will.

In the novel, Aar's death resonates with the ouster of Said Barre's government which left a power vacuum for which warlords from various clans fought for. The warlords controlled most of the wealth and power before the emergence of the Islamists who vouch for the establishment of an



Islamic state in Somalia. However, the transitional federal government which is supported by the United Nations and AMISOM insists on establishing an inclusive, stable and secular government. The differences in political and religious ideology has led to armed conflict between the federal government and the Islamists in Mogadiscio and hence the disintegration of Somalia.

Additionally, in *Hiding in Plain Sight* Salif and Dahaba are suspended between Somali culture and Western culture. The teenagers reveal a common trend among the Somali society; such that as much as they are raised by Somali parents in Kenya, they are alienated from a true Somali culture. Their parents reside away from their ancestral home and hence civilized in a distorted Somali culture which has heavily borrowed from European and other cultures in Kenya. For instance, they converse in various languages including Swahili and Gikuyu. Apart from being good in English and Somali they have been moulded to appreciate food, music and entertainment from both Western and other African cultures. Qamar has been raised by strict Muslim parents while Salif and Dahaba have been raised by secular parents for which, they are different from their parents in as much as their parents are equally different from the generation that came before them.

Farah's vision in the two texts, therefore, is to promote tolerance and appreciation of differences. He appeals for members of the society to be tolerant and patient with people who are different from them, with regard to gender, race, clan, sexual orientation, language, culture, ideology and religion. Intolerance creates a destructive ripple effect which results in the disintegration of not only the nation state, community, family but also individuals in that particular society.

Farah appropriates character typology, style, language and plot structure to show the differences among members of same society. The study establishes that the conflicts and hostilities owing to disintegration and reconstitution of Somalia's nationalism ironically lead to further disintegration and re-integration of Somali society. It is loosely held together like a windscreen which despite being broken, is still intact. Ultimately, one may eventually suppose that the use of certain characters, style and plot structure in the two texts are allegorical since they show the reasons for Somalia's fragmentation but at the same time show that it is the fragmentation of Somalia that lead to reconstitution of Somalia's nationalism. Farah in *Hiding in Plain Sight* is writing from the backdrop of activism in which he vouches for tolerance and appreciation of differences among

Somalis within and without Somalia. In *Crossbones*, the novelist is writing from the backdrop of journalism in which the two brothers are on a fact-finding mission in their ancestral land with an intention of finding their son who is a metaphor for Somali's nationalism. The trip uncovers that major reasons for the collapse and reconstitution of nationalism is rooted in economic interests and patriarchal oppression.

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