



Intertextuality as a Postmodern Feature in Ethiopian Amharic Cinema

Yalew Aklog^{1*}, Tesfaye Dagnew¹ and Ayenew Guadu¹

Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Bahir Dar University, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

*Corresponding Author Email: aklogyalew@yahoo.com

Abstract

The overarching aim of this research is to examine intertextuality as reflected in Ethiopian cinema: the case of two Amharic films namely, Ethél (2013) written and directed by Zelalem Neged and Wuha ina Werq (Water and Gold) (2011) written and directed by Mohammed Ali. Researchers have two main reasons for conducting the study. Firstly, they believe that postmodernist literary study is an important topic in the Ethiopian context, as it helps to understand current trends in literature and culture. Secondly, the study aims to address the lack of equal attention given to films compared to novels, poetry, and drama in literary research projects. These feature films were selected purposively based on their content consisting of postmodernist themes and involving intertextuality as a feature of postmodernist writing. The study employed a descriptive qualitative method since it emphasized analyzing and interpreting intertextuality as one feature of postmodernist writing in the selected films. The selected films were critically analyzed using intertextuality as a method of analysis. The critical approach of the study draws on Kristeva's (1980), Barthes's (1987) and Genette's (1982) theories of intertextuality. The findings of the study indicated that intertextuality is used in the selected films to create a universal cinematic language and communicate themes and ideas that filmmaker simplicity or explicitly convey. More importantly, the two selected films relay on referencing other texts and borrowing from other texts. The finding also showed that there is adaptation, reuse, reinterpretation and reimagining of poetry, history, mythology, and Bible implicitly or explicitly as chief manifestations of intertextuality in the selected films.

Keywords: Intertextuality, postmodernism, Amharic films, Feature films, Ethiopian cinema

1. Introduction

For many postmodern authors, playwrights, and poets, using intertextuality in postmodern writing became the hallmark of

their style. As far as postmodernists' belief in particular and hermeneutics, in general, is concerned, it is unlikely to come up with final and binding certainty in analyzing and



interpreting texts. In other words, it is impossible to bring an everlasting accredited interpretation and meaning due to various factors related to readers. It is also common listen to arguments whether a film can equivalently be used as a narrative medium with the genre of a novel or not. Supporting the role of film as a narrative medium, McFarlane (1996, p.12) pointed out that whatever the cinema's sources as an invention, as a leisure pursuit, or as a means of expression and whatever uncertainties about its development attend its earliest years, its huge and durable popularity is owed to what it most obviously shares with novels. Intertextuality, as a term, has not been restricted to discussions of the literary arts. It is found in discussions of cinema, painting, music, architecture, photography and in virtually all cultural and artistic productions (Allen,2000,p.5). He also agreed that it is possible to speak of the 'languages' of cinema, painting or architecture: languages which involve productions of complex patterns of encoding, re-encoding, allusion, echo, transposing of previous systems and codes.

Researchers of this study also believe that since films consist of an aesthetic product such as sculptures and pictures, they have features of narrative. In intertextuality,

issues like parody and pastiche are considered as forms of postmodern writing (Bennett & Royle, 2004; Jameson, 1991). Liknaw (2020) reported that both parody and pastiche, according to these scholars, relying on imitation of earlier texts or objects. Liknaw (2020) also claims that intertextuality in postmodernism is intentionally made to show some departures between the interwoven texts. The above statement works especially in parody where there is an impulse to ridicule by exaggerating the distance of the original text from 'normal' discourse. This is what the postmodern notion of intertextuality emphasizes. In the case of parody, intertextuality in postmodernism is designed to create a distance between the interwoven texts, whereas in the case of pastiche, narratives are made in an interwoven nature where the original and imitated are not clearly identified.

Aboneh (2016) reported that in each year, over a hundred films are produced on annual bases in Ethiopia. Nevertheless, articles, books, and encyclopedias written on African and world cinema do not as such include the Ethiopian account, hence adversely affecting the wholeness of universal knowledge. Aboneh (2016) also argues that Ethiopian cinema is one of the pioneers in Sub-



Saharan Africa, but it has yet to receive sustained academic attention. Ethiopia's film industry has to be situated in the broader Sub-Saharan context with which it shares a few similarities but more importantly, reveals critical divergences. Michael (2011) also pointed out that it is indeed striking to note that despite the dynamism of the Ethiopian film sector during the twentieth century all most all the key reference books on African cinema published in English over the past three decades, Ethiopian cinema is almost absent. To understand Ethiopian cinema, researchers highly believe that it is imperative to have an understanding of the Ethiopian values, tradition, mythology, history, and the larger cultural contexts. As far as the researchers' reading is concerned, although Ethiopian cinema in the recent times has made conscious efforts to weave in an intertextual milieu around its films, intertextuality in Ethiopian Amharic cinema is a subject that has not been up for investigation that much. As a result, professional academic sources on the topic under investigation are scarce in the history of Ethiopian Amharic cinema. In this inquiry, we made a critical analysis of intertextuality in two Ethiopian Amharic

films from a postmodernist theoretical and analytical perspective.

2. Theoretical Framework of the Study

2.1. Intertextuality

This study adapts a pluralistic view bringing forth an approach that lets to analyze intertextuality as one postmodernist feature in the selected Amharic films in their all complexity. As a result, the study makes use of the general conceptions of postmodernism postulated/out laid by various scholars in the analysis. However, the analytical parameter that is used for the subsequent analysis of the selected films/works is adapted from Kristeva's (1980), Barthes's(1987), and Genette's (1982) theories of intertextuality. These original theorists of *intertextuality* were selected based on the following reasons. Theories of intertextuality, can be highly applicable to the analysis of films. To begin with, ontologically speaking, films often incorporate intertextual references to other texts, whether they are literary works, historical events, or other films. In this regard, Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of texts and the ways in which meaning is constructed through the dialogue between texts, can be useful in identifying and analyzing these references. Secondly,



Barthes' notion of the "death of the author" can be applied to film analysis by challenging the traditional focus on the director as the sole creator of meaning. According to Barthes, once a text is created, its meaning is no longer solely determined by the author's intentions but is shaped by the reader/viewer and their individual interpretations. In the context of film analysis, this perspective encourages researchers to consider the active role of the viewer and the multiple readings that can emerge from a film. Furthermore, Gérard Genette, known for his work in narratology, introduced the concept of "transtextuality," which encompasses various forms of intertextual relationships. Genette's typology of transtextual relationships, such as hypertextuality (direct references to other texts) and paratextuality (elements surrounding the text), can be applied to film analysis. For example, examining how a film's title, promotional materials, or opening credits interact with the main narrative can provide insights into intertextual connections and contribute to a deeper understanding of the film's meaning. In conclusion, the theorists of intertextuality offer valuable frameworks and concepts that can be applied to the analysis of films. Their ideas help researchers identify intertextual

references, explore the role of the viewer, examine narratological elements, utilize semiotic analysis, and analyze adaptations. By applying these theories to film analysis, researchers can deepen their understanding of how films engage with other texts and the broader cultural landscape.

3. Methodology

In terms of methodology, the study employed a descriptive qualitative method since it emphasized describing intertextuality as one feature of postmodernist writing in the selected films. In this particular study, textual analysis is utilized as the data analysis technique, for textual analysis involves the identification and interpretation of verbal or non-verbal signs. The selected films are taken as texts. Extracted scenes that are appropriate for intertextuality are taken from the films and are examined following the plotline of each film which has a paramount role for the better understanding of how postmodernist intertextuality is portrayed.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select films that depict intertextuality in Ethiopian Amharic Cinema. The criteria used to select films were their content which appeals to postmodern films and whether there are postmodernist features or techniques like intertextuality in them or



not. The selected films are classified under the feature film category. Based on Kernvak CKV Online Glossary of Film terms definition cited in Bezabih (2020,p.20)feature films are "full-length" motion pictures, one greater than 60 minutes in length, but usually about 90-120 minutes on one particular topic. Even though, there are a number of Amharic films that can be categorized as a postmodern film the scope of this study is delimited to two films for lack of space. These two selected films were *Ethél* (2013), written and directed by Zelalem Neged, and *Wuhaina Werq (Water and Gold)* (2011), written and directed by Mohammed Ali.

The selected scenes were transcribed into written texts after watching them thoroughly and extracts were translated into English. Due to the researchers' limited cinematographic background, the analysis was limited to the analysis and interpretation of dialogue, and narrative. As a result, to show how intertextuality is employed in the selected films, narratives, dialogues, performances and screenshots were considered as data for the analysis. Selected extracts that have with intertextuality were analyzed by using Kristeva's (1980), Barthes's (1987) and Genette's (1982) theories of intertextuality as analytical

frameworks. In order to ensure the credibility of the current research, researchers employed a method of analyzing narrative texts known as transcateogrical reading.

4. Results and Discussion

In the sections that follow, the analysis focus on historical intertexts, biblical intertexts, cultural discourse, mythology, folklore (chants), and other literary pieces (modern poetry) that were intertextually incorporated into the composition of the narratives of the two films. These intertextual features were thematized as shown in the analysis sections.

4.1. Intertextuality in Ethél

It is hard fact that authors, poets, and playwrights consciously re-write the work of predecessors, imitate, quote, or plagiarize the works of others for several reasons. Today, it seems to be more appropriate to speak of film as one medium among others which interacts as multimedia, or is connected to one another intermedially. Intertextuality plays an imperative role for readers, audiences and authors as well. Byincorporating a variety of intertexts in their films, playwrights are proving the assumption that texts are more of constructions than creations. There is a poem referenced in the film *Ethél* which



states about identity crisis revealed by characters in the film. The poem shows

hybridity and dilemma whether somebody is in Ethiopia or in another universe:

<p>እዚህ ነኝ እዛ ነኝ ይደናገረኛል እንዲህ ይሰማኛል እንዲህ ይታየኛል እዚህ ነኝ እላለው በአካል ተቀምጬ በሃሳብ እነጉዳለሁ አንድ ሁለት ሶስት አራት ዲቪ. እሞላለው ደግሞ እስከላርሽፕ ኢ-ሜል አደርጋለው። እንዲህ ይሰማኛል እንዲህ ይታየኛል ደሴ ላይ ቁጭ ብዩ ዲሲን ይመስለኛል ሃገረ ማርያምን ሜሪላንድ ይለኛል። አክሱም ቁጭ ብዩ ሊበርት ይታየኛል የቴዎድሮስ ምስል ከአይኔ ጠፍቶኝ የቱፓክን ጥይት መምታት ያምረኛል የትራንፕ ንግግር ይኮረከረኛል ጤዛ እየኖርኩኝ እስኖው ይበርደኛል ድፎ እየገመገሙኝ በርገር ይሸተኛል እዚህ ነኝ እዛ ነኝ ይደናገረኛል ጥቁር ጠላ አጥምቁ ነጭ አተላ ያምረኛል የጥበቧን አገር አርገናት ባይተዋር ሃገር ናት ኢትዮጵያ አለም ናት ኢትዮጵያ ጥበብ የሰራባት የአምላክ ማደሪያ እዚህ ነኝ እዛ ነኝ ይደናገረኛል (ዘላለም፣ 2013፣ 08:40-10:07)።</p>	<p>I'm here, I'm there, and it confuses me This is how I feel I say I'm here, I'm physically sitting and I'm thinking I fill one two three four divvy lottery I also email the scholarship. This is how I feel I think of DC when I sit on my island My mind calls form the State of Mary, Maryland. I can see the axis sitting down The image of Theodor's disappeared from my eyes I wish to be shooedby Tupac's pistol. Trump's speech gives a joy to me I live in dew and the snow makes me cold I guess it smells like a burger I'm here, I'm there,itconfuses me I baptized the black hater I like white slime Don't neglect the country of art Ethiopia is a country, Ethiopia is a world God's abode made by art Hey, I'm here,I'm there. It confuses me. (Zelalem, 2013, 08:40-10:07)</p>
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This intertextual tie with other literary productions like poetry brings an additional

view for the interpretation of the story of the film. While watching the film, the audience



will remember lines and stanzas of the Amharic poem which is written before the release of the film *Ethél*. This poem shows the distance between the reality and the central idea of the poem. The speaker of the poem wants to convince readers that Ethiopia is a country of art, country of wisdom and the gift of God. By contrast, characters yearn for America and they do not want to live in Ethiopia and they do not want to be called an Ethiopian. Characters in the film reveal a feeling of double consciousness. They are in between the sea and the devil since they physically reside in their homeland (Ethiopia) and are drained mentally to America and Europe. The script writer also gives us an answer to the basic question "who is the sole creator of meaning in a postmodern text?" When the playwright employs such self-conscious forms of intertextuality creates its audience with the necessary experience to make sense of such references and offers the pleasure of recognition. When referring to other texts and other media reminds us that we are in a mediated reality.

The tie between postmodernism and religion is one of the oppositions. That is to say, postmodernism undermines biological, cognitive, and moral certainties, while religions rest on them. The most notable

type of intertextuality in the film *Ethél* can be said to be the use of biblical texts and mythology. The dialogue between characters like Dagim and the Godfather about the literary and figurative meaning of Ethiopia can reveal both mythology and Bible as intertexts: Karen (1990) differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic intertextuality. He said that most contemporary theorists of intertextuality use the term "extrinsic intertextuality" to refer to their focus on the reader's role in producing intertextual readings, whereas the text rewritten or incorporated by another text is "intrinsic intertextuality". At times the intrinsic intertextuality is quite overt, indicated by quotation marks or identified by name. The Ethiopian playwrights of the films under analysis have made references to Ethiopian history, African and European historical accounts in different scenes of the film. For example, the playwright of the film *Ethél* has provided either explicit or implicit hints that guide viewers to place the historical events at the background of the narrative of the film. The dialogue between Dagim and the Godfather in the film *Ethél* also indicates that the scriptwriter relies on history so as to develop his film story:



<p>ልጅ ይህ መጻሕፍት ከሶስትሺ አመታት በፊት የአንተ አባቶች በብራና ፅፈው ደብቀው ያስቀመጡልን የታሪክ መጻሕፍት ነው። አውሮፓውያን አንዴ በጦርነት፤ አንዴ በሚሲዎኖች ከዘረፉት የቀረን ከጥበብ መጻሕፍት አንዱ ነው። እኛን ሲዘርፉ የኖሩበት ምክንያት የአንተ አባቶች በጣም ጥበበኞች ስለነበሩ፤ ስለምህንድስና፤ ስለጠፈር፤ ስለፊዚክስ አብዛኛው አለም ላይ በሚታያቸው ቴክኖሎጂ ሳይቀር በዚህና በሌሎች መጻሕፍት ፅፈው አስቀምጠው ስለነበረ ነው። ስለዚህ እንደኛ ሃያል ሀገር ለመሆን ከፈለጉ እነዚህን የአባቶቻችን መጻሕፍት በእጃቸው ማስገባት ይጠበቅባቸው ነበር።</p> <p>(ዘላለም፣ 2013፣ 1:27:31-1:28:20)።</p>	<p>Son this book is a history book that your ancestors wrote on parchment and hid for us three thousand years ago. It is one of the wisdom books that the Europeans stole from us once in war and once by missionaries. The reason why they stole from us is because your ancestors were very wise. Because most of them had written and stored in this and other books even with the technology seen in the world. Therefore, if they wanted to be a powerful country like us, they had to hold these books of our ancestors in their hands. (Zelalem, 2013, 1:27:31-1:28:20).</p>
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The above extract clearly indicates that extrinsic intertextuality is used by the scriptwriter of the film. Direct quotation mark is indicated in the conversation held between Dagim and the Godfather. The historical book which is written by our ancestors on parchment is acknowledged when the storyline of the film is developed. The Godfather insists that Dagim should read the book so as to accomplish the mythological as well as biblical prophecy. The content of the book is also explicitly

indicated. According to the narration by the God Father, this book consists of secrets of indigenous wisdom, paths to modern technology, mathematics, physics and Astronomy. The dialogue between the characters (Dagim and Ashebir) also shows how the playwright alludes to ideas from history. In order to show the supremacy of Ethiopia, Ashebir brings historical evidence for Dagim who hates to be called an Ethiopia



አሽብር:-ዳግም ኢትዮጵያዊነት ማለት እኮ ሚስጥር ነው። ኢትዮጵያዊነት ማለት እኮ ጥበብ ነው።ኢትዮጵያዊነት ማለት እኮ ሃይል ነው።ኢትዮጵያዊነት ማለት እኮ የድል መንፈስ ነው።

ዳግም:-ሌላ የማላውቃት ኢትዮጵያ አለች እንዴ? እኔኮ የማውቃት ኢትዮጵያ በርሃብ በስደት የምትታወቅ ሃገር ናት።እኔ እውነቱን ልንገርህ እኔ ኢትዮጵያዊ ነህ ስባል እራሱ በጣም ነው የማፍረው። ለምን እንደሆነ ታውቃለህ ሁሉ ሰው ኢትዮጵያ በርሃብ በስደት የምትታወቅ ከአለም መጨረሻ የሆነች ሃገር ናት።It does not make sense ከምትለው ጋር።

አሽብር:-ዳግም ይህ በራስህ እንዳትተማመን ያደረገህ ጨረር ነው፤ሴራ ነው። አዎ በእርግጥ ተርበናል፤የታወቀ ነገር ነው ማንም የአለም ህብረተሰብ ደግሞ ተርቧል። ይህን ደግሞ ማረጋገጫ አለኝ።ለምሳሌ ይህን ፎቶ ግራፍ ተመልከት (ፎቶ ግራፍ እያሳየ)።አውሮፓውያን በሁለተኛው የአለም ጦርነት ተርበው ወደ አፍሪካ ተሰደዋል። Even አንተ የምትመጻደቅባት አሜሪካ እንኳ በ1920ዎቹ ተርበው በዳቦ ሰልፍ ስንት ተጨንቀዋል።

ዳግም:- Are you kidding me? አሜሪካ ተርባለች እያልክኝ ነው?

አሽብር:- አዎ ተርባለች፤ በእኛ ነገር busy

Ashebir: Ethiopianism is asecret, Ethiopianism is wisdom, Ethiopianism is power, and Ethiopianism is the spirit of victory.

Dagim: I don't know where Ethiopia is? The only one I know is Ethiopia, a country known for famine. Let me tell you the truth, I'm an Ethiopian, and I'm very ashamed of myself. You know why, everyone thinks Ethiopia is a country known for famine.

Ashebir: They conspired to make you not trust your Hebrewsagain. This is the result of conspiracy. Yes, we are starved. We know that everyone in the world is starvedagain. I have proof of this. For example, look at this photograph (showing a photograph).

Dagim: Are you kidding me? Are you saying America is being starved?

Ashebir:Ofcourse, she was being starved. “They are so busy with our things that they forget their own pains”

(Zelalem, 2013, 32:10-33:20).



ሁነው ነው የራሳቸውን ነገር የረሱ።
(ዘላለም፣ 2013፣ 32:10-33:20)።

From the above dialogue, it is easy to understand the fact that the scriptwriter tried to show the distance between texts. The history of the two countries (USA and Ethiopia) at present and in the past involves a paradox. The photograph by Ashebir is evidence that America was starved. Dagim can't trust his eyes and he does not want to listen to Ashebir's narration about the supremacy of Ethiopia. While imitating a text, one tends to mix one's ideas with the ideas contained in the imitated text, thus leading to a product of hybridity or multiplicity of meaning. When we see the

application of intertextuality in film, picture, color, sound, motion, and adaptation from literature, whether technological or mechanical, make film a sort of technical intertextual. Thus, we can deduce that there is departure between the present text and what is being referred to which is the main emphasis of intertextuality in postmodern writing.

The dialogue between Dagim and the God father consists of myth as a textual reference. The secret of the so-called Nissan yields cosmological reference:

ዳግም፡- የኒሻኑ ሚስጥር ግን ምንድን ነው?

አባ፡የመጀመሪያው ሚስጥር በአባቶቻችን ትንቢት ተተንቦኖ ነበር። ኢትዮጵያ ሃያልነቷና ክብሯ ተረስቶ እንደምትወድቅ፤ ግን ትንቢቱ ከተነገረበት አንስቶ 14ኛው ትውልድ ላይ ልክ እንደ ኢትኤል አያልሰው ተነስቶ ኢትዮጵያን ሆነ አፍሪካን ዳግም አንድ አድርጎ ሃይሏንም ክብሯንም ይመልስላታል። ነገርግን የትንቢቱ መፈፀም ማረጋገጫ 13ኛው ትውልድ በተራራ ላይ ቤት ሰርቶ ዎንደማማቾችን አስታርቆ፤ መሬት አሳርሶ ከ14ኛው ትውልድ በፊት ተወራርሶ የመጣውን ኒሻን እጁ ሲያስገባ ነው። ሌላው ሚስጥር ደግሞ ከኒሻኑ በስተጀርባ በሚስጥር በግዕዝ የተፃፉ ፀ-ሁፎች አሉ። የግዕዙም ትርጉም ደግሞ አንደኛው እንደዚህ አይነት ያሉ የአባቶቻችን መፅሃፍትና የኢትዮጵያ ክርስቶምና በየቦታው የያዘውን የተፈጥሮ ሃብትና ማዕድናት የሚጠቁም ነው። ልጅ 13ኛው ትውልድ አንተነህ፤ 14ኛው ደግሞ የአንተ የበኩር ልጅ ኢትኤል ማለት ነው። ልጅ የዚህ ሁሉ መሰረት ኒሻኑ ነው። ኒሻኑ 13ኛው ትውልድ ካልደረሰ የትንቢት መፈፀምና ሃብቷ ተዳፍኖ እንዲቀር ያደርጋል። ኒሻኑን ፈልገህ አምጣ፤ እግዚአብሔር ካንተ ጋር ይሁን። (ዘላለም፣ 2013፣ 1:30:10-1:31:46)



Dagim: What is the secret of the Nissan?

Godfather: The first secret was prophesied by our forefathers that Ethiopia would be forgotten, its power and glory, but in the 14th generation since the prophecy was given, a man like Ethel will rise and reunite Ethiopia and Africa and restore power and glory. He reconciled the Vondemamas and plowed the land, when he put his hands on Nissan which was inherited before the 14th generation. Another secret behind the sign there are texts written in secret in Geez. The meaning of Geez is one of these books of our ancestors and the natural resources and minerals contained in the Ethiopian underground. The basis of all this is the Nissan. If the Nissan does not reach the 13th generation, the prophecy will be prolonged and its resources will be left behind. Look for the Nissan and bring it. May God be with you. (Zelalem, 2013, 1:30:10-1:31:46)

The other intertext in the film *Ethelis* folklore. The classic Amharic folk literature serves the palate of the audience in the history

of Amharic cinema. In the film *Ethel* the playwright alludes to the idea from war chant which is part of Ethiopian orature:

ዘራፍ! አካኪ ዘራፍ!	Zeraf! Akaki zeraf!
ዘራፍ! አካኪ ዘራፍ!	Zeraf! Akakizeraf!
የማት በገር የሴት አንበሳ	An invincible female lion
ገዳይዋን ጥላ የምታገላ	The shadow of the killer roars
እኔ ነኝ ሴቷ ወንድ የወለደኝ	I am the woman who gave birth to a man
ፈሪ ሲፎክር ዎኔ የማይክደኝ	When a coward boasts, he won't deny me
ዘራፍ! አካኪ ዘራፍ!	Zeraf! Akakizeraf!
ዘራፍ! አካኪ ዘራፍ!	Zeraf! Akakizeraf!
ተው ስለው ባይሰማ ይህ ዎገኛ	If you haven't heard about it, you will find this
ገድፌ ጣልኩት እንደ መጋኛ።	I threw it away like a storehouse.
የንጉስ ልጅ ነኝ የነጣይቱ	I am the son of a king
ኩራት በደሜ የሚዘዋዎር	Pride runs through my blood
	I dare not like my country



<p>የማልደፈር ልክ እንደ ሀገሪ</p> <p>እልፍ የምዋጋ ቁሜ ለክብሪ</p> <p>ኢትዮጵያዊ ነኝ የጀግኖች ቅሪት</p> <p>ለወዳጅ ማር ለጠላቱ እራት</p> <p>ዘራፍ! አካኪ ዘራፍ!</p> <p>ዘራፍ! አካኪ ዘራፍ!</p> <p>(ዘላለም ፣ 2013 ፣ 1:38:42-1:39:03)</p>	<p>I will fight for my glory</p> <p>I am anEthiopian, the remnantof heroes</p> <p>Honey for my friend, aloe for my enemy</p> <p>Zeraf! Akakizeraf!</p> <p>Zeraf! Akakizeraf!</p> <p>(Zelalem,2013,1:38:42-1:39:03)</p>
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According to Shiloh (2007), the concept of narrative may arguably be one of the most overused and under-defined terms in academic discourse. In fiction or in film, intention is usually associated with human agents, who can be either the characters or the narrator. It is these agents who move along the chain of causes and effects, so that cause-effect and agency work together to make the narrative.

According to the above-cited source, for postmodernists, the issue of originality and authenticity is undermined. The above extract from the film shows the anonymous nature of war chant. Birkie (the female minor character)uses this war chant after she defeats her antagonist. War chants in Ethiopian context are used when there is a great achievement by the society. This property of the masses is handed down from generation to generation orally. Thus, the

culture and tradition of the society is implicitly reflected and acknowledged

4.2. Intertextuality in *Water and Gold*

Intertextuality is an important element of postmodernism with its acknowledgment of earlier or prior literary works. For many postmodern artists, using intertextuality in their writings became the hallmark of their style. What is important to bear in mind while talking about intertextuality in postmodern writing is the role of other literary works to complete the story of a present text? While all playwrights re-write the work of predecessors, many contemporary writers consciously imitate, quote, plagiarize, parody and the like extensively. The playwright in the film *Wuhaina Werq (Water and Gold)* tried to show the text itself is not an autonomous entity as he tried to support his idea by



(መሃመድ፣ 2011፣ 02:43-03:07)	(Mohammed, 2011,02:43-03:07)
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The above extract is an interesting example of intertextuality in postmodern writing. When applying the above intertextual reference in his film, the playwright is shown us that there has to be a vertical relationship (there should be text to text relation not text to author relationship in the postmodern films or any other text).In a nutshell, there is shaping of a text meaning by another text. The playwrights are not rigidly and strictly dependence on their own ideas.

The postmodern artist tries to show the distance between the original text and what is being alluded to. We Ethiopians always

say we have three thousand years of history; we are the cradle of humanity, pioneer of civilization in Africa, etc. The Ethiopian popular motto that “we are always number one” is being challenged in this film which is the main emphasis of intertextuality in postmodern writing. The exemplification in the extract is that though we always say we are the first in many aspects, we are still farming with an ox which was started before three thousand years. The conversation between Dr. Dejene and his neighbors at the funeral ceremony also shows the way the playwright depends on history so as to unfold the story of his film:

<p>ዶክተር ደጅኔ፦ ሰው ሲቀበር በጣም ያሳዝናል፤ እንደዚህ አይነት መርዛማ የሆኑ ሃሳቦች ሲቀበሩ ግን በጣም ነው ደስ የሚለው። በዚህ አስደሳች በሆነ የቀብር ስነ-ስርዐት ላይ ጎረቤቶቹ ስለተገኛችሁ በጣም ነው ደስ ያለኝ።</p> <p>ሴትጎረቤት፦ ደግሞ ቀብር ምን ደስ ይላል።</p> <p>ዶክተር ደጅኔ፦ እናቴ የዚህ መጽሀፍ ደራሲ ማክስዌበር ይባላል። ደሃ መብት የለውም ነው የሚለው። የሱን ሃሳብ ተከትለው እንደነደስተን ቸርቻል አይነት ፖለቲከኞች ደሃ ሀገራትን መጨቆን ፍትሃዊ ነው የሚሉት። የዚህ መጽሀፍ ደራሲ ደግሞ ካንት ይባላል። እሱ ደግሞ እኛ አውሮፓውያን ብርሃን ነን የተቀረው አለም</p>	<p>Dr. Dejene: It is very sad when a person is buried, but it is very happy when such poisonous ideas are buried. I am so glad that you neighbors were present at this wonderful funeral.</p> <p>Female Neighbor: How could a funeral be nice?</p> <p>Dr. Dejene: My mother, the author of this book is called Max Webber. He says that the poor have no rights. Politicians like Winston Churchill who follow his ideas say that it is fair to oppress poor countries. The author of this book is called Kant. And he says that we Europeans are light and the rest of the</p>
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<p>ጨለማ ነው እኛ ነን የምናበራላቸው ስለሆነም በኛ ነው መወከል ያለባቸው ነው የሚለው።። ታዲያ ከዚህ በላይ ምን መርዛማ ሀሳብ አለ? እነዚህን መርዛማ ሀሳቦች በዚህ ሰንደቅ ስር ሆነን እንቀብራለን። (መሃመድ፣ 2011፣ 50:40-51:36)</p>	<p>world is dark. What is a toxic thought? We bury these poisonous ideas under this banner. (Mohammed, 2011,50:40-51:36).</p>
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The above quote clearly shows how an original text is being challenged when it is used as an intertext. Postmodernists are always against meta-narratives like history and religion. The playwright objects Max Webber’s idea that the poor are voiceless and Europeans are light and the rest of the world is dark. The playwright in the film acknowledges ideas from oral literature so as to show plurality of meaning or multiplicity of meaning. In other words; the playwright in the film uses previous works to show all texts are related to one another

The voice-over narrator of the film *Wuhaina Werq (Water and Gold)* gives a historical evidence so as to show alienation of laborers by the bourgeoisies. The narrator takes ideas from world history to show how the lower class was oppressed by the aristocrat (upper class). The way Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels revolted against the oppressors and the way they called for demonstration for the rights of the proletariat is intertextual evidence from world history which serves to arrange the plot of the film:

<p>በቀላሉ ሳስባት ኢትዮጵያ የዋህ አኩሪ አተር ትመስላለች። የትኛውም የአለም ስልጣኔ ወዛደሮችን ያማከለ ነው። የሚያሳዝነው ግን የወዛደሮችን ህይወት የሚያኖር በቂ ክፍያ አለመኖሩ ነው። ቀኝ እጃችን ይሰራል የሚያገለግል ግን ግራ እጃችን ነው። በሁሉም ዘመን የተነሱ ሰርቶ አደሮችም ሆኑ መያተኞች ተጨቋኞች ናቸው። ለዚህ ነው እንግዲህ የሃብት ክፍፍሉ ኢፍትሃዊ የሚሆነው። የኔዋ አንድ ኩንታል አኩሪ-አተር ከ25 ሊትር በላይ ዘይት ይወጣል። ግን ይገርምሻል በዚያት ሳይሆን በባቂላ ዋጋ ነው የሚሸጠው። (መሃመድ፣</p>	<p>When I look at it simply, Ethiopia looks like a gentle farmer. Any civilization in the world is centered on the workers. The sad thing is that there is not enough pay to support the lives of the workers. Our right hand works but our left hand decorates. Both the farmers and the skilled workers are oppressed in all ages. This is why. So, the distribution of resources is unfair. One quintal of my soybeans consumes more than 25 liters of oil.</p>
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2011፣01:35-02:25)	(Mohammed, 2011፣ 01:35-02:25)
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A literary text, a film, or any work of art, then, is not simply the product of a single author, but of its relationship to other texts and to the structures of language itself. “[A]ny text,” she [Kristeva] argues, “is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any

text is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva, 1980, p.66).In order to inculcate the down side of tradition for students, Rihana told a story for students in classroom as follows:

<p>አንድ ሰው በመንገድ ላይ ሲሄድ ቀጫጭን ክር በሚመስል ገመድ ዝሆኖች ታስረው ሲሄዱ ያያል። በጣም ተገርሞ ወደ ባለቤቱ ጠጋ ብሎ እነኝህን የሚያክሉ ዝሆኖች እንዴት በነዚህ ክሮች ታስረው እንዴት ዝም ሊሉ ቻሉ ብሎ ቢጠይቀው፤ ለምደውታል በነዚህ ክሮች ነው አስሬ ያሳደካቸው ብሎ መለሰለት። ይህ ነው እምነት፤ ባህል ማለት ይህ ነው፤ የስልጣኔን ጉልበት የሚበላ፤ የነገን አለም የሚያጨልም፤ የኋለኛውን የሩጫ ውድድር</p> <p>(መሃመድ፣ 2011፣ 1:10:51-1:11:30)።</p>	<p>When a person walks on the road, he sees elephants tied with thin thread-like ropes. He is very surprised and approaches the owner and asks him how elephants as big as these can be tied with these threads and keep quiet. This is what it means: it consumes the energy of civilization, it darkens the world of tomorrow, it is a backward race. (Mohammed, 2011, 1:10:51-1:11:30)</p>
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Towards the end of the story, Dr.Dejenie told a story for children .The moral of the story is instead of building a fence people should build bridge for the betterment of nation survival.

<p>ከአለታት በአንድ ቀን በጣም የሚዋደዱ ሁለት ወንድማማቾች ነበሩ። እናላችሁ እነዚህ ወንድማማቾች አንድ ቀን ተጣሉ። ከዛ በመሃላቸው የሚገኘውን ሰፊ እርሻ ሁለቱም ማረስ ጀመሩ። ከዛ በመሃላቸው ትልቅ ገደል ተፈጠረ። ይህ አልበቃ ብላቸው በአካባቢው የሚገኝ አናጢ ያስጠሩና በገደሉ ጫፍ ላይ ሁለቱም ስምንት ሜትር የሚረዝም አጥር እንዲሰራላቸው ጠየቁት። አናጢውም በሃሳባቸው ተስማምቶ፤ ሌሊቱን ድልድይ ሰርቶላቸው አደረ። ባዩት ነገር በጣም ተገርመው አጥር እንጅ ድልድይ መች አልገህ</p>	<p>Once upon a time, there were two brothers who loved each other very much. One day, these brothers had a fight. Then they both started to cultivate a large field between them. Then a big cliff was formed between them. Both of them asked a carpenter to build an eight meter long fence for them. The carpenter agreed to their idea and spent the night building a bridge for them.</p> <p>(Mohammed, 2011, 1:27:40-1:29:30)</p>
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<p>ቢሉት ለናንተ ድልድይ እንጂ አጥር አያስፈልጋችሁም አላቸው። አብረው ለመኖር ቢጠይቁትም ልክ እንደናንተ ድልድይ የሚያስፈልጋቸው አሉ ብሎ ትተቸው ነጎደ ይባላል።(መሃ መድ፣ 2011 ፣ 1:27:40-1:29:30</p>	
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Recognizing and analyzing intertextuality, which refers to anything in a particular text which can be fully understood only by reference to one or more other (written or spoken) texts(Parkinson &Thomas, 2000,p. 49 cited in Ayenew,2015) is applied by the playwright in the film “Water and Gold. The

director of the film *WuhainaWerq (Water and Gold)* has mastered the art of adaption to create his film texts. The playwright of the film under analysis also mimics ideas from another movie. The voice-over narrator in the alluded movie shows the action and reaction of love between or among lovers:

<p>ወንድተዋናይ:- ይታይሻል ይሄ? ፍቅር እንደዚህ ላስቲክ የተወጠረ ሀይል አለው። እኔ ብለቀው ምን ትሆኛለሽ? ሴትተዋናይ:- ያቃጥለኛል። ወንድተዋናይ:- አንችስ ብትለቂው? ሴትተዋናይ:- ትቃጠላለህ። ወንድተዋናይ:- ፍቅር ተቻችሎ ተስማምቶ መኖር ነው፤ ትዳርም እንደዚሁ ነው። (መሃ መድ፣ 2011 ፣ 1:05:21-1:05:57)</p>	<p>Male Actor: Are you looking it? Love has the power to be stretched like rubber. What if I leave this rubber? Female Actor: It burns me. Male Actor: What if you let this go? Female Actor: You will be burned. Male Actor: Love is living in harmony, so is marriage. (Mohammed, 2011, 1:05:21-1:05:57)</p>
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The above quote indicates that borrowing from other film text is also another example of postmodern intertextuality. The scene in the other film is used to advocate the reactionary nature of love. Lovers should be governed by the law of the universe. The give and take calculation of the material world has to be remembered so as to have an interesting relationships.

5. Conclusions

All in all, the plotlines of the selected films are arranged having a dialogue with other

texts. The success of these filmmakers lies in their ability to subvert a prevalent system of thought and belief. Mythology, folklore, history, and other literary pieces give them the basis of their stories. All the above referencing to the selected films indicates that no text is self-born and there is no originality when one develops a literary masterpiece. In order to control the emotions of the audience and to let them participate in films, bringing ideas from preceding works in an actual text is indispensable. The



selected films had intertextual relations with other literary pieces, history, the Holy Bible, culture and tradition and mythology. Playwrights used these texts to enrich their works with plural views. In some extent, we also understand that an attempt is made to show departure between the present text and what has been alluded to the actual texts. Finally, It is highly recommended that future researchers should explore other features like paranoia, magical realism, pastiche, parody, and the like in the films under study as well as other Amharic films.

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