

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN
LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)**

**THE CASE OF EXISTENCE IN *FƏQƏR ESKE*
MÄQABƏR, *KÄ'ADMAS BASHAGER* AND
GƏRACHA QACHƏLOCH: FROM
EXISTENTIALIST PERSPECTIVE**

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AUGUST 2007

**The Case of Existence in *Fəqər eske*
Mäqabər, Kä'admas Bashagär and *Gəracha*
Qachəloch: From Existentialist Perspective**

**BY
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**A Thesis Presented to the Department of
Foreign Languages and Literature
(Graduate Programme)**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
in Literature**

August 2007

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From Existentialist Perspective**

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

The study argues, as its starting point, that all the causes of our social evils rest on the kind of relationship that we established, as a social system, between the individual and the society. The society is so powerful over the individual that, as a result, it robs the latter the sense of responsibility—the more the individual leaves the responsibility to the society the more the nation will be overwhelmed by the social ills. To alleviate this problem the researcher suggests a system in which the individual is allowed to act freely with responsibility. The kind of philosophical outlook that offers such an alternative is Existentialism. Thus selecting, Jean Paul-Sartre's, among the existentialist outlooks, the study attempts to address the case of existence in three selected novels—*Fəqər eske Məqabər (FM)*, *Kä'admas Bashagär (KB)* and *Gəracha Qachəloch (GQ)*. According to the analysis made the researcher has found out that the more the pressure of the society gets intense the more agitated the individual becomes to be free, even that goes to the extent of losing one's life (like Säblä and Bəzzəh, in *FM*). The less, however, the pressure the freer and responsible the individual grows (Abärra of *KB* and Məzzgäbu of *GQ*). It is also observed that the society acts not as an invisible entity but concretizes itself in individuals, which can make the pressure surpassable by the individual. Such examination of characters is possible to be made as the genre of the novel allows its characters to become halt in crystallized still posture; whether the novel is written by a dead or living author. The very moment the reader finishes reading, the novel dies, gets freeze; thus available for a postmortem, *ie* analysis.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The cream of my eulogy goes to Ato Tena Shale, my advisor. He deserves all the honor I have for him for his invaluable comments, consideration and helpful attitude. There were many people who lent their hands to the accomplishment of the study. Some of them were kinds of people who could change my world with one simple word—‘yes’. ‘Yes, you can have it’. Among these I cannot forget Birtukan Bekele, Lema H/Michael, Tewodros Bekele, Abebe Teshager, Tekle Tesfa-Mariam, and Elisabet Dinku (including her entire family; two of them deserve to be mentioned, Yishak Dinku and Yared Dinku). There were others who offered me materials that become bricks in my study: without such materials the study was nothing; for this I want to call upon Netsanet G/Michael, Sosen Tesfaye, and Fereselam Demissie. The two extreme groups of people who played the role of enkindling inspiration whenever I lost one were: the group of friends who instigated me whenever I get paused and those who *interrupted* me. In the first group all my friends and classmates especially Nitsuh Mekonnen, Gezahegn Habte, Tesfaye Messele, Miheret W/Michael, Andualem Hadero and Rahel Etana are included; while in the second Ashenafi Dejene, Melkam Messeret, Tatek Debebe and Mekdes Mulugeta. The intrusions of the latter group had an invigorating effect. Finally comes inevitably, my family who gave me everything I needed. Thus my especial thanks go to my father Wondimu Shenkute and my mother Elfinesh Tekola.

I know, **ምስጋና ከስ አይገባም** ፤ but I am really indebt to you all (named or not). I really, really thank you.

PS: If there are any mistakes they are all mine.

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CAPTER ONE: Introduction

The motto for postmodern politics might well be "think globally, act locally"—and don't worry about any grand scheme or master plan.

Mary Klages

1.1. Purpose of the Study

In 1964 a woman named Kitty Genovese was attacked while thirty eight neighbors of hers were listening to her scream for a solid half an hour. None of them tried to call police or rescue her. They all left her to be murdered. This event inspired two psychologists, Bibb Latané and John Darley, to develop a theory called *diffusion of responsibility*¹. This theory states that the more there are people involved to perform a task, the less responsible each feels, as the responsibility, figuratively speaking, diffuses or is shared evenly to all who are present. Some researches suggest that such behavior of people has contributions to the existence and spread of social evils².

Ethiopia is one of the nations which are suffering a lot from social ills such as corruption, mal-management, neurosis/psychosis, HIV/AIDS, malaria, criminality, poverty, etc. To alleviate the problems different solutions are designed and implemented from economic, social and political perspectives. But still the problems persist to exist.

The researcher believes most of the social ills have resulted from the irresponsibility that each of us shares individually and the collective thinking that the society developed throughout the past centuries. To substantiate this we can refer to the study conducted in 1991 G. C. by Taye Woldäsāmayate (1994) which sheds light on the attitudes of Ethiopians regarding “human nature”. According to this survey, the respondents’ attitudes, towards “human nature”, despite the place where they came from and educational levels they have, are geared similarly by “values and beliefs [that are] deeply held and often intertwined with people’s modes of life... [which are] *difficult to deviate from* because people acquire them through their life experiences and through the

assimilation of vast amount of information, so that they are deeply engraved in them” (p. 794. Emphasis added). However we can pose a question here: are the pre-established modes of thinking of the society really unchangeable and “difficult to deviate from” individually?

Existentialists say it is possible to deviate; what is moral for them is inventing one’s own right and wrong, good and evil. Man is the only being who can go “Beyond Good and Evil.” What makes it seem difficult is the power the society has over the individual. The Ethiopian community seems to disregard the individual’s ability and freedom to judge between right and wrong. This creates a favorable condition for individual corruptors—the individual, the minority, corrupts and the mass bears the consequences collectively; the responsibility of fighting the illnesses diffuses among the majority.

Everything is prescribed and the members are liable to abide by it. This is why, it seems, intellectuals could not shine out for long if they have different notions from that of the society. This can be cited from the study conducted by Fäkadä Azäzä regarding portrayal of intellectuals in Amharic novels (from 1930-1974). He claims in his summary:

The study has revealed that most of the intellectuals portrayed in the novels set out to change their society. They start with a high social mission and idea of moral and material progress [Their] actions are, however, determined by their whims rather than by an understanding of the *complexities of the situation*. Their inner drive, ill-informed about the pressures and intricacies, leads them to wishful thinking and practice. The result is withdrawal, disillusionment, alienation, death, or, at times, relatively success (Fäkadä, 1988. Emphasis added).

One of the causes that might aggravate the “complexities of the situation” is the absence of a favorable condition for the intellectuals to sow their seeds of knowledge in the society. As it were, the society is a closed one and is resistant to new ideas. Moreover, the problem is further aggravated by lack of education.

The researcher believes there is a possible solution to go against the current of social evils associated with *responsibility diffusion*. The solution requires re-visitation of our moral standard and the kind of relationship between the individual and the society, for “History offers ample evidence that, as long as human life and culture are healthy and normally integrated, the individual and universal elements balance” (Reinhardt,1952:14). Thus we need to establish a kind of relationship in which the individual is free to think and act and thus become simultaneously responsible for her/his conduct. This individual action which assumes at the end the consequences of it, is believed to enable the individual to act ‘righteously’ despite pre-established systems and number of people that might be involved for similar task.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

For the effectiveness of the above purpose we need to study the case of existence of the individual in Ethiopian context; whether it is possible to go against the expectations of the society and what consequences the individual could face. This would allow us to pace equally with today’s world of “globalization” and “postmodernism”, to saunter with the motto of the day, to do our assignment in ‘thinking globally and acting locally’.

Thus this makes the study partly anthropological³ and such study is possible based on literary works, especially, of the modern novels of the country. R. K. Molvear (1980) claims “Ethiopian authors of fiction are strongly concerned with the social and cultural life of their time....” (p.1). Such notion has also inspired local researchers such as Eḡḡere Tolossa (1983 G.C.) and Fäkadä Azäzä (1988 G.C.). Ethiopian literary works are, in most cases, moved by the motive of illustrating their contemporary social, political, economic and psychological milieu, and criticize and suggest for improvement.

For this study three Amharic novels are selected: *Fəḡər eske Mäqabər* (“Love unto Grave”, 1958 E.C.), *Kä’admas Bashagär* (“Beyond the Horizon”, 1962 E.C.) and *Gəracha Qachäloch* (“Gray Bells”, 1997 E.C.). Of these, three more space and emphasis

is given in discussing the new technique that Adam Rāta introduces in his novel (in the subsection allotted to discuss the novel). First, this novel is new and is not much studied compared to the other two, partly as it is very recently published. Secondly, the researcher believes this novel to be different from the other two (and other novels) both in form and content. It attempts to employ a literary experiment, a new kind of technique named ‘Enjori’/’Enjera’, which seems to have strong affinity with the content. And content wise it introduces a new kind of hero, unlike the others. According to Fākadā (1988), in his summary referred to above, both Haddis and Bā’alu have characterized individual ‘change agents’ (such as Gudu Kassa and Abārra Worku) and victims of the society such as Bāzzāb and Säblä -Wongäl). However, there is one important difference that Fākadā (1988) pointed out regarding the agents of change. Haddis’s hero wants to change the society and Bā’alu’s hero wants to change himself. Adam’s hero, Māzzābu, however seems interested in changing neither of these.

In this introductory chapter, there are three more relevant questions that we need to address: Why novels? Why these three novels? And, why Existentialism as an approach?

Why novels? For this there are two reasons. First, the kind of approach selected, Existentialism, especially the Sartrean one, clearly prescribes prose as the best that deals with existential questions (this is elaborated in the next chapter). Second the novel being an extended prose work, thus provides ample room to study characters and their relationships with their environment.

Why the three novels? *Fāqərə eske Māqabər* and *Kä’admas Bashagär* are among important literary works in the history of Ethiopian literature for their techniques and language excellence (especially the former). The researcher believes that *Gəracha Qachəloch* will also take a high place in the near future for its experimental and other literary values. The other reason is that all three novels take the pre-revolution Ethiopia as their setting. Only *Gəracha* bridges this with the post-revolution period. Most

importantly, all of them deal with individual characters who are considered as struggling to be free from suppression of others. This has a great deal to reflect upon the beliefs of the authors about individuals. Tsägaye Hailu (1987), in his study entitled *Haddis [Alämayähu] as a Social Critic*, states that the author is “of the opinion that an individual’s happiness is the happiness of the whole society.” (p. 21). Similarly, Fäkadä’s (1988) study states, “Bä’alu suggests that changing oneself first is the most important revolutionary step the intellectual ought to take” (p. 233). *Gəracha* also deals with individual perception of the world of a character with an ‘I’ narrator. This can indirectly justify that the author appreciates the very individualistic coloring of the fictional world depicted in *Gəracha*; through x-raying the deep soul print of the individual character, letting him to speak for himself.

Why Existentialism as an approach? There are two basic rationales for this. First, Ethiopian philosophy seem more close to Existentialism; it emphasizes on the art of living and on the particular⁴. Claude Sumner (1985) identifies six features of the Ethiopian philosophy that differentiate it from the Western philosophy⁵:

Whereas the Western world, has a tendency to consider things as they are in their impersonal objectivity, the Ethiopian Semitic world is clearly *anthropocentric*. The Westerner takes as its starting point the world of external reality, which is distinct and measurable. The Semitic Ethiopian does not break away from the world in which [she] lives. [She] does not disengage [herself] it, *[she] does not stand out*; [she] is part of it. [Her] starting point is within [herself], in [her] own *personal experience*. [She] does not try to express what is in [her] mind; [she] rather attempts to evoke it.

The Westerner reconstructs and recreates the outside world within the framework of [her] own thought. The Ethiopian starts from what is already in [her] mind and endeavours to transmit it by suggestion. The Westerner abstracts and arrives at the universal idea; the Semite *sticks to the particular* and tries to absorb it. The Westerner would like to conceive truth and to demonstrate it; the Semitic Ethiopian seeks to offer [herself] to it and to have it desired by others. The Western world is a world of things, the Ethiopian world is a *world of persons* (Sumner,1985:427-28. Emphasis added).

Such features as ‘anthropocentricity’, ‘sticking to the particular’ and projecting ‘personal experience’ makes Ethiopian philosophy closer to the Existentialist one. However, there are at least two basic features that make the Ethiopian outlook not Existentialist. First, the Ethiopian does not ‘stand out’ from the world; and distinct between her/himself and the rest of the world, which is one of the basic features of Existentialism. In addition, the ‘particularization’ itself is individual in its sense of community rather than individual persons. The parameters to judge the world and to differentiate between right and wrong, for instance, rest on the shoulder of the community, rather than being left to the mind of the individual person. Thus, it is difficult to state that the Ethiopian outlook is Existential. Nonetheless, it is still possible to say Ethiopian outlook appeals to Existentialism, since it is basically anthropocentric. In addition to this appeal, Existentialism is a theory that basically, as Patric Hogan (2000) states, a philosophy of “mind and experience.” Such theories are experiential in that they “... concern the human mind in interaction with a material world and with other minds and focus on the physical and social relations into which the individual mind enters... [they] intermediate between psychological and social theories” (Hogan, 2000:3). This contributes a lot in the process of scrutinizing individual characters of novels.

There are two other questions that are also important to be addressed concerning the study: what objective the study has and the methodology it employs.

1.3. Objective of the Study

As its major objective the study tries to elucidate on the case of existence of the individual characters in the kind of society in which they are portrayed, *ie* what existential characteristics the characters exhibit. Attempt is also made to examine what impacts such portrayals have on the relationships of the characters in the light of the socio-political situation of the period that the novels assume as setting and what effects the new technique (*Enjori*) of Adam has in revealing the mind of his protagonist. From

these conclusion will be drawn regarding the reader-novel and the individual-social relationships observed.

1.4. Methodology

Regarding the methodology, we can say briefly that, by using chiefly Sartrean Existentialism as a framework, attempt is made to analyze and interpret the novels by taking appropriate extractions and making dialogues with previous studies to arrive at the condition of the individual in Ethiopian context as it is represented in the novels. Chapter three, in which the framework is designed, provides all the tools we need for the task of the analysis. The tools are scattered among the four sub-sections of this chapter. This chapter serves us also as a springboard, therefore whenever we want to borrow concepts and terms, we take them with their definitions as put in this same chapter. In chapter four general background information is given to illustrate on the socio-political milieu of the periods in which the novels are set, which is important to decide whether the authors are committed or not with the criteria of Sartrean framework. Within this same chapter then attempt is made to examine the case of existence of the characters, having three sub-sections that are allotted to each novel. To elucidate on their situations protagonists and other prominent figures are chosen from each novel

In its entirety the study is a combination of ‘literary criticism’, ‘literary theory’, ‘theory itself’ and ‘literary study’, based on the distinctions made by John Lye (2001. Web). According to him,

‘literary criticism’ is fundamentally the estimation of the value of a particular work or body of work on such grounds as: the personal and/or cultural significance of the themes and the uses of language of a text; the insights and impact of a text; and the aesthetic production (or, performance) of the text; particularly as these areas are seen to be mutually dependent, supportive or inflective.... One patrols the boundaries of good writing, admitting or excluding, determining what should be thought about a text, and why, what personal and cultural value should be placed on it” (p. 1. Web).

For Lye ‘literary theory’ is the process of understanding literature in relation ‘to author, to reader, to language, to society, to history’ to point out its function and nature. Thus it requires a kind of existing literary theory to analyze a text. The third one, ‘theory itself’ is understood as a theory that would the critic herself should arrive at regarding what relationship a literary piece has with language, readers, history and society. ‘Literary study’, the last one, “refers to knowledge about the facts of the case as they illuminate the meaningfulness of texts—facts of authorship, biography, influence, aesthetics, the pressures and modulations of contexts, rewriting and publication, historical interpretation, and so forth” (Lye, 2001:1. Web).

The study, therefore, employs the ‘literary criticism’ to touch upon the technique of *Gəracha*, in a dub manner. ‘Literary theory’ comes as the study applies Existentialism (Sartre’s) as a framework; while ‘theory itself’ is applied as it has tried to conclude on the reader-novel/its characters relationship based on the analysis; and finally, it is ‘literary study’ as it, inevitably, touches the lives of the authors and some of the philosophers though in a light manner.

Special note should be taken on two points in relation to the methodology, however. Previous studies made in relation to the novels under study are treated in the fourth chapter that is allotted to analysis. The studies are going to be put in dialogue with this study. This is intended for two reasons. One it is believed to bring together the different minds of different people regarding similar novels. Such an approach thus would have complementary effect regarding studies of the novels. Second, it is believed to give room to revisit and at times to comment on some points that the researcher thinks are misinterpreted due to lack of information and the kind of approach followed. The other point that needs to be noted is, even if Sartrean Existentialism is assumed as a framework, other philosophers of the same school are used when need arises.

What limitation does the study has?

1.5. Limitation of the Study

Due to language, time and space constraints the study is limited to only the three Amharic novels that are selected for this study. But it does not mean that the study denies literary and technical qualities of other Ethiopian novels. For the same reason given above and to make the study intact it limits itself mainly to one existential philosophy, *ie* Sartre's.

It seems also appropriate to ask whether it is possible to apply Existentialism (Sartrean or Other) to any prose text or to a text that is clearly influenced by the philosophy. In this study, the researcher suggests to divide the philosophy as a literary approach into two: narrow and broad. Narrowly if the philosophy is applied to fictional texts that are written with the framework of the philosophy—such works as novels, short stories or plays that are written by Sartre himself and other existentialists. Broadly, however, if it is applied to any fictional narrative (especially prose) as they deal with different human conditions. Thus in this study we can say we are applying Sartrean Existentialism as a literary approach in its broad sense.

The next chapter reviews literatures in relation to the philosophy and the selected novels.

CHAPTER TWO: Review of Literatures

2.1. The Concept of Existentialism

Existence, as a concern, was there since time immemorial, as the expression goes. It has got its shape as a philosophy on its own accord since the first half of the nineteenth century through the works of Søren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard developed his philosophy contradicting the idealism of Hegel, who states that it is possible to reach at universal, objective truth through dialectics. For Kierkegaard, man can attain only subjective truth, *ie* each for her/himself.

With the term existentialism many big names surface themselves beside Kierkegaard and Hegel (who contributed indirectly). Elmo Nauman (1972) in his book entitled *The New Dictionary of Existentialism* groups the major ones, after he states as follows:

Existentialism has exerted a profound unifying influence on the usually diverse disciplines of philosophy, theology, literature, and psychology.

The immediate foundations of existentialism were laid by Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), and to some extent by the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). The major formulations of existentialism are by Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre. In addition to these thinkers, the most commonly acknowledged existentialists are Gabriel Marcel, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Migeul de Unamuno y Jugo (1864-1936), and Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdyaev (1874-1948).

The literary existentialists, in addition to many of the above, are Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821-1881), Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), Frank Kafka (1883-1924), Albert Camus (1913-1960), André Gide (1869-1951) and André Malraux.

The most noted men in the field of existential psychology, in addition to Kierkegaard, Jaspers, and Sartre, are Viktor Frankl, Rollo May, Ludwig Binswanger, and Renald Kuhn.

The theological existentialists, in addition to Kierkegaard, Jaspers, and Marcel, are Martin Buber, Karl Barth, Rudolph Bultmann, and Paul Tillich” (C. S. Wyatt, 2005:1. Web)

This grouping also is not complete. There are others such as Descartes, Pascal and St. Thomas Aquinas who have strong connections with the philosophy. In addition, it marginalizes the prominent figures of women existentialists such as Simone de Beauvoir, who should not be remembered only as a disciple and lover of Sartre but as a philosopher who has great impact in developing the philosophy. It also excludes African existential writers such as Aye Kwei Armah and others who should be recognized as literary geniuses.

The number of the philosophers and writers, which is large, and the various themes each discusses and the apparent lack of integrity among them makes it appear as having no common principles. As a result, some writers such as John Macquarrie (1972) have argued that Existentialism should be considered as ‘a style of philosophizing’ than as a philosophy (p. 2).

Existentialism can be considered as a philosophy or a movement of philosophy about the individual existent; and that which was advanced and practiced throughout Europe in the twentieth century. The term existence has Latin Origin *ex-sistere*, which means to ‘stand out’ or ‘emerge’. For existentialists, this term has an extended meaning: “to exist is to stand out from nothing ... to have a place (and time) in the real world” (Macquarrie, 1972:42). It is the individual who stands out from nothingness. There is no answer why s/he came into the world, why they should live the way they are living and why they should die. Nietzsche laments:

No one is accountable for existing at all, or for being constituted as he is, or for living in the circumstances and surroundings in which he lives. The fatality of his nature cannot be disentangled from the fatality of all that which has been and will be. He is *not* the result of a special design, a will, a purpose; he is not the subject of an attempt to attain an ‘ideal of man’ or an ‘ideal of happiness’...” (Hollingdale, 1977:211. Original emphasis).

Thus as Heidegger pointed out man is a being that is 'thrown' into the middle of happenings of the world. *Thrownness* thus takes away the grace man used to enshroud herself with—'purpose' and 'design' behind her existence. This in turn left humanity naked and alone without a creator. The situation in which existentialism bloomed was a dark period of the early twentieth century where war, disaster, fall and uncertainty walk kingly in the world, where science and philosophy lost their wings by which they used to take man to the 'objective' 'concrete' 'truth'.

As a contingent being, man is thus compelled to face this absurd world. Absurdity is defined by Albert Camus (1942) as an essential divorce between man and the world (p. 30). Man needs happiness, the world offers suffering; man wants the rational the world gives the irrational; man aspires to live, the world provides death. This state of continuous struggle and facing up to the absurd, or the nothing causes what the existentialist terms as 'Angst' (German word for anxiety) or 'dread'.

The Concept of Dread (1844) by Kierkegaard reveals this condition of man, and Heidegger philosophically elaborated on that (Reinhardt, 1952:234). 'Fear' and 'anguish' are different in that, in the case of the former the person knows what s/he fears thus being in a position to run from it, however, in the latter case, it is an indefinite thing (that will become nothing finally) that threatens them. There is something enigmatic about the world. There is a gap between "[the person] and the familiar objects of [her]/his world, between [her]/him and the familiar objects of [her]/his world, between [her]/him and [her]/his fellowmen between [her]/him and all [her]/his 'values'" (Reinhardt,1952:235). Everything they anchor on turns into phantom, even her/himself into 'no-thingness". When s/he realizes finally it was nothing that was threatening them they are said experienced "nothingness" (Reinhardt, 1952:235).

There are two kinds of anguish: one that leads man to 'unauthentic' mode of existence. and another one to the 'authentic'. In the first case everything becomes bleak: nothing

matters. Nothing is important in life so such anguish tends to destruction. In the second case, however, the existent finds a means to face anguish. Anxiety clears away all the fog, false security that the existent was in and helps her/him to face the world with courage and heroism. According to Heidegger, anguish “arouses man from the false tranquility of his everyday life and makes him free for the fulfillment of his existential task. Anguish thus understood, is the positive privilege of man...” as Reinhardt (1952:235) points out. This is why Kierkegaard sings: “He who has truly experienced anguish has learned to walk as in a dance..., while the apprentices of finiteness lose all reason and courage’ (ibid).

It is again Kierkegaard who discriminates between the ‘authentic’ and ‘unauthentic’ existences. According to him there are three ‘stages’ through which an existent should pass to attain ‘authenticity’. The first one is the one which he calls ‘aesthetic’. At this stage the existent acts ‘naturally’, *ie* s/he is selfish, who goes against conventional relationships such as marriage and engagement, and seeks the sensual pleasure. Though they seem happy overtly, they feel despair and emptiness covertly. This is because the pleasure they are attaining will never cease and get satisfied so any kind of project, be it in art, intellect, etc cannot fill it. The pleasure always succumbs into nothing. Thus when the existent realizes this s/he moves to the second stage called *ethical*.

At this stage the existent approves relations such as marriage and engagement, becomes responsible for both her/himself and others. Thus s/he can be identified as ‘universal’. However, this is not still the ultimate higher position that man should settle upon. There is one last stage he calls *religious*. This stage is where anguish gets resolved and man reconciles to her soul and God; thus attaining freedom. The *religious* stage is also the stage where there is a realization of sin (unknown sin) and feeling of guilt which the existent repents. Therefore, according to Kierkegaard, *faith* is the only leap through which man can escape her absurd situation. Man thus should choose *Either* the

‘authentic’ Or the ‘unauthentic’ mode of existence. *Either/or* is the major theme in his work bearing the title.

The individual existent should stand out and be able to reject the pre-established systems of the collective society.

... ‘the individual’ is the basic category in the thinking of Kierkegaard. The ‘self’ and ‘the masses’ are at opposite poles. And what is true of ‘the masses’ applies equally to the ‘world’. For the existentialist thinker the world is at best a kind of testing ground of existential authenticity, the matter to be used in the process of self-realization” (Reinhardt,1952:236).

When the individual could stand out, rejecting the pre-established values of ‘the mass’ he is said to be authentic. Heidegger also differentiates between the ‘authentic’ and ‘unauthentic’ existents. According to him man is *Dasein*—German word meaning ‘being there’—a Being for whom *beingness* is an issue. The right mode of *Daisen* is thus ‘Being-in-the-world’ (Hogan, 2000:121-22).

However, at this juncture if this Being acts as a *das Man* (which means ‘public ego’, as Reinhardt converts it) he is ‘unauthentic’. *Das Man* belongs to the “everydayness” of life, fitting simply into the conventional:

Das Man thinks, believes, speaks, behaves as ‘one does’ and thus expresses the conformist leveling which characterizes the average human life. *Das Man* has fallen a prey to the things in the world and has become alienated from authentic human purpose and possibility. It expresses itself and communicates with others not in genuine speech (*Rede*) but in conventional, superficial chatter (*Gerede*)” (Reinhardt,1952:134-35. Original emphasis).

But this does not mean that the individual should abandon the everyday life to become authentic. To be authentic means to be a ‘Being-towards-death’, a being that realizes the end is death, the only true event for all. Therefore s/he should act genuinely, the way

they should act; not just mimicking as the ‘one does’ out there. It helps man to see and live with a new dimension to find a higher meaningful purpose and possibility beyond the simple everydayness which is simply a construction of ‘the one’ or ‘the other’, if we borrow Sartre’s expression. Thus for Heidegger *care* or *solicitude* is the remedy to live in this world facing nothingness—caring for the self and others.

Other existentialists offer other solutions to overcome the absurd and dread. Camus, for instance, suggests ‘revolt’ against the absurd. He argues: “The absurd dies when we turn away from it. One of the only coherent philosophical positions is thus revolt which is “a constant confrontation between man and his own obscurity” (Camus, 1942:54). Sartre prescribes, on his side, conscious choice as a solution. Man as a being of ‘here and now’ is free to choose her/his own value for there is no absolute good or evil. Choice is ought to. Not to choose is choosing not to choose. Then the individual bears all the consequences of her/his choice; thus this freedom is a condemned one.

It is impossible to deal with all existentialists in their wholeness, for they are, as stated above, so many in number and different theme-wise. Thus it is inevitable, and appropriate, to choose one to apply as a framework for this study.

Among them, the researcher has picked Sartrean existential outline for two basic reasons:

1. He is the one who popularized the philosophy in the first half of twentieth century, and had great impact in its development.
2. Most importantly, his is so complete in networking other areas of study such as: phenomenology, ontology, metaphysics, ethics, psychoanalysis, literary theory and politics, which can render service immensely to literary analysis.

At this juncture it seems appropriate to propound a question regarding the contemporariness of the theory, for it was developed more than a century ago. Philip

Mairet (1948) says in his introduction to his English translation of Sartre's speech *Existentialism and Humanism*:

Although the existential movement in France has had almost a popular success it is much more than a passing fashion in ideas. It has over a century of history behind it [from his day], and is already entitled to rank as one of those movements of revolt against over-simplification in philosophy which have occurred from time to time in the course of Western thought with correction or stimulating effect" (p. 5).

Alfred Stern (1967) also affirms this but with a different dimension—emphasizing on its survival as a philosophy. In his "Forward" to *Sartre: His Philosophy and Existential Psychoanalysis* he states:

During the fourteen years which have passed since the publication of the first edition of this book the international status of Existentialism has changed. The Existentialist night clubs in Paris closed, but the lecture halls of the world's universities were opened to Existentialism. From a sensational fashion Existentialism was converted into an object of serious scholarly, academic studies. This change is a guarantee for the survival of Existentialism as a part of modern Western philosophy" (p. ix).

The Neo-existentialist movement of the twentieth-first century proves Mairet's (1948) position wrong, while, somehow, substantiates Stern's (1967). The movement is also known as Post-existentialism. The initiator of the movement is Veri Tetra who is contemporary philosopher, scientist and writer. The movement tries to approach with a new dimension, the existing conflict between human consciousness that is seized with anguish and nature. The Neo-existentialists claim they are trying to answer the 'eternal questions' such as the place of the individual in society, the *whatness* of the world, and existence itself, and the quest for harmony with the world that are asked by 'contemplating and struggling individuals' (NPA-World, 2005:1. Web). Thus the philosophy is getting free again from the exoteric grip of the realm of the academy.

2.2. Review of Related Books and Researches

In this sub-section attempt is made to review literatures in relation to the problem at hand. First we shall address the four books that are written about Sartre, his philosophy and his philosophy in relation to literature. Among the four, Kurt. F. Reinhardt's (1952) work appears chronologically, first. After he gives a general idea about existentialism (who contributed what and what ideas are bothering the modern world), he discusses seven Existentialist philosophers. Among these we find Sartre; the writer has allotted one chapter for him. Within this chapter he attempts to discuss very briefly Sartre's biography, credentials, and his philosophy as reflected in his masterpiece novel entitled *Nausea* (1938) and his philosophical treatise *Being and Nothingness* (1943) (since an extended discussion of his philosophical outlook is presented in the next chapter and very briefly above, we do not discuss it here).

There is a section in which he criticizes Sartre's notion of 'the Other' and God, a Being who is a synthesis of the two beings that Sartre identifies as Being-for-itself and Being-in-itself (that designate in simple terms to man and nature respectively). Each man is an Other to the other. According to Sartre (1943) basically human relationship is conflictive (please refer chapter three, 3.3). Reinhardt (1952) raises a critical question:

Is it not truly amazing that in a philosophy which calls itself not only 'existentialist' but 'humanistic,' no mention is ever made of the phenomenon of friendship, conjugal and filial love, moral obligation mutual understanding? There is only the alternative of either the annihilation of 'the other' by me, or my own annihilation by 'the other' (p. 107).

Though it is clearly stated in Sartre's scheme of philosophy that "the Other is hell", he does not stop with that. The conflictive nature is for him is only the basic characteristic of humanity. However, to live meaningfully he suggests for each existent to be committed or engaged in action that s/he believes is better for all mankind.

Reinhardt's (1952) other criticism on God states that Sartre's postulate of the "non-existence of God" cannot be supported by his argument that "the finite mind can never have an adequate idea of God's infinite mind" (p. 170). According to Reinhardt, this claim does not affirm the postulate, rather it proves as "the divine mind cannot have the same ontological structure as human consciousness" (Ibid).

The other person who portrays Sartre is Alfred Stern (1967). Unlike the previous writer, he allotted the whole book in discussing Sartre in his entirety. Dividing the content of his book into two major sections as "Sartre's Existential Philosophy" and "Sartre's Existential Psychoanalysis", he gives detailed image of Sartre's philosophy that is substantiated with examples. He also evaluates Sartre's philosophy, through questioning, and contending some of the ideas and providing suggestions.

The third one that is written by Brian Masters (1970) conjoins and discusses Sartre's philosophy in relation to his literary works, especially his novels. He follows a method of discussing terms that are in most cases themes of Sartre's philosophy; showing how they are reverberated in the novels. The extracts he uses are in French, as the text is presented for students of French literature.

Patric Hogan's (2000) work is the last one in relation to Sartre. The writer gives the historical background, how Existentialism emanated from Husserl's philosophy of phenomenology (a kind of philosophy that attempts to reach at the essence of an object). Heidegger establishes his philosophy mainly based on Husserl's phenomenology. However, his concern is on the question of Being. Sartre, in his turn, reading both Husserl and Heidegger founded his philosophy based on Heidegger's *Being and Time*. After Hogan (2000) gives the outline of the historical emergence of Sartre's Existentialism, he applies existentialism on Shakespeare's dramatic text *Othello*.

When we move to local researches, we find two dissertations, two thesis and one senior essay that take either *Fəqər eske Mäqabər (FM)* or *Kä'admas Bashagär (KB)* or both, as their concern of study. There is no study found regarding *Gracha* for the possible reason that the book is recently published. Fəkəre Tolossa's (1983) dissertation attempts to examine if the fifteen novels (including the two, above) that he nominated fulfill the requirements of "realism". He distinguishes between two kinds of literary heroes: 'individual' and 'social' types. He states:

Social types are realistic characters because all the qualities common to a whole group, class and even a generation which have existed in real life are concentrated in their persons. Individual characters do not represent a whole social group, class and generation. Individual characters may or may not have existed in real life. They are more romantic than realistic (in the sense that they are unique, exaggerated and extraordinary) (p. 8).

Thus as his finding he identifies *FM* as a 'realistic piece' (p. 206). His argument is that this novel illustrates feudal Ethiopia both objectively and aesthetically. He excludes only Gudu Kassa as a romantic character for he thinks that he is idealized by the author. On the contrary, *KB* is attributed as an idealist novel. In discussing the novels the researcher takes the four characters *Fitawrari Mäshäsha*, *Säblä-Wängel*, *Gudu Kassa* and *Bazzabeh* from *FM*, and *Abärra*, *Hailäa-Mariam*, *Lulit* and *Gedlu* from *KB*. In this study following Fəkəre, the four characters of the *FM* are examined while from *KB* it is *Abärra* who is selected.

The other dissertation prepared by Fäkadä Azäzä (1988) attempts to examine the portrayal of the intellectual in Amharic novels written between 1930 and 1974 E.C. The *intellectual* of Fäkadä's study considered as equivalent to the individual. Thus the analysis also believed to reflect upon the individual's situation of existence. In most of the novels, according to his summary*, the portrayal of the intellectual who is determined to change the society starting "with a high social mission and ideas of moral and material

* His Summary has no page number.

progress" is ephemeral that lacks understanding of complexities of existing problems. His conclusion, in the summary, that states that "... the major preoccupation of the Ethiopian novel is the search for *models* of social change..." (Emphasis added) served in this study as a selecting criterion of the novels and the characters.

The third research is an MA thesis that is conducted by Tsägaye Hailu (1987). It attempts to show Haddis Alämayähu as a social critic, through discussion the author's novels and an interview made. Thus this thesis is believed to provide us with the concerns and situation of the author (these are used in the next chapter).

A researcher called Bəsratä-Gəbreal has made a research (senior essay) in examining the characterization of Abärra. Having dividing the study into different sections he attempts to show how Abärra is characterized: as a child, as a man on whom others impose their ideas, as a man who is foreign to his culture, and he as an atheist. This analysis is limited only to the realm of the fictional milieu only. And this is why it is believed by the researcher of our study that some of his ideas could not go out beyond what is stated in the novel to conclude about the character. One of the limitations could be the focus of the study itself and the other is lack of information of Bä'alu's being an admirer of Existentialists ((Molvear, 1997:350). Bəsratä-Gəbreal states: [አበራ] የቀን ተቀን የኑሮ መመሪያ የሌለው፣ አላማ ቢስ በመሆኑና በሌሌችም ምክንያቶች፣ በራሱ የማይተማመን ሁልጊዜ መሪ የሚፈልግ... ቅብጥብጥ በያዘው የማይረጋ ሰው ነው» (ገጽ፣ 49)::

[Abärra] is a man who has no daily program; who becomes unconfident because of his aimlessness and other reasons; who needs always a guide; restless [and] unsatisfied (p. 49)

The researcher takes Abärra's anxiety as lack of confidence which is a phenomenon of the Abärra before his imprisonment. After prison we see him changed, so it seems we cannot use his past as a working definition of him, *ie* for the Abärra that has changed. This is only his essence; if we use Sartre's notion it is only in his past. He has changed through time in his future. In addition, Bəsratä-Gəbreal's study does not consider the

kind of situation that led the character into such condition. He seems overlooked the fact that the restlessness and indecisiveness of Abärra happens due to his being deprived of an outlet to his talent; which is made buried inside him since childhood. He also seems unnoticed Abärra's wish to go out of the cyclic situation he has fallen, the thinghood—his enlightenment about himself as a "rotten thing".

Bəsratä-Gəbreal identifies Hailä-Mariam opposite to Abärra in all respect. He says:

«ሀይለማርያም በጣም ወሳኝ፣ ቆራጥ፣ በራሱ የሚተማመን፣ ለመሸጋገሩት ለመመራት የማይጠባበቅ [ጻይነት ሰው] ነው»።

Hailä-Mariam is [a kind of person] who is decisive, brave, confident, who is ready to lead not lead by (p. 22).

Even if we can agree with these attributions, we cannot take them as truism due to the same existential reason we have given above for Abärra. The researcher argues, Hailä-Mariam exhibits all these attributions because he was an atheist. Bəsratä-Gəbreal quotes the place where the character narrates about his miserable childhood. **«ያኔ ነው እግዚር ቢኖርም ባይኖርም በሰው ጣጣ እንደማይገባ ትንሿ ልቤ ያወቀኛው» (ገጽ፣ 49)።**

That is when my little heart realized that whether God exists or not, He does not intervene in the business of men (p. 49).

We can agree as it is possible for him independent and confident because he has faced hardships in his childhood (that led him to atheism). But we see him finally give up his hands for God; we see him become suddenly a believer. So there is a change in his characterization. In our study (next chapter) this is considered as a challenge of the author to the Existentialist philosopher Kierkegaard.

With this we can move to the other and the final local research. The only study that is found directly in relation to this study is Tewodros Gäbre's (1997 E.C.). He has studied

two of the novels, *FM* and *KB* as ‘novels of disillusionment’ from the point of view of the themes of Existentialism: death, disillusionment, despair and exile. These themes are suggested by John Maquire (1972). This study is different from Tewodros’s in two basic ways. First his study is limited to the themes that show disillusionment thus he does not address each novel in its own; he takes extracts from each of the four novels that he believes show the theme he is discussing (e.g. to substantiate the case of ‘exile’ he discusses extractions from the novels). Second, he does not apply one Existential philosopher’s outlook to study the novels. Thus his study is basically an attempt of networking the four novels he has chosen based on the themes to identify them as ‘novels of disillusionment’. In this study, nevertheless, each novel attempted to be examined in its own accord, to elucidate on the case of existence. In addition, one Existential philosophy is selected as a framework—Sartrean Existentialism.

The following chapter attempts to give the complete but compressed outline of Sartre’s philosophy of Existentialism.

CHAPTER THREE: Sartrean Existentialism as a Framework

Science insists in pretending that you know what you do not know, and philosophy in pretending that you do not know what you know.*

Paul Valéry

3.1. Sartre's Study of Being and Existence

One of the vigorous minds that moved the twentieth century Europe with philosophical outlook is Sartre's. This man is many in one; or to borrow his expression to his dualism, he is "infinite in the finite." He was a literary genius in genres of drama, short story and novel. He was a gifted essayist, professional philosopher, psychoanalyst and professor teacher at a university. He popularized modern Existential philosophy. As Simone de Beauvoir, his lifetime lover and companion in the development of the philosophy, witnessed, existentialism was in every body's lips. (Myerson, 2002:13).

Additional few statements are important regarding Sartre the man, as the philosophy itself necessarily takes the importance of the individual's subjective judgments about the world.

He never knew his father. As Alfred Stern (1967) quoted from his autobiography Sartre says "I left behind me a dead young man who had not had the time to be my father and who today, could be my son. Was it an evil or good? I do not know. But I willingly accept the verdict of a prominent psychoanalyst: I have no super-ego" (p. 6). This has an important symbolic feature in his philosophy that states that we are abandoned to be free; there is no God who can give us the absolute good and evil. God is a substitute for a father who abandoned his children. We shall see these a bit extended later.

* This is Paul Valéry's statement as paraphrased by Jacques SaVan (1967:18) in his book entitled *The Scandalous Ghost: Sartre's Existentialism as Related to Vitalism, Humanism, Mysticism, Marxism*. Detroit. Wayne State University Press.

The other very individualistic expression that serves in his philosophical outline, as Stern (1967) pointed out, is the case of café⁶. Actually Stern himself quotes Father Troisfontaines, “one of [Sartre’s] severest critics,” who calls Sartre “the Café Intellectual.” To illustrate his metaphysical concepts, such as *nothingness*, *bad faith*, *the look/gaze* (to which we shall come back to later) he uses the milieu of the café (“his bureau”) in which he used to write and discuss with others on existential problems. Such a tradition of using the café for developing ideas was there in Paris and Vienna for three hundreds years.

The other important aspect of his philosophy is what he calls *engagement/commitment* and showing practically what one believes theoretically. He was born of a bourgeois family but stood firmly on the side of the proletariat. This showed his “authenticity” in that he could break the pre-established system of bourgeois that he was naturally expected to act as *one* acts; just to play a *ready-made* or pre-established conduct that a bourgeois should exhibit. He deliberately and consciously had chosen his engagement or goal using his *freedom*, another pillar of his philosophy. In addition, he refused to accept Nobel Prize for literature in 1964, for it was a prize from a bourgeois society. These aspects are only few of his individual experiences that have reciprocal reflection with his philosophy. All his important novels, plays, short stories and essays are reflections of his philosophy, stand and criticism. The most important of all, in which he projects all his ideas extensively and which won for him the place of a philosopher, which is greatly influenced by Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, is *Being and Nothingness* (1943).

As stated in Stern (1967) there are two kinds of philosophies: *Theorogone* that is inspired by observation of the world and the desire to explain it; and *Pathogone* that is inspired by suffering as existent beings and desire to surpass it. Sartre’s philosophy is categorized under this second one (p. 47). Sartre begins his important treatise on *being* and *nothingness* by annihilating the traditional dualism of phenomena and noumena, exterior and interior, or body and mind. He declares:

There is no longer an exterior for the existent if one means by that a superficial covering which hides from sight the true nature of the object. And this true nature in turn, if it is to be the secret reality of the thing, which one can have a presentiment or of which one can suppose but can never reach because it is the “interior”; of the object under consideration—this nature no longer exists (Sartre, 1943:xliv).

The appearance that is formerly believed to represent the interior and exterior fused into one. There are appearances that designate other appearances and there should be no difference in giving privileges to some of them specifically. All appearances become equal in their status. Both being and essence are appearances; thus ‘... the being of an existent is exactly what it appears’ (p. xlvi). Since the ontological data and phenomenological data of the thing become one, he describes it as “phenomenological ontology” (Reinhardt, 1952:166). Similarly, there should not be potency that is devoid of action.

On the death of traditional dualism, however, there grew up another kind that Sartre calls the dualism of “the infinite in the finite.” The appearance is finite but its manifestations are infinite due to the subject (observant). The subject needs to transcend all the manifestations to grasp the appearance in its totality. For this reason, the appearance offers itself as a being to be transcended and reveals series of appearances (its member). Let’s take direct quotation from his treatise to grasp the argument better.

What appears in fact is only an *aspect* of the object, and the object is altogether in that aspect and altogether outside of it. It is altogether *within*, in that it manifests itself *in* that aspect; it shows itself as the structure of the appearance, which is at the same time the principle of the series. It is altogether outside, for the series itself will never appear nor can it appear. Thus the outside is opposed in a new way to the inside, and for being which-does-not-appear, to the appearance (Sartre, 1943:xlvii. Original emphasis).

What appears of an object is its aspect; and this aspect is outside of the object because the meaning depends on the subject that is seeing it. Again it is within the object because the

aspect is internal structure of the object that appears with that specific aspect. The structure is, therefore, the totality of the series of the appearances. But the structure, the principle, can never appear in its totality for the subject, who is outside; the subject can comprehend one of the aspects at a time. Thus the infinity arises as different subjects transcend different aspects of the object.

We can take the phenomenon of 'potency' as an example. To comprehend the totality of 'potency,' we need to consider its 'series of real or possible appearances.' Sartre exemplifies this with the case of Proust, the French writer: "The genius of Proust, even when reduced to the works produced, is no less equivalent to the infinity of possible points of views which one can take on that work and which we will call the inexhaustibility of Proust's work" (Sartre:1943:xlvi). The inexhaustibility, or we may say the infinite interpretation of the work, emanates from the structure of the very work itself plus the different subjects. Each subject (reader) may come with different views elucidating on different aspects of the work.

When we move to the main focus of the treatise we find the question of *being*. Heidegger denied his being an existentialist for the reason that his important philosophical work entitled *Being and Time*, basically 'hunts' the question of being itself rather than existence (Reinhardt, 1952:132). But other scholars see the reverse. His treatise dwells on the question of *existence* than *being*; Sartre, however, deals originally with the problems of both *existence* and *being* in his *Being and Nothingness*.

These two modern philosophers, unlike the classical ones, differentiate between the two terms. Stern gives the complete features of the two terms as follows:

Being is universal, abstract, timeless and unlimited by space. *Existence* is individual, concrete, limited to a definite, very short time and confined to a restricted spatial environment.

Being is "everywhere" and "always." *Existence* is always one's own—my own, your own.

Being is unaware of itself. Existence is self-conscious and understands itself.

Being is object, determined, and logically necessary; for whatever I think I have to think its being, at least as a possible thought. *Existence* is subjective, completely fortuitous, sheer fact, free, without any necessity.

Being is the synthesis and identity of the subject and the object; thus it represents fullness. *Existence* is the insurmountable separation of the subject from the object, the permanent non-coincidence and tension between subject and object; even when this object is the subject's own personality; *existence* is the unbridgeable abyss between knowing and being which Rationalism had in vain tried to bridge—with the words of Parmenide... thinking is the same as being. Existence is also the separation between the lack provoking the subject's wishes and the objective which would satisfy them. Thus *existence* is characterized by a "lack of being," a kind of emptiness (Stern, 1967:22-23. Original emphasis).

According to Sartre, there are two kinds of beings, *Being-in-itself* and *Being-for-itself*. They stand in simple terms to the world/nature and man, respectively. Sartre treats them pretending he doesn't know anything about them, to use Valéry's observation regarding philosophy, above. The In-itself is unconscious, inanimate and immutable; and that is an object for consciousness *ie* which waits to be known. In addition, to borrow Sartre's own expressions, it is a being that *Is*, "isolated in its being and that it does not enter into any connection with what is not itself"; "[It] can encompass no negation. It is full positivity. It knows no otherness; it never posits itself as *other-than-another-being*.... It is not subject to temporality" (Sartre, 1943:lxvi. Original emphasis). We can say a tree is a tree; it does not aspire to become another kind of being other than itself. It is complete by itself. It is contingent but not possibility. Meaning it has no choice. Thus the mode of temporality, past, present and future, have no impact on its beingness. The In-itself is a being that is simply 'is', 'in-itself' and 'is what it is'. Thus, as Brian Masters (1970) summarizes Sartre's notion, it includes our personal pasts (yesterdays) and history in addition to nature or the world.

We can say the features that Stern allotted to *being*, above, can be identified with the Being-in-itself. And the features of *existence* can be ascribed to Being-for-itself. This,

latter being, is synonymous with consciousness, 'human reality' or man. It perceives the chaotic or absurd nature of the In-itself. It is in a constant flux. In addition it can question the world and itself. Thus unlike the In-itself, the For-itself is full of negation and is incomplete. This being is unique in being able to ask questions. The answer for its question could be 'no', which is negation that arises based on nothingness or non-being. "For negation is a refusal of existence. By means of it a being (or a way of being) is posited, then thrown back to nothingness" (Sartre, 1943:11); or in other words, nothingness or "non-being appears within the limits of a human expectation.... The world does not disclose its non-beings to one who has not *first posited them* as possibilities" (p. 7. Emphasis added). To elucidate on this he provides his classical example. He says he has an appointment at a café with a friend named Pierre. Pierre is always punctual and Sartre arrives fifteen minutes late. "Will Pierre have waited for him?" is the question. Sartre looks for him and could not find him, thus Pierre is *not* in the café.

It is certain that the café by itself with its patrons, its tables, its booths, its mirrors, its light, its smoky atmosphere, and the sound of voices, rattling saucers, and footsteps which fill it—the café is a full of being.... We seem to have found fullness everywhere. But we must observe that in perception there is always the construction of a figure on a ground.... Each element of the setting, a person, a table, a chair, attempts to isolate itself, to lift itself upon the ground constituted by the other objects, only to fall back once more into the undifferentiation of this ground; it melts into the ground. For the ground is that which is seen only in addition, that which is the object of a purely marginal attention. Thus the original nihilation of all the figures which appear and are swallowed up in the total neutrality of a *ground* is the necessary condition for the appearance of the principle figure, which is here the person of Pierre (Sartre, 1943:9-10. Original emphasis)

The café, with all the beings it has, serves as a ground to foreground Pierre. All other people that attract Sartre's attention for seconds, whom he takes for Pierre, are also '*noughted*.' "Pierre [raises] himself as *nothingness* on the ground of the nihilation of the café" (p. 10. Emphasis added). In this case, therefore, both parties, the one who disappeared and the one who checked this, are consciousnesses or men. Thus, Sartre

argues, “man is the being through whom nothingness comes into the world” (p. 24). Unlike the In-itself, For-itself is a being that is subject for change or possibility. It is rather a being that makes itself. An author is not an author in the same sense that a tree is a tree. The author made herself that essence by choice. She can change her essence or becoming in the future. This is why Sartre (1943) says For-itself is “the being that is what it is not and is not what it is”—there is always unknown possibility for this being in the future; thus it is not yet what it is; and what it *is* is in the past thus it is no longer what it is.

Nothingness also reveals itself through absence, change, otherness, repulsion, regret, destruction, etc which Sartre calls *négativités* (Sartre, 1943:21). All these carry the concept of non-being in their bosom.

The *lack* or *desire* to be one with the In-itself also arises due to nothingness. Because of the awareness of the non-being, human reality is a *lack*, lack of the ideal ‘self’ that man is striving to attain. This self can be expressed as the *Being-in-itself-for-itself*; a synthesis of both beings or, in other words, God. “[Each] particular for-itself... lacks a certain particular and concrete reality, which if the for-itself were synthetically assimilated with it, would transform the for-itself into *itself*” (Sartre,1943:95. Original emphasis). This indicates, that though as human reality all is marching to the ideal self, each however attains it differently through choice which is limiting oneself to certain kinds of features that are factors of *finitude*, which is the kind of relationship that the For-itself has with the In-itself. It is finitude that makes individuals unique. Unfortunately, the ideal self is unattainable, for it is a contradiction. It is impossible for man to become In-itself still preserving its For-itselfness; they are mutually exclusive modes of being. Thus man is a suffering being (p. 92) and “a useless passion” (p. 615).

This does not however necessarily lead to despair. Sartre outlined the Existential Ethics through which he believes man can win the chaotic and absurd world in front of which

she is helpless through realizing the truth and living with it ethically. The next portion deals with his ethics.

3.2. Sartre's Existential Ethics

There is another hyphenated expression that puts For-itself under a condition. This condition or a limiting factor is Being-for-others of the Being-for-itself. Sartre discarded solipsism with an identification of the existence of the Other. Each consciousness has a body that appears as an object for the Other. The Other appears the existence of the For-itself through its *gaze/look*. Sartre (1943) says, “[In] order for me to be what I am, it suffices merely that the Other look at me” (Sartre, 1943:262). “Thus for me the Other is first the being for whom I am an object; that is, the being through whom I gain my objectiveness” (p. 270). Let’s create characters to clarify this idea. Let’s say there is a man called A. This person was looking through a hole of a door (this looking through the door is Sartre’s example). What she is looking at is an event she is not allowed to. While she is looking she is not positing herself as an object; she is not alienated from her acts, yet; she is her act. At that very moment the hole is playing the role of ‘instrument’ and an ‘obstacle’ at the same time. Suddenly she realized another person is looking at her. This makes her feel *ashamed*. This shame resulted from the *look* of the Other, who alienates her from her action. Her shame is a ‘confession.’ Thus at that moment she is transfixed, neither to the past nor to the future, but to the present. This makes her an In-itself.

For the For-itself despite the *gaze* of the Other, she should transcend it; make the Other an object through her *gaze*. Thus basically human relationship is conflictive. He says, hence, the Other is hell and a hidden death of the possibilities of the For-itself. Through the look the Other can retain the For-itself from doing what she wants. This relationship of man with the world (which is ‘*hodological*’, ie as an ‘instrument’ and ‘obstacle’) and the Other calls for the science of ethics.

Existential Ethics deals extensively and clearly in Sartre's (1945) speech entitled "Existentialism and Humanism" that was delivered to a mass to popularize Existentialism for "the word [was then] so loosely applied to so many things that it [was] no longer [meant] anything at all" (Sartre, 1945:25). The date Monday 29 October 1945 is thus marked in history as when a great wave of movement was created with this speech. The season is noted as "existential autumn".

He begins his speech by referring to the major accusations of others (communists, Marxists and Christians) on existentialism. The accusations were "existentialism is a philosophy of despair, quietism"; "it is a philosophy of bourgeois"; "it forgets brighter side of human nature"; and "it is a philosophy that denies the reality and seriousness of human affairs". He says in his defense,

Existentialism, in our sense of the word, is a doctrine that does render human life possible; a doctrine, also, which affirms that every truth and every action imply both an environment and a human subjectivity. The essential charge laid against us is, of course, that of over-emphasis upon the evil side of human life" (Sartre, 1945:24).

Existentialism as a philosophy of Here and Now claims: "existence precedes essence." This notion is what both Christian and atheist existentialists share. Traditionally, since for instance, Plato, it was believed that "essence precedes existence." Essentialists argue that before a thing appears as how it appears there was first its essence in the mind that conceived it. For instance, if we borrow Sartre's (1945) example, a paper-knife was there primarily as an idea, in the artisan's mind. This includes both the manner in which it should be produced and its definite purpose. Similar argument is ascribed to human existence. God conceived and created man with the analogy of the artisan, with definite purpose. "Thus each individual man is the realization of a certain conception which dwells in the divine understanding" (Sartre, 1945:27).

Thus for the essentialists there is "human nature" *ie* written by divinity. However, for the atheist existentialists "there is at least one being whose existence comes before its

essence, a being which exists before it can be defined by any conception of it” (Sartre, 1945:28). Thus the statement that states that “existence precedes essence” means,

that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him is not definable, it is because, to begin with, he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus, there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man simply is. Not that he is simply what he conceives, himself to be, but he is what he wills, and as he conceives himself after already existing—as he wills to be after that leap towards existence. Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself (Sartre, 1945:28).

Thus for human nature to exist for man, there need to be a room for a being who can see the totality from the outside; and atheist existentialists disclaim this very Being, thus there cannot be an objective human nature for all. Each should select, invent for her/his own value or good and evil. Existence precedes essence because it is consciousness that gives meaning to the chaotic world; each consciousness makes itself with conscious selection. But to exist as what one chooses, one needs to will and act it not only simply conceive it. This is the first principle what Existentialists call *subjectivity*.

Sartre (1945) states that “[the] word ‘subjectivism’ is to be understood in two senses.... Subjectivism means on the one hand, the freedom of the individual subject and, on the other, that man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity” (p. 29) Each individual bears the biggest responsibility of selecting herself. However, when she selects herself she is also selecting it for all mankind. This is what the second and the deepest meaning of subjectivism communicates:

For in effect, of all the actions a man may take in order to create [herself] as [she] wills to be, there is not one which is not creative, at the same time, of an image of man such as [she] believes [she] ought to be. To choose between this or that is at the same time to affirm the value of that which is chosen; for we are unable ever to choose the worse. What we choose is

always the better; and nothing can be better for us unless it is better for all (Sartre, 1945:29).

This subjectivism is one of the means to make our choice right. One should not invent values simply because one can, but because it would be 'good' for all to follow. This choice causes 'anguish.' It seems better to begin with the notion of 'abandonment' of Sartre to understand his idea of anguish.

As stated above, according to Sartre there is no God who can determine the good and evil. Thus, man is left by herself, 'abandoned', to decide to choose her own good and evil. There is no human nature, no absolute or *á priori* good and evil for all. This makes man free. Sartre says, "man is freedom;" "man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because [she] did not create [herself], yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment that [she] is *thrown* into this world [she] is responsible for everything [she] does" (Sartre, 1945:39. Emphasis added).

If there are no *á priori* values, each should invent same for itself; this indicates the existence of multiple possibilities for each case or issue that each individual faces. This multiplicity of possibilities and the very idea that each chooses, not just simply for her/himself, but for all humankind, causes anguish.

Choice is the same as 'action.' A choice that is divorced from action is nothing. However, being free to choose our values with company of action dose not mean that we are free to do whatever we like to do. As Masters summarizes Sartre's idea, there are three conditions in which our actions are immoral. The three conditions are addressed in question form to which Sartre responds in negative:

- A. Should we willfully commit acts which we know to be wrong which challenge the dictates of established morality?
- B. Should we commit suicide in order to express our freedom and as a means of awakening our fellow-men to the absurdity of their existence?

- C. Should we indulge in Gidean 'actes gratuits' in order to show that we are free to do whatever we like? (Masters, 1970:48).

Sartre accepts the notion of Heidegger that states that there are 'authentic' and 'unauthentic' existences. Authenticity lies in choosing with full consciousness and responsibility (whether we know the consequences completely or not). Thus acting according to the ready-made or pre-established system without questioning or consciously choosing it is 'unauthenticity.' However, this does not prescribe conscious rejection of a pre-established system for the sake of rejecting it, just to act its opposite, while one believes that what he chose against the previous system is wrong. This is immorality; because it is accepting the existence of *á priori* value to go against it for the sake of opposing it. One needs to go beyond all the possibilities and choose genuinely according to the situation one belongs. This is regarding the first immorality.

When we consider the second immorality *ie* suicide, it is a means of leap from the responsibility of choice. Man cannot and should not escape from choice thus through it anxiety; shunning anxiety is immorality. Death is becoming of a thing, Being-in-itself. As we have attempted to state above, the past is fixed thus belongs to the realm of the In-itself, which inhibits from indulging in further action, in the future. Thus, such a leap is immoral as it "adds to the chaos" absurdity of the world than facing and tackling it.

Acting 'gratuitously,' as Gidean suggests is also immoral. Gidean is an allusion to Andre Gide (1869-1951) "who developed the idea of a motiveless and irrational act (*l'acte gratuit*, a motiveless and irrational act which would be without purpose or profit, and would express personal liberty" (Masters, 1970:48). Masters (1970) gives reasons for the immorality of acting in Gidean manner as: "An act of this kind may be free, but it is irresponsible, and cannot, therefore, have any validity for Sartre. An *acte gratuit* contributes in no way to the definition or justification of a man it only indulges his whim" In addition, "such an act is a mere mockery of freedom, adding to the gratuity of existence instead of injecting some meaning of worth into it" (p. 53&54).

There is another important idea in Sartre's morality—*despair*. He argues that this word means that “we limit ourselves to a reliance upon that which is within our wills, or within the sum of the probabilities which renders our action feasible. Whenever one wills anything, there are always these elements of probability.... We should act without hope” (Sartre, 1945:39). He argues that this is not voting for pessimism, rather it is for optimism. We should not lean on others to act on our behalf or pray on illusion. Rather we should stand on our own feet and reveal our will with action. This saves man from living only by theory but action and saves her from becoming an object, “as a set of pre-determined reactions”.

In relation to choice and freedom, there is the idea of ‘situation’. Situation is a limitation. Our body, the country and family that we are born to, the historical milieu of our contemporary, etc are situations that may limit our choices. Situations, however, are neither exclusively objective nor subjective, rather they are both. “Objective because we meet with them everywhere and they are everywhere recognisable and subjective because they are *lived* and are nothing if man does not live them—if, that is to say, he does not freely determine himself and his existence in relation to them” (Sartre, 1945:46. Original emphasis).

There are four possibilities for the limitations: surpassing, widening, denying, or accommodating with them. Thus our individual choice with a purpose makes our choice universal in a sense that it works universally for others who are with the same situation we were when we decide, despite their race and whereabouts. Nevertheless, having commonalities does not mean that it is given, rather it is being “perpetually made.” (Sartre, 1945:47). It becomes universal for it is chosen individually in understanding the purpose of others.

This takes us to the other important notion of Existentialism called *commitment* or *engagement* or in other words realizing a type of humanism. This term, humanism, is one

of the reasons that makes his title of speech both odd and attractive. Sartre in his masterpiece novel *Nausea*, laughs, through his protagonist, at humanists who simply believe in greatness of humankind. Sartre argues, as stated above, man is contingent that has no special place in the world. Thus stating this term becomes at odds with his philosophy of existentialism. But what he understands by this term is different: “[Existentialism], in our sense of the word, is a doctrine that does render human life possible; a doctrine, also which affirms that every truth and every action imply both environment and a human subjectivity” (Sartre, 1945:24). This is humanity for Sartre.

Commitment we can say is that which makes human life possible. Masters (1970) summarizes Sartrean notion of commitment as follows:

Commitment demands that one should take action which involves the fate of men, and especially the fate of one’s contemporaries. The well-being of men living *now* should be the object of any act committed to the definition of justification of life on this earth. Action such as this involves sinking one’s own personality completely into the task of creating Man; it demands more of one than any existing code of honour or moral catechism could possibly demand” (p. 55. Original emphasis).

Sartre in his conclusion of his speech states that “what man needs is to find himself again and to understand that nothing can save him from himself, not even a valid proof of the existence of God” (Sartre, 1945:56). Commitment is thus inventing ones own values as if, one is choosing it for all of mankind; and it demands as necessary condition, action. Without action there is no commitment. And such action by choice is inescapable, to be an existent.

However, we can ask, do all people strive to invent their own good and evil? What must be the relationship between man with the Other, and man with the world? We find the answers in Sartre’s psychoanalysis, which is the focus of the following section.

3.3. Sartre's Existential Psychoanalysis

Sartre calls Freudian, Jungian, Adlerian, etc psychoanalysis *empirical* while he calls his own *existential*. He discusses the similarity between these two as follows:

Both kinds of psychoanalysis consider all objectively discernible manifestations of “psychic life” as symbols maintaining symbolic relations to the fundamental, total structures which constitute the individual person. Both consider that there are no primary givens such as hereditary, disposition, character, etc. Existential psychoanalysis recognizes nothing *before* the original upsurge of human freedom; empirical psychoanalysis holds that the original affectivity of the individual is virgin wax before its history. The libido is nothing besides its concrete fixation, save for a permanent possibility of fixing anything whatsoever upon anything whatsoever. Both consider the human being as a perpetual, searching, historization [“an active process to become involved as a concrete existent in an actual world so as to have an “history”] * Rather than uncovering static, constant given they discover the meaning, orientation, and adventure of this history. Due to this fact both consider man in the world and do not imagine that one can question the being of a man without taking into account all his *situation*... they utilize all the documentation which they can find; letters, witnesses, intimate diaries, “social information” of every kind.... (Sartre, 1943:569. Original emphasis).

However, there are three basic differences between the two kinds of psychoanalyses. First, ‘empirical psychoanalysis’ strives to free man from anxiety while ‘existential psychoanalysis’ offers anxiety, or teaches how to live with anxiety; that is why as Stern (1967) states, the latter cannot be therapeutic (p. 214). Secondly, the empirical psychoanalysis quests to determine ‘complexes’ to explain man while Existential Psychoanalysis seeks to determine the *original choice* (Sartre, 1943:570). And thirdly, the latter rejects the existence of the sub-conscious theory of the former; “bad-faith” substitutes it. There is nothing that man is unconscious about. A coward, the person who evades his freedom, is coward not because it is in her sub-conscious but because she

* This definition is taken from the “Key to Special Terminology” provided by H. Barnes, translator of *Being and Nothingness* (1943:631).

chooses it. If she does not want it she can transcend it. And if she does not know about it, it is because she suppressed it and lied to herself. This lie is what he calls *bad-faith*. Bad-faith is a human behavior through which man desires to shun anxiety that may result from the task of choice and through it freedom.

The original choice is the “fundamental project of human reality.” The lack and the making of oneself are in relation to this projection. Because of desire, man realizes her nothingness and to face it and to fill in this gap human reality strives through different channels to invent her own individual values. Deciding up on individual good and evil is *invention*. This desire, this fundamental project is to become one with the quality of for-itself; or as we have tried to state above, to become Being-in-itself-for-itself or God.

To attain being this being (though it is futile or impossible), realizing ones absolute freedom or being freedom itself is important. Fleeing from freedom thus is evading responsibility (to oneself as well as for all mankind). And this amounts to lying to oneself. One cannot and should not flee from freedom and choice in a situation. It is also pseudo-security and an escape to say “others will not follow me”. Sartre states that:

... existential psychoanalysis... is a method destined to bring to light, in a strictly objective form, the subjective choice by which each living person makes himself a person; that is, makes known to himself what he is.... It is then guided from the start toward a comprehension of being and must not assign itself any other goal than to discover being, and the mode of being of the being and the being confronting this being. It is forbidden to stop before attaining this goal (Sartre, 1943:574).

However, it seems clear that it is difficult to deal with the individual possibilities of appropriations of each person through which s/he is struggling to achieve the ideal self. Thus, Sartre suggests three categories of concrete human existence under which all kinds may fall—*to do*, *to have* and *to be*.

People desire *to do* and *to have* things and *to be* something or someone. If an author writes a book s/he is doing, if one buys a pen s/he wants to have it, if a person is trained as a police s/he wants to be one. These categories call upon the other desire of human reality other than to become God—Being-in-the-world.

These three categories the relationships that For-itself has with the In-itself. All finally reflect on the notion of possession, *mineness*. If an artist does a painting, it becomes her. She will have a special ownership over it. But at the same time it is not her in that it becomes independent of her as it shall appear for others as a message. But her special ownership is there. *Having* is directly owning the desired thing. In the previous example the *doing* becomes the *having*. But what is possessed is no more active, it is unchangeable thus it belongs to the realm of the In-itself.

Sartre gives two examples of *appropriation by creation: knowing* and *playing*. Knowing is first seeing; it is “to devour with the eyes” (Sartre, 1943:578). He calls it *Actaeon Complex*. Actaeon is a mythological figure who cleared branches of trees to see a bathing woman called Diana. Thus to know is to see the object necked. But this process does not bring significant change on the object known. It becomes the knower in the sense that transformed into her; it is assimilated; “it becomes [her] thought and thereby consenting to receive its existence from [her] alone (Sartre, 1943:579). The known does not change because it will remain the same after it has been seen. Thus it can be put with the analogies that Sartre used, of an ostrich that swallows a stone or Jonah in the stomach of the whale. Thus he calls it *Jonah Complex*.

This has an extended symbolic relationship with the lover’s dream that is “to identify the beloved object with [herself] and still preserve for it its own individuality; let the Other become [hers] without ceasing to be the Other” (Sartre, 1946:579). Thus the desire to know, like the scientist, is where *to be* is reduced into *to have*.

To *play* is also a reduction of *to be* into *to have*. A sportive activity for example of running is to have the object that we are playing on. For instance, when Abäbä Bäkila was running at the Olympics the ground under his bare feet and the grass blades were helping him to run forward. They had special relationship with him. Every time he raises his foot, the grasses that received the print of his foot become forgotten, remain behind after serving him. So, it can be said that he owned the ground, the place; the stadium at that moment.

But such having is different from possession. Sartre distinct between them as follows:

To possess is to be united with the object possessed in the form of appropriation; to wish to possess is to wish to be united to an object in this relation. Thus the desire of a particular object is not the simple desire of this object; it is the desire to be united with the object in an *internal* relation in the mode of constituting with it the unity 'possessor-possessed.' The desire to have is at bottom reducible to the desire to be related to a certain object in a certain relation of being" (Sartre, 1943:588-89).

To Possess is to have plus to become what is possessed. Money has magical powers that render such capacity. Money represents strength. The object a person could buy with her/his money reflects back her/himself; the magical bond would be created between the owner and the object; the object becomes part of the owner's body, *ie* as if it is an extended additional part that the owner can control.

Possession suggests the right to enjoy and utilize the object possessed. However, it also includes the right to destruct it. "To destroy is to reabsorb into [oneself]; it is to enter along with the being-in-itself of the destroyed object into a relation as profound as that of creation" (Sartre, 1943:593). Creation here indicates possession. When one possesses an object, s/he is creating a value. Through possession there is no positive enjoyment outside the symbolic value of the object that it represents. The meaning is its symbolism. The object is however there for all; it is *penetratable*.

In the case of *appropriation by destruction*, however, the object is there no longer. It becomes the destroyer; *ie* its meaning with the owner is recreated or altered. Destroying an object means to “recreate [the object] by recreating [oneself]; thus to destroy is to recreate by *assuming* oneself as solely responsible for the being of what existed for all” (Sartre, 1943:593. Original emphasis). It can be done completely or partially; partially in the case of consuming or “wearing it out.” “To consume is to annihilate and it is to eat; it is to destroy by incorporating into oneself” (p. 593). Hence, since the meaning of the object altered by the destroyer person it ceases to be penetrable (that is being possessed), in its original form.

With relation to man and the world we cannot ignore Sartre’s notion of *quality* of objects and *food*. According to Sartre (1943) psychic meaning of things is not in men but in the things themselves; “[Feelings] and acts are all charged with something material, have a substantial stuff, are *really* soft, dull, slimy, low, elevated, etc. and in which material substances have originally a psychic meaning which renders them repugnant, horrifying, alluring, etc” (p. 605. Original emphasis). But this is not enough. There is also an appropriation of relationship between the two beings. For instance, sliminess (liquidity plus stickiness) could be horrible (for Sartre), as the relationship between the In-itself and For-itself is that of *possession*. The For-itself appropriates this: “slime is the revenge of the In-itself. A sickly-sweet, feminine revenge which will be symbolized on another level by the quality ‘sugary’” (p. 609). Thus tasting slimy things, like honey is to risk to being sucked, becoming slime, dissolving in, losing concreteness and being possessed by the In-itself.

Sartre identifies *eating* as an appropriation of destruction and a means to fill the self with ‘a certain being’.

Taste is assimilation; by the very act of biting the tooth reveals the density of a body which it is transforming into gastric contents. Thus the synthetic intuition of food is in itself an assimilative destruction. *It reveals to me*

the being which I am going to make my flesh. Henceforth, what I accept or what I reject with disgust is the very being of that existent, or if you prefer, the totality of the food proposes to me a certain mode of being of the being which I accept or refuse” (pp. 614-15. Emphasis added).

These appropriations are the means through which the Being-for-itself attempts to get its being and attain the ideal (the impossible) For-itself-in-itself. The other way to appropriate an object through destruction can be accomplished by *generosity*. “Generosity ... is to give... [that is] to appropriate by destruction while utilizing this destruction to enslave another” (Sartre, 1943:594) . Thus it is a relationship of the For-itself with the Other. To give away is destruction in a sense that the owner does not need the object no more; the enjoyment which is “almost sexual” results from this giving away. Nevertheless, it requires the recipient “to recreate, to maintain in being by a continuous creation this bit of myself which I no longer want, which I have just possessed up to its annihilation and which finally remains only as an image” (Sartre, 1943:594). Thus, destruction calls upon nothingness through making the object, which used to be the owner herself, invisible, non-being.

The other aspects of existential psychoanalysis in relation to the Other are love, sex and death. Human relationship is basically conflictive according to Sartre (1943). The Other appears for the For-itself first as a subject that she takes as an object through her gaze. The gaze of the other alienates the For-itself from its freedom as it is a limiting factor (the gaze can make the For-itself to feel ashamed, blush, etc). But to reconstitute its freedom, the For-itself looks the look of the Other. With this s/he can transcend the Other and reduces her/him into an object. “The meaning of the conflict thus sought would be to bring out into the open struggle of two freedoms confronted as freedoms” (p. 379).

When one of them freely chooses to be an object for the Other the relationship can be considered as love. “Love is a desire to be loved.” However, it is a project to capture the other’s consciousness, “it is the Other’s freedom as such that we want to get hold” (Sartre, 1943:367). “The upsurge of the beloved must be the beloved’s free choice of the

lover... as his unique and absolute end....” (p. 370). Not simple picking up from the collection of others but as made especially for him. This makes love a failure, because the Other also moves with the same intention which results in, inevitably, the conflict. However, love is inevitable and inescapable as long as there is the Other. “As long as ‘there is’ the body and as long as ‘there is’ an *Other*, we react by desire, by Love...” (Sartre, 1943:406). In addition, man as a Being-for-itself is sexual towards the Other. Therefore, Sartre says man is the being through whom sexuality comes into the world. This does not imply, nevertheless, that all attitudes of the For-itself towards the Other is sexual; rather love and sexuality are given emphasis in the scheme of the relationship between For-itself and the Other, because these two desires are fundamental and other complex relationships between humans can be explained better through them.

There is another way that the For-itself presents herself to the other—masochism. This is fascinating the self (not the Other) through becoming an *object-for-the-other*. But it is also a failure because it is still the subject who tries to use the Other as an object who tries to love her back (p. 378-79).

Sexual desire is an “original attempt to get hold of the Other’s free subjectivity through his objectivity-for-[oneself]...” (p. 382). It is a striving to possess the incarnated self in his body. Thus, it is failure because it kills the desire for pleasure, which was the primary preference. For when the desire ends, the pleasure will go too.

In addition, each partner listens to its own body forgetting the Other; which contradicts the basic desire to possess the other in body and self (pp. 396-97). Sadism is identified as a strategy of failure for it tries to “incarnate the Other through violence” (p. 399). It succeeds in grasping merely the flesh not the consciousness; however, the latter is the primary goal in the original design. Indifference is also the other failure. When one is indifferent for the Other instead of looking back to the gaze of the other s/he is possessed by the looker, become an object.

But should we turn to hatred then? No. Even if we could kill the person whom we hate (to let him fall into the state of *thinghood* as an In-itself), we cannot kill all other people, who still give us who we are through their gaze. In addition, when we let the other die, s/he has the meaning of what we are with her/him perpetually; for s/he is going to unite the realm of the past, which we cannot alter. Thus hatred is also a failure (Stern, 1967:155-57).

With this we can address death. Death is “a boundary” (Sartre, 1943:531). Through death man ceases to act and change from the outside. Everything that is done becomes past, thus stagnant, immobile. This makes the dead to be left at the mercy of the living. The living are the ones who can let the dead to continue to be. If they forget them, they will die a second death.

Thus, the very existence of death alienates us wholly in our own life to the advantage of the Other. “To be dead is to be a prey for the living” (Sartre, 1943:543).

In the preceding sections an attempt is made only to give the highlights of Sartre’s existential philosophy. However, it will be doing injustice if we ignore his theory of literature, which is thoroughly influenced by his view of Existentialism. The major concern in this study being an attempt at analyzing the fictional texts, in the light of such a theory, now we will turn to his literary theory; and hence the following section.

3.4. Sartre’s Literary Theory

According to Sartre life is *de trop* and full of *nausea*. These are the other tools that require brief discussion. He addressed these terms in an extended manner in his masterpiece novel entitled *Nausea*. In this novel the ‘I’ narrator (he writes diary) Roquentin says, “... each one, confused, vaguely alarmed, felt *de trop* in relation to the others. *De trop*: it was the only relationship these gates, these stones. In vain I tried to

count the chestnut trees, to locate them by their relationship to the Velleda....”^{*} *De trop* communicates the ‘contingent’, ‘gratuitous’, and ‘unjustifiability’ of life. It explains the absurd state of the world without meaning and reason. The ‘test’ of relationship between man and the world is thus *nausea*. Sartre argues it is metaphysical; therefore Stern (1967:42) calls it a “metaphysical sickness” of the Existentialists when they fail to find a meaningful rational world. The world causes repulsiveness (the vomit, the sense of floating, excrement, etc). It is possible to overcome nausea, which means “freeing oneself from the oppression of the absurd” (Stern, 1967:49). One of the means is art. Through art the existent imagines discovering a realm that is beyond existence. Literature is one of the branches of art through which man gets free of *nausea*.

1947 was the year in which Sartre’s literary theory appeared in a book form (first it was written in a manner of article) entitled *What is Literature*. It raises three questions as its pillars on which his theory rests. He asks, "What is writing?", "Why write?", and "For whom does one write?"

Under "What is writing?" he exclusively nominates the art of writing, especially prose, as a means in which the writer could really show her engagement. Other arts such as, painting, music, sculpture, and poetry are not "engaged" in the same sense as that of prose, which is almost synonymous with speaking. He argues "... it is one thing to work with color and sound another to express oneself by means of words. Notes, colors, and forms are not signs. They refer to nothing exterior to themselves" (Sartre, 1947:2).

The colors in a painting appear just representing the object they qualify; they do not go beyond it to signify another meaning other than themselves. He gives an example of a painting made by Tintoretto, entitled *Golgotha*. The painter uses "yellow rift in the sky." This according to Sartre is neither signification of anguish nor an intention of provoking it; rather "[it] is anguish and yellow sky at the same time. Not sky of anguish or

^{*} This is a translation of Hazel Barnes in his introduction to the English version of *Being and Nothingness*:xvi).

anguished sky; it is an anguish become thing, an anguish which has turned into yellow rift of sky." (Sartre, 1947:3). Thus, the artist is not a creator; rather she makes an image of an object, not its sign. Similar argument is applied in the case of music. "A cry of grief is a sign of the grief which provokes it; but a song of grief is both grief itself and something other than grief" (Sartre, 1947:4). The 'something other than itself' probably refers to the notes and vocal of the song.

In writing, the writer has the room to explain the injustice she sees, to involve emotionally, and in addition to guide the reader. In the others, however, the spectator or the listener is left by itself to interpret the painting or the music as s/he feels.

Sartre differentiates between prose and poetry in two ways. The first one bases itself on handling of language. Poets "refuse to *utilize* language" while the prose writer utilizes it; utilization in the sense that the language that the poets use does not indicate necessarily a thing that is there in the world; such as "horses of butter." The two headwords may signify something in the world separately but together become only "monstrous couples." Therefore, words are to be considered as things not signs. They are devoid of their element of instrumentality in relation to the real world. He states that the ambiguity of sign as that "which implies that one can penetrate it at will like a pane of glass and pursue the thing signified, or turn his gaze toward its *reality* and consider it as an object (Sartre, 1947:6-7. Original emphasis). For the writer or speaker the language is used in its conventionality.

The second difference lies on the position that the poet and the prose writer/speaker hold in applying the language. "For the poet, language is a structure of the external world. The speaker is in a *situation* in language; he is invested with words" (p. 7. Original emphasis). The speaker considers the words as if they are her/his part of body that s/he can control; they are at their service they have become her/him. In the case of a poet, however, language is a phenomenon of the outside that is not in command of the poem.

The poet creates, with the words, images of the objects that are different from their conventional name; but the prose writer names as a sign. S/he names, "what has not yet been named or what does not tell its name" (p.18).

However, this does not imply that there are no poets who raise serious issues of their time; there are; but when they raise them, the "words take hold of them" (p. 13). In the case of prose, the writer "designates, demonstrates, orders, refuses, interprets, begs, insults, persuades, insinuates." (p. 14). S/he achieves these through disclosing the thing. After the disclosure is made, it is impossible to ignore it, as it demands action—action for change. The writer says the thing and s/he should say in a certain manner. The manner or style has a value in relation to its content; but "it should pass unnoticed... [for] beauty is in this case only a gentle and imperceptible force..." (p. 19). In relation to the beauty of writing, he sarcastically discusses the case of his contemporary critics. Instead of looking into the works of writers who are alive, they take works of the dead. However since such a work is "[written] by a dead man about dead things, it no longer has any place on this earth; it speaks of nothing which interests us directly. Left to itself, it falls back and collapses; there remain only ink spots on musty papers" (p. 23). Since it is no longer functional, in moving others and causes to act "[it becomes] less and less affecting and more and more beautiful" (p. 23). That is why the style should be unfocused, if not overlooked to let the work act.

The next question that Sartre (1947) pauses is "Why writing?" He argues human reality or consciousness serves as making a synthesis of this world to understand it and give meaning to. As it has been attempted to reverberate him, above, consciousness is the element that wakes the world that would otherwise be asleep in the darkness. Consequently, the writer writes to make connections between things for some action, either to preserve it or change it. Nevertheless, the action should be shared and performed by somebody else other than the writer. Thus, the reader has a great role in relation to what is written. The reader makes sense out of the "black marks of the white

paper." Reading is a process of "foreseeing", or "waiting".

The reading is composed of a host of hypotheses, of dreams followed by awakenings, of hopes and deceptions. Readers are always ahead of the sentence they are reading in a merely probable future which partly collapses and partly comes together in proportion as they progress, which withdraws from one page to the next and forms the moving horizon of the literary object. Without waiting, without a future, without ignorance, there is no objectivity" (Sartre,1947:35).

Thus the writer writes not for herself but for the reader, the Other; for "there is no art for and by others" (p.27). The writer, therefore, cannot be identified as a reader even if s/he reads what s/he has produced. S/he can only project; because, reading is a "synthesis of perception and creation" (p. 37)⁷. Her/his reading is simply a gaze to control the structure.

Reading also requires both the object (the work) and the subject (the reader). Since writing is guiding the reader, the work gives the structure to be transcended by the subject who discloses it. This is why reading is recreation. The reader is not passive observant, rather s/he participates in the creation of the work and shares responsibilities with the writer. Thus, writing-reading continuum is a conjoint of two freedoms. The writer "appeals" for the reader to take part in the action, recognizing its freedom. If the reader opens the book to read it, while s/he could leave it unopened, s/he takes a responsibility for all mankind. The writer should inscribe, without overwhelming, what should be done; s/he should not stop only disclosing her/his emotions. Then the reader generously participates in the action.

The last question, "For whom does one write?" can be answered briefly as 'to her contemporaries.'" Sartre (1947) makes a very detailed analysis and discussion of the historical background of European writer-reader relationship. This has no much significance for our current purpose at hand. However, it can be briefly stated as such: in the course of history of literature or writing in general, it has taken so long evolution for

the writer and his right public, to whom his writing perfectly belongs, to find each other. In some periods, the writer was used as an instrument to popularize ideologies of religion or politics. In some others to survive, he has served the government officials; in others he was obliged to stand against the public. Writings that are filled with praises of the nobilities of the government in flattery were just *bad-novels*. And novels that show concretely the situation of their time were *good* ones. Hence, there are these two kinds of works. For the reader to act, the work should dwell on the common period that both parties are sharing. Otherwise "the *context* would be lacking, that is, memories and perceptions in common, the situation and the enterprises of the couple; in short the world such as each of the speakers knows it to appear or to the other" (Sartre, 1947:62. Original emphasis). He calls the contemporary public to the writer "the concrete universe". This is an opposite to the "virtual universe, virtual reader" of the future and others outside the situation.

Now, it seems, we have collected most of the important tools of Existentialism of Sartre that has strong correlation to modern literature. We can now move to the very concern of this study—the case of existence as illustrated in *Fəkar eske Məkabər, Kə'admas Bashager* and *Gəracha Qachəloch*.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Case of Existence in the Three Selected Amharic Novels

4.1. The 1960s and 1970s in Ethiopia: A Brief Survey of the Socio-Political Situations

As has been pointed out in the preceding chapter in connection with Sartre's view, the notion of situation has an important role to play in relation to the freedom of the existent. The world, which is objectively outside the individual, has definite parts to play in the semblance of the role of obstacle, resistance or help. The free project that the individual selects determines which of these roles the In-itself should appear. If we borrow Stern's (1967:145) example, a big mountain can be both resistance or help according to the free project of the agent's choice. If he wants to build a railroad, it gives him a great trouble, as he should dig it to make a tunnel; if, on the other hand, his free choice is to admire or see the landscape, it becomes help.

The 'finitude' or 'situation' is the condition of freedom; it is an encounter of man the external world that he has not created.

The writer similarly says 'yes' or 'no' to the situation s/he is 'caste' into. The approval or disapproval, which is her free project encounters with the world, which thus becomes resistance or help. The writer, as it has been said, uses language as a sign and plays a role of revealing. Whatever she writes is an action, an action of designation, demonstration, order, refusal, interpolation, begging, insult, persuasion or insinuation. Thus, what she writes appeals for a change. When the writer, as an engaged writer, projects herself she is considering herself as an important person in revealing the situation in which she is.

Having this in mind, it is important to have a look at the situation in which the writers of the selected three novels lived and acted. Attempt is, therefore, made here to provide a

brief survey of the socio-political situations of the 1960s and 1970s of Ethiopia, the periods in which the selected novels are set.

We can divide the periods into three according to indirect suggestions by Markakis and Näga (1986)—feudal, capitalist and imperial, and socialist.

There were four levels of social hierarchy in feudal Ethiopia, namely high, middle, low and lowest. In this era, the church had a lion's share to play in establishing firmly the notion of fate. "Fate dictates a man's position, and its edict is *unchallengeable* and *unchangeable*" (Markakis and Näga, 1986:15. Emphasis added).

Each individual was supposed to be identified in one of the levels and was considered as fitting into it 'naturally'. The church was in support of social inequality as it benefited from the then prevailing land administration system. The church was *gultegna*, for it was given land as an endowment.

Gult was one of the privileges that were allowed for the ecclesiastical members. This system, which was similar to the fief of the medieval period, gives authority to the holder of land to cultivate and use the output. The other groups who enjoyed similar privilege were the members of the aristocracy.

The mass comprises the peasantry who were generally believed to have been created to serve their masters, the aristocrats. Thus, they were entangled in multifaceted sufferings. They were supposed to pay taxes levied on them, in grain cattle or any other form. The soldiers of the monarch had also the green card to feast on whatever they could lay their hands on, usually pillaging and looting. The peasantry were also forced to give gifts to the landlords for the usually pompous feasts (*gabər*) the latter would throw.

The feudal system that was inherited from the nineteenth century infiltrated also in the twentieth century hand in hand with capitalism. At this period, the great expansion of the state towards southern region awakened the need for a centralized government, which as a result “elevated the throne from its traditional position of limited suzerainty to the pinnacle of monarchical absolutism” (Markakis and Näga, 1986:30). This was the first and ‘endogenous’ force that contributed to the centralization. The second that contributed for the strength of centralization of the monarch, was what Markakis and Näga (1986) call ‘exogenous force’, which was the intervention of the capitalist Western world, after the expulsion of the Fascist Italia by 1941. Parallel to centralization there was the need for modernization.

After the Second World War capitalism set its foot in the country with the realization of irrigation which assisted the pastoral land and search for wealth (mineral) in the lowlands, which caused some clashes between the lowlanders and the authority.

The *Gult* system of Feudalism could survive until 1966. In 1966 a reformation was made, exempting the church, so that this system ceases to function. This is because,

timing proved a crucial element affecting that position. The information of the capitalist mode of production in agriculture had a highly pernicious impact on the position of landlording by exposing its parasitic nature and condemning it as a fetter on production force in the rural sector (Markakis and Näga, 1986:69).

Then an investment code was approved and bourgeois capitalism took its place. In 1967, 75 per cent of the investment was held by foreigners (Markakis and Näga, 1986:49).

During the 1960s and 1970s the country exhibited large number of unemployment of labor (which was unskilled and had rural origin) and inflation. At that period, to suppress wage increment labor organizations were discouraged. On the other hand, “until the mid-1960s, educated Ethiopians enjoyed unrestricted access to public employment and in

many respects preferential treatment and privilege. This class was totally unaffected by competition for social status and economic advantage” (Markakis and Näga, 1986:49). The government sector was open for both graduates of tertiary and secondary levels (the military, police and teaching professions were reserved for secondary school graduates). The decline in employment arrived for the graduates due to the competition that resulted in turn from the increasing number of the educated.

Generally speaking, the 1960s and 1970s were the two decades in which many strikes by the proletariat, military and student were exhibited. The two serious strides were the attempted coup d'état of 1960 and the student demonstration of 1965 “under the slogan ‘Land to the Tiller’” (Fäkadä, 1988:35). These two historical events showed that the throne was at least challengeable and finally give birth to the revolution of 1974.

In 1973 the country was hit by a great famine. At this time, 80 per cent of the crop and 90 per cent of the domestic animal had been devastated. Petroleum increased in price. These led teachers and taxi drivers to the strikes which students, parents and the unemployed youth joined. Despite the promise to increase the wage of the teachers and reduction of the price of petroleum, the strikes continued. In both rural and urban areas, there was unsettlement. Illegal publications (that eluded the control of censorship) of either typed or handwritten leaflets or pamphlets served in inflaming the political consciousness of the mass (Markakis and Näga, 1986:85-86).

This brought the revolution of 1974 that marked an end to the throne. Then “Socialist Ethiopia” came into the picture. At this time the youth, students of both tertiary and secondary levels, were enthusiastically involved in teaching the nomads the art of plowing, irrigation and teaching the shepherd how to read, organization of peasant associations, opening clinics and other projects (Markakis and Näga, 1986:11). Peasants, students and teachers were gripped with a new vista for the country. Markakis expresses

the situation in his introduction to the second edition to *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia* (1986) as follows:

Gaunt bearded figures and pigtailed girls in khaki uniforms, most of them in their teens, talked of the day's events, exchanged impression gave voice to their misgivings. Their relationship with the peasants was their main concern. How could the gap be bridged? How could they identify with the peasant and his problem? How could they help him assert himself in a world which lay beyond his understanding?" (p. 12).

However, the enthusiasm eaten up and the country failed back to bleakness due to the civil war among the then central military government and other parties.

This very modest and brief introduction is believed to give the background or rather the situation that the three novelists were in when they wrote their novels. In the following subsections attempts are made to look into the situations of the authors and their characters generally, the condition of existence in the periods in which the novels in question are set.

4.2. The Case of Existence in the Novels

4.2.1. *Fəqər eske Mäqabər (FM)*

What makes a hero? To go to meet simultaneously one's greatest sorrows and one's greatest hope.

Nietzsche

1966 is special year for many literary scholars for it was the birth of *Fəqər eske Mäqabər (FM)* after gestation for almost twenty years (Molvear, 1997:146). For Fəqəre Tolossa (1983), for instance, it is the first realistic novel that the country has produced. It is important year for Fäkadä Azäzä (1988) as the novel “marked the beginning of a new trend in Ethiopian novel writing” (p. 48). He claims it is the first novel that deals with the socio-economic milieu of the countryside of its setting with clear and neat expression of the characters of peasants, landlords and the clergy (which seems to confirm what Fəqəre claims, *ie* the text as a realistic novel). Fäkadä adds to this, the novel has also the quality of ‘lucid’ and ‘beautiful language’ in describing the beauty of nature.

Here is what Tsägaye (1987) says in his study that seems to give us the summarized individual situation of Haddis Alämayehu:

This system [feudalism] which was stagnant and dull, deprived the masses of a meaningful life on earth and forced them (with the help of the church) only to long for a better life after death. Coupled with this, the low economic level resulted in a very low culture. The culture of the Ethiopian feudal society was over-burdened by superstition and awkward religious beliefs determinates to material as well as spiritual growth of the people at large. Haddis [Alämayähu] is a product of that society, in as much as he was born and brought up in it (p. 6).

[The] wide sea—the socio-political milieu of his time—that engaged him and which he tried to survive to the best of his ability without sinking was the raw material for his works (p. 11. Emphasis added).

From this (especially from the italicized statement) it seems possible to state that Haddis is an engaged writer with the eye of Sartrean Existentialism. As a writer, he considered himself important in revealing his time, *ie* he solicits to change the political situation using language as a sign that refers to the existing world of his time. He was one of the intellectuals, we may say, who unlike others, overcame the seduction of the high post (though he served his nation in different high governmental posts), that silenced and lured many others to the pitfall of comfort zone that blinded them from seeing the misery of the mass.

We can hammer also another nail to strengthen the argument that Haddis is an engaged writer. For the question to whom he addresses his workers and why, he replied:

To the members of the Ethiopian society belonging to the upper and lower classes: *so that those found in the lower class know their rights and struggle to be owners of their right* [and] those in the upper classes if having reconsidered the right of the lower classes make peaceful reconciliation before it is too late [which is what had happened exactly], to make them understand that they will plunge into grave problems. I write to both sides” (Fäkadä, 1988:229. Emphasis added).

‘Moderation’, as Fäkadä observed in his study could be the important point that the author wants to suggest through his statement; however, beyond this, it seems there is an additional issue that the author is engaged in revealing. If he claims that the peasant has the right, which should be recognized by both the peasantry and the aristocracy, there is an appeal for an action in disclosing it. It is an action in its own that tries to deconstruct the strong building that both the state and church had been building since centuries ago in blinding the mass and making him to be submissive and accept it as his ‘natural’ place to be under the feet of the aristocrats.

The clause from the above quoted reply of Haddis “... *so that the lower class know their rights and struggle to be owners of their right...*”, carries with it the need to attaining “freedom”. The quest for freedom, however, is not limited only to the peasantry; it also

refers to other members of the society. *FM* thus seems to deal with the theme of ‘freedom’. The major characters Bāzzabəh, Säblä-Wängel and Gudu Kassa are struggling (though the latter two are not from the lower class) to free themselves from the strong grip of the custom that imprisoned them in different ways. As Fäkadä (1988) observes, despite their difference in their church education, these three rebel both as individuals and as a group (p. 220). Gudu Kassa calls the custom a prison and themselves as slaves of this prison.

Thus it is appropriate to look at these and other prominent characters in the novel to examine the major features of existence.

Which of them are/is really free?

The two reasons for man to search her freedom are: being existence precedes essence and the realization of nothingness (Stern, 1967:65). In the first case, since there is no given absolute value before existence it is man who should determine what is what as either good or evil, thus she is free to decide which is which. In the second case, to survive nothingness man has to make herself into something through ‘engagement’ or ‘commitment’.

In the novel under scrutiny, to build on the case of freedom—the most essential notion of existentialism—it is important to relate the individual characters with the concepts of the three kinds of beings that Sartre identified as Being-in-itself, Being-for-itself, and Being-for-others. The four prominent characters are chosen for this end—*Fitawrari* Mäshäsha, Säblä, Gudu Kassa and Bāzzabəh.

All these belong to the realm of In-itself through death. It is possible to say that *FM* is one of the literary works in which almost all its stars get dim. What we read is the past of the characters; even in their case it is the past of past. Under normal condition, we can

say, the future of the characters is as long as the story is concluded; after that, it recedes to the past. In the case of *FM* since all the four characters are dead it makes them the past of the past. This is the condition under which we will attempt to see their existence.

The husband and wife aristocrats, *Fitawrari Mäshäsha* and *W/ro Ṭiru* have great contempt for the peasant and for the noblemen who they say have ‘bought’ nobility through bribery. They have great vanity about their progeny. They say they are descendants of the great Emperors and Empresses. The peasants for them are not human beings. Nor are the nobility who do not descend from “truly noble” grandfathers. This scorn for the ‘lower’ class causes, their daughter, *Säblä* to come of age long before she is ever married. *Fitawrari Mäshäsha* says: “Our daughter has the blood of many kings passing through her veins. Our realm was taken from us and sold to farmers and merchants or cotton and leather” (Haddis, 1966:66)*.

Gudu Kassa criticizes him saying:

you are not giving rest to Emperor [Zära] Yaqob and Emperor [Lebnä] Denge, who died four or five hundred years ago. Even if their bones have changed into soil and the soil into rock, you act as if they are still alive and as if they directly fathered you. You act by calling them your fathers.... *You are like a man living with them in their world*” (p. 146. Emphasis added).

In his present, the *Fitawrari* lives in his past. Everything he admires as custom and belief is part of his past. He believes and lives with the standards of the nobility of the past. For him, having houses at different places with concubines is the deed of a noble blood. He has already become dead, still or ‘stinker’, as Sartre may call this kind of person, even before his actual death. He is in the world of the In-itself. Thus, his belief in the ready-made values makes him identified with a person in bad-faith.

* All the extractions are taken from Sisay Ayänäw’s (2005) translation of the novel as *Love Unto Crypt*.

This is not the only instance that indicates his being in bad-faith, but also his pride in his past heroic deeds. The narrator comments: “Whenever he heard his heroic deed from twenty to twenty five years ago recounted as if he did it yesterday or today....Most of the time he would forget that he was an old person, older than seventy years of age” (p. 173). He is divorced from his present state instead of wedded to it, which has always infinite possibilities to be a hero, and lives in his past glory, which has already become his crystallized essence on which he can add nothing. He does whatever he wants to the peasants not out of necessity but because he has all the power to do so. This act without sufficient reason can be identified as *act gratuity*, which is for Sartre immoral.

He does not understand that his past is separated with nothingness, the insatiable big gap, with his present. He is a coward who dies being coward. A coward for Sartre is a person who is shunning his freedom; a person who knows that he is a coward but who does nothing to surpass it. The coward has all his chances to be a hero in his future, through choosing freely. *Fitawrari* Mäshäsha forgets all about the future and shuns anxiety as a Being-for-itself.

Amazingly, not only himself but he also identifies others as Beings-in-itself as if they are unchangeable and crystallized. For instance, he never guessed Säblä would love *Ayya* Kassa more than him; he believes she loves him the way she did when she was a kid. And *Bäzzabəh* to him remains as meek and silent in front of others, ‘who knows his limits’, no matter how much he is acquainted with people. *Fitawrari* believes the peasant is created to serve ‘the aristocrats’ and that the heroism of the peasant cannot exceed that of the aristocrats, which is however proved wrong through *Abäjä Bäläw*’s masterful scheme to capture him.

But what is his possible reason to act this way? There seems to be at least one possible reason behind it and that may surface itself through the concepts of ‘free projection’ and ‘possession’ of *Fitawrari* Mäshäsha as a Being-for-itself.

Let's see his possession of In-itself through 'to have' and 'to be'. He possesses houses at many places (with concubines), slaves, peasants, his family (we regard them as if they are objects for him, to serve him), and land. He also has the *Färäs Meda*, the field on which he used to play *gugäs*. The field is where he established his essence of glory; it helped him to win both the *gugäs* game, and wars. Thus, he has it through 'play', which is an appropriation by creation. However, what he has made him to be stagnant, as the In-itself, for he could not surpass his past essence. All that he has gives him immense power. He loves money (the other reason that makes him to look for a husband for his daughter from the real noble family). Money is a power with magical quality that facilitates appropriation of the world as 'to do' and 'to have' things. His free projection 'to be' is to become powerful administrator of his *gult* and *rist*, controlling everything and everyone. And this has become impossible, at his present time, due to his physical situation, old age. Thus he tenaciously clings to the past to evade the present, which requires anxiety, *naughting* the past and proving oneself in a different kind of heroism.

Nevertheless, there is one instance, at least, that seem make him appear as hero, authentic, free and in good-faith. It is where he declares the duel with *Fitawrari* Asäge who declined his own proposal to marry Säblä (in a manner fitting a virgin). All the relatives of *Fitawrari* Mäshäsha express their disagreement about the duel. For this, he replies, "Don't quarrel with me! I have told you that *I would not find a better death than this one; the good death that I found suddenly please don't withhold it from me*" (p. 85. Emphasis added). This imploration and determination to take the last chance of heroic deed could be authenticity and freedom if there is no other chance and alternative to avoid the danger. The Being-for-itself wants to live in *the fictional world of immortality*. Thus man wants to invent and act her last highest value while she is alive. Then she will be remembered for this, as a heroen. The same would be true in the case of our character. However, he decided the duel not because the situation compelled him as the only alternative. It was because Säblä insulted him in front of others, siding with her absent uncle *Ayya Kassa*, when her father calls him a screwed minded man. She says, "He

whose mind is messed up and doesn't have a right mind is the man who would say Kassa has a messed up mind..." (p. 83).

Her father, who does not believe, that his daughter would love her uncle more than she does him, takes it for granted that there must be something else that has so enraged her—that he doesn't act like a father upon her insult by *Fitawrari* Asäge. Thus, instead of the compensation that they have decided to receive as a punishment for the breached engagement, he decides to have a duel. Thus, he is avoiding the future anxiety, still, by grabbing the accidental situation (to die heroically and remain hero in people's mind, as an In-itself).

Therefore, in every dimension, we can say *Fitawrari* Mäshäsha, is a coward who is not free; who acts as the 'one acts (as *Das Man* of Heidegger), who lives in bad-faith, thus unauthentic and a man who dies cowardly and remain coward forever.

Nevertheless, amazingly, he (the antagonist) is not the only character who is in bad-faith and unauthenticity, but also the protagonist Säblä shares this same realm.

Säblä as a disciple of her uncle *Ayya* Kassa become aware the kind of situation she and others are in *ie* the 'lifeless social system', as Gudu Kassa calls it. She says,

Long live *Ayya* Kassa, in order to see that the system of our life is bad and full of violence, at least he has opened our eyes to get annoyed by it and to weep. However, we wouldn't be able to get out of it. There, if our eyes hadn't been opened and we hadn't seen or known it, we would be living happily" (p. 212).

She is made to see the condition, the misery of her historical time, but believes she could do nothing other than being annoyed and weeping to transcend it. This potency of knowing without action is futile; it is nothing, because action is the manifestation of potency. Thus at this juncture she is no different from her she-servant, *Habtəsh*, who

likewise realized her situation, through the teachings of Gudu Kassa to Säblä, but could do nothing about it. Halash realized that both herself and her children are slaves that they were, properties of their master. She is one step ahead of her peers in that others believe they are created to be slaves; and she knows however that it is the system that made her to be in her condition—this is suggested through her deep sadness that may not be the case if she accepted it with her full heart.

Säblä actually attempts to go against her situation at the end. The desire to be assimilated with the Being-in-itself is revealed through her. She projects herself into the scene of spring that she is seeing in the compound of her parents' house. She imagines that the bees and butterflies are saying, "Let's decorate it [the lawn] before it passes away, let's be happy on it before it passes away, and let's use it before it passes away" (p. 60). Here she likens herself to the lawn that bloomed and was filled with spring fragrance. The bees and butterflies stand for the men who are hovering around her to marry her, to make her theirs. However due to her parents' vanity her springtime was passing and with it all the men.

She finds a common spot between the being of In-itself and For-itself (between shoots and human beings).

Shoots, flowers, fruit, then drying up. And getting mowed! Then, the plant that, had no fruit would remain only chaff and dust! Only the one that had fruit would live forever and ever by its seed!... The human life too, in its stratum of life so like this. Childhood, youth, adulthood, aging, and then death. He, who has no seed however, just as the grass and shoots that don't bear fruit, turns to dust or mud! Surprising! How similar human and plants are!" (p. 60).

This also refers to her free-project of becoming a woman. Preservation and procreation are the two aspirations of man. However, the external world stand as an obstacle and suppresses her will for the second desire. Thus it adds to her condition of nausea as a

Being-for-itself. It adds to her absurd condition. We see her escape her nausea, temporarily, through a melody of a flute.

When [Gäbre] blessed and set out his breath through the seven holes of that joined bamboo, it seemed that the flute was given a power from God so as to make the world free from tremendous toil and agony and hunger and thirst and pain and weakness. Instead, in its place happiness, love, and memory would appear!... If only the world that [Gäbre's] flute created for a short time would stay forever" (p. 65).

The melody has the magical power to wipe out the misery that she is feeling. Then she ultimately succumbs to her initial state.

Finally, she finds love and thus flees, on the eve of her wedding day to some *Fitawrari*, from her birthplace to the unknown future. At this point, we can say she acts freely and heroically. However, she ends like her father in bad-faith when she marries Bäzzabəh on his death-bed. To use Sartre's expression, Bäzzabəh "stands in front of the *wall*". *Wall* is a symbolic representation of death. Man who is in front of this wall has nothing to share with the living one. Stern (1967) puts Sartre's idea as follows:

What are love and marriage? A shared human project. But if one of the love partners suddenly stands in front of a wall, the wall of death which stops him from projecting himself toward the future, he has no longer anything in common with the other partner, who still possesses his human condition, his freedom of projecting himself towards his possibilities" (p. 176).

In the case of Bäzzabəh and Säblä, the former is in front of the *wall* (as pointed out above) while the latter is not. Thus when she matrimonially unite herself with him forever, she is *naughting* the fact that she is alive and is assimilating herself with the dead, the In-itself. This *naughting* the future is *naughting* the infinite possibilities of other great deeds. Her firm belief that no one will ever love her as Bäzzabəh does makes her decide to die with him, without trying to see if there isn't someone else. With this we

can say she made her own *wall* for she becomes a nun (which Gudu Kassa later on defines it as being dead, p. 388). Thus we can agree with Tewodros (1996 E.C.) who calls her situation as ‘licensed self- distraction’.

Because of her fear of the would be punishment in the life after death (for her guilt of causing her parents’ death, who perpetually owned her essence of ‘parricide’), and the ‘unnamable’, as she states it, and Tewodros (1996 E.C.) attempts to identify it, in his study, as an ‘endurance for love’ on the one hand and a ‘heart break’ on the other (p. 38), compelled her to become a nun, which is being dead. Her fainting due to her heart disease is also a leap; by being faint, she is magically flight from the actual world, its misery. Thus, it seems that she dies without achieving freedom, heroism and authenticity. Nevertheless, as readers, we can preserve her as a great lover and free person who flee from her birthplace to meet her lover.

We find Gudu Kassa in a different situation. He is the one, who excels many in his church education. He is the one who realizes the situation the citizens are in at his time—the misery of the peasantry and the vanity and stinginess of the aristocracy. Though he puts the pro and cons of the social system in its rightful perspectives, he does not fight it, physically. He identifies himself as an observer or to borrow an expression from a movie entitled *Dark Angels* he is an ‘eye only’. He says in his dialogue with Bāzzabəh: “If you remain simply an observer just like me and simply comments upon the system, you will be called ‘mad’ and ‘weird” (p. 228), which is his being as the Being-for-others. He could not even be successful in teaching and making his wife Enqoppa, a wife and friend (who is from the progeny of slave), and make his man-servant Ezra act freely, as he desires. He says to Bāzzabəh that: “... the slaves, the crafts men, all of those whom the violence has been done to, in corporation with those who do the violence, why they judge against you; what are you going to say. Realizing the saying, ‘the truth that doesn’t agree with custom is always false,’ you remain silent” (p. 228).

Silence can be considered as an action by disclosure. Sartre (1965) says “silence is a moment of language, being silent is not being dumb; it is to refuse to speak, and therefore to keep on speaking” (p. 19). Though Sartre discusses silence in the case of the writer, he identifies the writer equally with the speaker (see chapter two of this study). Gudu Kassa, as a speaker, is playing the role of the writer. Thus we can say, unlike the previous two characters, he acts freely and dies freely. He is married to a slave girl going against the ready-made norm, as he is from the nobility. Through his death, he is going to be remembered as the free person he was.

Fəqərə (1983) argues Gudu Kassa’s death is injustice that is committed by the author. “... in killing Gudu Kassa unjustly he [Haddis] is also symbolically killing the hope of the dissemination for the democratic ideas which Gudu Kassa has been cherishing all his life” (p. 240). The researcher of this study believes his death is justifiable.

There was no conducive environment for his ideas to come to fruition. The society was backward and was therefore not in pace with him. If he was allowed to live in the fictional world created, he would lose his quality as a realistically portrayed character, which is rather a strand in favor of Fəqərə’s argument that the novel is a genuine work of realism. Thus, his gradual death (not physically) is justifiable. It also, on the other hand, lets him crystallized, as he *is*—free and responsible man forever.

The other free man who truly attains freedom and cares about it deeply is Bəzzəf. In their discussion with Gudu Kassa, when the latter tells him that his relatives want to intervene with his marriage believing he has ruined their progeny, Bəzzəf hotly says: “If a scholar like yourself and who is educated and willing to teach others marries whomever he has chosen and lives the life he has chosen, that is his own business...” (p. 227).

The concept of choice recurs throughout his life. From the very beginning, he realizes that it is not God who has denied him the right to live like other men but his own mother, for it is she who has chosen for him to live as a person consecrated for the angles (saints). As he chews over this idea, he says:

I know that there are many people who had lived and have been living this kind of life that has been assigned to me. However *they chose it and lived it. I don't think that other had it chosen for them. Even if there is a person to whom other had chosen for, it is not right.... I don't choose it...*" (p. 25. Emphasis added).

He perfectly seems to understand that what man cannot evade is choice. He is not only aware of it but acted it. After he contemplates on it he flees to another province to live freely. He truly feels free when he learns of his parents' deaths. He doesn't mourn their deaths much; he even becomes happy'. What is thus exhibited in Bāzzabōh's portrayal is the notion of freedom to go against the pre-established expectation. While he is supposed to cry aloud and mourn his parents' death, he does not because, in his situation, their death, signals freedom from his imprisonment as a child of imposed vow. This is what the bird that he sees, his own projection, in his dream affirms. It says, "The rope you were tied up with was broken and buried. Go wherever you like" (p. 38).

We see his anxiety since his childhood. Then finally he realized, could define what 'a son of vow means. He says: "[it] means not to be able to do what my friends were doing and not to be able to live as a man. My own mother had brought judgment against me and had imprisoned me. I was a prisoner, that much I understood" (p. 154). The anxiety continues, after this, in a different form. He falls in love with a daughter of a landlord. This is how the narrator describes the way he feels after their first kiss (his and Säblä's): "That verdant body, that beautiful body, as if it was made from unpurified bee-wax, and as if it feared warmth, began to melt down and was powering out gradually" (p. 216). Honey is identified as a thing with a quality of viscosity. As stated in the previous chapter, this quality is dreadful; it is a situation which the For-itself loses itself into the

In-itself. Bāzzabəh wishes himself to be devoured and sink in this viscous honey like body. In Sartre's case viscosity is dreadful that we should avoid, in Bāzzabəh's, however it becomes love. And Love, in Sartre's scheme of philosophy, is the other means to escape nausea (Stern, 1967:154). After the strange feeling he discovered he starts to touch her to check whether she is real or an illusion. This touch we can say, as Sartre would say, is touching the other to possess her as an object but not as one possesses an object. It is an attempt to grasp the other as a free subject, controlling freedom; for the Being-in-itself is freedom.

After he searched her with his fingers he realizes she is "... like other people, she was a woman made of flesh, blood, bone of flesh and tendon" (p. 217). This goes perfectly in line with Sartre's (1943) notion regarding love: the lover "loves all women or all womankind in one woman" (p. 598). He believes she is the one for him and he for her. However, the obstacle, the gaze of the others, which is always there around them, causes them to be alienated from their freedom. Thus he left *Dimma* for Addis Ababa until Säblä could come too by the help of Gudu Kassa.

When Bāzzabəh is in Addis, we find him thinking that if Säblä were not to come until Easter where he is, it would indicate that it is not God's will for them to get married. So he would follow the life that is set for him by his mother (p. 324). This condition goes parallel to Sartre's example of a man who becomes a Jew believing he saw a sign from God to become religious. Sartre (1945) argues the interpretation is highly dependent on the individual's choice. There is no mechanism in which we can identify whether the voice is authentically that of God's or not. Bāzzabəh's case is also similar. He has no means by which he could check what God's will is in his life. This however reveals his determination towards Säblä. In his delirium after he is beaten by the robbers, he says "To whom do I leave Säblä and die? No, I won't die; I will not leave Säblä" (p. 388). When he hears the news that her parents are planning to give her to some *Fitawrari* as a wife he returns to *Dimma*. Fəqəre (1983) argues that Bāzzabəh's return is artificial in

that it shows the involvement of the author. He says, with a tone that seems emotional, the reason that Bāzzabəh returns to *Gojjam* “is crystal clear—the author wants him to go [there], get beaten by some robbers and meet [Säblä] on his deathbed” (p. 203).

The researcher has a different opinion regarding this. Bāzzabəh realized in Addis that he was acting cowardly. He figured out that only people with loud voices are heard and people with heavy muscle win. He belonged to neither (p. 321). He wondered who created that system God or; as Gudu Kassa says, custom. However, one thing has become clear. He does not want to die coward and with guilt of his parents death. Thus to act heroically he marches to *Gojjam*, to face whatever hardship he should face. On his way back, he gets beaten fatally. Thus, his return and death is a heroic act that will remain crystallized his essence eternally.

The author makes an analogy of death with ‘a pile of snow’. This is closer to Sartre’s perception of death as being still or crystallized. Death, as it has been said, is a state through which the dead prey on others, as a Being-for-others, and a Being-in-itself. Tewodros (1996 E.C.) argues in his study that Bāzzabəh’s death does not make him to become an object. The logic behind his argument is that the language that Säblä uses in showing his crypt to Gudu Kassa. She says:

“Please, don’t cry, *Ayya Kassa*, I am living happily! You told me that I was changed and become different, but never would I know that I got changed. Do you see? Whatever happens, I take [*Bāzzabəh*] out everyday, at least once a day and sweep his bed and help him sleep again. Well, when I see him everyday, it seems to me that he is alive and we live together and I am living happily”

“How?”

“May I show you [*Bāzzabəh*]?” (p. 38. Underlining added).

Tewodros (1996 E.C.) claims: «...በቋንቋውም... የበዛብህ ሕያውነት እንደተጠበቀ ነው። ወደ 'ንብረትነት'፣ ወደ 'ዕቃነት' አልወረደም» (ገጽ 42) ። /“... also by the language... Bāzzabih’s aliveness is preserved. He does not condensed to [the level] of ‘possession’,

of 'thingness' (p. 42). However, we need to propound a question; who is speaking the extraction from the novel? It is, of course, Säblä. And she is in a state of In-itself herself. Gudu Kassa, even suspects her sanity. She is in a bad-faith. Through the *we* she is trying to be assimilated with Bazzah; she says that "it seems to me that he is alive...". It seems the life after death that she is referring to through this, not the secular one. Thus as a dead man he belongs to the past, the In-itself, who preys on others as an object.

The next portion deals with the case of existence in *Kä'admas Bashagär*.

4.2.2. *Kä'admas Bashagär (KB)*

Of all that is written I love only that which is written with blood. Write with blood: and you will discover that blood is spirit... He who writes in blood and aphorisms does not want to be read, he wants to be learned by heart.

Nietzsche

One of the literary giants of the twentieth century of Ethiopian Literature, who wrote with blood, we can say, is Bä'alu Germa (1938/39-1984). His first and last novels, namely, *Kä'admas Bashagär* and *Oromay* respectively, compared to his other works, have great impact on his life. The first marked him as a talented novelist, and the last caused, it is greatly suspected, his death.

Kä'admas Bashagär (KB) appeared in 1970 during the Emperor's era, and *Oromay* during *Derg's* regime. In the previous era he was sometimes in conflict with the government; for this reason, for instance, he was suspended in 1968 from his job for six months. However, he contributed a lot towards the betterment of the then different journals and newspapers both in form and content. During *Derg's* regime he was so close to Mängästu Hailä-Mariam, as to make for him speeches as well as holding various governmental posts. Nevertheless, this could not save him from being eaten up by the

very revolution he served. Molvear (1997) summarizes the possible reasons why Bā'alu took the risk of writing *Oromay*.

He might have become over-confident because of his close association with Chairman [Māngəstu]; or he trusted that his political standing was stronger than it was. Or he might have believed that he was so popular with “the masses” because of his earlier books, that he became careless about what he wrote. But then he might on the other hand, have written as he did in full awareness of the risk he was running. He might have risked all in the hope of promoting his political ambition. Or he may have come to reject the turn the revolution had taken. He said once to some colleague that he only cared about the acceptance of the masses and to be in the hearts and minds of the people—and his books continued to be loved and respected by the public (from the “common man” to “people of the university”) long after he had disappeared. So possibly Bā'alu decided to risk everything for what he believed in (p. 34. Emphasis added).

Thus we can consider him, as the previous one, as a committed writer who revealed the situation of his time risking his life, as a responsible individual who received courageously all the consequences of his action. He says, regarding his first novel and its hero, as cited in Fəqərə's (1983) study: “[Abərri] is an idealist. He used to fight with himself. This is a symbolic work which shows that all of us were in that futile life” (p. 289). Bā'alu was thus free who faced the problem of choice and anxiety, the inescapable providence of the authentic For-itself.

In addition, we can state which writers he used to admire, for it would have relevance in interpreting his novel. Molvear (1997) states that technique-wise Hemingway, Grame Green and Dostoevsky had greatly influenced him; while he admires Kierkegaard (p. 350). This later name have a great relevance with the study at hand. If he admires him and Dostoevsky, it indicates the possibility that *KB* could bear some influence from the philosophy of Existentialism.

Both Fəqərə (1983) and Fākadā (1988) in their studies, on pages 229 and 49 respectively, identified the theme of his first novel as a conflict problem of the individual or

intellectual in becoming himself, acting according to one's talent and the possible problems he encounters. In other words we can say, the characters are striving to be free of imprisonment to realize themselves, to recreate themselves.

Tewodros Gäbre (1996 E.C.) has suggested in his study that the notion of choice and decision should be studied in their own right in *KB*. In a positive response to this suggestion, a modest attempt is made here to examine these notions from Existentialist perspective of Sartre.

To elucidate on the case of existence, focus will be placed on Abärra, the major character, while references will be made to the others in relation to him. To substantiate this we can refer to Tewodros (1996 E.C.), who also rightly pointed out in his study that friendship, marriage and professionalism seem to be “the three pillars” of the narrative (p. 67). These pillars are regarded, in our study, as the causes of Abärra's anxiety which in turn pushes the plot forward. Tewodros (1996 E.C.) says:

በልብ ወለዱ ውስጥ የመጣ የትኛውም ጭብጥ የሚረቀው የትኛውም ግጭት የሚወለደው፣ የተረኩ አቅጣጫ ሙሉ በሙሉ የሚወሰነው—የየትኛውም ገጸ ባህርይ እጣ የሚቆረጠው አበራ በሦስቱ ጉዳዮች (sic) ላይ ባለው ምርጫና በሚሰጠው ውሳኔ ነው። ሦስቱ ጉዳዮች ልብ ወለዱ የተመሰረተበት አብይ ጨመቅ—ራስን መፈለግ ማንነትን ማወቅ—የገዘፈባቸው ሦስት ገፅታዎች ናቸው (ገጽ፣ 68)።

Any theme abstracted, any conflict begotten, the direction of the narration fully decided, the fate of any of the characters is determined, in the novel, based on the choice that Abärra has and the decision he makes on the three issues. The three issues are that that concretize the foundation of the gist of the novel—searching for the self, knowing ones identity (p. 68).

In this study, attempt is made to identify three phases in the development of Abärra's life. The first one, we can call, *realization of [his] being In-itself*; second, *dread/anxiety*; and third *freedom*.

After gazing at his house furniture in pride, Abärä starts to contemplate on who he is, and how he becomes what he has become. «ማንነኝ? ምንስነኝ? እቃ። ለዚያውም ዋጋ የሌለው የበሰበሰ እቃ። እቃ ሆኜ እንድቀር ያደረገኝ ማነው?እኔው ራሴ? ወይስ ያፈራኝ ህብረተሰብ? ወይስ አልፎው የመጣሁት የትምህርት ተቋም?...» (ገጽ፣ 62)።

Who am I? What am I? A thing. And valueless rotten thing at that. Who made me remain a thing? I myself? Or the society that produced me? Or [is it] the educational system I passed through?..." (p. 8. As Fäkadä (1983:240) translated it; minor modification is made).

This is his realization of his *thingness*, as a person who simply, as Heidegaard would say, a *das man*; a man who is devoured in the everydayness of life. He knows that something is struggling inside him to erupt. He had a suppressed talent for art which his family and teachers could not only failed to admire but also punished him for it thus causing it to remain buried. Eጋጥጥ (1983) comments on the situation of Abärä, as an artist in the feudal milieu: "An artist had no place in a feudal society like Ethiopia where art which did serve a religious function used to be considered to be not art" (p. 234). He adds to this that many Ethiopians study subjects they are not interested in just to make a 'good career'.

Having no outlet, his latent talent thus compelled him to become a restless person who chases his sensual pleasure. He has a very good salary by the standard of the time, 800 birr. But it could not buy him real pleasure in his life. He changes job after job and house after house. The period allows for this, as we have stated above, *ie* 1960s was the period in which the educated could enjoy plenty of opportunities in terms of job in governmental organizations. The narrator gives us the summarized situation as follows:

የአበራ አእምሮ ካንድ ሀሳብ ወደሌላ ሀሳብ ስለሚጋልብ አንድ ነገር በተለይ ወስዶ እስከ መጨረሻው ድረስ ሊያስብበት አይችልም። ለዚህ ነበር ባለቅኔ፣ ወይም ደራሲ፣ ወይም ሰአሊ የመሆን ተስፋውን ውስጡ ቀብሮ ያስቀረው። ነፍሱ ግን ራሷን ባንድ ነገር ለመግለጥ ዘለአለም እንደዋተተች፣ እንደቃተተች ትኖራለች (ገጽ፣ 6)

Since Abärä's mind gallops from one idea to another he could not think over a single idea up to its end. This was the reason why he made his hope to become a poet, or writer, or an artist remain buried inside him. However, his soul, to reveal herself in one way, will live roaming and gasping forever.

His appropriation of the world through 'to have' can be identified with the furniture he possesses. He buys things of quality for he believes that saving is meaningless as tomorrow is unpredictable. Thus he says he lives his present. But he does not seem to realize that if he is not sure about tomorrow, it is all the same futile to furnish his house with quality things. Sartre (1943) differentiates between 'possession' and 'having'. 'Possession' is becoming one with the thing possessed while 'having' does not require this (please refer chapter two). Thus Abärä's possession of quality things seems to indicate his wish to be assimilated with the objects, the In-itself; and to surpass (knowing his being a 'rotten thing') through the *qualityness* of the objects.

The man who gets pleasure through worn-out things is his friend named Hailä-Mariam. He changes his cloth, except his shirt and socks, once in months time. He wears his shoes until they get trodden all at one side. Abärä was associated with him for twenty years. This friend of his is free of family ties while Abärä has a brother and mother. His friend is shabby looking, bookish and strong-minded while Abärä is tidy but irresolute. It is this friend who utters to him that he should become an artist, for it is the purpose of his life. This erects a wall that separates the Abärä that used to think only about himself and a man of his flesh from the would be new Abärä. Abärä's first phase, we can say, therefore, is parallel to Kierkegaard's first stage called *aesthetic*.

The second phase—dread/anxiety—begins after the utterance of Hailä-Mariam's determination to become a writer and Abärä an artist.

ከህይወት ጽዋ እስካሁን እራት ስንጠጣ ቆይተናል። አቅጣጫችንን መለወጥ ያለብን አሁን ነው [...] የህይወቴ ምክንያት ድርሰት ነው፤ ያንተም የስእል ሙያ ነው። ታውቀዋለህ፤ አውቀዋለሁ። የህይወት ጥሪያቸውን አውቀው ነፍሳቸውን

ባላቸው ችሎታ የሚገልጹ ሰዎች አማልክት ናቸው፤ ሽክም አይደሉም፤ መሻርገር አይደሉም፤ አማልክት ናቸው...እና የሰው የመጨረሻ አላማው ራሱ አምላክ ለመሆን ነው... (ገፅ፣ 33)::

We have been drinking bitter aloes from the chalice of life. It is now that we should change our direction [...] The purpose of my life is authorship and yours is painting. You know it. I know it. Men who realized the call of their lives and express their souls with their talents are gods; they are not burdens; they are not vermin; they are gods... and man's ultimate aim is to become god himself... (p. 33. The translation of the first sentence is taken from Fäkadä, 1988:253).

The last statement of Hailä-Mariam, reminisces of Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* (1980). In this novel the nightmare (hallucinatory replica of Ivan) states when the idea of God destroyed man becomes the man-god (p. 588). This is what Sartre reverberates also when he says 'man's highest desire is to become god'. Hailä-Mariam persuaded Abärra to quit his job and lives on his salary. The former proposed this because the latter cannot do two things at a time.

The 'three pillars'—friendship, family and profession—come into play now, in increasing the intensity of the dread that Abärra is entangled in. As it is said Hailä-Mariam wants him to make his living by painting; his bother Abatä, his sister-in-law, Elfnesh, and his mother want him to beget children; Lulit, later his wife, enters into the stream of his life. He becomes so anxious to decide whether he should quit his job to become an artist or not; that whether he should marry and father children to please his family or not. His elder brother is sterile, who alters wife after wife believing one day he would have a child to preserve the noble progeny of his father. But he couldn't. He is married to Elfnäsh finally and has become drunkard. He believes Hailä-Mariam is the 'demon' that stood between he and his younger brother. His brother cannot understand the situation he is in because, he believes, Hailä-Mariam is not the kind of friend who could help Abärra to settle and get matured. Elfnäsh, whose marriage is getting worse and worse from time to time, implores Abärra to marry that in a bid to save her own marriage. Lulit, the 'black-ido!' also gives him an awesome trouble.

This lady was raped when she was a teenager in the countryside. She got flogged by her first husband, on the day of her marriage, for he found her deflowered. From this time on she was determined to punish men and make them worship her; changing her name from Chaltu to Lulit she became the 'black-idol'. Tewodros (1996 E.C.:72-73) makes wonderfully, a possible allusion of her name to the Lilith of the Hebrew mythology; she is considered as the first wife of Adam (before Eve); the 'goddess of the night', and the darkest side of femininity. Lulit punishes men by seducing them and leaving them when they start to fall for her. One of the perfect relationships she could find is with a man called Gädlu Bāzzabəh, who has a wealthy aged wife. He uses her money to jeweler and serenade Lulit. He is masochistic who enjoys immensely the punishment he receives from Lulit, through her indifference. He says at one instance:

«ሉሊትዬ፣ ውደጂኝ አላልኩሽም። ናቂኝ፤ አዋርጂኝ፤ አሰቃይኝ ነው የምልሽ። ባንቺ ገላ መሰቃየት ለኔ ገነት ነው። እኔን ብቻ አሰቃይኝ ነው የምልሽ። ያንቺ ቅዝቃዜ ለኔ መንግስተ ሰማያት ነው። ስትንቁኝ፣ፍታዋርጂኝ ህሊናዬ ፋታ ታገኛለኝ» (ገፅ፣ 92)።

My Lulit, I didn't say love me. What I am saying is despise me, disgrace me; humiliate me. It is Eden for me to suffer by your body. I am saying humiliate only me. Your frigidity is my heaven. When you despise me and humiliate me, my conscience gets relief" (p. 92).

Such love relationship is, as it has been discussed in chapter two, is a failure. Lulit takes her cloths off in front of him, giving him her back. Through such indifference she builds her 'confidence' so that she is seen and admired with the eyes she never wants to look back. Under normal circumstances the look of the Other should be looked at to transcend it and make the Other the object, a transcendence-transcended. Or in the case of Love to become an object in order to control the Other as a subject. However, in her case she turns her eyes off from looking back to the eyes that are looking at her. She believes that she is using the Other, Gädlu, as a function⁸. He is a function for her not as a man like herself, but simply as an institute, a bank for instance, from which she can draw money whenever she needs it. The difference that Gädlu has with the other guys is that he really enjoys it and wants even to marry her, while the others leave her after sometime.

He enjoys his being an object for her. Nevertheless, the failure protrudes as she becomes awake, and finally as she resolves to get free of him. She seems to have realized that the Other exists out there and possesses her through his look, the look that she avoids to look back. This has a disturbing effect causing her to want to break away from the chain she was caught in. Gädlu, on the other hand, who is in bad-faith, and who believes he is making himself an object to her does not want to separate from her, which would mean letting her go to another man, namely Abärra. He was in war with him. In addition, she is his perfect instrument, an object he needs.

Thus she chooses Abärra as a means to run away from Gädlu. There is so much 'conflict' as beings of For-itself between Abärra and Lulit, one to make the other the transcendence-transcended. Neither of them wants to be the object. Here is the dialogue they make on the first day they meet:

ሴቶች ላይ ኩራትና ትእቢት ታባዘህ። በእምብርክክ መጥተው እስኪለምኑህ ድረስ ዞር ብለህ ቋጭኛውም አሉ.... ማወቅ ያለብህ እኔም እንዳንተ ኩ ሩ መሆኔን ነው።

«አንችም እንደኔ ከሆንሽ ልንቋቋም አንችልም.... ሆኖም አንቺ እንዳልሺው እኔ በከንቱ ኩራት አላምንም። የማምነው ሰጥቶ በመቀበል ነው።» (ገፅ፣ 42)

You are proud and contemptuous towards women. They say you do not lay your eyes on them until they come to you on their knees.... What you should know is that I am also proud like you."

...
"If you are like me we cannot survive each other.... But I do not believe, as you said, in an empty pride. I believe in give and take. (p. 42).

She is the one who proposes marriage, to which he consents and that to please his family. At the same time he decides also to leave his job. This adds fuel to the fire of his anxiety. After he quits his job, he tells to his best friend his skepticism about his talent.

ሞክራ ያልሆነልኝ እንደሆነሽ? እውነተኛ የተፈጥሮ ችሎታ መሆኑ ቀርቶ ባዶ የፈጠራ ስሜት፣ ትንሽ አየር የሚያስተነፍሰው የሳሙና አረፋ ሆኖ ያገኘሁት እንደሆነሽ? ምን ለመሆን እችላለሁ?

ህይወትን እንተውና ራሴንም ቢሆን ለማየት ድፍረት አይኖረኝም። መሞት ይሻለኛል» (ገጽ 140)።

What if I become unsuccessful after I try? What if it turns out to be foam of soap that is bubbling with little air, empty feeling of creativity instead of real natural talent? What would become of me? I won't have the courage to face myself, let alone life. I prefer to die" (p. 140).

What Hailä-Mariam argues is that it is better to die after experiencing being a god, a creator, just even for a day. It suffices even to give it a try. There seems a hidden rational behind his instigation of Abärra to quit his job and become a fulltime painter—he wants to use him as an object of experiment. This is, of course, suggested via his wish of the ideas on which he likes to write. He says:

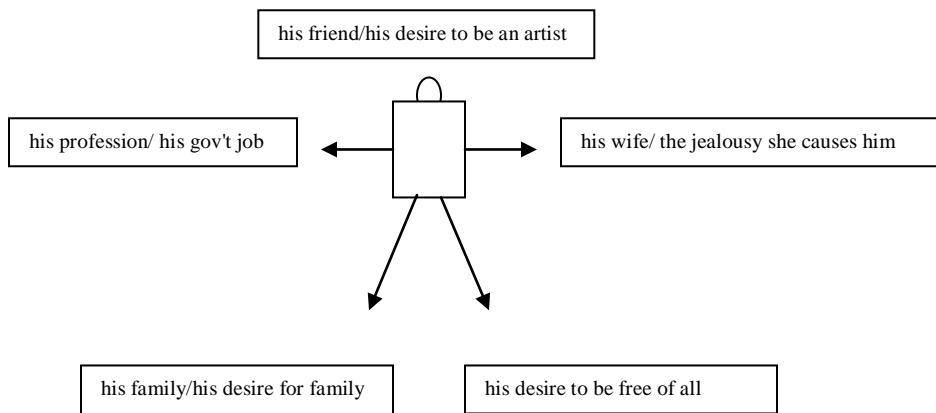
ስለችግርና ስለብቸኝነት ለመዝፈን ፍላጎት የለኝም። መጻፍ የምፈልግው ስለአለም ውበትና ስለሰው ተፈጥሮ መሰረተዊ ጥሩነት፤ እንዲሁም ሰው በራሱ የራሱን ደህንነት እንዳያገኝ ስለሚያደናቅፉት ሁኔታዎችና አካባቢዎች ነው። በዚህ ውጥን ውስጥ ችግርና ብቸኝነት አነስተኛውን ስፍራ ይዘው ይገኛሉ» (ገጽ 49)።

I don't have an interest to sing about misery and loneliness. What I want to write is about the beauty of the world, about the goodness of man's basic nature; and also about situation and environments that hinders man from getting his own security on his own. In this project misery and loneliness hold the smallest place" (p. 49)

He cancels out misery and loneliness, because he has been and is (at the time he says this) experiencing them. He can write about 'beauty of nature' and 'goodness of man's basic nature' any time he wants to. However, the last project requires a study. To see what things, why and how hampers man from the attainment of her security, how it is possible to attain it without external help, even God; whether man is man-god or not; he needs a subject who should be set in a certain situation. Thus he chooses his friend. To strengthen this argument we can call upon his habit to study peoples' faces when they talk to him; he doesn't sometimes even listen to them (pp. 18-19). Thus it seems plausible to argue that Hailä-Mariam is experimenting on his friend, though not out of hatred rather could be out of 'solicitude' (Heidegger's).

There is a statement that Hailä-Mariam reiterates, 'we should start to die little by little to reach the goal we set'. This is a bad-faith. It recognizes the world, profession or talent as something, superior to once individual life. This is what Sartre identifies as *the spirit of seriousness* and Nietzsche as *the spirit of gravity*. It is taking life seriously as if it is given with purpose, aim and meaning. In addition, just before he dies he sends a message for Abarra to preserve both his brother and him through his paintings. He says: «ለኔ ስትል በርታ፤ ስራዎችህ ለወንድምህ ዝርያ ለኔ ሀውልት ይሁኑ...» (ገፅ 108):: /”... For the sack of me be brave; let your works be an offspring for your brother and a statue for me” (p. 108)./ This goes with Sartre’s (1945) reference to Marxists who would leave their goals to be carried out by others upon their death. Sartre comments “I cannot base my confidence upon human goodness as upon man’s interest in the good of society, seeing that man is free and that there is no human nature which I can take as foundational” (p. 40). As there are infinite possibilities to the living men in their future it is impossible to be sure whether they will accomplish what the dead started. This same logic works in the case of Halä-Mariam’s. He has no means to know whether Abärrä would carry out his free project to leave some reminiscence that stands to remind others as he was on this planet. As Sartre says, he was supposed to act without hope (please refer chapter two). Thus, this also adds to his being in bad-faith.

All the people around Abärrä need him to act in a certain way. And he wishes to be free of all these. His condition, if we try to illustrate it, looks the following diagram:



He is stretched in all directions. Abärä's action of marrying Lulit and his care for his family makes him ascend to the Kierkegaard's second level—the *Ethical*, which is the realm of universality.

The very day he quits his job is the very day he was supposed to celebrate his birthday and that is the day he also commits a murder. Hearing a rumor that his wife is flirting with someone else at certain hotel blinds him and he subsequently kills a woman whom he mistakes for his wife. (He learnt jealousy when he was very kid). This is also a moment, we can say, through which he experiences nothingness. The principle figure he wants to see in the room is Lulit, every object and people in the room are grounds that are supposed to foreground her. Thus her absence, just like in the case of Pierre for Sartre, is a non-being. From this moment on the plot, as Tewodros (1996 E.C.:29) pointed out becomes full of dramatic events. Fäkadä (1988) states regarding the plot, with a critical tone:

The attempt in [the novel] which began by portraying however, inadequately the struggle of the individual within the context of his family, his office and his own personal psychology, suddenly takes an unforeseen turn. The novel that seemed to embark on one of the serious problems, namely the intellectual and his place in society, abruptly changes course by spontaneous, irrational actions.... The writer sharply terminates Abärä's quest" (p. 251).

As for the researcher of this study the spontaneous irrational actions are one of the most important elements of the novel if we agree on the argument that the novel is influenced by Existential philosophy. Life as full of nausea and absurdity is one of the main concerns of the existential philosophy that it attempts to disclose. Hence as an existential novel, it seems justifiable to weave in the plot the essence of irrationality. As a result, rather than terminating Abärä from his quest, this leads him to his authentic invented self.

The irrationality, to express it paradoxically, is rational. The kind of irrationality that Fäkadä (1988) attempts to point out seems to have been made due to an overlook of some expressions. He says: “Abärra has not fired a shot, and yet he goes to a police station and gives himself up to the police. Eventually he is sentenced to three years. There is no visible reason for creating an implausible incident to end the novel” (p. 253). It seems irrelevant to argue that since it is not explicitly stated that he fired the gun, he is not the one who shot the woman. In the court, the man who was with the murdered woman confessed that he was under the bed when Abärra violently gets into the hotel room; we are told the same through Abärra’s flashback. Thus it is impossible for the other man to kill her. In addition, it is Abärra that the shot woman asks why he did it to her between her gasps, to which he replies “I don’t know. Ask God”. Thus the irrationality of the artifact of the plot seems applied not simply to some way of ending the story; but to elucidate on the case of absurdity.

The researcher of this study argues that the dramatic events of the novel towards its end are the roads that takes Abärra towards his freedom—the third phase.

Abärra finally stands alone without his God, relatives, a friend and a wife. His mother died because of grief. His brother committed suicide after he killed Hailä-Mariam. Abärra himself sends Lulit away. So he become solitary at last—thus free. Here we need to elucidate on an interesting case that we encounter. Abärra becomes openly an atheist while Hailä-Mariam becomes theist (discarding his notion of man's ultimate desire to be god). The question is why? There is one possible reply for this. Hailä-Mariam has learnt that man cannot become the man-god (the hallucinatory replica of Ivan arrives also, in *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), at the idea that man is weak). Hailä-Mariam learned this through Abärra who ends up in prison. Thus he picked Kierkegaard's remedy for the absurd world—the leap of faith. This leap for Sartre is bad-faith in voting for the absolute which does not exist. Thus, we can say, the author is attempting to challenge Kierkegaard through letting the main character become an atheist. Kierkegaard says,

... if it will uprightly, honestly, frankly, openly, directly rebel [the generation of his time] against Christianity and say to God, 'We can but we will not subject ourselves to this authority'—but remember that it can be done uprightly, honestly, frankly, directly—well then, strange as it may seem, I am for it; for honesty is what I want.... But an honest rebellion against Christianity can only be made when one honestly admits what Christianity is and how one is related to it (Reinhardt, 1952:5).

Abärra seem honestly, frankly, openly and directly states that there is no God that can plot such disaster to a man's life. The narrator says, "[አበራ] እግዚአብሔርን ላጣ አለምና ምንም ምክንያት ለሌለው ከንቱ ህይወት አንዳች ጠብታ እንባ ሊያፈስ አልቻለም.... ለሞትም ሆነ ለሽረት ደንታ አልነበረውም:: ብቻውን ቆሞ ቀረ—ያለፈጣሪ" (ገጽ ፣ 148)::

[Abärra] couldn't shed a single drop of tear for the world that lost its God and life that is irrational and futile.... He was indifferent to both death and redemption. He stood alone—without creator (p. 148).

Though he stands alone with honesty (in his condition) he seems chooses it without the consideration of Christianity. Thus his apostasy could be a challenge for the Danish philosopher; man can truly become an atheist without considering his position about Christianity. It should also be noted that he has no future regarding his spiritual position as a Being-for-itself. He becomes still the very moment the story ends.

Fäkadä (1983) argues that *Ato* Abatä has no 'satisfactory reason' to murder Hailä-Mariam (p. 254). And Fəqəre (1983) claims that Lulit has become an 'ideal heroine' (p. 238). Both of these statements are contended in this study.

Ato Abatä's major free projection as a Being-for-itself is preserving his genealogy. For this he has waited years until he could get the consent of his brother to marry and father children. The only person that his brother believes and heeds most is this friend whom *Ato* Abatä takes as the demon who stood between them. He is the one who persuaded his brother to quit his job. In addition, he believes in the gossip that Lulit is an adulterous and promiscuous woman. Thus when he finds them at Abärra's house, in the absence of

the latter (for he is in prison) Ato Abatä can't help getting angry. He could even be led in to thinking that they are the ones who have set the trap for Abärä to kill a woman just to cut him out. Thus Ato Abatä appears to be led into believing that the entire scheme he built throughout his life would go astray. Therefore his action is plausible and 'satisfactory reason', conventionally speaking (as a ready-made), to a man who is blinded and confused with overlapped situations.

Lulit acts at the end not as an 'ideal heroin', rather as an authentic heroin. She married Abärä just taking him as a leap to run away from Gädlu without risking her financial security. However, through time she could love him as a man and husband not as the 'cruel man' that she wants to avenge herself on. He is the only man to whom she uttered the statement "I love you", which amazed herself; he is the only person to whom she revealed her heart's wound (other than the first people who helped her to come to Addis). She says: «ሰክሊ ከመሆን የሚያግድህ ነገር እንዲኖር አልፈልግም:: ህሊናውን ሸጦ በምቶት ከሚያኖረኝ ባል ጥሪውን ተከትሎ ማንነቱን ለማወቅ ከሟገል ሰው ጋር ማቅቁ ብሞት ደስ ይለኛል፤» (ገጽ፣ 124)::

I don't want anything to impede you from becoming an artist. Rather than living with a husband who can manage to make me live in comfort, selling his conscience, I would be happy to die in destitute with a man who struggles to know himself, following his call (p.124).

She is a changed and matured Lulit, who could naught her past and prepared to face the future; she turned into a person who knows what her free project is—that is paving the road for the would be artist. Knowing that there is always infinite choice to choose, she altered her old project and chooses this new project of hers. And finally when she realized that Abärä does what he does not because he has an affair with another woman but because he loves her, she forgives him. This doesn't make her simply ideal, rather authentic.

However, this project of hers faces a resistance as Abärä wants to set her free at the end. He realized that they are not sailing in the same boat. He is in a prison; she is in the free world. The grill of the prison is the *wall* that separates them. They will never be able to speak the same language. He says: «እኔ እስር ቤት ሆኜ አንቺ ውጪ ሆነሽ... አንድነት ልበልሽ?... አዎን፤ አብረን ሳለን በቅናት ተሰቃይቼ የማሰቃይሽ ሰው አሁን ምን ይሰማኛል? ለሆነው ሁሉ እወድሻለሁ። ጸጸት የለኝም። ግን ነጻነት ልሰጥሽ አፈልጋለሁ...» (ገጽ፣ 183)።

Me in a prison and you outside... how can I say it to you... Yes, When we were together, I the man who abused you, suffering from jealousy, what do I feel? I love you for everything. I don't have a regret. But I want to give you your freedom (p. 183).

He adds to this, when she insists to wait for him until he gets released, that it is difficult to guess how the prison life might alter a man. Thus it becomes clear as long as that as there is a *wall* between them they will never be together. His life is determined by the milieu of the prison which is full of nausea, repulsive scenes. His future is partly in hands of this institution. She has, however, all her future in her hands.

Nevertheless, he can also be identified as an authentic and free man. When he was in this second phase he wanted to die, even attempted to commit suicide to flee responsibility and anxiety of the future. Finally, however, he determines to stand firmly to face the anxiety of the future, tomorrow—the other day. Thus he becomes, finally the *extraordinary* man of Kierkegaard, without faith.

The extraordinary or the religious man clings to faith as a means to shun the absurd world. Abärä, however, become an atheist for there is no such God who plots such as what happened to him. On the other hand, his best friend has become a theist, before he dies—thus crystallized forever as an In-itself. We may say Abärä's change is the realization and ascendance to the highest possible value of becoming an artist.

Fəqərə (1983:234) seems not convinced with the plot of Abärra’s quitting his job to become a full time artist without being sure of the possibility. However, we can say, it is appropriate, in case of a Being-for-itself, to go for what he wants and believes without consulting the pre-established values; and this is what it seems that Abärra is trying to live up to. In addition, he exhibits his talent through his drawings of his colloques' physique. The only defect the pictures have is that they do not display the real essence and uniqueness of the people. And this talent could not be suppressed any more as it makes him agitated and restless. It is inevitable for him to choose between the Either/Or, *ie* either his talent or his marriage, as Hailä-Mariam puts it for him. His friend tells him also that he cannot run from himself; «ከራስህ ርጠህ ልታመልጥ አትችልም፣ መቼም ቢሆን...» (ገፅ፣ 52)/ "You cannot run away from yourself, never" (p. 52) Abärra himself feels this. After the fly left his house, in the first chapter, he mumbles to himself «እኔ ግን መውጫ ቀዳዳ የለኝም!» (ገፅ 6)/ “I don’t have a vent!” (p. 6). This is a reverberation of Sartre's (1945) statement that says "nothing can save [man] from [herself], not even a valid proof of the existence of God" (p. 56).

To conclude, we can say, within the parameters of Sartre it is Abärra rather than Hailä-Mariam and others who is a hero, authentic and free. Hailä-Mariam chooses the absolute shrugging the possibility of inventing his own value. Abärra, on the other hand, votes for anxiety, to bear all the consequences. Unlike the axiom, he survives his guilt of the past, without remorse. However, he has become his past, his essence as what he was and prepared to move forward to the unknown future—as a man *who is what he is not and is not what he is*.

4.2.3. *Gəracha Qachäloch (GQ)*

[...] let us therefore limit ourselves to the purification of our opinions and evaluations and to the creation of our own new tables of values [...] We, however, want to be those who we are—the incomparable, those who give themselves their own law, those who create themselves.

Nietzsche

There isn't much that could be found about the author Adam Räta, as a man. On the blurb of his first novel *Gəracha Qachäloch (GQ)* we are informed that he was born in 1957/58 and has contributed many short stories in different newspapers and magazines. He is acquainted to the audience for the first time through his two short stories ("Sphinx" and "Siroco") that appeared in an anthology of short stories of different writers entitled *Aba Defar*. Then his first anthology of short stories appeared entitled *Mahlet* and later on *Izabel*. Many critics agree that *Mahlet* introduces a new and successful technique to Ethiopian literature.

Similar trend seems followed in his novel *GQ*. However, here we need to revisit Sartre's (1947) notion of style. He argues, "... to be sure, the style makes the value of the prose. But it should pass unnoticed. Since words are transparent and the gaze looks through them, it would be absurd to slip in among them some panes of rough glass" (p. 19). He seems to say that separating the style from its content is absurd, according to him, for they both are one. Style is only the manner in which the disclosure of the writer is made. However this statement that the style should "pass unnoticed" is challenged in this subsection, for one basic reason. The novel is recent in its print that might not been studied (this is what the researcher concluded after her attempt in search of local researches). Thus to help the reader grasp the essence of the novel, the technique is discussed in relation to the problem of the study.

In the novel a new technique is introduced that he calls *Enjera/Enjori*. He says in his preface that, as the word *Enjera* is derived from *Enjori* (the Amharic word for Berry), the

technique of the novel is named *Enjori* with inspiration of the feature of *Enjera*. He says, as *Enjera* has eyes of different sizes, with distances between them (both space-time-wise), his stories also have different sizes and distances (both space-time-wise). The narrative has no clear, neat, single conventional plot; if it is said a plot it is subtle one that is the search for a life partner. There are many stories, but all revolve around one character called Mäzzäbu. The novel is constitution of stories which are of various sizes, ranging from a few sentences to a number of pages that are all narrated from the first person point of view. Thus these stories that appear as chapters could represent the eye or pasted particles of *Enjori*, depending on the kind of this fruit of the reader knows. *Enjori*, has different genus. Some have eyes others have pasted particles. Each chapter of the story thus represents one eye or pasted particle. Thus together make the whole of the berry *ie* the story itself.

This may have some contribution in adding to the meaning of the novel. The major character's name, Mäzzäbu Dub'ale which literally means, "the record plummeted", communicates the manner in which the stories are composed. This man has recorded his memories starting from his early teens to his adulthood. The chapters, the eyes, are not put in a logical or chronological manner. Rather they are put in a manner of stream of consciousness; one incident calling upon the other. The novel has 122 titled stories that are subsumed under two main parts. The first part narrates his experiences as a teenager in Nəfas-Mäwcha, while the second about his experiences in Addis Ababa, after he flee his homeland, as a young policeman. The stories can be considered as photographs of the past of the major character. The last story of part two ends saying: «ይህ ፎቶ ታላቅ ነው» (ገጽ፣ 444). "This photograph is great" (p. 444). This statement has double reference: one to the photograph that Mäzzäbu is seeing in an album; and secondly to the whole story. This record is written without ruminating over its scheme; the stories are put as they come to the mind of the author (Mäzzäbu) as they plummeted to his consciousness. Such manner of writing has something to tell about Mäzzäbu. He is a victim who is deprived of love by almost all people around him. He finds love only at

the end. This love helps him to discard his past, what he is, as Sartre would say, his misery, melancholy; and becomes social man. Thus he is in an urge to dispose off his past and make it still in a projection of authorship.

This could be one of the possible reasons for its lack of conventional plot. The records are prints of his misery, his sadness, his observation and criticisms of the society (its superficiality, vanity and corruption). The criticisms and observations would not appear as beautiful and as witty as they appear in the novel, if they were integrated in a single plot scheme. The way the novel is presented, as the author pointed out in his preface, allows the reader to be involved. There are fragmentations of both sentences and memories that appeal for the reader's cooperation. The experimental feature of the novel could have some relationship with modernist and postmodernist literary movements (that needs further study).

The manner in which Mäzzgäbu narrates his stories, as plummeted records of his past seem to have an affiliation with the choice of the title, as "Gray Bells". As it has been stated above, the story is constructed from the past memory of the protagonist. Memories are usually vague. Sometimes, as Adam says they could get 'slim'. They are subject for distortion, exaggeration and evanescence. Thus they cannot be clearly put in their black and white, but rather as a mixture of these two—*gray*. The word *bell* could have an association with what the object does. A bell tolls. Thus it could be related again with the memories and memories within memories of the protagonist as they toll to his consciousness. When they ring with some pattern, he remembers and records them. There are sometimes some light relationships between one chapter and another in the main parts, or between the *Hətsän* stories (discussed below). One word could bridge between two stories that may not have apparent relationships (This style also needs to be studied further in its own accord). Thus Mäzzgäbu narrates the stories, as accounts of memories whenever they toll, as does a bell, from his distant grey past.

The author says in his preface that he is trying to create the art of forgetting, which makes the novel more close to reality and go beyond impressionism. There are instances where we witness this ‘art’. For instance on page 22 he tells us that he has forgotten the name of a woman, whose daughter is called Tsähay. Thus she used to be called as ‘mother of Tsähay’. This woman who suspects that her daughter has been raped by the Mayor (*Ato Engäda*) makes a speech in the village loudly with repeated utterance *kätem* (a word to show sarcasm, irony), this word is used as a title to this memory. However, on page 149 he says “*Kätem* said *Eteyyea Askalä*” (this is a rhetorical expression by which one shows one’s position borrowing words from another person). The narrator has forgotten that he previously said he cannot recall her name. The other, to add to this, is the name Zänäbäch and what it signifies for him. He says on page 96 whenever he hears this name he remembers pink gum. He tested it for the first time taking it from a young girl called Zänäbäch. But on page 143 he tells us an event when he encountered three guys talking to him admiring the look of his step-mother’s neck as: ‘Zänäbäch has pretty neck’. He never associates her with either that girl, the gum or other people he may have encountered having the same name. Throughout the first part, in which she is an integral part, he keeps on addressing her as «አአ» an acronym for «አንጀራ አናት» (step mother).

The art of forgetting can also be observed in the way the author (*Mäzzäbu*) handles some of the memories. There are memories that are marginalized and put at the end of each of the two main parts. These memories have titles in red. The red titles of these memories appear as words or phrase, in red, in the main parts. Adam says the color simply hints as there is something additional in relation to the word/phrase at the end of the part in which the word/phrase appears. He calls the marginalized memories *Hätsen* or *Wäshmät*. *Hätsen* is a borrowed word from the art of tailoring; that the process makes cloths loose. Adam says any story is endless. «ማንኛውም ልብወለድ አያልቅም። ማለቁ ምትሃት ነው። (ምሉዕ አይደለም)። የመስፋፋት ድብቅ ኃይል (ፖቴንሻል) አለው።»^h

* This is from the preface of the novel, which has no page number.

"There is no end to any novel. Its ending is a miracle (it is not complete). It has a hidden potential for expansion".

The expansion he is talking about is not something like elasticity. It is rather a kind of expansion from the center by adding new *eyes* entitled with words or phrases in red. The stories that appear as *Hasten* could be stories that can stand by themselves, sometimes even they could be memories within memories. Sometimes they may appear even more important than the main *eye story*.

He says his *Hitsen* is different from the conventional end note. The latter appears in reports and is scientific. It is also required in reports. The former however appears, at least in his case, in a novel. It is not scientific. Rather it represents the kind of outlook the society has which is most of the time based on gossips or "Encyclopedia of gossip" as he calls it. In addition, *Hitsen* does not have strong bond with what it indicates in the main eye. An end note has strong relationship with what it is associated in the main body. It may give facts. In the case of *Hitsen*, it could be simply a tale that has very remote and loose relationship with the story it appears in. He argues that if they were woven with the main story they would cause the story lose its plausibility. Weaving indicates artificiality, the high involvement of the author. Real stories are not like that.

The stories, being the memories of the major character makes the novel an In-itself. The past of Mäzzgäbu has already become In-itself on which he can add nothing. The memories are what he *is*; that is still untouchable. There is no possibility for Mäzzgäbu to alter any of them. Sartre (1943) claims,

Hence arises that memory presents to us the being which we were, accompanied by a plenitude of being which confers on it a sort of poetry. That grief which we had—although fixed in the past—does not cease to present the meaning of a For-itself, and yet it exists in itself with the silent fixity of the grief of another of the grief of a statue" (p. 119).

The past cannot present itself thus it needs a being through which it appears. This makes the past contingent. However, it is not the past that is recovered by the For-itself rather it is the reverse. The essence of the For-itself recovered through the past as In-itself. It gives what the For-itself was as fixed and still figure. The contingency deprives the In-itself of its being able to be a *value*. Value requires surpassing from what one has become to another, as there are infinite possibilities for the Being-for-itself. Therefore, since the past has become In-itself it is impossible for it to become a value. Thus Mazzgabü's past memory does not have the quality of value that we can realize through his stories, it simply gives us the past of Mäzzgäbu what he was as what he is (that become still), his essence.

Adam says in the introduction the story is mainly constructed from the sense of sight. «አዚህ የሚያጋጥመን እያንዳንዱ ምዕራፍ በአብዛኛው ከአንድ የስሜት አካል (መመልከት) የተገነባ ነው»/ “All the chapters that we may encounter here are constructed from one sense perception (sight)”. Mäzzgäbu speaks as a teenager *infant* -Mäwcha that his ‘profession’ is looking at a lit bulb. He says it is poetic to look at a bulb. After he discusses about the art of looking at the bulb he states, «እኔ የማወራው ስለማየት ነው። አንድ ነገር ወይም ብዙ ነገሮችን ስለማየት። መሆን የምመኛቸው ግን መሆን የማልችላቸው ብዙ ነገሮች ነበሩ» (ገጽ፣ 7)። /”Looking is what I am talking about. Looking at a single entity or many. There were many things that I wished to be but that I couldn’t” (p. 7).

This could take us to the cover picture of Mäzzgäbu. The picture that represents the protagonist is made with the traditional Ethiopian style; a young man with very big eyes and afro-hairstyle. Thus the big eyes depict the style of the story (each paragraph as an eye which is constructed mainly from the perception of sight). He can be attributed with the allusion of *an eye only* of the movie entitled *Dark Angels* (like Gudu Kassa, above),

The other different thing about this novel is the way it uses tabulations and sketches that have also affiliation with sight. There is a table that presents the actions of four people in four seconds. Each row represents what each of them was doing in a second (p. 45).

There is also the picture of a little stone that he found at the compound of his school and that he believes or wants to believe that surpasses the power of gravitational force after he throws it high that could be his projection to shun his misery (p. 50). The other is the drawing that gives the route he has followed from his house to Wäsän-Yäläshe's (a young girl in the neighborhood with whom he is in love) (p. 130). These illustrations could be related to the nature of his profession as a policeman who concretizes reports with facts (his free choice of being a police man has also association with his desire to gaze at the world). Thus the tabulation and the pictures seem to have significance, in relation to his profession in concretizing his memory with illustrations.

The For-itself looks at things to know them. And knowing, as we have stated, reverberating Sartre in the previous chapter, is an appropriation of the world through creation. When we are looking at something we are creating our value, our free projection without distorting what we are seeing. This is identified as, by Sartre (1943), *Actaeon Complex*. We can attribute this complex for Mäzzgäbu. He appears possessed, in looking at everything to “devour them in seeing” thus to appropriate them. It gives him the capacity to own the entities he sees.

The other complex that Sartre (1943) identifies as *Jonah Complex* can also serve to examine Mäzzgäbu's past. He fantasizes and imagines a lot. We shall take two of his fantasies that has similar feature. Both as a teenager and young man, he falls in love; both in Nəfas-Māwhca and Addis Ababa. In his hometown he falls in love with Wäsän, his peer who could not love him back. However, he used to have her in his imaginations. After he came to Addis Ababa he finds Gänät. This woman unlike the previous loves him. All the three fantasies of his with relation to her are before they become lovers officially.

According to Sartre there are four ways in which the imagined entity can be posited—*absence, non-existence, existing elsewhere* and *neutralization*. The For-itself that posits

the imagined entity in either of these nihilates the world twice. As a conscious being the For-itself knows it is not the world; that it is not one with it. Thus it is said to nihilate the world as posited out there. The second nihilation takes the imagined entity away from the world, as if it doesn't belong to it; for it is not possible to imagine the thing while seeing it. Mäzzgäbu imagines both Wäsän and Gänät positing them as *absent* and *existing elsewhere*. Through these he makes them *out-of-reach* of others and own them. Such 'to have' does not alter anything. To substantiate what we have stated, we can cite Sartre (1943) who says: "... the lover's dream [it is fantasy/imagination in our case] is to identify the beloved object with himself and still preserve for it its own individuality; let the Other become me without ceasing to be the Other" (p. 579).

The theme of the story, which has also association with the case of the existence of Mäzzgäbu, can be stated as a desire to be loved; having a partner. This notion recurs throughout the story. Mäzzgäbu lost his mother when he was three and his father has no heed for him. He is blind to what his second wife (Mäzzgäbu's step-mother) does to his son. In his teens he had never had anyone who loved him, who cared for him. He used to identify himself with things such as celestial bodies (the sun and stars) and insects as his partners; if they are people they do not know that he is making them his partner. He says:

በየቤታቸው ያሉትን ሰዎች ከኔ የሚለያቸው አንድ ትልቅ ጉዳይ ከሌሎች ሰዎች ጋር መሆናቸው ነበር። እኔ እዚያች መልዕልት ላይ ብቻዬን ነበርኩ። ከቤቴ ደግሞ ተጨንቆ ራት እንደበላ የሚጠራኝ ማንም የለም። ሁለመዬ እንደሌሎች ቢሆንም የምቀርበው የማፈቅረው የማምነው ሕጻን ጓደኛ አልነበረኝም (ገፅ፣ 4)።

There was one big issue that made other people, who were in their homes, different from me; it was their being with other people. I was alone on that podium of mine. There was no one concerned from my home who would call me for dinner. Even if I was like everybody else. There was no kid (peer) friend whom I was close to, I loved, I trusted (p. 4).

When he was around thirteen he used to sit on Sunday mornings on his mound waiting for the sun to appear. Then he accompanies her when she sets. She was one of his

partners. He says there were many partners that God has given him like the pole and its bulb that gives the road light. This was the only road light the town had. He associates light with both girls that he loves in his teens and later. In the first instance, he sees Wäsän, while the whole town was celebrating *Dämära*, surrounded by the yellow light of the moon, like a halo around her head just like saints. Though he knows that it is his sitting position that gives him that impression, he wanted to believe that she is different from all other girls. Similar associations are made with Gänät. When he saw her for the first time he likens her hands (she has a very light complexion) with the rays of the sun. His appropriation of the world through light has something to say about him. Light has a quality of alluring. It clears out darkness and danger. In the case of Mäzzgäbu, there seems there a part in him that needed to be lit both for himself and the world. The dark side of his soul that was aspiring to be touched and accepted by others; the dark abyss that was created through his loss of his mother.

He experiences nothingness through the *négatités* of the *absence* and *distance* of his mother through death and his lack of another person who can fill in the lack causes a great abyss in him. He says: «በጨዋታቸው መቀመቱን እንደ ጥጥ ሊከድጉልኝ ይለፋሉ..... (ገጽ፣ 334):»/ “With their stories they try to fill my abyss in vain” (p. 324).

His distance with others again creates another gap that was unbridgeable. This is what he says about it: «በእኔና በእነሱ መሀል እኔም ልሻገረው የምፈራ፣ እነሱም ሊሻገሩት የማይችሉት ወንዝ አለ» (ገጽ፣ 119):/ "There is a river, between me and them, that I fear to cross and that they cannot cross" (p. 119).

Such gap he has with others causes his loneliness and strengthens his association with the Being-in-itself, *thingness*. He treats and cares about suffering insects. He gives some of them warmth and energy to return to life and helps some others to fly. He sympathizes with the insects (including flies) that could not fly while they have wings. He says that «እነሱ ክንፍ ስላላቸው አየር ላይ መቆየት ቻሉአንጂ እንደ እኔ ስዱድ ናቸው» (ገጽ፣

6):: / "Though they could hover in the air since they have wings, they are like me, exiled". (p. 6). This is a projection of his wish to be cared about, to be loved, to be given warmth.

The other strong association he has is with his mound. This mound, which he thinks is his and that others also identify him with, is a help as a free projection that facilitates for him to see and appropriate the world through his seeing at things that he could not possess—such as other people. In addition, it was the place he could run to; hide himself from others especially from his step-mother.

We see his aspiration of the In-itself to fill in his lack through the way he wishes as in:
«መት እናቴ ከዚያ ከከበበኝ ደን ቅጠል ተመስላ እንድትመጣ ፈለግሁ:: እነዚያ ቅርንጫፎች አንድ ክንድ ሆነው እንዲያቅፉኝ ፈለግሁ (ባይወልዱኝም አሳድገውኝ የለ? አየርና ጥላ ሰጥተው እንደገለልተኛ ውስጣቸው ደጋግሜ ለምረሳው አፍታ ሸሽገውኝ)...:: (ገፅ፣ 81-82)::

I wanted my dead mother to come with the image of the leaves from the forest that surrounded me. I wanted those branches to hug me as one arm (even if they didn't begot me, didn't they bring me up? Giving me air and shadow, sheltering me, as an outcast, for a moment that I forget now and then).... (pp. 81-82).

In another instance we see him wishing to be himself the In-itself; to shun responsibility and anxiety of the absurd world. Sometimes he defines himself in likening himself with other things. For instance, he says «ከአንድ ቀን ሌላ ቀን የምስራው ነገር መቀመጥ ከሆነ የምመስለው ዛፍ ነው» (ገጽ፣ 4):: /“If what I do from one day to the other is sitting what I look like is a tree” (p. 4).

Likewise, he envies ants. His wish to be the In-itself can be cited from what he calls his “day dreams” that are meditations about ‘love’ and ‘freedom’. He wishes he was not born (p. 87). This wish to be no-thing is a wish to be the Being-for-itself to avoid anxiety and responsibility a condemnation imposed on him without any alternative. In relation to

this he also wonders about his situation. He asks why he has been descended from his father; why his mother is dead while there was an old lonely woman in their village; why God didn't give him a good step-mother.

On the other hand as a conscious being, as a Being-for-itself, he tries to see the limitations of the Being-in-itself. For instance he wonders how the big mountains could not be more than green and yellow in different seasons. (p. 33).

The other two of his projections are his love for Abäbä Bäkila (the late Ethiopian great runner) and for *Nana* candy. The only man he admires and loves from the bottom of his heart is Abäbä Bäkila. His thin legs awaken sympathy in his heart. He wanted to be him. This sympathy or rather empathy is related to himself. On the one hand he is making association with himself since he was so thin due to malnutrition. And secondly, this great runner represents for him the wish to run away from the place he was living.

The other appropriation that *Nana* candy shows is his choice of value. The sweetness represents his wish to have the world as sweet as the candy. When he went to Addis Ababa as a police officer he couldn't find *Nana*. Then he says he started to see the city with a critical eye. Before this his impression about the city was so different from what he heard. He considered it as if it is alien, mysterious, and powerful. This is how he expresses his fear and excitement about Addis' lack of *Nana*:

«ናና ከረሜላስ?» አልኩ።

የለም። ስለዚህ ፈረሁ።

ናና ድሮም ለእኔ የሚስጥር ምልክት ከረሜላ ናት። ሁሌ ትጠልቅብኛለች። አዲስ አበባ ይህን ሁሉ አግኝቶ ናና ከረሜላን ካጣች የሆነ ያልተረዳችው ያመለጣት ሚስጢር አለ። (ገጽ፣ 220)።

“How about nana?” I said.

There is no any. Thus I feared.

Nana is a kind of candy which always is a mysterious sign for me. She has always been so deep for me. If Addis'aba got all these and lacked *nana* there is something that she doesn't understand, the secret that she overlooked" (p. 220).

Only after he falls in love with Gänät, who also loves him, does he say: "I found my *nana*"; thus being reconciled with the city, with the world.

He fears mouths. There are plenty references to mouths throughout the novel. He hates the face because it has a mouth (The face wouldn't be important if eyes were not there). With mouth he is referring to his fear of being devoured by others. For instance he says: «እኔ ጮክ ብዬ ባልናገረውም ከእስዋ ["እእ"] በመሸሸ...እንዳልዋጥ የፈራሁ ዐይነት ይሰራኛል» (ገጽ፣ 5):// "Even if I do not say it loudly, in eluding from her [his step-mother] it makes me as if I fear being devoured" (p 5).

Conversely, he wants to devour things, the In-itself. The following is what he feels while eating fried eggs for the very first time. He says:

ሃሀትን ምግቡን ሁሉንም መብላት ፈለግሁ።
ሃሀትን ምግቡን የጠረጴዛውን ልብስ መብላት ፈለግሁ።
ሃሀትን ምግቡን የጠረጴዛውን ልብስና ጠረጴዛውን መብላት ፈለግሁ።
ሃሀትን ምግቡን የጠረጴዛውን ልብስ፣ ጠረጴዛውንና ምግብ የተሰራበትን ማድቤት መብላት ፈለግሁ (ገጽ፣ 47)።

I wanted to eat the plate the food everything.
I wanted to eat the plate the food the table-cloth.
I wanted to eat the plate the food the table-cloth and the table.
I wanted to eat the plate the food the table-cloth, the table and the kitchen in which the food was prepared" (p. 47).

The way it is put without commas suggests his wish reducing every entity listed into one and eat them up. This wish to devour is an *appropriation* of the In-itself *through destruction*, which reflects his anger.

As a being-for-others, he is an object for them. They look at him and alienate him for his freedom through their *look/gaze*. He says, «ይኼ ከተማው ሥራ የፈቱ ብዙ ዓይኖች አሉት. . . ሁልጊዜም ነበሩት» (ገጽ፣ 14)/ "This town has many unengaged eyes It always has them" (P. 14). The *gaze/look* of the others for him, as Sartre would say, is his hell. They make him feel ashamed and other times hamper him from doing things he likes to do (they for instance, make him abandon his desire to read novels through their gaze and sarcasms). Only once, it seems he could transcend the transcending look of the other. The gaze is of a peer kid who wants him to feel ashamed of his torn and scruffy socks.

አንድ ዕለት ጫማዬ ውስጥ ጠጠር ገብቶ ለማውጣት ሳወልቀው የካልሲዎቹን ቀዳዳና የተጋረባቸውን ቆሻሻ አንድ ልጅ አይቶ በሳቅ ሊሞት ነበር።

ምን አደረኩ? ምን መለስኩለት?

ምንም። ዝም ብዬ አየሁት [...] ትኩር አድርጌ ለረጅም ጊዜ ሳየው ሳቁን አቆመ (ገጽ፣ 94)።

One day when I took off my shoes to take out pebble, a boy laughed his head off, seeing the holes and the dirt caked on my socks. What did I do? What did I reply?

Nothing. I just looked at him.... When I stared at him for a longer time; he stopped his laughter (P. 94)

Through their look at each other, they exchanged a message. Mäzzgäbu knows something about the kid and his father that is equally scandalous—they are even poorer than him. He just looked at the kid's spoilt teeth that look like his fathers' who gnaws offal meat with his teeth, which seems makes the boy to be ashamed. Thus his *look* could transcend the *look* of the boy and makes him an object in his turn.

Mäzzgäbu was an alienated teenager from the society. Through their gaze, they became the death of his possibilities that makes him hidden on the midst of his world, *ie* one with the In-itself not as a Being-for-itself-for-others. Through their gaze also they fix him to the present the way they want him for he could not transcend it because of his indifference or fear. However, the look of the Other could also gives the essence or

whatness of the Being-for-itself. Sartre states (1956), “But in order for me to be what I am, it suffices merely that the Other look at me” (P. 262). In relation to this Mäzzgäbu identifies himself as a handsome young man through a remark a man makes who was at the shop of his father (his father is a barber). He goes to a mirror and sees himself and wanders about his features reflected in the mirror. He concludes that he resembles his mother more than his father. This is what he deducts from the tone of the man who says to his father "You have a handsome boy" and from his own reflection in the mirror. Then he gets down to the river to wash his body for the first time since his five or six years of age. This also has something to communicate; that he has never been even touched by his parents. Touch is one of the important communications that a man needs in relation to others to be social. Other people also confirm his being a handsome young man. One of these was a prostitute named Olivetii. He visits her following a suggestion by his friend Elias. Knowing that he is virgin, the latter, advices him to go to Olivatii. He goes there but could not sleep with her. He fails twice. He fears when he is with her. Probably, this has something to do with his lack of the appropriate “tactile” experience of touch and touched by others; or his fear of being devoured.

With Elias he makes some adventures. He helps him in spreading propaganda pamphlets in garrison of soldiers. Since he is only a teenager they do not suspect him of being dangerous. He leaves the pamphlets under their mattresses and snicks out. Elias encourages him to do this. But his relation with this friend ceases when Elias gets captured as a member of *Ethiopian People Revolutionary Party (EPRP)*. Mäzzgäbu has enjoyed his being involved in the adventure.

ከተማው ሰው ይበዛበታል... የኢህአፓ መፈክር ይበዛዋል [...] እዚያ ዓይነት አካባቢ ወዲያ ወዲህ እያልኩ ስራመድ ከተማው ውስጥ ካሉት ልክ እንደ እኔ ከመሰሉ ጉብኦች ጋር በማጭዳ ሚስጥራዊ ሽርክና ውስጥ እንዳለሁ ሳውቅ ደስ አለኝ። ከማይታይ ከማያየኝ ግን ከሚያፈቅረኝ ብዙ ሕዝብ ጋር ነኝ አልኩ (ገፅ 177)።

The city is populated ... it is full of EPRP’s slogans [...] When I pace up and down in that kind of place, when I realized that I was engaged with lads, who were just like me, in an invisible mysterious accord, I became

pleased. I said I was with many people that were invisible, that loved me without having to look at me (p.7).

He feels as if the hell disappears, he senses some people love him without looking at him. And through this he feels, at least, temporarily that his lack, the abyss of nothingness that he experiences through the death of his mother is filled.

After Elias's capture he moves to Addis Ababa as a policeman. In Addis though he starts to live with roommates of other police and a nurse (for five), he keeps on being reserved and quite. Among his roommates, especially Bäkürä arises as his rival and starts to kindle a new hell for him. Through his gaze of Mäzzgäbu's every movement and through his sarcasms he starts to alienate him from his freedom and causes the death of his possibilities.

When Mäzzgäbu was a teenager he was suffering from somnambulance. Now in this city he starts to suffer from hallucinations (both are 'magical' way through which he evades anxiety by altering his state, as he cannot change the external world). There are some incidents that are not clear whether they are hallucinations or not. For instance there is a man who introduces himself as Wäläyäu (he says he did not come from *Wällo*, however). This man is a 'mad' man who wears raged and very dirty clothes. He says he knows that he stinks to others. One day he calls upon Mäzzgäbu and their relationship starts. At one instance, there is an evidence that this man is seen also by another police. At other instances he seems to exist in Mäzzgäbu's hallucinatory realm only. This man believes he has responsibility for everything he does (which is very Existentialist). He says' «... ስለሰራሁት ሁሉ ኃላፊነት አለብኝ» (p. 338). This same person is the man who for the first time reveals to Mäzzgäbu that he is a coward and alienated from the world. Woläyäu pointes out what difference he has with him as follows:

እኔ አደርጋለሁ። ስህተት አላሳልፍም። ሰው አያስፈራም። ማየት ምን ይጠቅማል? ለመውደድ ለመጥላት ካልወጣህ? ትንሽ ካልበሽክ፣ ትንሽ የአንተን

በታ ካላሳየህ። መፈጠርህን ማስመስከር አለብህ። እዚኝ ምድር ላይ እንደነበርክ ማሳየት አለብህ [...]» (ገጽ፣ 341)።

I act. I do not let off mistakes. Man is not scary. Of what use is seeing? If you do not go out to love, to hate? [If you do not] disturb little; if you do not show, a little, your place. You should show that you exist. You should show that you were on this planet. (p. 341).

Then Mäzzgäbu for the first time realizes he is a coward; that he is not in the world as a Being-in-the-world, who is involved and act.

በራሴ የብቸኝነት ጎዳናዬ ላይ ያጋጠሙኝን ሰዎች በግዴታ ከማወቅ ሌላ ሰውን ልወዳጀው፣ ተጋጭቼ ላርመው የፈለግሁበት ጊዜ አልነበረም። ጉዋደኛ የመሆን ፍላጎት እንኩዋን ቢኖረኝ በቸልተኛነት አስቀረዋለሁ። ተጣልቼ አላውቅም። አፍቅሬ አላውቅም። በአካባቢዬ የተሳሳተ ነገር ባይ ለማስተካከል ከሰው ጋር መሆን እንዳለብኝ እዘነጋለሁ[...] (ገጽ፣ 342)።

On the road of my loneliness, unless with people that I met and compelled to know, I never wanted befriend man; want to correct him in argument. Even if I had the desire to be a friend I abandon it in apathy. I never quarreled. I never loved. I always forget that I should be with people to fix things if I see things go wrong around me (p. 342).

He realized what many people in his present and past lack is "little love" (p. 379). The other person who wiped away all his past through her kiss is his lover Gänät. There was a small round back scar that he got himself into when he was a teenager when his father slapped him on the face, for his service to Mustäfa in delivering a love letter to his step-sister. The hot water that was there in the room peeled his back skin. He used to feel ashamed of it. He used to contemplate about it but never saw it. Bäkürä's sarcasms when he gets in and out after he sees it for the first time opened new wound in his heart. However, after Gänät kissed it, it seems he become complete again. Sartre (1956) says,

whereas before being loved we were uneasy about that unjustified, unjustifiable protuberance which was our existence, whereas we felt ourselves "*de trop*," we now feel that our existence is taken up and willed even in its tiniest details by an absolute freedom which at the same time our existence conditions and which we ourselves will with our freedom.

This is the basis for the joy of love when there is joy: we feel that our existence is justified" (p. 371).

After he is justified as an existent with his "protuberance" by his lover he started to act. He starts to advise people to take care of their properties for they may get stolen, or cross roads carefully, etc though many of them do not pay him attention. Finally, one day when Bäkürä started to complain that he should not hung his jacket over the chair and attempted to say things, as usual, Mäzzgäbu tried to dispose the chair out of the room. When Bäkürä tried to rescue his chair, Mäzzgäbu hit him with the leg of the chair on his forehead and then kicked him between his sheen. Then he left the room. With this he merged to and began to flow with the current of the river of the world with others as an individual, responsible person who cares for others. Afterwards he says to himself:

አምፖል እያየሁ አይደለም፣ ንፋስ መውጫን እየጣልኩ ነው፤ በደም ስሮቼ የሚሮጠው እንደ እሳት የቀጠነ ደም ነበር። ሽፋሽፍቶቼ እንደ ሲሚንቶ ከረዋል። የበኩረን ቦግ ያለ ጨለማ ፊት በቅንድቦቼ እየቀደድኩት ነበር። ማእከሉን እየተጋፋሁ። አውቃለሁ ለመሞት ወይም ለመኖር እየለፋሁ እንደሆነ (ገጽ፣ 437)።

I am not seeing a bulb; I am discarding *Nəfas-Mäwcha*. What was running in my veins was thinned blood like fire. My lashes, as if they were cemented, were stiffed. I was tearing apart Bäkürä's garish darken face, with my brows. Fighting its core. I know I am striving either to die or live (p. 437).

Thus he could, at last, naught his past essence to try a new possibility in the future. He becomes a responsible individual, who does not go to the other extreme of nihilism. A woman who cooks food for him and his roommates (at her own place), called Chaltu says to him «ከልጅነቱ ጀምሮ የተበሳጨ ሰው ጨካኝ ነው» (ገጽ፣ 375)። / "A man who was upset since his childhood is brutal" (p. 375)./ However, he goes against this expectation of many, as a ready-made value. He becomes a 'good' person despite his past misery. He marries Gänät and fathers a child, finally. There were many women including Olivetii and Chaltu, who desired him. But he couldn't have them even if he was tempted, especially by Olivetii on his second night. He finally gets who he thinks is made for him (she is a distant relative of Bäkürä; and he wants to have a different relationship. And

this is one of the reasons, why Bäkürä acts the way he acts). By choice Mäzzgäbu becomes her object and she his. Thus, we can say, he identifies himself by choice as a man who is a Being-for-itself-for-others-in-the-world⁹, authentic and free.

It is possible to raise a question here. How engaged or committed the author is. When we say the author it can refer to both Adam Räta and Mäzzgäbu Dub'ale, both of whom wrote *GQ*, one as a real author and the other as an implied author or narrator of his autobiography. The latter even says he is planning to entitle his novel *GQ* which makes this title appear as a title of a novel within a novel.

There are indications that the setting, time-wise, refers to the 1960s and 1970s. The indications, especially of those historically important marks of years and incidents are revealed, in most cases, indirectly. For instance the famine of 1973 is referred to through what his step-mother says when he asks for a piece of meat (she usually leaves the offal of mutton on holidays for him to eat). He reports that she says “Didn’t you hear that the country is hit by famine?” Or to refer to the time of the revolution he mentions the strikes he saw sitting on his mound, or the way his father acted after it; his father hides pictures of the Emperor from where it was hanged in his house (he used to say he loved Emperor Hailä-Selasse). At another place he replies, to the request why he does not speak when the people ask him he says “because I have swallowed a fat Imperialist”. Similarly to refer to the *Zämächa* of the *Derge*’s regime he presents it in telling us as his step-sister is sent to the rural area to teach.

There are plenty words and descriptions of acts that helps us to identify what happened in which period. However, neither Adam nor Mäzzgäbu discuss or try to disclose the hot issue of the period. The novel rather gives very personal experience of the young man. This does not, we can argue, ostracize the writer from engagement. Either the author or the narrator in discussing the very personal realm of a man he believes he is important in making relations between both the external and internal features of the major character.

He says “I am the one who is the victim and the one who recorded it” (p. 11). Thus he believes that he is important in disclosing his situation. He also believes that he is revealing the very essence of lack of love from family members and others despite the important big issues of the time. Such lack of love can happen any time. This is his engagement that he chooses appeal for our (reader’s) cooperation for change. Thus after we read we are becoming responsible in acting as the author is appealing for a change. Therefore, it is possible to say both the author and the narrator-author are engaged writers who attempt to create individualistic situation of a young man who can represent others in the same situation.

CHAPTER FIVE: Summary and Conclusion

But there remains also the truth that every end in history necessarily contains a new beginning; this beginning is the promise, the only "message" which the end can ever produce. Beginning, before it becomes a historical event, is the supreme capacity of man; politically, it is identical with man's freedom. Initium ut esset homo creatus est-"that a beginning be made man was created" said Augustine.'• This beginning is guaranteed by each new birth; it is indeed every man.

Hannah Arendt

5.1. Summary

As responsible reader and researcher, the researcher attempted to analyze the selected three novels: *Fəqər eske Mäqabər (FM)*, *Kä'admas Bashagär (KB)* and *Gəracha Qachəloch (GQ)* to elucidate the case of existence and forwarded possible interpretations, among the infinite possibilities, applying Sartrean Existential philosophy as an analytic approach. All the novels are set in the socio-political milieu of the 1960s and 1970s of Ethiopia, the periods that are characterized by political unrests. All the authors of these novels are identified as engaged or committed writers who tried to disclose the situations of their time. Haddis Alämayähu depicted the feudal period, while Bä'alu made his setting the time in which capitalism was introduced to the country. Thus he unveils the individual struggle of the intellectual as a product of the period. And Adam bridging the periods of capitalist and socialist Ethiopia without raising and discussing the big issues of the time, discloses the very individualistic worries and sufferings of a young man. Thus these novels do represent different situations of individual characters who are *thrown* in different historical periods. In addition, all of them are identified as novels that deal much with the existential issues of love and freedom.

To study the case of existence in *FM* four characters have been selected: *Fitawrari Mäshäsha*, *Säblä-Wängel*, *Gudu Kassa* and *Bäzzabäh*. *Fitawrari Mäshäsha* is branded as a coward character who will remain the same forever in the realm of the In-itself through

his death. He is also found to be in a bad-faith as a man who is living in the ready-made values of the past of others. Amazingly he also considers others as Being-in-itself as if they do not have a future in all its infinite possibilities. Säblä's free projection is to be free of the enslavement that her historical situation imposes on her. She wants to have her own family and play the role of a woman. She fails to achieve this because she faces *resistance* from the external world. The social system is the *obstacle* that imprisons her from realizing her free project. Owing to this, she has always been immersed in a state of *nausea* except for one brief moment of experiencing relief through a melody she accidentally hears from a flute. She ends like her father as an unauthentic, *unfree* and in bad-faith. Believing that Bäzzabḥ is the only true love she has found, she marries him on his death-bed and becomes a nun, which is one with death. She assimilates herself to the dead while she is alive and this is a leap from the face of the absurd world, anxiety, which is negating the infinite future possibilities as a Being-for-itself.

The other characters Gudu Kassa and Bäzzabḥ are identified as free and authentic characters. Gudu Kassa is observed going against the traditional value with sufficient reason. He rejects the ready-made value and becomes a self-made man. He invents his own value as an authentic being. Similarly Bäzzabḥ also chooses his own 'self' or value and dies heroically on his journey to face his future possibility. He is the one who contemplates more seriously about the notion of choice and freedom. He believes no one should make a choice for anyone.

Bä'alu's novel is recognized as a novel that is influenced much with the Existential philosophy. Abärra Worku, just like Gudu Kassa, Säblä and Bäzzabḥ found questing his freedom. Three phases are identified regarding his life: *realization of his thingness, dread and freedom*. The first phase is aligned with his realization of his position which is not more than an entity. This coincides with the time when he is selfish and chases the pleasure of the flesh. This stage is thus paralleled to Kierkegaard's first stage called *aesthetic*. In the second stage he gets stretched in all his four limbs. His friend urges

him to abandon everything (job, family, etc.) and become a painter; his family wants him to father a child to preserve their genealogy; his wife causes him jealousy; he fears to quit his job; and on the other side he wants to be free of all these. At this stage however, he is observed compromising the wishes of others; thus as a result ascended to the second level of Kierkegaard's *Ethical* man. Then at the end he achieves his freedom through becoming free of his God, relatives, friend and wife, which is tantamount to attaining the *extraordinary* level. This last stage is considered as a challenge by the author to Kierkegaard, for he suggests faith as a remedy to overcome absurdity and the author let his hero end in apostasy. Only Lulit shares the realm of freedom with Abärra. She finally changes her course of life realizing her future with infinite possibilities. The others, including Hailä-Mariam, are regarded as characters in bad-faith. Hailä-Mariam is defeated in the face of the absurd world through faith which is a remedy in Kierkegaard's scheme of philosophy and a bad-faith in Sartre's. In addition, he is observed finally succumbing to the world in regarding talent more important than the individual, *the spirit of seriousness*, which is *unauthenticity*.

The third novel *GQ* illustrates the life of a young man who narrates his own story. The novel has applied a new style called *Enjori*. The narrator's name Mäzzgäbu Dub'ale, which means 'the record plummeted', associated with the manner in which he composed his stories. The stories are memories that are put without any premeditated scheme. The major character is in urge of projecting his past in writing it down, to get free of it. This is thus considered as one of the possible reasons for the novel to appear without conventional plot scheme. The narrator keeps records of the lives of people (their cruelty, kindness, superficiality, etc) in a very personal way, as he perceives it. For the perception of sight is heavily applied in the novel, it is associated with the *Actaeon complex*, while his fantasies are related with *Jonah complex*.

The death of the mother of the narrator is identified as *nothingness* and *lack* through the *négatéts* of *absence* and *distance*. Before he meets Woläyāw (that could be a man from

his hallucination) and Gänät (his lover) he was in bad-faith who sees the world in apathy. However, after he realized himself through these two he becomes a Being-in-the-world, who chooses his free project of art. Having this brief summary of the study we can go to the concluding remarks.

5.2. Conclusion

There are two areas that the researcher wants to elucidate on in this sub-section: the relationships of reader-characters and individual-society. We have stated in the second chapter of this study that writing is for and by others, as Sartre (1945) argues. The reader is the one who is expected to generously involve with the action of the writer. Thus the reader is the Other for the writer and vice versa. The role of the writer, however, in the process of the disclosure is leading the reader. And the reader as a subject holds the right to interpret and reveal the infinite manifestations of the work. In addition, Sartre (1945) argues that the writer writes for his contemporaries to disclose the situation of injustice she observes to bring about change. Thus the critic is expected to look at the products of living authors, instead of the works of dead writers about dead things.

In this study except the author of *GQ* the other two are dead. The researcher would like to pose a question here. Should we disregard what they have written taking them as dead works about dead things? If Sartre says the past is the essence of the Being-for-itself that is *is*. It is the only way that we can surely conclude about the Being-for-itself, for his future is in flux. However, the future is under the situation of the past choices. Even if it is possible to abandon it totally, it is impossible to erase it as if it never existed. Law accuses a criminal not for what she will do in the future or is doing in the present but for what she did in the past. This is because as Sartre himself says the past is the only essence that can be surely identified with the Being-for-itself. Otherwise it would have been difficult to punish the criminal if the past was also in constant change same as the future. Thus, no matter how much the criminal regrets her past deeds, she receives her punishment now that would also shed its shadow on her future. Thus by the same token

we can regard past works of dead authors as crystallized essences of the socio-political situations of the past society they disclosed which would have direct or indirect relationships with the future. Therefore, they should not be simply ignored.

The researcher of this study even holds a position that a work of a living author is also a dead Being-in-itself. The novel is the reflection of the past realm of its characters who have given up their possibilities of change in the future. The characters whether they are dead or not are going to be limited and are forced to prey on the Other, the reader. The infinite possible manifestations that the reader or critic provides ultimately base themselves on the corpus of the novel. The future of the characters exists as long as the reading lasts. Of course, as Adam Råta pointed out any novel can have a hidden potential for expansion. But the expansion is only theoretical than practical. The author cannot or does not write about the same character throughout his life—even if the character appear and reappear with different names. If a different author writes about similar character that is abandoned by another author the character cannot be considered as a person who is posited in the same situation as the authors are different and unique. The individual writer is important in revealing a unique individualistic situation. Even if the same writer is determined to write about the same characters throughout her life, it is inevitable that its end is bound to come when the author dies. If we take the novels selected for this study, the futures of all of the characters that are posited both by the dead and the living authors, are equally alienated from the characters. Their essence crystallizes the very moment we finish reading. That is why we use present continues tense in discussing the situations of characters. Their psudo-future with infinite possibilities of change is possible only with new readers. They prey as a dead being on the Other, the reader.

The study of the existence of the characters of the selected novels is possible because the characters have become at their halt.

There is also another point that is observed in this study in relation to the reader-character relationship. It has been stated above that if the Being-in-itself is the character the Other is the reader, as an outside observant, who has no direct effect on the character. The only effect that the reader/critic has on the character is in saving the dead character from dying the second death due to failing to remember. As long as there is reader the dead characters exist as they are crystallized. However, one point observed is the essence of the characters is highly dependent on the memory and complexity of the association that the individual reader is capable of. For instance, we can forget the end of Säblä as a woman in-bad faith and hail her in her crystallized essence when she flees her hometown questing her lover. We can do this due to sympathy by just letting her end slip us like an evanescent dream. Sartre would call it bad-faith for it is a lie to the self. But what if the individual chooses it. What justification do we have to disprove as all mankind will not stand with the sympathetic reader? There isn't any. Thus the Other (the character) chooses the Being for-itself (the reader) this way.

When we move to the individual-social relationship, as revealed in the novels it is observed that the more the society is harsh towards the individual the more the individual becomes violent and suicidal. As observed in *FM*, the social power over the individual is so great that it has even the right to intervene and manipulate ultimate desires of men, such as of *preservation*. Both Säblä and Bāzzab̄h are victims of this type. They end up tragically, giving their lives. In considering *KB* though the kind of situation that the major character, Abār̄ra, is put under regarded as so intense, we can say the social pressure seems less intense than the above two characters passed through. However, he is weaker than Säblä and Bāzzab̄h in his quest for his freedom. He ends up in prison for murder. At least he remains alive when the story ends and he will remain thus eternally. In *GQ* no one dies. The major character before he attains his free projection he is characterized as even more weaker than Abār̄ra. Abār̄ra realizes his being an It-self himself. Māzzgābu, however, realizes it through another agent. He was indifferent for everything and everyone, and who never engaged in action. When we examine his

relationship with others we find it so loose. Therefore, we can conclude that the more intense the social pressure is the more the individual is forced to quest for her/his freedom and, in the reverse the more light the pressure of the society the more the individual achieves his free choice without being a martyr.

The other point realized is the fact that the society assumes to pressurize the individual to abandon her/his freedom. The society, as observed in the novels, enforces its power over the individual not as an amorphous and abstract entity, but rather as definite and concrete individuals. The traditional and conventional ready-made values that negate the individual's freedom to be experimental and that are descended to the society from the past, occur through men like *Fitawrari Mäshäsha*, Abatä and Mäzzgäbu's step-mother. And as in *GQ* the positive approving values reveal themselves through Gänät and Wäläyew. Thus this feature of value, in relation to Sartre's non-existence of the absolute, can allow the possibility for the individual to deviate from what is established. Both parties that want to implement their freedom or power to approve or disapprove of the exercise of freedom, exist in individual level thus neither of the parties have the absolute good and evil with them.

Finally, we shall see what benefits existentialism could provide if we actualize it in our lives. Morris (1966) states, "Existentialism is not a missionary movement. It does not promise anything. Rather, it tells us what is at stake in the task of being human" (p. 3). Existence, as we have observed in the novels is a *task* that even demands the existent's life *at stake*. Applying existential philosophy in our lives makes our lives more meaningful through making us more responsible for both ourselves and others. As we can cite from *FM*, for instance, the more the society impedes the individual from achieving his individual free projections (for all equal) the more other irresponsible individuals abuse their power. For the corruption of *Fitawrari Mäshäsha* it is the mass that suffers. But if all is allowed to act freely the system would be put in poise. If such individual-social relationship is allowed, naturally we won't have 70 million values.

Perpetually selected values would be employed by individual choice of each. However, if the social system denies the individual's freedom it is the possibility of the *new beginning* of Hannah Arendt that the society risks to cost. The *new beginning* has always carries the promise of the possibility of attaining the highest goal as “existential community” (Reinhardt, 1952:236) for the society. Thus it is suggested that, following Morris (1966), the educational system which is basic for everything, to be shaped by Existential philosophy (maintaining its existing merits) to make education “an act of *discovery*” rather than “an act of *taking*” (p. 117).

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Notes

1. Source: Mick Underwood, 2003. Web and Stacy D. Coates, 2000. Web.
2. The writer of the article "Political Corruption of Large and Small Insects", scrutinizes that the case of corruption in South America and East Countries, and finally concludes: "What we can seem to witnessing in way of these scandals [of the corruption] is a diffusion of responsibility" (Maddocke, 2004. Web).
3. Anthropological in its sense of investigating the individual-social relationship.
4. The closeness of Ethiopian philosophy is what is deducted from Claude Sumner's (1985) essay. After he established the differences between the Ethiopian and Western philosophy he states:

[The Western world] is the offshoot of ancient Greek thought and in particular of the civilization which has developed since the Renaissance. However, it carries within itself its own contradiction: existentialist philosophy is a world to find the concrete anew, to go the Greek and German manner of edifying a whole system on the basis of abstraction, prefers to apply thought to the art of living (p. 428).

Thus concern about the existing world and man is what both Ethiopian philosophy and Existentialism have in common.

5. The features of Ethiopian philosophy that Claude Samner pointed out does not include Zära Yaqob's which is rational and scientific (Samner, 1985:428).
6. For complete reference please cite Stern (1967: 15-17).
7. Such similarity of Sartrean Existentialism with other literary theories, such as Readers Response, should not be surprising. Sartre's Existentialism is begotten from Husserl's phenomenology (a philosophy that tries to reduce Objects into their phenomena or essence). Similarly Ingarden applied the same philosophy to establish his literary theory, which in turn influenced theoreticians such as Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, George Poulet, Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss. (Hogen, 2000:114).
8. To get the full analysis of the characteristics of the persons who are indifferent and masochistic, please refer, Sartre (1943:378-383).
9. Stern (1967) says Existentialism is "a philosophy of hyphens" (p. 26); we are contributing one to the existing list.