ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES, JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

Postmodernism in Selected Ethiopian Diasporic Novels in English

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Literature

By

Misrak Tenna Adafre

December 2019
Addis Ababa

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This is to certify that the thesis submitted by Misrak Tenna, entitled **Postmodernism in Selected Ethiopian Diasporic Novels in English,** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Literature complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Abstract

Postmodernism is a movement that has influenced the artistic as well as cultural discourses since the 1960s. Though debatable it generally suggests a move away from the modernist conventions that have influenced the Western thought, social life and culture for centuries. Postmodernism specifically is characterized by, a rejection of authority, skepticism towards totalitarian narratives and reality. On the literary level it is applied to make sense of new insights and developments in contemporary literary works. Even if postmodernism succeeded in influencing the literary domain of the world for over seventy years now it is invisible in the Ethiopian literary scene. Thus, it is this gap that motivated the researcher to carry out the study on postmodernism. In this study, an attempt has been made to analyze aspects of postmodernism in the selected Ethiopian Diaspora novels. Nega Mezlekia's The God Who Begat the Jackal and The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades and Dinaw Mengistu's How to Read the Air and All Our Names are selected for the analysis. The method of the study is textual analysis. Through thorough reading of the novels relevant excerpts are identified and critically analyzed both on the formal and thematic level using the theoretical parameters adapted from postmodern literary theories of Barry Lewis, Brian McHale, Linda Hutcheon and Patricia Waugh. Intertextuality, ontology, metafiction, temporal distortion and fragmentation are used as parameters for the analysis. Accordingly, the study revealed that the authors have brought prior texts like history, popular culture, fiction and non-fiction into the contexts of the novels and borrowed formal styles from different texts that promoted plurality of realities and characterized the novels as pastiches than autonomous works. It is also found out that the novels have foregrounded ontological concerns using alternative worlds, mixing fact and fiction and through description creation paradox to destabilize the truth status of the issues presented in the novels and the mode of existence of the characters. It is also observed that the authors have revealed their consciousness of the fictional status of their stories and various grand narratives exposing their textuality. Temporal distortions and structural and character fragmentation also constitute the novels. Observing the extensive use of aspects of postmodernism and their subversion to question the notions of totality, authority and reality the study concludes that the novels can fall under a category of postmodernist fiction.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Overview of Ethiopian Indigenous and English Literature

Ethiopia is a country of ancient literary tradition whose written literatures succeeded in being subjects of scholarly inquiries in the Western world. Unlike most African countries written art in Ethiopia is not an outcome related with the influence of the West. Concerning this Gerard (1980, p.67) and Zarandona (2009, p.33) comment that the introduction of writing in Africa is not a consequence of colonization. Written art had been known and widely practiced in ancient Ethiopia, and the Ge'ez writing of this old Christian nation has awakened scholarly curiosity in 17th century Europe.

Ethiopian literature is different from African literary heritage because of three factors. The first reason is that Ethiopia has a long-established written language culture through which annals (historical records) were being produced for more than 2000 years. These historical records include inscriptions left on stone labs (of Axumite rulers) and Chronicles of Emperors written by dabtarras (Scholars of Theology) on parchments. Second, Ethiopia's literary heritage has its roots in the Christian tradition. The third is the absence of colonial experience in the country. Ethiopia is among the few African countries that did not experience the horrors of slavery and colonization (Gerard, 1971, p.4; Kurtz, 2007, p.188; Mikias, 2011, p.294).

Early Ethiopian literature was written in Ge'ez. Gerard (1971, p.273-274) and Zarandona (2009, p.134) observe that from the 4th century AD, Ge'ez was the language of Ethiopian literature, which has joined the field through translations of religious works from Arabic and Greek. And in the 13th century, original religious works appeared in Ge'ez along with translations. Ge'ez reached its golden age under Zara Yacob who reigned the country from 1434-1468. Ge'ez lived on until the eighteenth century before lingering as the language of church and culture.

Currently, Ethiopian literature is categorized under various indigenous and foreign languages. However, Amharic is the prominent. According to Zarandona (2009) Amharic writings emerged in the 15th century with poems of secular contents mainly praises of rulers of the time and war songs. Menelik II and Haile Selassie I, who continued the modernization that Emperor Tewodros II began, encouraged western type literature in Amharic. However, only a few novels could be published before the Italian occupation of 1936 (p.134-135). Although literary works are being

written in other indigenous languages in addition to Ge'ez, Ethiopian literature mainly consists of Amharic literature because the bulk of it is produced in the Amharic language. Regarding this, Fellman says:

> Most modern Ethiopian writers and authors have customarily published in Amharic, the national tongue, and lingua franca of Ethiopia. A few have published in Tigrinya, the sister language of Amharic, and now the official language (alongside Arabic) or Eritrea. Very few have published in English and certainly in comparison with other African countries like Nigeria, Tanzania, etc. (2003, p.235).

Kurtz (2007) also observes that in Ethiopian history, Amharic is the dominant indigenous language that dominated both official and informal discourse. Unlike most African countries, more novels, plays, and poetry collections are published in Amharic than in European languages (p.189). This can show that in Ethiopia, Amharic is the principal language used in non-literary and literary forms of communications. Its position is not either affected by foreign languages like most African artworks. Nonetheless, this does not mean that no works are produced in foreign languages. Authors have experimented with these languages, especially in English, but compared to the writing tradition of the country and the Amharic literary history, English literature is a very recent development. Concerning this, Beer (1973) and Huntsberger (1973) state that Ethiopian literature in English is a recent phenomenon. Creative writing in English is the result of the sixties, which were inspired by the country's acceptance of English as a second language. Prior to this period, Ethiopian literature was mainly literature in the indigenous languages Ge'ez and Amharic. Ge'ez was used for literary purposes until the end of the 19th century, Amharic took its' place in the twentieth century, and English is an outcome of the sixties.

Scholars associate the birth of English literature in Ethiopia with Ethiopian authors' urge to be read outside their country and the modernization project of the time. Huntsberger (1973, p.28) and Fellman (2004, p. 186) explicate that even if Amharic is the most prolific vernacular literature of Sub-Saharan Africa, the publicity of the authors is confined to Ethiopia. This almost made the world to overlook Amharic literature. However, in the 1960s, European languages entered the Ethiopian scene through the modernization scheme undertaken by Emperor Haile Selassie I. Foreign languages were introduced in the educational sector as well as the literary world of Ethiopia.

Tewodros (2002) also observes that the causes for the development of English literature in Ethiopia fall under historical, educational, and publicity aspects. The historical factor is viewed in relation to the country's earlier relations with foreign countries like Italy, France, and England. Through these relations, Emperor Haile Selassie, I was able to send students in western universities for modern education. These educated people were later able to influence the literary tradition of Ethiopia. The educational changes, which were the results of the historical factors, also contributed to the development of English literature. Italian, French, and English began to be taught in schools. In 1941 after the Italian occupation English language has been adopted as the medium of instruction and later accepted as the official foreign language of the country. The Ethiopian authors' urge to be read by outsiders had also impacted the English literary tradition. Ethiopian authors started writing in English to attract an international audience (p.3-7).

Though English literature entered the frame in the 60s, the production was restricted to a limited number of publications, and most of the authors were dependent on periodicals. Beer (1973), Debebe (1980) and Fekade (1985) comment that due to its recent use as medium, small domestic market, stifling censorship, high cost of printing and an almost complete lack of local publishing facilities, Ethiopian literature in English has been confined to a small number of novels, plays, short stories and poems. The authors have relied on local journals, magazines, and newspapers such as *Something* (University literary publication 1963-67), *The Addis Reporter*, *Menen*, *Ethiopian Mirror*, *Ethiopian Observer*, and *Ethiopian Herald*.

The literatures comprise original works as well as translations. For instance, from the novels written at the time Ashenafi Kebede's Confession (1962) Daniachew Worku's *The Thirteenth Sun* (1973), Sahle Sellassie's *The Afersata* (1968) and *Warrior King* (1974) are originally written in English. Imru Haile Sellassie's *Fitawrari Balay* (1962) and Makonnen Endalkachew *The City of the Poor* (1955)were originally written in Amharic. Sahle Sellassie's Shinega's (1964) is also originally written in Chaha, a Gurage language(Beer,1973, p.46-47).

Besides their limited number, literary products of the English language had also fallen under scrutiny with regard to their quality. Regarding this, Debebe (1980) says, "nevertheless, we must consider these writings only as experimental works that may pave the way to better writings in the future" (p.151). However, the awakening of the 60s and70s could not penetrate and develop through the following decades. Since the 1970s a limited number of Ethiopian literary texts in

English such as Mulugeta Gudeta's novel *Evil Days* (2008) and short story collection *Demon at the river: And other Ethiopian Stories in English, French and Italian* (2015), Tariku Abas Etenesh's novel *Eyes and Mist* (2012) and Eyob Getahun's novel *Behind Invisible Bars* (2014) were published. But these works were not very influential. Besides, there was little academic interest in the area. According to Endalkachew (2008, p.2), it is the works of the Ethiopian Diaspora, which opened a new window of opportunity for the development of Ethiopian literature in English. These works succeeded in gaining international recognition and attract critical attention.

1.2. The Ethiopian Diaspora and Its Literatures

1.2.1. Diaspora

Etymologically the term Diaspora originates from a Greek word *diaspeiro,* which refers to the dispersion of people from their homeland. Historically it denotes the exile of the Jews from their homeland and their dispersion throughout the world (Cohen,2008, p.21; Dufoix 2008, p.4; Safran,1991, p.83). Later it was used to describe the dispersal of religious minorities in Europe (Dufoix, 2008, p.1; Faist, 2010, p.12).

However, through time, the term Diaspora had evolved and is used to express broader events associated with most people in the world. Cohen (2008, p.1) presented this development in three groups. He labeled the first group that comprises Jews, Africans, Armenians, Irish, and Palestinians victim Diasporas. These are groups of people who were forced to leave because of traumatic events. The second category refers to labor and imperial diasporas that mainly consist of Indians and the British (ibid, p.61). The third group withholds trade, and business diasporas exemplified through Chinese and Lebanese (ibid, p.83). These categorizations imply that the concept of Diaspora is associated with voluntary and nonvoluntary displacement of communities from their homeland for purposes of safety, livelihood, and business.

Safran (1991), on the other hand, tries to bring diasporas under one umbrella and defines them relying dominantly on sociological and psychological characteristic traits. It reads:

> Lest the term lose all meaning, I suggest that Connor's definition be extended and that the concept of diaspora be applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics:1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "center" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a

> collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. (Safran, 1991, p.83-84).

This study delimits its scope to the Ethiopian Diasporas who are in the group of the Africans. The African Union defines the African Diaspora as, "The African Diaspora consists of people of African origin living outside of the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union" (2005, p. 4-5).

1.2.2. The Ethiopian Diaspora

The Ethiopian Diaspora consists of people of Ethiopian origin living outside of Ethiopia fleeing the country due to political, social and economic reasons at different times, even if authors like Bonacci (2015, p.3) referring to Alpers and Koser (2005) try to trace the origin of the Ethiopian Diaspora in the Middle East. Particularly in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean slave trades and to the religious community of Jerusalem. However, many scholars agree that prior to the 1974 revolution, Ethiopian settlements in foreign lands were rare.

Solomon (2007) studying the Ethiopian Diaspora development in the context of the United States notes Ethiopians that were sent for further education always come back to take the positions and responsibilities that were given by their government. He claims permanent migration is a consequence of the 1974 Revolution (p.3). Supporting this Kuschminder and Siegel (2010), referring to Singer and Wilson (2007), also say the Ethiopian Diasporas that constitute the largest population in America are immigrants of the1974 Ethiopian revolution and the conflict that lasted for two decades (p.2).

This is true of the Ethiopian emigration in Europe too. Schlenzka (2009) notes that before 1974, no migration of Ethiopians was reported, and students who came for education between 1930 and 1974 largely returned to their homeland. It is estimated that around 5% of the Ethiopian

Community living in Germany today arrived before 1974 due to academic reasons, 20-30% came during the time of the military rule and the largest group, between 65-70% of the Ethiopian citizens living in Germany came after 1991(p.10). The reality of the Ethiopian immigrants in the Netherlands is no different. According to Abbink (2006, p.368), even if Ethiopian students came to the Netherlands prior to 1974, the first arrival of political refugees was reported in the late 1970s, and this steady flow continued after the change in the Ethiopian regime, that is, 1991. Though the initial reasons for Ethiopian emigration were repression, civil war, and regional conflict like the late 1970s and unrest, political and economic insecurity and violence in the 1990s, economic migration in Ethiopia is currently persistent.

The exodus of Ethiopians to the West in the name of better earnings and living conditions is increasing every year. The emigration, especially of the highly educated youth, is affecting the country. Solomon (2002) states, Ethiopia has been providing the United States and parts of Africa with highly educated professionals. He says the consequence is devastating in the health sector. Many medical doctors leave the country despite the country's persistent need (p.52-53).

However, the settlements of the Ethiopian Diaspora around the world are not without problems. Alienation, cultural shock, identity crisis were the significant problems the emigrants face in the host countries. Supporting this, Walsh, Edelstein, and Vota (2012) discussing the Ethiopian Jews in Israel state diffused ethnic identity, alienation, disconnection, distress, and marginalization as problems faced by immigrants (p.131). The Ethiopian Diasporas, like every Diasporas of the world, organize themselves in communities, associations, and centers to confront the challenges they face in host countries. For example, ESFNA (Ethiopian Sports Federation of North America) organizes a sporting and cultural festival every year that brings Ethiopians together from all the states of America. Entertainment and cultural centers also bring Ethiopian together in different events. Getachew (2006) states, "Tayitu Entertainment and Cultural Center" established by Alemtsehay Wodajo and a book club established by Brook Abdu are samples of the organizations in the US within which the cultural ties between the motherland and immigrant communities are being preserved and strengthened through art (p.326-27).

Individuals of the Ethiopian Diaspora are also seen coping with the challenges through artistic manifestations. Regarding this Levine (2006), taking "loss" as one of the forces of the creativity claims the physiological reactions which are released when a habit is breached like in the

immigrants; departure from the homeland are sources of the creative mind. He states Max Weber's terms "transition from tradition to charisma" and Victor Turner's "the move from structure to liminality" as the immigrants' ways of creativity and he strengthens this view saying it is because of this that Ethiopians and others in the diaspora have become among the most creative citizens (p.219-20).

1.2.3. Ethiopian Diasporic Literature

Ethiopian Diasporic literature comprises literature produced by the Ethiopian emigrants and the generations that follow. Some of the authors of the Ethiopian Diaspora were already established when they left their homeland, and the remaining started writing while in exile. Basing his account on authors of Amharic poetry Getachew (2006) explains that the Ethiopian Diaspora writers can be divided into two groups: those who were already established before they reached their host nations and those that pick a pen in foreign lands (p.326). This is also true of the diaspora authors who write in foreign languages. For example, Nega Mezlekia was a lecturer at Alemaya University (now Haramaya) before his exile, and his literary scholarship is initiated abroad.

Traces of history, literary, and cultural traditions of their homeland are observed in most of the works of the Ethiopian Diaspora. Levine (2006), in his article "Cultural creativity in the Ethiopian Diaspora" supports this saying Ethiopians manifest special intensity in their attitude towards their homeland, and there is a profound connection between being Ethiopian and feeling committed to the land wherein you were born and raised (p.220). Regarding this Dinaw in an interview says:

> Because history does influence our lives every moment, we never sort of live our lives in a linear fashion, we always have these memories and these images from our past that sometimes we're not even aware of, and they sort of shape who we are. I'm obviously not the first novelist that has hit upon the idea that family history, cultural history, is inevitable in shaping who we are. As much as possible I wanted the novel to reflect that feeling that the past and present are constantly in conversation with each other. (https://www.economist.com/prospero/2011/04/26/dinaw-mengestu-novelist).

Ethiopian Diaspora writers are among the immigrant groups in the west who secured a reputation for the novelty of their works and the new styles they were able to create. Levine (2006) states that creative incorporation has a long tradition in Ethiopian art and religion and views the

Ethiopian Diaspora creative works in relation to the host culture. He argues that Ethiopians abroad, especially in North America, have broken away the historical pattern of creative incorporation that was characterized by assimilation and the incorporation of the techniques and genres in a hard and fast tradition. Referring to the domains of popular music, modern painting, and literature, he claims Ethiopians abroad today are caught up in a world of civilization that places a premium on novelty, inventiveness, and continuous change. He says the new platform is a source of ingredients for new energies, new combinations, and creation of new forms. They adapted traditional forms to new circumstances, like the artist playing traditional Ethiopian melodies on western instruments. New forms are created in which old contents are expressed. A case in point is the incorporation of Ethiopian faces or Ethiopic syllabary in modern paintings. The Ethiopian Diaspora creative artists combined traditional elements with forms and ideas of another culture. For example, instead of reproducing the traditional style of Ethiopian painting or adhering mainly to modern Western genres, the artists use figures with faces and garments that hint of traditional styles while working them up into increasingly abstract configurations (p.216-19).

The Ethiopian Diaspora writers produce their works in their indigenous languages as well as foreign languages. From the indigenous languages, Amharic is the major. Concerning this, Taye (2008 E.C) states that Ethiopian Diaspora writers began writing widely in the 1980s, and their works include essays, autobiographies, poetry, and novels written in Amharic and foreign languages. He adds that there are many novels written by the Ethiopian Diaspora that narrate the lives of the immigrants in their host nations (p.33).In his former article entitled "YeEthiopia Sidetegnoch Sinetsihuf" (Ethiopian Diasporic Literature) as cited in Abraham (2016, p.19-20), Taye(1993) studied two volumes of short story collections, four novels and eleven poems written in Amharic. He had identified three themes. He claims the works mainly address issues of human rights violations of the military government of Ethiopia that ruled from 1977-1991, the importance of unity in spite of ethnic and political differences and nostalgia for home. Abraham (2016) has also studied Ethiopian Diasporic literature written in Amharic. In his PhD thesis entitled "Diasporic Life, Images and Aspirations of Ethiopians in Ethiopian Diaspora Novels: A Socio-Cognitive and Historical Approach," he analyzed seven novels written in Amharic and concluded the novels reveal various images of Ethiopia and Ethiopians in the immigrants' host nations. He identified the image of hunger and impoverishment, barbarism, sub-humanity, and

unrighteousness being associated with Ethiopians. He also notes that the Ethiopian Diasporic life, as revealed in the works, is characterized by a feeling of disenchantment and humiliation.

Concerning foreign languages to the researchers' knowledge, the Ethiopian Diaspora works that are found in the literary platform of Diasporic writing are presented in two languages English being the major followed by three works in Italian. Even if Italy has briefly occupied Ethiopia for five years, Italian is not adopted as a foreign language in Ethiopia. Zarandona (2009, p.135) supports this, saying that the Italian language has not left any trace in Ethiopia. It can't be regarded as a postcolonial Ethiopian language at all. Nevertheless, according to Marzagora (2015, p.211-212), there are three contemporary works in Italian that can be categorized under Ethiopian Diasporic literature. The works are Gabriella Ghermandi's "G. Regina di fiori e di perle" (Queen of flowers and pearls) (2007), Martha Nasibu's "Memorie di unaprincipessaetiope" (Memories of an Ethiopian Princess) (2005) and Maria Abebu Viarengo's "Scirscir'ndemna" (let's go for a stroll) (1999).

The Ethiopian Diaspora writers in English are among the most recognized citizens in the west who won awards and got recognitions through their artistic works. It is not difficult to locate, for instance, in the international literary canon, the names of Dinaw Mengistu, Nega Mezlekia, Hama Tuma, and Lemin Sisay. Getty Ambau, Hiwot Teferra, Bereket Habte Sellasie, Meti Birabiro, FasilYitbarek, Mawi Asgedom, Rebecca G. Haile, Maaza Mengiste, Tewodros Fekadu, and Mahtem Shiferaw are also a published Ethiopian Diaspora writer of the English language.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

What motivated the researcher to carry out this study is the gap observed in postmodern literary Inquiry in the Ethiopian scene. Literary scholars like Harvey (1989), Nicol (2009), and Malpas (2005) stated that postmodernism is an important tool of literary study. They note that it helps to understand literary works as well as new developments in literary products. Concerning the purpose of postmodern literary inquiry, Nicol states:

> Though it is a product of the latter half of the twentieth century, studying postmodern fiction can deepen our knowledge about literature on a wider scale. To read postmodern fiction is to be invited to ask: what *is* fiction? What does reading it involve? Why do we read? Why, for that matter, do novelists write? Why do they create innovative, experimental forms rather than just stick to traditional ones? (2009, p. xiv).

The above text shows that postmodernism is a vital literary approach that supports individuals to digest the general conceptions of literature as well as specific works. Harvey (1989) also suggests that studies in postmodernism are necessary because compared to other theories, it has succeeded in being an influential tool in the configuration of new sentiments and thoughts. He adds postmodernism currently can influence various debates and discourses setting parameters for cultural, political, and intellectual criticism (p.x). Beyond literary scholarship, studying postmodernism is also beneficial for understanding the world. Supporting this, Malpas (2005) says that understanding postmodernism gives a wider base for understanding the contemporary situation of our world. It gives an essential means to understand the social, cultural, and political states of our rapidly changing globalized world (p.1-4).

More than seventy years had elapsed since the idea of postmodernist literature entered the world's literary scene. According to Nicol (2002, p. xiv), Bertens (1995, p.3), and Hoffman (2005, p.13), postmodernist literature is a product of the 1950s and1960s. However, the topic is not visible in the Ethiopian literary scholarship. The researcher has observed new trends in the Ethiopian Diasporic literature written in English and could not come across a study that confronted and responded to these new developments. Looking for approaches that will help to explain these new features of the works, the researcher decided to explore aspects of postmodernism in the selected literary texts. Thus, the researcher believes that postmodernist literary study is an important topic in the Ethiopian context. It would be both a rewarding and interesting topic for research because it helps to make sense and define current trends in our literature and culture in general.

1.4. Research Questions

The following research questions will be answered in the analysis of the novels.

1. What aspects of postmodernism are manifested in the selected Diasporic novels in English?
2. What are the thematic issues highlighted in the selected Diasporic novels in English?

1.5. Objectives of the Study

1.5.1. General Objective

The general objective of the research is exploring elements of postmodernism and postmodernist themes in the selected Diasporic novels written in English.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives

The following are the specific objectives of this research.

1. Show how the authors used intertextuality in the selected novels.
2. Explain the ontological concerns depicted in the selected novels.
3. Discuss metafictional manifestations of the selected novels.
4. Explore temporal and narrative warps in the selected novels.
5. Highlight the postmodern issues raised in the selected novels.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The researcher believes the study will have the following significance:

1. It will be a reference for researchers who intend to conduct research on Ethiopian literature in English, including Diasporic writings under an umbrella of postmodern literary theories.
2. The researcher believes this study can help readers and students to acquire an in-depth understanding of the selected novels.
3. Literary criticism contributes to broadening knowledge of literature, and this study being one of its kind can have a share in enhancing students' interest in Ethiopian literature in general and Ethiopian Diasporic literature in particular.

1.7. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to examining postmodernism in the selected Diasporic Novels. Although the study makes use of general conceptions of postmodernism more emphasis is given to common postmodern elements that are dominant in the selected novels. As a result, the study attempted analyzing postmodernist aspects of intertextuality, parody, pastiche, ontological concern, metafiction in the light of self-reflexivity and histographic metafiction, temporal distortion and fragmentation.

Concerning the primary texts, even if Ethiopian Diasporic Literature comprises various genres that include novels, essays, and short stories, poetry, forms of nonfiction such as autobiography and memoir. The study is confined to the novel genre and limited to four works. Dinaw Mengistu's novels *How to Read the Air* and *All Our Names* and Nega Mezlekia's novels *The God Who Begat a Jackal* and *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades*.

1.8. The Method of the Study

The method used in this study is textual analysis. Texts or excerpts that are selected from the primary sources are described and interpreted through an in-depth textual analysis. The selected texts are analyzed both on the formal and thematic level. The research is library-based. Sources collated from books (theoretical, critical, fiction, nonfiction), periodicals, and web resources are used to develop the theoretical framework of the study.

Through a thorough reading of the works, major aspects of postmodernism that are relevant to the analysis of postmodernist issues in the selected novels are developed as parameters. Hence, the identified postmodern aspects intertextuality, parody, pastiche, ontological concern, metafiction (self-reflexivity, histographic metafiction), temporal distortion, and fragmentation invite extra-textual features social and historical contexts are considered and referred while analyzing the selected novels.

1.8.1 Basis of Selection

The method used for the selection of the primary texts is purposive sampling. As it is cited in the background, many Ethiopian Diaspora Literature are written from 1991on. Since all the works are written in the time of postmodernism periodically and literally, all can be used for postmodern inquiry. However, their periodic location cannot qualify them for a postmodern study. Concerning this, Hutcheon (1988) states that all contemporary art is not postmodern. In order to be called postmodernist, a work needs to manifest important postmodern aspects like the parodic presence of the past, histographic metafiction, self-reflexivity, temporal, historical warp, and coexistence of various genres (p.4-5). So, the researcher purposefully selected works that manifest the important postmodernist elements.

From the works, the novel genre is preferred because the researcher believes it is a more suitable genre to fully explain the various aspects and issues of postmodernism in a coherent and logical manner. Accordingly, Hutcheon observes that in her postmodernist literary inquiry she wants to

privilege the novel genre that she wants to call histographic metafiction because it incorporates all the domains of postmodernist fiction such as theoretical self-awareness, views of history and fiction as human constructs and rewriting of past forms and contents (ibid, p.5). She also adds that she prefers the postmodernist novel because it questions the series of interconnected concepts of autonomy, transcendence, certainty, authority, unity, totalization, system, universalization, center, continuity, teleology, closure, hierarchy, homogeneity, uniqueness, origin that are associated with liberal humanism (p.57). Therefore, the researcher chose the novel genre to analyze aspects of the postmodern, which are closely interrelated and reflect the preceding periodic conventions.

1.8.2. Method of Data Analysis

The first step carried out in the data analysis is thoroughly reading and re-reading the selected novels keeping in mind the issues of postmodernism. Basic issues and events of the novels are sorted out and marked. Then the novels are read again to identify postmodernist issues.

Then the researcher referred to the texts to locate relevant textual evidence. These textual evidences or excerpts consist of words, sentences, summaries, paraphrases, and direct quotations. Next, the excerpts are categorized under the five aspects of the postmodern, which are used as parameters for analysis. Then the excerpts are critically interpreted using the parameters evolved from the theories and general conceptions of postmodernism.

1.9. Organization of the Study

This study has five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the study. It includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, the scope of the study, and methodology of the study.

Chapter two devotes itself for the review of related literature. The first part presents a review of critical studies carried out on Ethiopian Diaspora literature. Part two presents an overview of postmodernism, which discussed issues like the development of postmodernism, the difference between modernism and postmodernism, the definition of postmodernism and literary postmodernism.

Chapter three is a discussion of the theoretical framework of the study. Postmodern literary theories of McHale, Hutcheon, Lewis, and Waugh organized under intertextuality, ontology, metafiction, temporal distortion, and fragmentation are presented.

Chapter four is divided into four parts. The first part presents the intertextual analysis of the selected novels. It specifically analyzed the novels' employment of parody and pastiche. Part two is an analysis of the ontology of the selected novels. Part three examines the selected novels metafictional characteristic categorizing under self-reflexivity and histographic metafiction. Part four is an analysis of temporal distortion, and part five deals with the fragmentation of the selected novels.

Chapter five is a part where a conclusion of the issues discussed under the four chapters is presented. Recommendations for interventions and further research are also included.

Chapter Two: Review of Studies on Ethiopian Diasporic Literature

This section reviews available studies on Ethiopian Diasporic literature in English. Even if literary products of the Ethiopian Diaspora can be traced back to 1991 Critical and academic works dealing with Ethiopian Diasporic literature have only started to appear in the literary canon from 2002 onwards. The works are reviewed below in their chronological order.

The pioneering work is Kortenaar's (2002) study entitled "Nega Mezlekia Outside the Hyena's Belly." The critical inquiry was inspired by the controversy formed over the authorship of Nega's (2000) memoir *Notes from the Hyena's Belly* through the accusation of Anne Stone, a Montreal editor, and novelist who authored substantial parts of the book. He adopted theories of autobiographical authorship for his inquiry.

He discussed the justifications of the editor's supporters and defenders of Nega and shifted the focus from the controversy of who wrote the text to the doubt which Nega did the writing. Kortenaar says Nega's Narrative authority derives from his location outside the hyena's belly. He is only able to tell his story because of his radical break from his past, conversion or new life because this break allowed the writer's self to look from outside on the self that lived the life.

Kortenaar splits the author into two personalities Nega the sufferer, and Mezlekia, the author, and says Nega's experience is far from universal but in order to judge what Nega has suffered Mezlekia must appeal to universal notions of humanity. Kortenaar argues the controversies do not arise from the internal fractures of the text but from the splitting characteristics of the African self and the migrant self. He concludes the split in the self is characteristic of textuality, and autobiography, in particular, is compounded in the African biography.

The second critical study is Milz's (2008) work "Inside and Outside the Hyena's Belly: Nega Mezlekia the politics of time and authorship." The statement of the study, like Kortenaar's (2002) study, is the allegation of Anne Stone. This initiated an inquiry that doubts the very concept of modern authorship, particularly autobiographical authorship. In the study Milz tries to answer questions, who is Nega? What is an author? What is an editor? Why did the Canadian media dismiss the possibility of an authorial collaboration?

Milz says the claim of Stone is taken as an editors' claim whose task is supporting the author to express his voice as clearly as possible, and Stone did this, but the book remains to be the author's. An editor should never change the author's natural voice, and Stone had the skills to put

Mezlekia's unique oral style and voice onto the page. The researcher further explains the controversy is mainly a result of the hybrid nature of Nega's book. It's thoroughly modern and incorporates the genre of autobiography and Amharic literary and oral styles. Milz questions, what if this hybridity comes from the result of Stone's familiarity with traditional narratives and oral stories? What if her experience in the gothic gospel helped her to secure a universal knowledge and skill to replicate the culturally specific orality on Mezlekias' background?

However, Milz explains the hypothesis of the possibility of Stone's authorship is dismissed because the authority of western cultural categories and knowledge is fixed on an isochronic present of normative description, and the memoir is presented from an allochronic agency. Further, the book is clearly put as a memoir, and the memoir as a narrative of lived, time, and space-specific experience adds complexity to the often-totalizing official story of a given historical situation. Milz concludes by reflecting a stand that not only the content but also the form of Mezlekia's narrative communicates an allochronic temporalization of Ethiopia's modern history, of the country's specific embeddedness in modernity and specific contemporaneity in the global present and of the narrator's and narration's specific embeddedness and contemporaneity as well.

The two studies reviewed above have reflected a tendency of categorizing the memoir of Nega under the emigrant narrative of the west detaching it from its original literary and cultural background. The theory of the split personality authorship proposed by Kortenaar (2002) the isochronic and allochronic views on autobiography proposed by Milz (2008) don't clearly support Nega's full authorship. Kortennar concluded that the book is written by the Canadian Mezlekia, not Nega the Ethiopian and Milz explains the allochronic narrative characteristic of the book gives the authority to Nega and even if the editor may have the sufficient knowledge to write the book and have done so the book is not Stone’s. This impulse differentiates the works from the current study because this study categorizes Ethiopian Diaspora literature under an umbrella of Ethiopian literature and strives to fill the gap in the area.

To the researcher's knowledge, the first critical work on Ethiopian Diasporic literature in English is Endalckachew's (2008) MA study entitled "The predicament of the Diaspora as reflected in the Texture of Dreams and the Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears." The objective of the study is to identify the predicaments immigrants face in a foreign country and analyze what theories of

Diaspora and other related concepts say about the situation of the Diaspora and migrant literature. Endalckachew used conceptual tools from Diaspora studies, postcolonialism, post-structuralism. The findings of the thematic analysis are that the novels revealed economic and political woes of the homeland, disillusionment, frustration, emptiness, homesickness, racism and discrimination, nostalgia, loss, acculturation, and lust for love.

The study concluded that the novels share the same concerns of racism and discrimination with other black Diaspora writers. This study is different from the present one because it adopts postmodernism as its theoretical framework, and its objectives are directed towards exploring aspects of postmodernism, unlike the present work, which targeted analyzing diasporic and immigrant themes. The selected texts for this study are also different from the ones analyzed in the present study.

The researcher could not find any critical works between 2009 and 2011. However, in 2012, a good number of studies were undertaken. Dereje's (2012) MA study "A Thematic Analysis of Beneath the Lion's Gaze and Held at a Distance: My Rediscovery of Ethiopia" is undertaken on Ethiopian-American female diasporic writers Maaza Mengiste and Rebecca Haile. The aim of the study is publicizing the remarkable involvement of female writers in a variety of political, social, cultural, and economic issues. A comparative approach is employed to analyze parallel themes between the works. It was found out that the works mainly focus on the political instability and economic crisis, the unimaginable commitments of the national icons or the amazing few who are determined to sacrifice their life for others, the secret of the ideal family bond, the importance of cherished traditional values, the major predicaments of the diasporas in the host land and the temptation of being drawn to the motherland. Like the above study, this study differs from Dereje's because it adopts a different theoretical framework with a different objective.

Haftu's (2012) MA study on "Ideology in Hama Tuma's Give Me a Dog's Life Any Day: African Absurdities, Maaza Mengiste's Beneath the Lion's Gaze, Nega Mezlekia's Notes from the Hyena's Belly and Rebecca G. Haile's Held at a Distance: My Discovery of Ethiopia" is also a remarkable contribution to the field. This study was steered with the purpose of filling the gap with regard to readers' hasty judgments of Diasporic writings. The analysis was conducted using three theories of political philosophy; theory of the state of nature, the divine right theory, and

the social contract theory. A comparative approach is adopted to reveal the commonalities and differences with regard to ideology. Thus, the study's finding has shown that the major ideologies reflected in the selected texts are Feudo-capitalism, Marxism-Leninism, Nationalism, Anarchism, and Liberalism. As the above studies, this study is different from Haftu's because it adopted a different theoretical framework, set different objectives, and targeted different texts.

Mesfin's (2012) PhD thesis, "Thematic Analysis of Selected Prose Fictional and Non-Fictional Writings of Ethiopian Diaspora in English," is a much broader study that has a profound contribution in the field of the Ethiopian diaspora literature. The study dealt with six representative literary writings of the Ethiopian diaspora in English, published in the period between 2000 and 2010. The study used the Post-colonial theory as its theoretical framework.

The findings reveal that there is a good deal of thematic convergence, as well as few divergences among the narratives. Disillusionment, a visit to the past, racial discrimination, interest or involvement in homeland state of affairs, and social and psychological traumas of immigrants are identified as the most dominant themes. The research concludes that viewed from the perspective of the postcolonial literary theory, the prevalence of the listed themes in the selected literary writings of the Ethiopian diaspora makes the Ethiopian diasporic literature eligible to be included in the general realm of Postcolonial/Diasporic literature. This study differs from Mesfin's inquiry because it adopts postmodern literary theory with a divergent objective.

Samron’s (2012) MA study “A Stylistic Analysis of The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears” is a forerunner in the study of Ethiopian Diasporic literature by shifting to a stylistic endeavor. The objective of the study is to show how meaning is constructed through the interplay of different textual features. The findings of the study revealed that the writer used more nouns compared to other word classes; regarding figures of speech, the writer uses repetition and parallelism as the major grammatical and lexical schemes. With regard to the phonological schemes, alliteration is widely used, creating a consonant sound effect. Concerning the use of tropes, almost all of the rhetorical devices that are used are similes. This study poles apart from the present one because of its set of objectives, theoretical parameters, and target texts are different.

Taye's (2012) critical study, "Magical Realism in The God Who Begat a Jackal," is a significant undertaking that brought a different perspective and text to the discourse of Ethiopian Diasporic Literature in English. The aim of the study was examining the narrative strategies employed in

the depiction of the magical in the novel. The work identified the significant attributes of some of the major magical elements and their functions, including their thematic implications.

The study depicted *The God Who Begat a Jackal* as the major Magical Realist text that is written by an Ethiopian author. Religious mythologies, superstitions, characters with extraordinary attributes and extraordinary events, hyperbole, discourse as magic, intertextuality, and the reality effect are listed as techniques used to depict the magical. Using the techniques themes related with class division, spiritual decay and material corruption among leading proponents of the official religion of the time, common interest of secular and religious elites which cause conflicts, duality of the real world and society's effort to appropriate human conduct to the preferred reality are manifested in the novel. However, the work concluded that there are hardly any fictional events or characters that can be directly linked to the history and historical figures of 17th and 18th century Ethiopia. Even if the target text of the present study is also the subject of this study, the two studies differ because they are founded on different objectives and theoretical frameworks.

Garcia's (2015) BA study "Re/Creating History through the Persistence of Memory in How to Read the Air" is a study by a non-Ethiopian that brought another work by an Ethiopian Diaspora to the western platform which to the researchers knowledge except for a limited number of book reviews was represented by the two critical studies discussed above which were inspired by the controversy of authorship of Nega's (2000) memoir *Notes from the Hyena's Belly*. The objective of Garcia's study was explaining how the past is comprehended in *How to Read the Air*. Garcia used theories of memory and temporality to support her thesis.

The focus of Garcia's analysis was how and why the protagonist of the novel reimagines past events and occurrences and how the past is expressed through the protagonist's acts. The finding of the study is that the novel moves towards recreating history. The characters evade discourses and exhibit their trauma through their actions. The protagonist lived a fragmented existence, and this fragmentation acts on the protagonist's very body, which cannot settle into one space. Physical bodily experiences were used to help the protagonist rearticulate the past and its identity. Though How to Read the Air is analyzed in the present study, the two pieces of research have set different objectives and adopt different theoretical undertakings.

Lendent's (2015) critical study "Reconfiguring the African Diaspora in Dinaw Mengistu's The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears" is another western work that devoted itself to Dinaw's work. Lendent examined how the novelist problematizes the relationship of the African Diaspora with different communities in America. The analysis is done under the umbrella of race relations in the world of the American immigrant. The relationship of the protagonist (Ethiopian immigrant man) examined in relation to four racial communities, the protagonist's Ethiopian family, his two African friends (who view him as an Ethiopian immigrant), the African American community (who view him as an African immigrant) and white Americans (who view him as black immigrant).

The findings revealed that the protagonist concretely connects with the four racial communities that shape his loyalties and affect his fluctuating sense of self. Lendent argues the composite identity of the protagonist could be called diasporic because it relies on a constant interplay between similarity and diversity, continuity and rupture which are results of the cultural presences of Ethiopian, African, African American, and white American. The present study differs from this study in its objective, scope and the theoretical framework it adopts.

Nigistie's (2016) study "Common Sensibilities in Four Selected Ethiopian Diasporic Narratives in English" is a relatively recent study carried out on Ethiopian Diaspora literature. The aim of Nigistie's inquiry was locating common attributes of the works concerning setting, theme, and texture. The findings revealed that the stories are set in the reign of the Ethiopian monarch, and half of the stories are set in the homeland and the other half in foreign lands. The common themes manifested in the works are patterns of conquest, exploitation, poverty, economic frustration, racial discrimination, home and exile, social and cultural issues, identity, family life, pain, joy, and love. Concerning the texture of the works, the study found out that the works have single major stories with unbroken plot, use first and third-person points of view and follow chronological order. Their content deals with the political history of the Dergue and the imperial period, and the language of the works is journalistic by nature and is highly simplistic, explanatory, reporting, and powerful. Nigistie's work is different from this study because unlike Nigistie's inquiry of common sensibilities using technical and thematic manifestations, this study looks for postmodern aspects and issues in the selected texts. The target texts of both the works are also different.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theoretical framework that is applied to the analytical inquiry of postmodernism in the selected novels of Dinaw Mengistu and Nega Mezlekia. The theoretical framework is evolved from the theory of postmodernism. The conceptual background of postmodernism and elements of postmodernist literature are discussed in detail under this chapter.

The study adopts a pluralistic view to elicit an approach that enables to analyze postmodernism in the selected novels in its all complexity. Thus, the study makes use of the general conceptions of postmodernism out laid by various scholars in the analysis. However, the analytical parameter that is used for the subsequent analysis of the selected works is adapted from Hutcheon's works, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (1980), *Politics of Postmodernism* (1989) and *Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) Lewis' "postmodernism and Literature" (2001), McHale's (1987) *Postmodernist Fiction* and Waugh's (1984) *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. Through a thorough reading of the works, major aspects of postmodernism that are relevant to the analysis of postmodernist issues in the selected novels are developed as parameters. Thus, more emphasis is given to the postmodernist elements of intertextuality, parody, pastiche, ontological concern, metafiction, temporal distortion and fragmentation. While approaching these elements the general and foundational conceptions of postmodernism such as skepticism towards authority, totalitarian/meta narratives and reality are addressed.

3.1. Postmodernism

Postmodernism is an intellectual, cultural, and artistic movement which has a powerful influence on contemporary literary writings. Even if the origin of the term remains uncertain, some authors have tried to give it a genealogical background. According to Appangesi (2004, p.3) and Best and Kellner (1991, p.5-6), the first use of the term can be traced back to the 1870 British artist John Watkins Chapmans' speech of postmodern painting which was used to designate art more modern than the French Impressionist painting. Then they claimed in 1917 Rudolf Pannwitz used the term to describe the nihilism and collapse of values of the contemporary European culture. They also include Arnold Toynbee, who used the term to delineate the fourth stage of western history in 1947. They maintain that Toynbee argues that the issue of postmodernism is started in 1875 and flourished in the 1960s in literature, social thought, economics, and religion.

Hassan (1982) also locates the term in Federico de Onis's use of the term *Postmodernismo* in his *Antología De la poesía espaňola e hispanoamericana* (1882-1932) and in Dudley Fitts's 1942 *Anthology of Contemporary Latin-American Poetry* and later traces it in the 1947thArnlod Toynbee's *A study of history* within which the term is made to designate a new historical cycle in western civilization (p. 260-261). Nicol (2009) also states that postmodernism was first coined in the 1940s in architecture to explain the reaction against the modern movement. He says it began to be widely used in literature in the 1960s, and in the coming decades, it became a focus of discussion of disciplines like social theory, cultural and media studies, visual arts, philosophy, and history (p.1).

Cahoone (1996) unlike Nicol(2009) who located it in the 1950s architecture argues the term entered literary-critical vocabulary in the 1950s and was gradually adopted to refer to all cultural products such as literary texts, media products, visual arts and architecture that were indicative of some important changes in the cultural atmosphere after the second world war (p.3). Šnircová (2015) supporting Cahoone (1996) also reflects postmodernism was used to express the changes which were associated with the new phase in the development of advanced western societies that moved from modernity into postmodernity (p.87).

Though the above authors have given different dates concerning the inception of postmodernism, they all have a tendency of using postmodernism to describe different kinds of reactions developed against fields like culture, art, economics, religion, history, architecture, etc. Thus, interrogating postmodern periodically has no use except creating conceptual ambiguity, so it is better to focus on its conceptual issues and the new perspectives it brought in the discussion of various discourses. Taylor and Winquist (2002) states that postmodernism has emerged as a significant cultural, political, and intellectual force that defines our era. Postmodernism has consistently challenged our understanding of unity, subjectivity, epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, history and politics (p.xiii). This designates that postmodernism is a movement that affected different societal institutions by destabilizing the philosophical and the theoretical backgrounds they are founded on. It also hints that postmodernism is a delicate term which cannot be bound within a fixed conception.

The instability of postmodernism is a result of its discursive nature. Beyond locating postmodernism at different times, the authors' conceptions that we have already discussed above

have also incorporated postmodernism in varied fields that inclined to describe it in the light of the areas of interests listed. Similarly, Sarup (1993) lists art, architecture, fiction, film, photography, philosophy, anthropology, geography, and sociology as the artistic, intellectual, and academic fields in which postmodernism is being used (p.12). Since these varied fields view postmodernism from their own windows, it cannot escape the overloads and underloads of explanations and definitions the fields bring into contexts. Concerning this, Hutcheon (1988) says:

> Given all the confusion and vagueness associated with the term itself (see Paterson 1986), I would like to begin by arguing that, for me, postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges—be it in architecture, literature, painting, sculpture, film, video, dance, TV, music, philosophy, aesthetic theory, psychoanalysis, linguistics, or historiography. (p.1).

Emphasizing on the fact that the term postmodernism itself takes many concepts from varied arenas and manipulates them to fit into its area of interest. Nevertheless, all the ideas and explanations given in all areas of inquiry are not devoid of the perplexity the term postmodernism brings.

The contradictions and confusions are mainly a result of two things. The first source of the problem is its mix-up with terminologies such as modern, modernity, postmodernity, modernization, and modernism. Therefore, one needs to make sense of these terms before jumping into postmodernism. Jurgen and Seyla (1981) states that even if the term modern in its Latin form “modernus” was used for the first time in the late 5th century to differentiate the Roman pagan past from the Christianity of the time "modern" designates the consciousness of an epoch that relates itself to the past and that appears and reappears when the consciousness of a new epoch forms itself through a renewed relationship to the ancient (past) (p.3). This implies the term modern is not bound within a specific time frame; rather, it designates the essence of being current. They also claim the idea of being modern looking back to the ancient is changed with the belief in the infinite progress of knowledge and in the infinite advance towards social and moral betterment which is inspired by modern science and this new form of modernist consciousness was established in the early 19th century (Ibid, p.3-4).

Berman (1982), as cited in Best and Kellner (1991, p.2), views modernity as a historical periodizing term that followed the middle ages or feudalism and opposed to traditional societies which are characterized by innovation, novelty, and dynamism. Childs (2000) also notes, "In relation to modernism, modernity is considered to describe a way of and of experiencing life which has arisen with the changes wrought by industrialization, urbanization and secularization; its characteristics are disintegration and reformation, fragmentation and rapid change, ephemerality and insecurity." (p.14-15). Thus, modernity refers to the social, economic, and political systems that are developed against the pre-modern conceptions that were brought into being through technological advancement.

Modernism is a cultural response to modernity. Childs characterizes modernism as an aesthetic and cultural reaction to late modernity and modernization. He adds modernism favors radical aesthetics, technical experimentation, spatial or rhythmic rather than chronological form, self-conscious reflexiveness, skepticism towards the idea of a centered human subject, and a sustained inquiry into the uncertainty of reality (Ibid, p.17-18). Barret also strengthens this view saying:

> The predominant characteristics of modernism are an optimism regarding technology; belief in the uniqueness of the individual, creativity, originality, and artistic genius; respect for the original and authentic work of art and masterpiece; a favouring of abstract modes of expression over narrative, historical, or political content in art; a disdain for kitish in culture and a general disdain for middle-class sensibilities and values; and an awareness of the art market. (1997, p.25).

The above quotation explains that modernism as a cultural outlet dictates the positive side of technology, individuality, and authenticity. It also prioritizes form over content and looks down on ordinary (low) cultural forms of art.

As our discussion above concerning modernity, it is possible to view postmodernity as a historical periodizing term. Therefore, postmodernity can be explained as a social and cultural situation that came after modernity. In agreement with this Malpas (2005) states, "According to these accounts, postmodernity is a social formation that takes root in the last years of the nineteenth century, puts forth its first shoots amid the social, economic and military conflicts that scarred the first half of the twentieth, and comes into its own about the middle of that century as it replaces the modern as the dominant form of cultural and social organization" (p.34). This

implies that postmodernity refers to the social and cultural realities that came into being at the end of the 19th century and developed through the first half of the twentieth century. Like what modernism is to modernity, postmodernism is thus an aesthetic response to postmodernity.

Postmodernity implies what comes after modernity and refers to the dissolution of political and socio-economic systems, which were developed at the third stage of capitalist expansion. Modernization refers to socio-economic changes based upon industrialization driven by the capitalist world market. Modernism concerns a set of cultural or aesthetic styles that developed in opposition to classicism; it is a culture of modernity. Postmodernism is a cultural movement in the arts in the advanced capitalist culture related to the question of style and artistic representation. (Sarup,1993; Nicol, 2009; Malpas, 2005). Concerning postmodernism Hicks (2004) also elucidates that many postmodernists deconstruct reason, truth, and reality because they believe through these narratives that are viewed stable and rational western civilization has dominated, oppressed, and distracted societies (p.3). This shows that postmodernism is against any independently existing and dominant narratives.

The second reason is the term "Postmodern" does not clearly notify what it stands for. The prefix "post" does not clearly tell that modernism is superseded or has entered a new phase, whether it departed from modernism or took with it the concerns originally dealt with by modernist writers. There are two views expressed on the relation between modernism and postmodernism. The first view states that postmodernism is a reaction against modernism and the second claims that postmodernism is a cultural activity that has started from modernism. Concerning these Harvey notes, "No one exactly agrees as to what is meant by the term, except, perhaps, that 'postmodernism' represents some kind of reaction to, or departure from, 'modernism'. Since the meaning of modernism is also very confusing, the reaction or departure is known as 'postmodernism' is doubly so" (1989, p.7). Hutcheon also says, "Indeed there appear to be two dominant schools of thought about the nature of the interaction of the two enterprises: the first sees postmodernism as a total break from modernism, and the language of this school is the radical rhetoric of rupture; the second sees the postmodern as an extension and intensification of certain characteristics of modernism" (1988, p.49-50).

Through this plurality, however, scholars have tried to define postmodernism. Lyotard used the term postmodernism to describe the condition of knowledge in the highly developed societies of

the West at the end of the nineteenth century. In his book "The postmodern condition a report on Knowledge," he defines postmodernism as incredulity towards metanarratives (1984, p.xxiv). He notes that skepticism has developed towards the grand narratives of the West, which he categorized under narratives of emancipation and narratives of speculation which are authoritarian and oppress individual knowledge. He says, "In contemporary society and culture-postindustrial society, the postmodern culture-the question of the legitimation of knowledge is formulated in different terms. The grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation" (ibid, p.37). In his view in the world, knowledge has become a significant commodity and is controlled by the decision-makers. He says knowledge is being communicated through grand narratives that claim to answer and explain everything. The grand narratives which were controlled by the superpowers have become obsolete, so they lost their followers. The grand narratives were regarded as irrelevant to development, so the people need to lean to the mini-narratives (local narratives), which are the best ways of disseminating and creating knowledge. He also commented on the postmodern art as emphasizing the lack of any unifying form or method as such:

> A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer then are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done. (ibid, p.81)

Baudrillard explains postmodernism as ‘the world of the simulacra’. He categorizes the world into three periods where in the first period signs were exchanged for reality in a sense that they were representations of it (gift exchange), in the second era signs were related to other signs which referred to reality (commodity exchange) third era which is the postmodern signs have no connection to the real they become reality themselves (sign exchange). In this era virtual reality is dominant. The term Baudrillard used for the interchangeability of signs is “the code”. The code establishes system of signs that duplicate things. These simulations (duplicated things) are indistinguishable and they replaced the original (1993, p.437-460).

Hassan (1993, p.281-282) explains postmodernism as "a tendency of indetermanence" designating tendency of indeterminacy and immanence. Indeterminacy in Hassan's view represents ambiguity, discontinuity, heterodoxy, randomness, plurality, revolt, perversion and deformation. He tries to link these terminologies with the idea of un-making. He elaborates on this idea using literature. Hassan says in literature our ideas of author, audience, reading, writing, book, genre, critical theory, and of literature itself, have all suddenly become questionable. Immanence on the other hand is expressed through words like diffusion, dissemination, interplay, communication and interdependence. These concepts for Hassan refer to the constructdness of reality through language/symbol.

The plurality and complexity of postmodern philosophy is also a characteristic of postmodern literary theory. Postmodern literature is marked both stylistically and ideologically. Critics and scholars find it best to define postmodern literature against the popular literary style that came before it. That is modernism. Regarding this, Nicol says:

> Such generalized portraits of modern and postmodern society have been paralleled by similar comparisons of the specific aesthetic styles which have dominated in these periods. Where modernist art forms privilege formalism, rationality, authenticity, depth, originality, etc., postmodernism, the argument goes, favors bricolage or pastiche to original production, the mixing of styles and genres, and the juxtaposition of 'low' with high culture. Where modernism is sincere or earnest, postmodernism is playful and ironic. (2009, p.2).

The above-quoted text implies that postmodernist art, unlike its modernist counterpart, doesn't strictly abide by the already structured generic forms as well as it doesn't privilege one culture over the other. Supporting this, Hutcheon, says "Postmodernism has called into question the messianic faith of modernism, the faith that technical innovation and purity of form can assure social order, even if that faith disregards the social and aesthetic values of those who must inhabit those modernist buildings." (1989, p. 12). This can tell that modernism views the chaotic world as a broken piece that needs mending, while postmodern views it as a normal phenomenon. Hoffman (2005) also states:

> Postmodern fiction joins the rebellion against the Fifties and late modernism in its own way by turning against the three pillars of modern art, the concepts of reality, identity and totalizing artistic form, and by developing its own "imagined alternatives" (Goodman). It was the deconstruction of "traditional loyalties, ties and associations" (Howe 426),

> the experience of a sharpened sense of new possibility and diversity, and the willingness to experiment, rethink, and redefine, that caused what has been called "a revolutionary explosion of the arts" (Howard 267).(p.33-34).

The above-quoted text strengthens the view that postmodernist literary works stand against modernist conceptions of an art, opening its door for formal experimentation. Basing his argument on the 1960s views of Susan Sontag and Ihab Hassan Butler (2002) states the following:

> They argued that the work of postmodernists was deliberately less unified, less obviously 'masterful', more playful or anarchic, more concerned with the processes of our understanding than with the pleasures of artistic finish or unity, less inclined to hold a narrative together, and certainly more resistant to a certain interpretation, than much of the art that had preceded it. We will look at some examples of this later on. (p.5)

Sarup (1993:132) also lists the deletion of the boundary between fact and fiction and elite and popular culture, parody, pastiche, fragmentation, quotation, reflexivity, self-referentiality, anarchy, randomness, textualizing (history, philosophy, jurisprudence, sociology) as the popular features of postmodernism.

Thus, the above-reviewed assertion of the authors shows that postmodernist literature is marked both stylistically and thematically. Below the analytical parameters that characterize Postmodern fiction will be discussed in detail. Notions of postmodernism developed by Barry Lewis (2001), Brian McHale (1987), Patricia Waugh (1984) and Linda Hutcheon (1988, 1989 and 1980) are used to develop the framework for the subsequent analysis of the selected works.

The analytical framework draws upon five areas. The first is intertextuality with parody and pastiche as its subcategories. The second is the ontological concern. The third is metafiction with histographic metafiction and self-reflexivity as its subcategories. The fourth is temporal distortion and the fifth is fragmentation. However, these aspects are very much interrelated.

3.2. Elements of Postmodernist Literature

3.2.1. Intertextuality

Intertextuality is an important technique in postmodernist writing. Mason (2007) in his book *Historical Dictionary of postmodernist Literature and Theatre* defines intertextuality as "A term develop by poststructuralist theorists to describe the process by which all texts can be seen to have "traces" of other texts embedded within them" (p.153). This designates that no text is an isolated entity. If we closely examine texts that we are reading, we will always discover other texts entrenched within them. Regarding this Hutcheon (1988) argues that the postmodern has replaced the notion of distinctiveness with intertextual play which was once taken as mandatory for artistic works (p.54).

Postmodern authors exploit intertextuality to display the constructdness of texts and realities as well as to convey the plurality of truths. In the postmodern the modern view of the author as an autonomous imaginative expert is replaced by an author who weaves already existing texts. Concerning this McHale (1987) observes that unlike modernisms 'Exit Author' 'Death of the Author' is a postmodern slogan which articulates that writing is no longer an expression emanating from a unified source or origin. He argues the postmodern writing is 'a multi-dimensional' space created by the author where a variety of non-original writings and quotations that are brought from different cultures intermingle (199-100). This explains that intertextuality in postmodernism is very much related with the notion that authors no longer produce original texts but collage them from already existing sources. The author does not create a text but constructs it using various texts and makes the text rely on the world of discourses which does not reflect any extra-linguistic reality. Supporting this Hutcheon (1988) also says, postmodern intertextuality is used to subvert the modern notion which views the work of art as closed, self-sufficient and autonomous object that derives its unity from the formal interrelation of its parts. Through intertextuality the postmodern returns the text to the world but not to the world of ordinary reality but the world of discourses, the world of texts and intertexts. The world has links with the empirical reality but it is not the empirical reality (p.125). This explains that a work of art is not the reflection of reality or the empirical world. It is a reflection of already established discourses.

The intertextual allegiance also puts a text in the position of a process and a product. Hutcheon (1988) explains that intertextuality in postmodern novels signals the constructedness of fiction by highlighting the fact that fiction is being produced by the writer and the reader. The author places the text within an entire communication structure of social, ideological, historical and aesthetic contexts and exposes the existence of the text as a process and product (p.40). This describes that postmodern writers put their text in a pool of intertexts that exposes the text as a process being created by the reader in the process of reading. Hence the reader brings a whole lot of texts to the writing and fills openings; writing in the postmodern is taken as a cooperative activity carried out by the writer and the reader.

The postmodern view of the text as 'permutation' and process cue the plurality of reality. The intertextual aspect in the texts denies it a fixed meaning. Concerning this Hutcheon says, "Among the many things that postmodern intertextuality challenges are both closure and single, centralized meaning. Its willed and willful provisionality rests largely upon its acceptance of the inevitable textual infiltration of prior discursive practices. The typically contradictory intertextuality of postmodern art both provides and undermines context" (ibid, p.127). This indicates that postmodern texts signal the illusion of a single reality by exposing the author's inability to express an organized original idea. Postmodern texts by allowing various intertexts to shape them manifest plural views.

The American animated television series "The Simpsons" is a good example of postmodern art. Concerning this Nicol (2009) says "The Simpsons is widely considered one of the most exemplary postmodern texts because of its self-reflexive irony and intertextuality" (p.1). One finds instances of postmodern intertextuality in different episodes of the animated TV series. In the Simpsons season 23 episode five of "The Food Wife" the incorporation of the Ethiopian culture can be taken as an aspect of postmodern intertextuality (The Simpsons season 23 episode 5).

In this episode Marge Simpson to prove for her daughter Lisa and son Bart that she is more fun than her husband, Homer Simpson, takes the children to an "X-game convention". However, when they arrive at the convention, they find out that the game convention is "†- Games" Christian Convention and they drive back with disappointment. The engine of the car dies in the middle and is forced to stop in the neighborhood of "Little Ethiopia" in Los Angeles where

streets, hotels, shops and business adopted Ethiopian names written in Ethiopian Alphabet. They got into a restaurant named "Haile Delicious Ethiopian Food" and ate "Zilzil Minchet Alecha Wet" (Ethiopian Dishes). We see Marge Simpson's taste buds dance "Eskista" (Ethiopian traditional dance) while she tastes the food and they give "Gursha" (feeding each other) which is the Ethiopian culture. At the restaurant the Simpsons bump into a group of "foodies" who encouraged them to start a food blog. They started a popular blog called "The Three Mouthketeers". This alienated Homer Simpson. Marge feeling sorry for her husband invites him to a foodie's event at molecular gastronomy restaurant "El-Chemistry" but fearing of losing her "fun mam" title to her husband she gives him the wrong address. Homer ends in a "Meth lab" which he thought was a restaurant. The lab turned out to be a drug cell and left him in the middle of a drug war.

This episode using Allen's (2000) word is a "permutation" of texts. The movie for a meaning calls out to "The United States video game industry", "the American food culture and industry", "Ethiopian cuisine and culture", "the theme and style of a drug war action saga", "science fiction" and the classic movie "The Three Musketeers". In the "The Food Wife" these texts are incorporated ironically to highlight the fragmented and plural aspects of the American way of life.

The notion of postmodern intertextuality can be better grasped through the more specific faces of intertextuality parody and pastiche. Hutcheon (1988) explains that postmodern intertextuality can be approached from its parodic intertexts and pastiche of popular and high art forms (p.132). Parody and pastiche are going to be discussed in detail in the upcoming pages.

3.2.1.1. Parody

Parody is an aspect of postmodernism which is used to ironically critique the totalizing, marginalizing and dominant metanarratives of liberal humanism. Parody is not a term used exclusively in the postmodern arena; it can be traced back to the classical period but its usage in the postmodern is different. Concerning this Hutcheon (1988) explains that in the postmodern parody is not the ridiculing imitation of the standard theories and definitions that are rooted in eighteenth century theories of wit. She says it is a repetition with critical distance that allows ironic signaling of difference at the very heart of similarity. It paradoxically enacts both change and cultural continuity (p.27). So, using parody as a mockery tool has ceased in the postmodern

period. Postmodernist writers apply parody in order to criticize the present situations through the light of the past. The past in the postmodern texts is not incorporated for decorative purpose but is used to magnify current societal traits. The past texts and the current texts association is paradoxical; even if tips are given for the reader to build the link there is an obvious difference which is a key to understand the gist behind the parody. Supporting this Dentith (2000) says:

> But many parodies draw on the authority of precursor texts to attack, satirize, or just playfully to refer to elements of the contemporary world. These parodies also need to be reckoned in to any definition, so the polemical direction of parody can draw on the allusive imitation to attack, not the precursor text, but some new situation to which it can be made to allude. Such parodies, indeed, are the stock in trade of innumerable compilations of light and comic verse and of literary competitions, and their 'polemical' content is often very slight indeed. (p.9).

The above quotation confirms the essence of parody is not directed towards the parodied text but to the world. Parody writings transform the prior works by playfully amending them to give new meaning and in the process create a new work. Parody rethinks and questions the past and uses it in the light of current concerns.

Hutcheon (1988) argues parody has become a perfect mode of postmodernist narrative because of its capability of integrating past texts ironically within its structure. Parody is more effective to question the ideological platforms that are laid behind past texts. Through parody the artist is able to speak from within the established discourse to offer a perspective on the present and the past but not mended by it. Therefore, parody can be called a mode of the 'ex-centric' because it gives a voice for the texts marginalized by the dominant ideology. Postmodern's parodic confrontation of the past is not nostalgic. Parody does not avoid the present and idealize the past as best. Through parody we reveal our awareness of prior discourses that invade our texts and signal their reconsideration (p.35-39). This designates that parody is an efficient postmodern technique which enables the author to strongly criticize the discourses of the past from within itself to comment on current issues. While parodying the author is not overshadowed by the ideals of past and doesn't criticize the present irrationally or emotionally.

Parody in postmodern works is also used to criticize societal values. Hutcheon (1989) says, "Instead, I would want to argue that postmodernist parody is a value-problematizing, denaturalizing form of acknowledging the history (and through irony, the politics) of

representations." (p.94). Thus, parody is a post-modern strategy that undermines and deconstructs previous values by emphasizing their representational status or their fictionality.

Waugh (1984) views parody as a literary strategy that deviates from the norms that have become conventionalized. Parody undermines the common language of the literary conventions by amalgamating them with cultural forms outside the mainstream literary tradition. Forms of journalism and television and devices which were positioned to popular forms like the spy thriller, the family saga, the space opera, science fiction and the historical romance are used in a new and bizarre context. The dislocation and suffocation of this popular form results the "death of the novel". The parodist by resisting the automatized forms of prior literary conventions creates a new style by realigning units within the system and absorption of elements outside the literary convention. If the object of parody is the literary norm the reader is made conscious of the relationship of the historical and cultural with the literary system. The author exposes that the literary conventions are tied with ideology. Parody forces the reader to revise his/her attitude by playing the contemporary and earlier forms against each other showing literature is never free and original but has always been produced (p.64-67). Thus, the target of parody is not limited to exposing the dominant ideologies or metanarratives behind texts (past and present) but views previous styles or genres (novel) themselves as ideological formations. The author breaks their convention by experimenting with non-literary and other popular forms resisting their formal dominance.

"The Simpsons" animated TV series episode "The Food Wife" which the researcher discussed earlier is a good example of postmodern parody. The movie parodies the United States video game industry. In the movie we watch Homer Simpson and his children attending a video game convention called "Expensive Electronic Entertainment Expo" it is a parody of "Electronic Entertainment Expo" that is presented annually in the United States by the entertainment software association. It is a critic of how expensive, crowded and nightmarish the expo is. It is also a critique of the unchallenging nature of the games. In the movie we watch the children passing the levels of the games without much effort. In one moment, we watch "Bart Simpson" winning the game called "Guts of War II" before the creator finished explaining how challenging creating the game was and how he has come to lose his family because of the hard work the creating the game needed. The American food culture and industry are also parodied in the movie. While Marge and the children tell Homer Simpson their adventure at the Ethiopian

restaurant, we listen to Homer saying "I don't want to think about food. I want to like it" (8min&40sec). Then admiring the American way of dining Homer goes to the fridge which he calls "the 24hour open restaurant". In the movie we watch Homer eat all the junk food which makes him sleep and later chokes him (*The Simpsons season23 episode5 "The Food Wife"*). Homer's choking represents the state of the consumer society of postmodernism. Which is characterized by excessive consumption.

3.2.1.2. Pastiche

Pastiche is a technique that combines different genres, styles and various elements of literary works to create a new text. Postmodern writers use this technique without an urge of parodying the style of past writers. Lewis (2001) describes pastiche as a combination of genres and styles that arises from the frustration that everything has been done in advance and referring to Jameson (1983) he notes that it is not possible to invent new styles and worlds for today's authors. They construct their text from the free-floating fixed combinations. However, he adds that postmodern writers while exploiting existing styles the impulse is not parodic but spasmodic and views science and detective fiction as popular sources of pastiche (p.125-126). This clarifies that pastiche differs from parody and is used to denote the postmodern assumption of the 'death of the author' that the postmodern author does not create a text but collages already existing constructions. The modern notion of authority is demystified. McHale (1987) referring to Roland Barthes (1968) reveals the concept of the death of the author as the absence of the author from his writings. In postmodernism works cease to emerge from a unified source of origin. The writer does not originate his discourse but he produces it by a pastiche of already existent discourses. The author creates a space whereby a variety of works and quotations drawn from innumerable centers of culture blend and clash (p. 199-200). Thus, the task of the author of the postmodern fiction is that of a facilitator that creates an environment where various texts intermingle with each other.

Hutcheon (1988) also describes pastiche as a technique which questions the definition of subjectivity and creativity that contests the modernist assumption of unique and individual style. The modernist assumption of the creating subject gives way to quotation, accumulation of the postmodern. Subjective consciousness and continuity are questioned. Thus, contesting of a unified and coherent subject is more generally questioning of any totalizing or homogenous

system (p.11-12). This illuminates that the point that the postmodern author instead of manifesting a new autonomous personal style he/she borrows styles from various works and creates a new work. The author is viewed as a fragmented being that is unable to comprehend an original narrative.

Pastiche in postmodern fiction is also used to represent the confused and pluralistic state of the postmodern society which is the product of advanced technology and communication packages of postmodernity. Concerning this Waugh (1984) asserts that pastiche is a technique that appears repeatedly in postmodern fiction and pastes the languages of science, technology, psychosexual therapy, history, journalism, music hall and cybernetics. She adds that such experimentation in fiction points to anarchy, massive existence of conspiracy which manically and insidiously proliferates itself through the linguistic diversity of its surface manifestations (p.146). The jumbling of expressions, issues and languages of different areas of scholarship in postmodernist fiction entails the chaotic state of the postmodern society which is skeptical towards a totalizing (dominant) narrative including the novel genre.

Hutcheon (1989) observes the totalizing nature of the novel genre saying "Totalizing narrative representation has also, of course, been considered by some critics as the defining characteristic of the novel as a genre, ever since its beginnings in the overt controlling and ordering (and fictionalizing) of Cervantes and Sterne" (p.63). She adds that the postmodern started questioning the authoritative institution of the novel writing in favor of free and unconditioned narrative experience. This is related with resisting the life plotted, ordered and controlled by someone else. She states that writers like Joseph Heller and Thomas Pynchon and non-American novels both historical and fictive such as Midnight's Children, The Name of the Rose, or The White Hotel as works that revolted against the novel genre ignoring teleology, closure, and causality of narrative (p.63).

3.2.2. Ontological Concern

Ontological concern is another distinguishing aspect of postmodernist literature. McHale (1987, p.Xii) explains that postmodernist fiction differs from modernist fiction just as a poetics dominated by ontological issues differs from one dominated by epistemological issues. He argues, that the modernist epistemology raises questions like how can I interpret this world of which I am a part? And what am I in it? etc. which deals with method, validity and scope of

modes of knowing. Questions such as, which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it? What is a world? What kinds of world are there, how are they constituted, and how do they differ? What happens when different kinds of world are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated? What is the mode of existence of a text, and what is the mode of existence of the world (or worlds) it projects? How is a projected world structured? Highlights modes of being that are ontological inquiries (ibid 1987, p.7-10).

Waugh (1984) also considers ontological shift a defining characteristic of postmodernist literature. She says that unlike the realist and modernist forms contemporary metafiction (postmodernist fiction) is a move against the view that reinforces the everyday world as the 'only real world' (p.87). This view tends to characterize postmodernist literature as a work that acknowledges the existence of multiple worlds. McHale (1987) shares the view of Waugh affirming that to do ontology is to describe a universe not of the universe there by implying the plural nature of universes that include the possible as well as the impossible ones (p.27). These views explain that in postmodernist literature questions of existence are emphasized unlike the modernist and realist works that focus on the method and validity of the perception of the world. And the ontological questions in literary works display the existence of multiple worlds or realities. Postmodernist fiction poles apart from its predecessors because it acknowledges the existence of multiple realities/worlds.

Ontological questions function as generators of turmoil and indeterminacy in postmodernist fiction. Waugh (1984) discusses this issue basing her argument on the creation/description paradox. She says that as utterances are brought into existence through contexts literary works simultaneously construct context and text. Description of objects in fiction is creation of objects, thus realities or worlds of literary works are only constructions. Ontological foregrounding in metafictional (postmodernist) texts prevents readers from settling into any given reality making them aware of possible alternatives to the reality of the everyday world. Thus, metafiction (postmodernist fiction) engages with the question of the truth status of fiction which ends up questioning the truth status of what is taken to be reality. It destabilizes 'commonsense' contextual construction of the everyday world (p.87-90). This affirms questions that are raised related with existence or mode of being in fictions making readers suspicious of the world or reality that is assumed 'common sense. In postmodernists' view realities are not reflections of the everyday world but they are linguistic constructions. Literary texts through foregrounding of

ontological questions display possible alternatives to the assumed everyday 'realities' and 'worlds' at the same time exposing the fictionality of the reality of the everyday world. McHale (1987) supports this saying "critics have characterized postmodernism in terms of its ontological instability or indeterminacy, the loss of a world that could be accepted, "willy-nilly," as a given of experience" (p.26). This can show that the viewing of the world as a single or only experience has become obsolete in the world of the postmodernists.

Themes of ontology that are based on the opposition between the real and the fictional were dominant from the classical period through the Renaissance. In the twentieth century we need a modified heterocosm theory that acknowledges the overlap and interpenetration of the heterocosm and the real world because the relationship of the textual and the real world is not only built with imitation and mirroring. The simple expression of the relationship between the heterocosm and the real as 'never was in nature' that marks a clear boundary between the hetercosm (fiction) and the real (reference) has shifted to an analogy of 'fictionality'. The universe or the semantic continuum (world) to which literary texts make a reference whether it is history, scientific theory, ideology or philosophy is itself a text that is constructed (ibid, p.28-29). Waugh (1984) supports this saying "Metafictional texts show that literary fiction can never imitate or 'represent' the world but always imitates or 'represents' the discourses which in turn construct that world" (p.100). She adds that to define the ontological status of a literary fiction we need to adopt 'alternative world's theory' which exposes construction of contexts as construction of different universes of discourse (p.87-90). This suggests that writers of postmodernist fiction incorporate themes of ontology in their fiction either by acknowledging the existence of multiple worlds or by fashioning the worlds in their fiction in manners which create a sense of confusion on the readers regarding their reality.

Postmodernist writers use various techniques to foreground ontological issues in fiction. Construction of alternative worlds or heterotopian spaces is one of them. McHale (1987) discusses heterotopia as a postmodern space which is radically discontinuous, inconsistent and accommodates and juxtaposes worlds of incompatible structure. He calls this an opalescent world of objects which are permanently ambiguous; it is a world within which characters are both dead and alive, spaces exist and do not exist. Opalescent worlds don't obey the law of the excluded middle which states in order to constitute a world propositions need to be either true or false. Postmodern texts portray worlds that are suspended between existence and nonexistence.

The author creates a space to be inhabited by entities of different worlds (universes) together. In the postmodern space the world of the living with the dead, the sacred with the profane, the real world with its model or double (its copy) are placed in confrontation. Through mystification real world entities can change their ontological status moving from the profane realm to the sacred or through fictionalization mythological entities with the erosion of the belief system that sustains them, can lose their status of superior reality and deteriorate to the status of mere fictions (p.33-44).

This implies that postmodernist fiction displays spaces (settings) that incorporate events or entities which in the normal logic of the everyday world cannot be brought in the same plane. For instance, once people are dead in the ordinary world, they are dead, they cannot start living again. But in the postmodern fiction characters that are dead at some point in the story will be shown living at other point as if it is normal to die and live as if nothing happened. This creates confusion in the reader who wonders whether he should accept the reality of the controversial being which makes the reader develop a skeptical attitude towards the ontological status of the characters. Postmodern fictions also mingle the natural and the supernatural, the worldly and the divine. Beings that are assumed to occupy a realm different from the humans are portrayed to roam in the same world with ordinary people, communicate and lead a normal life with them. This destabilizes the ontological status of the fiction and thereby makes the reader question the 'primary reality' that is offered by the world. Waugh (1984) emphasizes this saying; metafictional literary works contest the reality of the everyday world through a self-conscious construction of alternative worlds. One way of reinforcing the notion of fiction as an alternative world is through using literary and mythical allusions. Introducing different realities where the logic and norm of the world suspends and makes the reader question the ontological status of what is happening. This creates a consciousness of the existence of multiple worlds or realities which cannot be contained within a single book. The allusions reinforce the notion of fictionality and the reader's awareness of the construction of alternative worlds (p.110-12).

Alternative worlds or heterotopias that create ontological indeterminacy in fiction can also be constructed in postmodernist fiction through trans-world beings. McHale (1987) defines trans-world identity as device of borrowing characters from other texts. Authors sometimes take characters from already established authorities and insert them in their fiction with their recognizable features. Such practices by authors disrupt ontological status in fiction (p.57).

McHale (1987, p.85) and Lewis (2001, p.131) argue that heterotopia which is also a metafictional space makes the interaction of trans-world identities possible. This interaction upsets the ontological status of the fiction as well as the identities in the fiction. The authors' permission of real-world figures, fictional figures and other world bodies to inhabit the same space creates an ontological offense. When the world of the text, the real world and other universes are made permeable a vicious circle which inhibits our ability to differentiate one from the other will be created. This seems to indicate that postmodern writers borrow characters from the real world, from fiction and nonfiction to construct the world of their fiction. When the world of the fiction is breached by such characters the reader will be hesitant to acknowledge the ontological status of the real world as well as the fiction. Waugh (1984) calls this postmodern space an "alternative world" a world which is presented to the reader as a match to the world not offering general matches like realism but with historically determinant particulars that foreground history as a multiplicity of alternative worlds. And in this context (fictional space) real historical events happen and real personages live (p.105).

Heterotopias that create ontological indeterminacy in postmodernist fiction can also be formed by manipulating the physical world. McHale (1987) lists these techniques as strategies of juxtaposition, interpolation, superimposition and misattribution. Postmodern space is created through juxtaposition when spaces which real-world atlases or encyclopedias show as non-contagious and unrelated in written texts constitute a zone. The strategy of interpolation involves introducing an alien space within a familiar space, or between adjacent areas of space where no such 'between" exists. Even if some names of familiar places are mentioned in the texts the space is imaginary which is geographically indeterminate. A third strategy is superimposition. Here two familiar spaces are placed one on top of the other creating through their tense and paradoxical coexistence a third space identifiable with neither of the original two zones. In this strategy two countries will be superimposed to generate a visionary space. The fourth strategy of misattribution works by mismatching the traditional catalogue of places and their attribute or by giving a known geographical characteristic of one zone to another. This designates that postmodernist writers by disordering the world map and the geographical signposts causes the world for their fiction which creates a difficulty for the readers to locate the portrayed world anywhere but in the text itself (p.47-57).

Authorial intrusion in the fictional world also creates ontological indeterminacy in fiction. Authors of postmodernist fiction expose themselves as the maker of the text which on its part reduces the authors and the fiction into fictional artifacts. The old analogy of author as a god is related with the theory of heterocosm which takes the author as a divine function in the world of fiction. However, in the twentieth century the position of the author is problematized by the 'Pascalian world view' that is developed after the Renaissance which questions the ability of the authors' finite mind to perceive the unfathomably vast, complex and infinite universe. Thus, to defend themselves from the criticism authors started to visibly insert themselves in the foreground of their work presenting themselves in the act of making and unmaking their fictional world which reduces themselves as fiction and the work as a 'made thing' rather than a mirror of the outside reality (ibid, p28-30). This indicates that the postmodernist author resists invisibility through boldly advertising his/her self as a writer of the fiction. Waugh (1984) develops this saying:

> The author attempts desperately to hang on to his or her 'real' identity as creator of the text we are reading. What happens, however, when he or she enters it is that his or her own reality is also called into question. The 'author' discovers that the language of the text produces him or her as much as he or she produces the language of the text. The reader is made aware that, paradoxically, the 'author' is situated in the text at the very point where 'he' asserts 'his' identity outside it". (p.133).

The above text indicates that when the author tries to expose himself/herself in the writing process the reader will be conscious of his/her reading process and thereby take the author as created in the reading process.

Postmodern texts are viewed as constructions and the task of the author is diminished to collecting and collaging texts from different sources. McHale (1987) remarks the role of the author in postmodernist fiction is reduced to a function. Writing is no longer regarded as an expression that emanates from a unified source but an entity that is a result of the blending and clashing of a variety of writings and a quotation of numerous cultures. Thus, the author is viewed as a construct of the reading process rather than a textual given. The postmodernist author who is aware of she/he is only a function chooses to behave like a subject, a presence. In postmodernist writing authority and subjectivity are dispersed among a plurality of selves. The author is distributed within her/his role as a protagonist, narrator, recorder and author (p.199-201). This state of the author foregrounds ontological questions that question the existence of the author and

the reality of the fiction. The more the authors appear the less they exist. The more the authors expose their presence their absence outside of the text becomes more noticeable.

Ontological instability can be manifested in postmodern novels using characters. Waugh (1984) puts the fictional world in the position of an "alternative world" (another level of ontology). She accepts the notion of the creation/description paradox where a construction of context is taken as a construction of another universe. Metafiction destabilizes the contextual construction of the everyday world by making the reader aware of possible alternatives to this reality. She took identity of fictional characters and the status of literary fictional discourse as destabilizing mechanisms in metafiction. Fictional characters both exist and do not exist; they are non-entity who is somebody. Characters suddenly realize that they do not exist, cannot die, have never been born, cannot act or perform impossible acts in terms of the logic of the everyday world. Character naming is also made to create a problem of reference in postmodern fiction. Proper names are often flaunted in their seeming arbitrariness or absurdity, omitted altogether or placed in an overtly metaphorical or adjectival relationship with the thing they name. In metafiction such names remind us that in all fiction, names can describe as they refer, that what is referred to has been created anyway through a 'naming' process (p.90-94). This elucidates that fictional characters exist in a text when they are uttered and the utterance does not go outside the text. The utterance is the author's voice and character's existence is realized through language. The text is the world of reality for the characters. In postmodernist fiction the characters are made to realize their textual existence or the author addresses the issue directly to the readers so that the readers experience a sense of indeterminacy towards the existence of the characters.

3.2.3 Metafiction

Metafiction is a technique used by postmodern writers to draw attention to their writing process thereby telling the reader that the texts are imaginary. Patricia Waugh (1984) defines metafiction as follows:

> Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text. (p.2).

The above passage designates that metafiction is a technique which authors use to give a hint to readers that what they are reading is being constructed by the author. This technique makes the reader skeptical of the reality presented in the text and also makes him/her question the assumed primary realities of the everyday world.

Metafictional writing is both a response and a contribution to an even more thorough going sense that reality and history are considered provisional. They are no longer taken as a world of eternal verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures. The materialist, positivist and empiricist world view on which realistic fiction is premised no longer exists. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that more and more novelists have come to question and reject the forms that correspond to this ordered reality (the well-made plot, chronological sequence, the authoritative omniscient author, the rational connection between what characters 'do' and what they 'are', the causal connection between 'surface' details and the 'deep', 'scientific laws' of existence) (ibid,p.7). Through metafiction both fiction and history are exposed of their constructdness. They are represented as momentary which changes their stand and form through time. Time here designates the temperament, belief, spirit of periods.

Metafictional writing is considered a frame breaking technique. Unlike realistic fiction postmodern fiction brings the reader's attention to the frames involved in fiction. Frames refer to an established order or system that is created by the author. According to McHale (1987) metafictional frame breaking occurs when the illusory reality of the fictional world is destroyed by the authors' foregrounding of his/her own superior reality by making visible his/her performance in creating that world. The authors' frame braking destabilizes the ontological structure and relativizes reality (p.197-198). Frames are narration of a text with which the elements are determined by the author. Thus, realities in fiction are mediated by frames employed by authors. Authors break frames by intruding in to their texts. They openly tell readers that they are writing the stories.

Waugh (1984) views frame as a construction, constitution, build, established order, plan or system of anything. She adds that everything be it in life or novels is framed and the notion of history/reality as a construct is dealt in the field of sociology and framing as the activity through which it is constructed. She adds that analysis of a frame is an analysis of organization of experience which is governed by at least social principles and our subjective involvement in them

(p.28). This designates that whether it is the assumed reality of the primary world or history there is a consensus which limits the frames within which the texts are presented. Postmodern fictions deviate from these ordering systems to expose the ideological formation of both reality and history.

3.2.3.1. Self-reflexivity

Self-reflexivity in postmodern literature is related with the self-conscious state of the fictions of their fictionality. In postmodern fiction authors become intensely engaged with their work. They make themselves visible in the text to expose the constractedness of the written work and themselves. They purposefully expose the fictionality of their work to undermine the notion of reality. Concerning this McHale (1987) says, "No longer content with invisibly exercising his freedom to create worlds, the artist now makes his freedom visible by thrusting himself into the foreground of his work. He represents himself in the act of making his fictional world—or unmaking it, which is also his prerogative. There is a catch, of course: the artist represented in the act of creation or destruction is himself inevitably a fiction" (p.30).

Vladmir Nabokov's novel *Lolita* is a good example for this. The author at the beginning of the novel exposes himself as the writer and tells that the reader and the characters in the novel are results of his imagination as such:

> Annabel was, *like the writer*, of mixed parentage: half-English, half-Dutch, in her case. I remember her features far less distinctly today than I did a few years ago, before I knew Lolita. There are two kinds of visual memory: *one when you skillfully recreate an image in the laboratory of your mind, with your eyes open*(and then I see Annabel in such general terms as: "honey-colored skin," *"think arms*," "brown bobbed hair," "long lashes," "big bright mouth"); and the other *when you instantly evoke, with shut eyes*, on the dark inner side of your eyelids, the objective, absolutely optical replica of a beloved face, a little ghost in natural colors (and this is how I see Lolita).(p.7).(emphasis added).

In the above excerpt the narrator referring to himself as "the writer" is narrating how he created Annabel and Lolita. He directly addresses the reader and explains how the characters have come to life out of his imagination. He also invites the reader to participate in the writing process. For example, in the pictorial description of "Annabel" the author gives a facial description and asks the reader to imagine what kind of arms the character could have saying "think arms" and doesn't give a description of Annabel's arms. Like Nabokov postmodern authors deliberately

make the readers conscious of the fictionality of the work they are reading by narrating how they have come to create the texts.

Hutcheon (1980) defines self-reflexive texts as narcissistic narratives. Narcissistic narratives exhibit textual self-awareness of their fictionality by commenting on and describing their existence. Such narratives for her exhibit a narratorial awareness that encourages the reader to strip prior conventions and traditions. She notes that narcissistic narrative bares its fictional and linguistic systems to the reader and transforms the reader into a position of making the text. Narcissistic narrative calls the readers' imagination into action. Literary works that exhibit characteristics of narcissistic narrative emphasize the creative process and with an awareness of the process, break down old conventions and propose replacements for those conventions (pp.1-20).

Postmodern texts demonstrate self-reflexivity as a reaction against the assumed "realities" which are considered reflections of the already established norms and conventions of the society and the culture. Accordingly, Hutcheon (1989) says "In other words a self-reflexive text suggests that perhaps narrative does not derive its authority from any reality it represents, but from the cultural conventions that define both narrative and the construct we call "reality" (p.36). This explains that fiction is not a mirror to the outside reality. It only refers to established discourses such as historical, social, political…etc. The author of postmodernist fiction explicitly informs his readers that he/she is constructing the text and the reality that is being narrated is nothing but an imagination.

Self-reflexivity can also be expressed in postmodern works through the mingling of the literary and the theoretical. Author's sometimes in the middle of the narrative talk about theories of a narrative or the writing process. This blurs the boundary of the text and the system which underlies its construction. For Hutcheon such practices frustrate critical attempts that try to systematize and order the texts. The texts refuse to stay neatly within accepted conventions and traditions by deploying hybrid forms. The texts are equally literary works and theoretical conceptions (ibid, p.37). Therefore, the texts disrupt the totalizing and mastering attempts of fiction writing through the author's anarchic deployment of imaginative texts and theoretical ideas within a single narrative space.

3.2.3.2. Histographic Metafiction

History is also a focus of the postmodern critique. Through histographic metafiction the postmodern fiction tries to expose the textuality of history writing. Concerning this Hutcheon (1988) states that, unlike the realist novel which dictates that observable reality can actually be written factually, postmodern theory and art challenge the separation of the literary and the historical focusing on what they share than differ. She says the sources of both writings is verisimilitude not objective truth; they are textual, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure and are intertextual (p.105). The commonalities of history and literature mentioned above are what the postmodern fiction exposes using histographic metafiction. The postmodern fiction reveals that like fiction history does not reflect any empirical reality but constructs it by referring to past texts. Like literature the language and its narrative structure are not autonomous and original. It constructs its narrative using the already developed systems and discourses. Since we only know the past through narratives (written or oral) like fiction it cannot escape the subjective impulse of the narrator that is shaped by the spirit of the period be it cultural, social or political. Supporting this Waugh (1984) notes;

> However, metafictional texts which introduce real people and events expose not only the illusion of verisimilar writing but also that of historical writing itself. The people and events here may 'match' those in the real world, but these people and events are always recontextualized in the act of writing history. Their meanings and identities always change with the shift in context. So history, although ultimately a material reality (a presence), is shown to exist always within 'textual' boundaries. History, to this extent, is also 'fictional', also a set of 'alternative worlds'. (p.106).

Histograpic metafiction employs various techniques to dismantle the authority and the totalitarian impulse of history. Hutcheon (1988) lists the incorporation of silenced and excluded past events, the mixing of the 'fictious' and 'medacious' and demargnalizing the literary through confronting it with the historical as histographic metafiction methods. She says these practices help to bare the universalizing/totalizing impulse of history and advertise truths in the plural. There is never one truth and rarely falseness but other's truths (p.106-109). Anti-totalization is a major issue in the postmodern. The postmodern through histographic metafiction brings in the marginalized, the forgotten, the decentered and the unconventional in to the discourses of history. Manifesting them as alternative stories/histories and demystifying the claim of the dominant discourse of history as

the only truth. Postmodern authors make their point on the fictionality and universalizing scheme of history writing from within it.

Concerning this McHale (1987) notes that the refusal of one official history draws postmodern novelists to 'dark areas' where they are given a relatively free hand to rewrite and demystify the narratives of the past and the conventions of the traditional historical fiction. The 'dark areas' are the times and places where the real world and the pure fictional characters interact. In these areas in historical fiction the transgression between the real and the fictive is unnoticeable where as in histographic metafiction the transition is made visible by contradicting archival records, by flaunting anachronisms and by incorporating the historical and the fantastic (p.87-90). This indicates that postmodern authors consciously insert texts that oppose obvious historical narratives. The settings and material cultures of the fiction are also made to contradict the historical period. The assumed objective accounts of the world are also put in confrontation with the imaginative/ not the real.

3.2.4. Temporal Distortion

Temporal distortion in postmodernist fiction is related with the use of non-conventional timelines and contradictory events within a text. Lewis (2001) defines temporal distortion as disruption of the past and corruption of the present. He refers to Hutcheon's (1988) view of distorted history manifested by "histographic metafiction" and McHale's (1987) conception on techniques of apocryphal history, anachronism and the mingling of history and fantasy by.

McHale (1987) lists apocryphal history, anachronism and historical fantasy as techniques used to disrupt the past in postmodernist fiction. Apocryphal history which is also called alternative history comprises the inclusion of fictional events or characters to fill in the blanks of history or even replace the official versions using the loop holes in the "dark areas". This technique revises the content by reinterpreting or demystifying the orthodox version and the convention and norms of historical fiction. Anachronism is giving a character the attitudes, thoughts or beliefs of someone from a totally different era. It also creates tension between past and present by superimposing the material culture of one period on another to create an impossible fusion. Through historical fantasy the postmodernist author integrates history and fantasy to enhance the tension between fact and fiction. Thrusting fantastic elements questions the reliability of official

history. By fictionalizing history postmodernist writers imply that history itself is a form of fiction (p.91-93).

These techniques make historical, social and cultural references not to fit in to the narrative of the fiction. The historical and material references usually do not go along with the plot of the novel. The present time in postmodernist fiction is also manipulated. Lewis (2001) notes that temporal distortion refers to the twisting of ordinary and significant times in fiction. The modernist kairos (significant time) which is associated with epiphany and disclosure is mocked by collecting a number of events and actions overnight denying importance to any of the events and the realist chronos (chronological time) is ridiculed by diminishing its significance (p.124). This is to say that postmodernist fiction over stuffs the story's time with a number of actions which makes the reader and the plot of the narrative indifferent to any of the actions. The author also magnifies the uselessness of counting ordinary time by letting absurd actions overshadow the ordinary association of specific time with specific action.

Waugh (1984) notes that metafictional (postmodernist) novels experiment with time. Casual narrative sequence is displaced which illustrates the process of retardation and withholding of final resolution. Central narratives are not finished because they are constantly interrupted by descriptions of events that don not have any relevance to the main story line. Characters are constantly frozen in time stranded in odd voyeuristic poses at keyholes or left in strange physical positions. Subjective time continuously assimilates external events. The undermining of time is itself undermined by the subjectivism of a novel 'written' by a narrator desperately trying to catch up with himself and dissolving all events into the present of his discourse. Historical dates are employed with patterns of personal history rather than world history. Events which are looked forward on the level of story are being narrated by discourse. The past and the future are treated merely as the before and after of the order of the narration (p.70-71). Thus, the author of postmodernist fiction relaxes conventional time lines. Instead of constructing the fiction in accordance to time sequence the author blurs the boundary between several events that occur simultaneously. The author ignores the level of the story over taken by his/her discourse (verbal communication). The reader is left to wonder within the past, future and present events chained together. These overlapping events are often contradictory and frustrate readers will not be able to perceive what the author has presented in the narrative.

3.2.5. Fragmentation

Fragmentation is an important aspect in postmodern literature and its root is in the postmodern concept of incredulity towards metanarratives (Lytorad,1984) whereby referring to any unified, centered and consistent narrative or system is undesirable. In postmodern literature various elements; plot, characters and themes are fragmented and dispersed (ordered in a non-linear manner) throughout the entire work. This is related with Hutcheon's (1989, p.18) notion of postmodern as critique of the accepted idea of man as a centered subject of representation and McHale's (1987, p.15) expression of fragmentation with a theme of the multiplicity of the self-dramatized through a fragmentation of monologue. This designates that considering individuals as organized and stable is not applicable to the postmodern world and it is reflected through the disruption of the traditional narrative conventions.

Best and Kellner (1991) also strengthen the above stated assumptions. They approach postmodern fragmentation as a critique of the totalizing macro perspectives on society and history. Postmodernism rejects modern assumptions of social coherence in favor of multiplicity, plurality, fragmentation and indeterminacy. It abandons the rational and unified subject and welcomes the socially and linguistically decentered and fragmented subject (p.4-5).

In general, there is an interrupted sequence of events, character development and action. This is primarily to bring in an overpowering loss of totalizing distinctions and a consequent sense of fragmentation. Regarding this Lewis (2001) referring to John Hawkes says authors of the postmodern sledged the elements of the novel plot, character, setting and theme instead of the wholeness and completion which is typical of traditional stories. Plot is pounded into small pieces of events and circumstances, characters disintegrate into a bundle of twitching desires, settings are little more than transitory backdrops. The postmodernist writer prefers multiple endings which resist closure by offering possible outcomes for a plot. The writer breaks the text into short fragments separated by title, space, numbers or symbols (p.126-127).

Postmodern literature jumbles up the sequencing of a story challenging the reader to piece together the different components of the story to make sense of it. The story can start in the middle of the action and hop back and forth through the timeline of events; it does not settle in the conventional linear manner. Referring to Barth (1977) Hutcheon (1989) says "Even if the chronological linearity or the causality of the Bildungsroman are to be rejected, even if fragments

with no center are to structure the text, there is still a story of a self, a construction of a subject, however 'deconstructed, taken apart, shifted, without anchorage' it may be (p.41). This is a reflection that through fragmented elements postmodern fiction foregrounds a story of a subject a story of 'deconstruction'.

Fragmentation is a sign that we have become lost in a world of globalization and mass communication where there is no longer an obvious center. It is not surprising that paranoia rears its head. Postmodern society is characterized by an era of technological advancement and mass communication. This society spent most of its time with computerized technologies engaging with symbolic representations (in Baudrillard's (1996) term "simulacra") rather than tangible objects. These alienate the human subject from the authentic reality forcing it to move from one symbolic representation to another causing its paranoia (delusion). The paranoia of postmodern society is caused by the resistance of the postmodern society to a static sense of being. Lewis (2001) views paranoia in postmodern literature as a sense of 'engulfment' by a system felt by the characters. It is a representation of the atmosphere of the cold war that is characterized by fear and distrust. The characters feel that somebody is controlling their life and is conspiring to rob them of their autonomous thought and action. They reflect their paranoid anxieties by resisting to be circumscribed in one particular place and identity, convicting the society in conspiring against them and plotting to counter the imaginary schemes. Authors of the postmodern reflect these anxieties through conspiring with the plot and forms of their writing. They resist following one particular convention (p. 129-131).

For this purpose, postmodern authors feature unreliable narrators who all have their own version of events and the story keeps being reinvented to the point where we cannot pinpoint an absolute truth making. The reader deals with multiple individual truths that depend on who does the telling. Furthermore, authors make protagonists travel around in time to show the psychological fragmentation they are going through. By choosing a chaotic and fragmented style the postmodern writer encourages readers to embrace this chaos. Supporting this Hutcheon (1989) notes that postmodern works represent subjectivity as something in process, never as fixed and never as autonomous, outside history. The subject is portrayed in a loss and dispersal (p.39-40).

McHale (1987) views the postmodern fragmentation of characters in the context of the postmodern narrator within which authority and subjectivity are dispersed among plurality of the

selves. He says the authorial role is distributed at different levels: a protagonist who acts and suffers, a narrator who tells his story, a "recorder" who relays the narrative and takes responsibility for the typographical arrangement of the text on the page, and a fourth figure the "author" who regulates the relations among the other three. These four figures are located at different ontological levels, but all located at the same level, play the roles of character, narrator, and author circulating among them (p.200-201).

Authors create narrative crisis in their novels which will result in the fragmentation of the story. McHale calls this "Narrative self-erasure". In fiction narrated events can be un-narrated and projected settings, characters, objects and their likes can have their existence revoked. This disrupts the narrative sequencing or chronology of the story. In postmodernist literature authors narrate certain events, characters and so on and erase them after certain narration to foreground the textuality, unreality or constructdness of the narrative (ibid, p.103-4). This strengthens the postmodern foundational concept that reality is a linguistic construction and authors' removal of linguistic form ceases the assumed reality.

Fragmentation aspects of postmodernism are observed in "The Simpsons" animated TV series episode of "The Food Wife". We find Marge Simpson and the kids in their quest of "Foodie" world join the marginal food cultures and go ethnic abandoning the mainstream American food culture. The author expresses this issue through the family's encounter of the Ethiopian cuisine. After Marge and the kids practiced "Gursha" (an Ethiopian culture of feeding each other) at the restaurant, Homer catches his children playing Gursha with left-over food and says "Marge the kids are acting ethnic" (At 8min&21sec). Japanese, Korean, Afghan, etc.…food cultures are viewed popular. In the movie the characters are also portrayed as having fragmented identities. For instance, Homer Simpson is given three identities a "fun dad" who acts childish and enjoys childish games (jumps using big balls, play games), a depressed dad who makes baseball bats and a happy family man who builds bird houses *(The Simpson's season 23 episode 5)*.

In the upcoming chapter the theoretical framework adopted from the postmodern theories of Lewis, McHale, Hutcheon and Waugh is used to analyze the selected novels. Intertextuality with parody and pastiche as its subcategory, ontological concern, metafiction further classified in to self-reflexivity and histographic metafiction, temporal distortion and fragmentation are applied to the analysis of the texts.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Intertextuality, Parody and Pastiche in the Selected Novels

This chapter deals with the intertextual analysis of the selected four novels namely Nega Mezlekias' *The God Who Begat a Jackal* and *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades* and Dinaw Mengistus' *How to Read the Air* and *All Our Names*. Though parody and pastiche are discussed earlier under the theoretical framework as forms of intertextuality for depth and clarity in the upcoming analysis they are addressed independently.

4.1. Intertextuality of the Selected Novels

The selected novels are very rich in intertextuality. Since it is a characteristic of postmodernist fiction to call upon previous texts and systems, the novels explicitly and implicitly show their allegiance with already existing texts. History, mythology, fiction, nonfiction, tradition etc. are the texts the authors used to compose their novels.

The authors used these texts to enrich their works with plural views and to question various dominant narratives which is a case in postmodernist fiction. The intertextual links made to the various texts prohibit the novels not to base their arguments on single views and promote one dominant metanarrative. The relations created with the texts also demystify the modernist assumption concerning the originality and authenticity of literary works. The intertextuality also exposes the authors as functions denouncing them to a role of collectors that bring texts from different sources and paste them together rather than creating their original narrative. Below the selected works intertextual relation with fiction, history, the Holy Bible and mythology and the intertextual issues raised by the authors is analyzed in detail.

4.1.1. Intertextuality with Works of Fiction

Dinaw and Nega has exploited various fictional works in writing their novels. The authors borrowed text fragments, events, characters, styles, plot lines etc. from various fictions. The intertexts denote that the novels are more of constructions than creations. They also show that the authors works do not refer to the outside world but to the world of constructed discourses, already written fictional works. This calling out of the novel for outside contexts denies the stories a single meaning opening them for different interpretation and prohibiting the reader not to reach any logical end.

Nega Mezlekia has used various Ethiopian and international fictional works in the *God Who Begat a Jackal.* It could not have existed had it not been for anterior works of other novelists. Though Nega is the person who wrote the novel, the authorship is in fact to be shared with Ethiopian novelists such as Afeworq Gebreyesus, Haddis Alemayehu, Sahle Sellassie Birihane Mariam and the Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez and the British writer Lobsang Rampa.

To develop the crusade story of *The God Who Begat a Jackal* Nega used intertexts from Afework Gebreyesus's novel *Tobiya* . Though reversed there are explicit hints that were given by the author that direct the reader to bring *Tobiya* into context. For example, Gudu's first clash with the Mawu-Lisa is like the war held between the "DejiAzmaches" of the Christian kingdom and the warriors of the pagans in the novel *Tobiya*. This is stated as, "like always the pagans came to loot, kill, cut genitals of men and enslave people. The king of the Christians sends troops of four 'Dejazmaches'. However, they were defeated because the pagans outnumbered them ten times. The three 'DejiAzmaches' were killed. The survivor was sold as slave and made to lead a miserable bondsman life" (*Tobiya*, p.1-2). In *The God Who Begat a Jackal* the Amma front of Gudu which is portrayed as heretic and infidel faces the Mawu-Lisa invaders and plans a bloodless victory. The technique was to outnumber the conquerors by a ratio of hundred to one. The enemy recognized the hopelessness of the situation and surrendered. The comrade was captivated but later was given money and soldiers that escorts him out of kersa (p.178-179). The narrative is similar except for the change of some roles. Unlike *Tobiyas'* pagans the Mawu-Lisa of the true faith are portrayed as the invaders. The Amma's are presented as peaceful and against any type of killing unlike the pagans of *Tobiya*. The Amma's used the advantage of their number to put the troops in a hopeless position and persuade them to surrender without a single split of blood unlike the pagans that used their outnumbering position to slaughter the Christians. The Amma's did not kill their captives but released them with provisions.

The parallel mythological accounts composed to explain the reason behind why hill tops are chosen for the construction of the House of God also relates the two novels. In the novel *Tobiya* the 'DejiAzmache' and his daughter *Tobiya* are seen hiding themselves in the hills to escape the eyes of the pagan's army. However, after settling on the plain field the King started to watch the area using his binoculars and spotted *Tobiya* and her father (*Tobiya*, p.33-37). After their capture we listen to a dwarf joker of the King's chamber saying, 'The kaffirs' say their God is from the

sky. That is why these captives chose to hide in the hills. They needed to approach the sky so that their god hears their prayers urgently and save them from us' (*Tobiya*, p.37). In *The God Who Begat a Jackal* similar situation is described:

> Tolerance of the Amma faith hadn't evolved at the same pace as the integration of slaves. In fact, with the erection of the first shrine, a civil war was almost ignited. (…) Ever careful not to antagonize the people they set out to help, Amma elders decided not to pursue the matter, preferring, instead, to relocate their shrine up the hill and away from all homegrown temples. (p.166).
>
> The villagers didn't need their priests to tell them that prayers made from higher altitudes and under clear skies reached the Almighty a lot faster than prayers made under the canopy of a tree and a raging wind, wind that dissipated every spoken word long before they ascended where they could be answered. If the homegrown shrines hadn't made it up the rocky mountains, it was only because no one knew how to erect a building on a solid rock foundation. Amma priests had hired Arab architects to fashion their shrine. (p.166).

In the novel unlike the Christians of *Tobiya* who were mocked for praying at the top of the hills the Ammas are presented as the ones who started building shrines at the hills for security reasons and the culture was adopted from abroad. Through subverting the story in *Tobiya* Nega creates instability in the historical and legendary accounts. The reader is led to question the narratives that surround the religious architectural histories and dominant narratives in society. Since the novel is about Ethiopia this logic destabilizes the metanarratives of Ethiopian religious history and the reader scrutinizes the dominant ideologies adopting a relative and pluralistic view of the situation.

It seems the allusion made to *Tobiya* has a purpose of creating a space for questioning the historical and legendary accounts that dominated the crusade as well as religious conflict discourses that label one as invader, savage, cruel, irreligious and the other peaceful and religious. Since the novel is based on Ethiopian history it scrutinizes the metanarratives that surround the history of religion in Ethiopia and the various religious conflicts that have taken place in the country. On a broader context it also ironically reviews the partial discourses that are freely flowing in our world.

Sahle Sellasie's *Warrior King* is also another novel which is used by Nega to compose The God who Begat a Jackal. In the novel the protagonists Gudu and Teferi (the Narrator) have some

common characteristic features with Kassa Hailu and Gebreye of *Warrior King*. The first clue is related with Gudu and Teferi's dislike of the monk of the Mawu-Lisa shrine. In *Warrior King* Kassa Hailu (Tewodros) and Gebreye are presented not as people fond of the religious figures of the Orthodox Church. Their dislike is incepted in their childhood while they were studying at Mahbere Sellassie Convent. Kasssa Hailu and Gebreye due to their failure to follow the strict rules of the convent were always in conflict with the priests. Instead of praying and poring over books like the rest of the children they were always caught committing pranks and roaming in the wilderness. The priests' harsh disciplinary measures could not tame the boys. Instead the boys began insulting the priests, tearing manuscripts and hitting their mates and this resulted in the dismissal of Gebreye. Kassa later leaves the Convent when it came under attack by Dejach Maru (*Warrior King*, p.19-21). In *Warrior King* we see the childhood grudge the two developed towards religious officials revealed at various points in the novel. For example, after joining Kassa's rebel group Gebreye returns to his village to see his father and confronts the family diviner Aba Tekle. Unlike his parents Gebreye did not show any interest to be blessed by the priest. His father was embarrassed by his reaction. The tension between the priest and Gebreye escalates when the priest comments that being sick is a blessing from God. Gebreye opposes the monk that attributing good and bad to God is a simple blasphemy. They jump to the subject of fighting and the priest despises Gebreye and his friends for disturbing the legal government. Gebreye appalled by the priest's idea stops eating and the priest says it is not a proper manner to watch people while they are eating. Gebreye responds that the priest need not to be afraid because he does not have an evil eye. Then the priest starts to chase a fat fly calling it a devil's creature. Gebreye says it is not a devil's creature because only God can create. The fly stained the priest's turban reddish and settled on the egg. The priest swore and slipped the egg in to his mouth rolling it with enjera. Gebreye felt like vomiting (*Warrior King*, p.83-88).

Similar incident is incorporated in The God Who Begat a Jackal. The narrator Teferi and his father on their way to Kersa lose their cargo to an *ergum* and set up camp for the night making a bone fire. Then all of a sudden, a monk emerges from nowhere and they were forced to let him share their fire. The monk wanted Teferi to relinquish his seat. Like Gebreye of the *Warrior King* he was ignorant of the monk's plea till his father made him move. Gebreye was staring at the food basket of the monk. The monk opened the basket and Teferi interrupted the monk saying 'A stinkbug has its eyes on your food'. The monk asks where and Teferi responds he does not know.

The monk responded may be Teferi is the bug, but all of a sudden, a big bug dives out of the blue and landed on the basket. Like AbaTekle of *Warrior King* the monk fights the bug, tosses it in the fire and eats disgustingly. Teferi stares at the monk while he eats and the monk grumbles in a foreign tongue. Teferi cries and the monk asks why. Teferi's father responds that it is his first day out and the monk tells Teferi he is becoming a man. Teferi says he is hungry and the monk tells him again that is one way of becoming a man (p.6-7).

Moreover, the pranks Kassa and Teferi committed at the Mahbere Sellassie Monastery are like Teferi and Gudu's pranks. In *Warrior King* Kassa and Gebreye kill a pigeon on the church roof with a stone while all the boys were praying inside. When caught they lied but were punished cruelly and from that time on, they raised a hell in the holy place (*Warrior King*, p.20-21). Likewise, in *The God Who Begat a Jackal* Teferi and Gudu set a trap to test the ability of the monk who is said to have an ability of seeing forthcoming things of this world and beyond. They hang an ash filled pot on the door way of the monk and proved his insight cannot even penetrate the darkness in his own home let alone the future. They were also able to punish a slave runner monk by mixing his Holy Ash that he applies to his face after every prayer with a powder of lime (p.40-41). Teferi and Gudu's friendship later changed into brotherhood just like Kassa's and Gebreye's friendship and brotherhood. In *Warrior King* we read that after their friendship in Mahebere Sellassie Kassa and Gebreye were separated for a while. But after his fame Gebreye joined him in his rebel camp like the rest of the youth and was exposed to a *gugse* training and brave warriors of Kassa (Warrior King, p.17-29). In *The God Who Begat a Jackal* we see Teferi following the same path as Gudu just like what Gebreye did in *Warrior King*. Teferi's father wanted him to be an overseer of the count's state like himself but he wanted to be a court entertainer like Gudu (p.41-42). Gudu chose him as a partner in group sports and was his confidant (p.39).

Haddis Alemayehu's *Fiqir Iske Meqabir* is also a novel associated with *The God Who Begat a Jackal*. Parallel events and common features of some of the characters in the two novels force the reader to think that some of the characters have migrated from *Fiqir Iske Meqabir*. For example, Aster of *The God Who Begat a Jackal* is very much like Seble of *Fiqir Iske Meqabir*. Both of them are an only daughter of a noble family. Seble is a child of a feudal lord and a noble woman and Aster is a child of a count and a noble woman. Beyond their noble backgrounds both of them had identical childhood. They were brought up in isolation and more over the event that

led to their isolation is similar. Seble had stopped playing outside when she was only six. One day she got in to a fight with her friend Askale went home crying with a mud-soaked cloth and a bloody face. Her father called the girl's father and beat him. The next day when she went out to play with her friends they ran away from her as if she is a beast and this became her everyday reality. Her imprisonment worsened when she got older (*Fikir Iske Meqabir*, p.244-246). In *The God Who begat a Jackal* the incident that caused Aster's isolation is described as follows:

> One day, the five-year-old daughter of a feudal tenant injured Aster bodily, shoving her off an earthen mound. In a fit of anger, Count Ashenafi evicted the girl's parents from his state. Neighbors began to forbid their children to associate with Aster. When they saw her running toward them, little girls and boys abandoned their play and disappeared behind doors. Aster cried and complained, but mothers were never short of excuses for their children's behavior. (p.15)

Both of them are victims of their conservative parents. They were not able to enjoy their youth like their peers and were not able to form families according to the custom of the society (at the assumed appropriate age of the time). Seble's parents looking for exact equals to their noble background continued to turn away marriage proposals. Initially her beseechers were countless but after her sixteenth birthday men gradually stopped coming to their door. Seble turned twenty-four and she could not find any man that will marry her with a status of a virgin. She began to be viewed as a divorcee (*Fiqir Iske Meqabir*, p.85-87). Aster of *The God who Begat a Jackal* also stayed unmarried because her proud parents were not willing to give their high-born daughter to a man of lower social status and like Seble she was viewed as an old woman. Therefore, their admirers stopped coming. The narrator presents the situation as, "If her father could be forgiven for basking in his newfound fame, Aster ought to be pitied for feeling resentful about the limelight into which she was suddenly thrust. She had secretly hoped that the days were gone when young men would come knocking at her door with marriage proposals. At the age of eighteen she was considered, by many, an old maid" (p.117). Both of them had also fallen in love with a vassal but what is more interesting is that the events and steps that took the two girls to the forbidden affair are similar. Seble had fallen in love with Bezabih while he was teaching her writing

The insertion of the comment of HabtishYimer in *Fiqir Iske Meqabir* a slave of the nobility is also an explicit reference made to *Fiqir Iske Meqabir*. In the novel this issue is raised in the debate held between the narrator's father and the hunchback monk about the basis of master

slave relationship as sanctioned by Holy Scriptures. The monk says, "'As a mule born of a mare and an ass is more like a mare than one born of a she-ass and a horse,' the monk reasoned, 'so is a child born to a woman in bondage, regardless of its father'" (p.66).

Nega has also used Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as an intertext to develop his work. Taye (2012) in his study of "Magical Realism in The God Who Begat a Jackal" has stated that Nega is influenced by Marquez and the similarity of some easily recognizable images, incidents and character attributes reveal their association. He listed Aster's memory loss and the memory loss of the Macondo people, Areru's tying to a tree and Jose Arcadio Buendia's tying to a chestnut tree, the vines tree's winding up and down and Jose Arcadio's blood racing up and down, Aster's and Meredios the beauties ascendance to the sky, the levitation of the family diviner and the Count and the levitation of Father Nicanord, the clanking bone of the Hermit of Hermits and the clicking bones of Rebecca's parents, the shrinking of the albino charmer's body and the shriveling of Ursula's body, the palm reading of the *ergum* charmer and Pilar Ternera's card reading etc. (p.85-87). Beyond this Nega has used similar ideas/ plots like Marquez to narrate his story.

For instance, isolation is presented as a reason for occurrence of unworldly things in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. José Arcadio Buendía the founder of Macondo town comes across the wonders of the world through the gypsies that go through town. The gypsies always brought some new findings of the world and one day they brought the magnifying glass. José Arcadio Buendía experimented with it and wrote to the government so that he can prove the use on enemy troops He waited for an answer for several years. When none come, he began studying the works of Monk Hermann in isolation. He conceived a notion of spaces across unknown seas and a belief that he can have relations with splendid beings without having to leave his study. That was the period in which he acquired the habit of talking to himself, of walking through the house without paying attention to anyone. Then José Arcadio Buendía finds out that Mocondo is surrounded by water on all side and fear of isolation makes him illusive. He asks the community to leave and start life at another place. No one agrees so he confines himself and the children in the laboratory and begins teaching them wonders of the world. José Arcadio Buendía isolating himself and the children from the rest of the community devoted his time for alchemy and strange things began to happen. An empty flask that had been forgotten in a cupboard became so

heavy that it could not be moved, a pan of water on the work table boils without any fire under it (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.4-31).

Nega followed the plot of Marquez and made Aster to move in between two realms by isolating her. *The God Who Begat a Jackal's* protagonist Aster's supernatural acts and late miraculous deeds were presented as results of her loneliness. Aster's friends abandoned her after her father scared one of her friends and her parents. She began to spend her days in closed doors and started communicating with animals and one day all of a sudden, she walked through a solid wall. Then her father decided to make her study under a sage of sages and she began performing miracles (p.15-17).

The war between the Ammas and the Mawu-Lisa in the novel is also narrated in the same pattern as the war between the liberals and the conservatives in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In Marquez's novel the idea of a war is introduced by Aureliano's comment on his sister's wedding. He says, "These are not times to go around thinking about weddings" (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.78) and late in the story the reader learns the cause of Aureliano's attitude.

One day his father in law tells Aureliano that the liberals are determined to go to a war. His father in law presented the liberals as 'freemasons' who want to hang priests, allow civil marriage and divorce, recognize rights of illegitimate children, take the power away from the supreme system. On the contrary he described the conservatives as God sent who want to establish public order and family morality and adds that because of their divine authority they are not going to let the country to be broken down. Even if Aureliano sympathizes with the liberals because of their humanitiarism he sets out to support his father in law in the upcoming election of Macondo. Aureliano witnesses the sabotage of the election while his father in law takes out some blue ballots and replaces them with red. Then war breaks out and the conservatives terrorized the town. Aureliano noticed in spite of his present title of civil and military leader of the town his father in law was once more a figurehead and the conservatives' killings are illogical. He announced the fight and led the liberals to victory and rose to be Commander in Chief of the revolutionary forces. Later, he gave the authority to his brother Arcadio who began killing people savagely (One Hundred Years of Solitude, p.78-87). Arcadio in his turn got killed by the conservative colonel Gregorio Stevenson (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.97).

In *The God who Begat a Jackal* the war between the Ammas and the Mawu-Lisa is signaled by similar events and told in the same narrative pattern like the liberals and conservatives war in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Like Aureliano the hunchback monk notifies the nature of the time while the narrator's mother apologized for not serving milk. The narrator expresses this saying, "Mam apologized for not being able to provide milk for the drink, but the monk assured her that such excesses were sinful in hard times like the present" (p.62-63). After dinner the monk tells the narrator's father that they are besieged by a 'hideous foe' the Amma. Then the narrator asks what an Amma is and learns from his father that Amma is an egg-shaped lowly god that united itself with earth and gave birth to a jackal and half human half snake twins. The narrator explains that he later realized that the Amma's adopted an egalitarian culture. His father and the monk got into a debate about master-slave relationship and the monk convinced his father that it is bound by the Holy Scriptures (p.63-66).

Like Aureliano who witnessed the sabotage and terror of the conservatives Gudu observed the barbaric siege of Harar and came back to Deder sympathizing for the poor and peaceful tenants (p.104-105). Then Count Ashenafi found out the affair of Gudu and Aster and Gudu escaped. The Ammas saved Gudu from the wilderness and adopted him (p.127). Then one day, the town of Deder got besieged by ragged men and the Hunchback monk announced the onset of the crusade in the kingdom and made clear he is the top man not just within the bounded valley but also in the kingdom at large. The crusaders terrorized the town and summoned an inquisition. They imposed fines, killed and burned people (p.137-146). Gudu realized that for dreams to become true and the world to change wars would have to be waged. Harar began preparing for a war under Gudu as its commander in chief. Gudu was against any type of bloodshed so when the first troops of the crusaders arrived in Kersa he used an outnumbering strategy and the enemy laid its weapon without a fight (p.155). The crusaders returned but this time they fell into a death trap which was built in consultation with the Abettors. The Abettors switched sides and began helping the crusaders and the emperor intervened and began trying to identify the heretics from the pilgrims. Leaving all the matter to the emperor the monk turned away from the war and took Gudu prisoner and got the reward money from count Ashenafi (p.205-210). Then the narrator 'Teferi' took the baton from Gudu and liberated the town of Deder. When he reached there Gudu was already dead and Aster was gone. However, he had succeeded in hanging the monk (p.228-231).

Nega's reference to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* denies the novel a denouement. *One hundred Years of Solitude* is characterized by vicious circles of conflicts created by the generations of José Arcadio Buendía's family. The liberal and conservative rules were both oppressive and terrorizing. The reader is left to anticipate multiple closures to the novel forecasting stories which can empty themselves to the vicious circle which is brought in context by intertextuality.

Dinaw's novel *How to Read the Air* is also connected with James Baldwin's novel *If Beale street Could Talk*, Charles Dickens's Novel *Hard Times* and Franz Kafka's short story *A Report to the Academy*. The novel's connection with James Baldwin's novel can easily be shown delving into the relationship of the characters in the two novels. Some of the characters in the two novels share the same thoughts and attitudes. For instance, Tish's (the protagonist in *If Beale Street Could Talk*) the expression of her new job at a shop matches Jonas's expression of his job at the center. Tish says, "Sis started calling me Jezebel after I got my job at the perfume center of the department store where I work now. The store thought that it was very daring, very progressive, to give this job to a colored girl. I stand behind that damn counter all day long, smiling till my back teeth ache, letting tired old ladies smell the back of my hand (*If Beale Street Could Talk*, p.21)". Jonas tells;

> Undoubtedly it was my name more than my English degree that had first gotten me the job and then later the promotion that came with a change in responsibilities and a monthly subway card. Jonas Woldemariam had a perfect degree of foreignness to it for the center's needs, almost as deeply vested in America from the sound of it as John or Jane, but with something reassuringly "other" at the end. (p.17).

It is obvious in the above excerpts that Jonas and Tish are portrayed to express a similar feeling towards the marginalizing scheme of the white majority of America. They also share a sarcastic attitude towards the job they are offered by the institutions. They knew they did not get the job because the institutions are really trying to fight the segregation but are using them for a political game. They also express the relationship they have with their partners similarly. Tish tells the beginning of her and Fonny's friendship saying, "Or, maybe, and it's really the same thing – something else people don't want to know – I got to be his little sister and he got to be my big brother. He didn't like his sisters and I didn't have any brothers. And so, we got to be, for each other, what the other missed (*If Beale Street Could Talk*, p.10)." She did not hide the fact that she and Fonny got together not because they fell in love with each other but they needed someone to

be with. Jonas also does not hide that he and Angela ended up in a relationship because there are no black people in the center except for them (p.17).

The third work that has a strong connection with *How to Read the Air* is Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*. *Hard Times* is incorporated in the novel in a fuzzy manner as if the author does not want the reader to make the association. It is mentioned in a dialogue that took place between Jonas and Angela after avoiding each other for a couple of days at a boat party. At the time someone was preparing for a speech while Jonas was standing outside. Spotting him outside Angela came out and joined him. Jonas says, ""Aren't you afraid you'll miss out?" "I know what they're going to say already," she said. "It's hard times. We've done the best we can. Our clients are an inspiration."" (p.26). It seems when Angela says 'hard times' she is referring to the content of the speech but it has a more important meaning than that. In the novel it reflects the narrator's idea that objective truth is an illusion which is a major postmodern issue. As mentioned earlier Jonas and Angela were not talking for a couple of days before the party. The reason was that Angela catches Jonas writing false stories on the asylum application of the refugees and her mentioning of hard times is indirectly telling him that she knows why he did that.

Dickens's *Hard Times* begins in a classroom where a man called Mr. Gradgrind gives an instruction to teach facts, "'NOW, What I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon facts: nothing else will ever be of service to them. This the principle on which I bring Up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up this children'" (*Hard Times*, p.1). The man is seen living up to this principle guiding his children to have a strong hold of facts ignoring a wondrous and imaginative speculation in the following chapters of the novel.

In *How to Read the Air*, when Jonas arrives at the academy for the first time, we see him being worried of the physical and emotional consequences of his thoughts on his students (p.57). He confesses his inability to be objective saying, "As soon as I began teaching at the academy I noticed that there was a distinct, almost palpable difference in the general haze through which until then I had conducted my life. Things, objects, people all suddenly appeared sharper, as if I had been wandering through the world with a pair of dirty, poorly cared-for glasses that blurred the lines and washed away distinctions (p.58)." And we see Jonas absorbed in subjective issues

that stretch to imaginative presentations and fabricated lies in his scholarship. However, this is contradictory since Jonas is portrayed in the novel as a character that is searching about the facts of his past life. He is presented simultaneously seeking truth and lying. This character trait of him is similar to that of Mr. Josiah Bounderby of *Hard Times*. Like Jonas Mr. Josiah Bounderby is a self-contradictory character. On the one hand he is seen infected with Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy of facts calling his workers as faceless, emotionless "hands" and his wife 'a piece of status-building property' (*Hard Times,* p.) on the other hand we see him fabricating a full childhood history of ungrateful miserable upbringing for himself to dismiss poor people's complaint (ibid, p.25-27).

The other intertext in the novel is Franz Kafka's short story *A Report to an Academy*. Unlike the other novel whose adherence with *How to Read the Air* is hinted implicitly the author directly tells the reader that he took ideas, words and texts from Franz Kafka's short story. For instance, in the part where Jonas (the narrator and protagonist of the novel) talks about his new job he says;

> I am the only one who calls it the academy. That's not its real name. I stole it from a short story by Kafka that I read in college-a monkey who's been trained to talk gives a report to an academy. That's the title of the story: 'A Report to an Academy.' I used to think of that story every day when I first started teaching. I never told anyone that, not even my wife, Angela. I used to wonder if that was how my students and other teachers even with all their liberal, cultured learning, saw me- as a monkey trying to teach their language back to them. (p.166-167)

This short story is basic to understand the narrators' point on the textuality and illusiveness of reality. In the short story the narrator Red Peter who was captured in Gold Coast and made to lead a life as a human is called to an academy to share the experience he formerly led as an ape. He tells after his capture he was caged and survival was problematic. He could not escape. However, when he finds 'a way out', he stopped being an ape and became a human. He tells the reader not to mistake 'away out' for the word 'freedom' because freedom is an illusion. He imitated humans not because he was attracted to them but because he needed a way out. He took trainings with various teachers to the extent some inherited his ape nature. At last he achieves the level of an average European (*A Report to an Academy,* p.168-180). In *How to Read the Air* the narrator after losing his job at the refugee center takes a part time job in teaching literature and composition. After a while his students begin asking personal questions and it emptied to a

question ‘where he was from’ he tells them he is from Illinois but they could not accept that. Then he realized his students have already made up their mind that he is an immigrant and only needed a confirmation. After his one-year stay, he began thinking that English is his own and started telling fabricated stories of his past to students like Red Peter’s “way out”. Unlike Red Peter who became a human, he became an ape echoing what the Americans narrate about the problems in the immigrants’ home land. He was even successful to inspire his students organize relief and aid organizations like Red Peter’s teachers who adopted his ape nature.

Dinaw’s exploitation of Dickens’ novels does not stop in *How to Read the Air* his novel *All Our Names* is also terminated to some extent with the reading of Charles Dickens novels *Great Expectations* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. His borrowing and transformation of the texts and the reader’s recognition, understanding and interpretation of these allusions and explicit references shape the experience of reading *All Our Names*.

The first hint of the novel’s relation with Dickens’ novel is observed when Helen (the narrator of all the stories that are set in America) gives Isaac (the narrator of all the stories in Africa) a nickname “Dickens”. It reads:

> “He has a funny way of speaking,” I said.
>
> “Funny how?”
>
> “He sounds old.”
>
> “That is a new one. Maybe it’s just his English.”
>
> “No,” I said, “his English is perfect. It’s how I imagine someone talking in a Dickens novel.”
>
> “Never read him,” he said.
>
> And neither had I, but it was too late to admit that Dickens was merely my fall guy for all things old and English. From that day on, David and I took calling Isaac “Dickens”. (p.17).

The above quoted comment of Helen parallels the comment given by one of the characters in Dicken’s *Great Expectations* which ties the protagonist of *All Our Names* the narrator with the protagonist of *Great Expectation’s* Pip. Likewise, in *Great Expectations* Pip is described as follows, ““Now, master! Sure you're not a-going to favour only one of us. If Young Pip has a half-holiday, do as much for Old Orlick.” I suppose he was about five-and-twenty, but he usually spoke of himself as an ancient person.” (Great Expectations, p.158).

Isaac continues to be associated with Dickens throughout the novel. Though superficially and initially it seems that the purpose of the association is to portray Isaac as conservative, the consistent reference forces the reader to think otherwise. The reader does not just stop imagining the protagonist Isaac as "old" and "English" but goes further and puts the novels of Dickens at the background of *All our Names* and looks for further links all over the reading experience. The reader indeed finds out that *All Our Names* is infused with incidents and characters taken from *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*.

For instance, after the author brings into context the novel *A Tale of Two Cities* (p.17) the reader will be engaged in looking for parallels between the two novels. The most obvious similarity of the novels is their story. The general structure of *All Our Names* has been already sculpted by Charles Dickens. *A Tale of Two Cities* is a historical novel which is written at the foreground of the French Revolution. The story revolves around friendship between a noble French man and a former orphan English man who was a student in France. The noble man abandons his royal patronage and immigrates to England deciding to live by his sweat and became a teacher. However, the noble man named Charles Darnay faced trial for treason in England and is saved by the English man called Sydney Carton because the latter convinced the court that he exactly looks like Darnay. Then by the request of Carton the two became friends. At the pick of the French Revolution the two friends were forced to go to Paris which turned out to be hell with bloody massacres and lawlessness. On his way to Paris Charles Darnay gets exposed and the tribunal of the republic sentences him to death by the guillotine. But Carton plots the escape of Darnay from prison and succeeds in sending him and his family back to England safe. Since he replaced Darnay in prison Carton is killed by the guillotine in place of his friend (*A Tale of Two Cities*).

Likewise, *All Our Names* is a historical novel which is narrated at the background of a friendship of two young Africans who were portrayed at the foreground of the Ugandan Revolution. The protagonist and narrator of *All Our Names* is an Ethiopian immigrant who comes to the capital of Uganda to pursue his dream of becoming a famous writer and ends befriending a Ugandan orphan man (p.4-10). Like the French noble man Charles St. Evrémonde who abandoned his royalty taking an ordinary name Darnay the narrator comes to Kampala abandoning his past. He says "On the bus ride to the capital, I gave up all the names my parents had given me." (p.4). The two friends later get engaged in campus protests and we read Isaac his Ugandan friend saving the

narrator from life threatening incidents at various points in the novel. For example, when the protest in the university becomes deadly Isaac hides the narrator in a room in a university compound and later gives him advice and money so that he can escape the violence (p.81-86). When the revolution turned into a civil war later in the story Isaac gives the narrator the visa and the ticket which was meant for him so that he can escape the war and terror in Uganda and migrates to USA (p.245-255). We learn that Isaac dies in the war front in place of the narrator and the narrator resides in US adopting the name Isaac (p.137). So, following these story lines in the two novels we learn that in *All Our Names* Dinaw does not narrate anything new but a story which is told by another author.

Giving common names to people is also one thing Dinaw borrowed from *A Tale of Two Cities*. In *A Tale of Two Cities* the French revolutionaries are seen calling each other Jacques. Jacques are men from the French lower class, who were oppressed and mistreated by the French royalty. They later organized a secret circle that succeeds in overthrowing the French Monarchy. (*A Tale of Two Cities*, p.45-46). In All Our Names the protagonist Isaac is seen calling all the rich boys in campus Alex's (p.26-27).

The novel is also related with Dickens *Great Expectations*. The story of the protagonist and the narrator of *All Our Names* matches the story of the protagonist of *Great Expectations* Pip. In *Great Expectations* Pip the protagonist and a young boy lives in a village with a church where his parents and his five brothers were buried. He lives with Joe Gregory, his elder sisters' husband, a black smith (*Great Expectations*, p.1-8). He attended some informal schooling at an old woman's house in his village. He practiced writing on a broken slate. He led a life of a commoner along with his family with ragged shoes and clothes. Though everybody who was acquainted with his family tells Pip that he is lucky Pip was not happy with his position and to escape this he gets into a habit of telling lies. Later when he was almost twenty-five with a mysterious inheritance, he moves to London to acquire knowledge and manner that will make him a gentle man.

In *All Our Names* the narrator and protagonist of the novel confronts similar incidents. Though he was considered a member of one of the advantageous families in their village the narrator a young boy is dissatisfied. He says, "Our family was considered blessed to have such a history. Everyone in our family had been born and died on that land. We fed it with our bodies longer

than any other, and it was assumed I would do the same, and so would my children. I knew from a very young age, though, that I would never want that. I felt as if I had been born into a prison." (ibid, p.177-178). Even if he was not allowed to leave the village at his young age the narrator started preparing himself to leave. He started giving himself different names which he copied on a notebook. But he stayed longer because his family became poorer (ibid, p.178). He leaves his village while he was twenty-five (ibid, p.3). However, he was not able to join the university in spite of his ambition so along his friend Isaac he started to lead a life of pretense which is full of lies (ibid, p.6-10). Later in the story he emigrates to US with a student visa which he received as a gift from his friend Isaac and began his university education (p.254-255). Dinaw does not hide this fact from his readers till the end of the novel. He openly reveals that the narrator of *All Our Names* is strongly tied to Pip of *Great Expectations*. Let us consider the following:

> I took my copy of *Great Expectations* in to the courtyard and sat near the tree. I didn't read the book as much as I recited it; I could have gone minutes without looking down at the page and not lost a word, just as I knew my father and uncles must have done with the stories they told me and their own children. The stories were lifeless until they made something out of them, and that was what I did that morning. London was now Kampala; Pip, a poor African orphan wandering the streets of the capital. (p.164).

The story and pattern of friendship between the narrator and Isaac in *All Our Names* resembles that of Pip and his benefactor the convict in *Great Expectations*. These characters are protagonists in the novels and most of the stories in the two novels revolve around them. Dinaw in *All Our Names* introduces the friendship between the narrator and Isaac by making them meet twice in the slums limiting their first communication to a nod. After that they meet in a university compound and were able to form a friendship (p.6-8). Later in the story we learn that the two went to Café Flamingo and Isaac says, "That's where we belong," he said "in one of those expensive cafés with the rest of the students. Years from now, they will say, 'That is where Isaac and Langston the Poet Professor met.'" (p.42). In *Great Expectations* Pip and his benefactor were able to meet twice in the marshy churchyard (p.4-24) and then they meet again in a public house called Three Jolly Bargemen where pip went to look for his sister's husband Joe Gregory (p.103). The communication that took place with Pip and the convict in the house is similar to that of the narrator and Isaac in *All Our Names*. It reads, "He had a pipe in his mouth, and he took it out, and, after slowly blowing all his smoke away and looking hard at me all the

time, nodded. So, I nodded, and then he nodded again, and made room on the settle beside him that I might sit down there (P.104)". For the rest in the public house the man is a stranger and they would assume that everybody met him that day in that place. This incident matches the comment stated by Isaac of All Our names above that people in the future will say that he and the narrator met at the café because they do not know about their encounter at the slums as well as in the university compound. Similarly, no one knew in *Great Expectations* that Pip and the convict have met in the churchyard and marshy fields of his village prior to the Three Jolly Bargemen.

Thus, the association created between Dickens's novels and *All Our Names* exposes the textuality of the incidents incorporated in the novel. The stories and the characters of *All Our Names* are not obtained from the world but from other fictional works. This reminds readers that what they are reading is also fiction and this is one of the purposes of postmodern intertextuality.

4.1.2. Intertextuality with History

The authors have made references to Ethiopian, African and European historical accounts in their works. They have given explicit and implicit hints that guide readers to place the historical events at the background of the selected novels.

Nega Mezlekia's novel *The God Who Begat a Jackal* is for instance indebted to the history of the Knights Templars. The explicit hint given at book five and chapter four of the novel, "An ever – passionate student of history, the hunchback monk found the perfect parable for the crisis in the plight of the knights Templar" (p.204), forces the reader to go backwards and make an association with the history of the knights Templars and the fictional crusaders story employed in the novel.

According to Yahya (2003) the crusade of the Knights Templars is initiated by Pope Urban II who gathered the council of Clermont in 1095. The Pope called on the rich, poor, aristocrat and peasant to unite under one banner and to free the holy land (Jerusalem) from the Muslims (p.15). He also argues though the cover of the crusade is a deep motivation in Christian faith the main reason is the greed of the West which was caused by utmost poverty and misery. At the time the Muslim society was lavishing on wealth and poverty and was tolerant to Christians and Jews. All the minorities coexisted in the holy land and equally benefited from the wealth protected by the moral code of Islam. Abandoning the peaceful policies, the Christians had followed for 1,000

years waged a war in the name of the liberation of the holy city of Jerusalem and Palestine as a whole. Urban II proclaimed the sins of who participated would be forgiven. In 1096 the appointed crusaders set out to collect aid from kings and different aristocrats. On their way to Jerusalem the crusaders killed many Muslims and Jews and looted everything. They arrived in Jerusalem in 1099 and killed everyone and burnt mosques and synagogues. Then taking an oath from the patriarch of Constantinople the order of the Knights Templar was formed. The real motive was to acquire influence and wealth. Despite their Christian origin they were involved in non-Christian practices like black magic, rites and sermons of perverse content. They were searching the Cabala (oral tradition) with the goal of acquiring supernatural powers (p.15-28).

The author of the novel followed the plot line of the conventional history of the crusaders and the Knights Templars to narrate the crusade held between the Mawu-Lisa and the Amma. In the novel the crusade between the Mawu-Lisa and the Amma was initiated by the hunchback monk, called Reverend Yimam, an appointed legate of the supreme pontiff of the Mawu-Lisa Shrine. He rode from village to village to raise money and enlist warriors for an imminent crusade. He asks the narrator's father to address Count Ashenafi to relive the tenants from undue taxes because the poor are turning to the heretics and the infidels (p.65). The Reverend after some time calls for a mass of worshipers in a shrine hall and dictates that the heretics and the infidels had besieged the true faith and left for the crusade (p.67). This reveals that like the crusader of Europe the religious war in the novel was instigated by a religious person of a higher position who convinced the leaders and the people their true faith was endangered. Like the avarice which caused the historical crusade Reverend Yimam was agitated by the egalitarian culture of the Amma's. The narrator views this situation stating "later in my life, I would come to understand that, ridiculed for their perceived simplemindedness, followers of Amma had never been considered a threat to the establishment until the day when their egalitarian culture and its influence on serfs and slaves could no longer be denied" (p.64). Like the Muslims of Jerusalem, the Amma's were ignorant of class and race differences which were a turning point for the Mawu-Lisa who were exploiting slaves and serfs preaching that it is the rule of the Holy Scriptures (p.65-66). They also waged the crusade envying the heaven the Amma created in the town of 'Kersa' while the rest of the kingdom was in misery due to poverty and draught. Kersa is described as:

> A mere four months would elapse, after construction of the ingenious wheels, before the tenants of Kersa celebrated the first harvest-Which yielded cabbages, tomatoes, red beets, and sweet potatoes. Children were mystified at how the scorched earth, so hostile and suffocating a short while ago, could have become so forgiving, producing things that they had never imagined-many of the youngsters had never before known a drop of rain or a breathing cornfield. (p.160).
>
> Merchants made Kersa their destination, instead of a stopover during a long journey. Caravans of camels showed up after each harvest-three times the first year-scooping up edible stuff for markets far away. Soon auctions were held for produce that had yet to be grown. (p.160).

Since the tenants of Kersa abandoned the duty of serfdom and began to use their produces to serve their house hold and the community the lords of the kingdom were not getting anything from them. The church being one of the benefactors used the veil of the true faith to strip the town of its excesses. Before they reached Kersa, the crusaders like their European replicas looted towns like Deder. Their deed is explained, "Day break brought to light a side of the ragged band of men that the darkness had mercifully kept veiled. The men grabbed at the skirts of women, young and old, single and married, with feverish abandon. They stole homes and made away with valuables; some carried off pots of stew that had been left to simmer on the kitchen fires" (p.139). When the number of volunteering crusaders decreased like Pop Urban II Reverend Yimam won the heart of new recruits by a promise of a plenary absolution of all sins committed from their birth to their death (p.190).

Reverend Yimam and the crusaders were also not true Christians like the Templars. Their goal was power and wealth and are seen committing mistakes not expected from them. For instance, we observe in the novel the reverend dispatching dog charmers and spell-casters to the enemy (p.199). The hunchback monk also committed cannibalism (ate corpuses of the dead). The narrator presents the incident as such, "That was when the ever-resourceful peter the Hermit uttered the much-celebrated words: 'Are there not corpses of Turks [the enemy] in plenty? Cooked and salted, they will be good to eat.' Reverend Yimam repeated those words, suitably tailored to the local situation. And so, the hunchback monk conducted his battle with a full stomach" (p.204). Like that of the Templars of Europe who searched the 'Cabala' for its supernatural benefit Reverend Yimam was also looking for medicines that will shower him with supernatural powers. For this he began searching an amulet of an Abettor which is the key to their super power. Abettors are war patriarchs who can ride dust devils, answer fire with fire.

They are immortal. However, Yimam's scheme was found out by an abettor and we learn that this coast him his testicles and was a reason for his hunched back (p.195-197).

The texts that were discussed above bring different meanings to the crusade that is presented in the novel. The reader is forced to bring different realities and events from the history books of the Knights Templar based on the context of the novel. This will result in viewing the story from different perspectives and question dominant logics related with the novel as well as history. For instance, before referring to the conventional history it seems that the cause of the crusade is that the Mawu-Lisa religion officials have felt threatened by the Amma faith. However, the history books expose implicit reasons like money and power as major causes of the crusade waged by the Europeans on the east. Through referring to the history books readers also recognize the hidden heresy of the Mawu-Lisa crusaders. These insights help the reader to see the story from different angles and question the motives of the Mawu-Lisa. The reader will be able to associate the different events and reflections in the novel and construct a range of reasons and truths concerning the crusade and the larger context of the religious conflicts in Ethiopian history.

Dinaw's novel *All Our Names* is also associated with historical texts. It is linked to the Ugandan colonial history and conflict after independence and the history of the Ethiopian student protest of the 1960s and 70s.The most obvious intertextuality of the novel is with the history that is related with the Ugandan colonial experience and the turmoil that followed. Even if the author of *All Our Names* does not mention the incident of colonialism and names Milton Obote and Idi Amin Dada there are clues that alerts the reader that they are implicitly depicted. *All Our Names* begins with the narrators' description of the setting of Kampala. He says he arrived in Kampala ten years after its independence where all the infrastructures and the luxuries observed after independence were no more and the promises of Pan-Africanism were nonexistent. But he says the current president preaches it will be actualized soon (p.3). This narrative links the story with the Ugandan history that extends from1962 to 1980 and the president of Uganda when the narrator arrives is Idi Amin. James (2013, p.1) states that Uganda got its independence from Britain in October 1962 and Milton Obote governed the country until he was overthrown by a coup in January 1971 by Idi Amin. The reader then needs to bring the history of Uganda at the background in order to grasp the general picture of the novel.

This intertextual tie with the Ugandan history brings in an additional view for the interpretation of the story of the novel which is mainly a story of civil war and power struggle. In the novel the turmoil in Uganda, in addition to the poverty discussed in the above excerpt, is presented as caused by corruption and violence which motivated the university students to start their struggle to overthrow the government. The narrator says, "For years the patronage kept the students content. They held on to their socialist, Pan-African dream, while ignoring the corruption and violence that touched the rest of the capital, for as long as they could. By the time Isaac and I arrived on campus, the dream had proved rotten and was cast to the side." (p.24). However, the intertextual link created by the author to the Ugandan history especially with its colonial experience brings in another factor to the cause of civil war. The author in Book one opening chapter of the novel describes the state of the protagonist Isaac relating it to an after effect of the British colonial practices. Let us consider the following passage:

> From the beginning, it was harder for Isaac than for me to be in the capital. This had never been and, I understood later, would never be my home, regardless of what I imagined. It was different for Isaac, however. Uganda was his country, and Kampala was the heart of it. His family was from the north, one of the tall, darker tribes that a man in Cambridge had decided were more warrior-like than their smaller cousins to the south. Had the British stayed, he would have done well. He had been bright enough in his early years to be talked of as one of the students who when older could be sent abroad, perhaps to public school in London on a government scholarship. But then the whole colonial experiment ended in what seemed like a single long bloody afternoon, and boys like Isaac were orphaned a second time. And although Isaac had arrived in the capital only a few weeks before me, he would easily find his place in it, and then rise to the top of whatever circle he found himself in. (p.6).

In the above excerpt the author indirectly hints the divide and rule strategy of British colonialism applied in Uganda. According to Mutebi (2008, p.2) colonial rule began in Uganda in 1894 in the kingdom of Buganda where the British showed their preference over the rest of the kingdoms in the country. They signed their first agreement with Buganda with an infant Kabaka on the throne. Later the British signed similar agreements with other kingdoms and established eleven administrative districts based on ethnic boundaries but the Buganda kingdom was dominating the rest with an arrangement of a sub imperial system by the British. The Bagandas of Buganda were economically advantageous and provided with a British style education. Mutebi argues the colonialists intentionally recruited armed forces from groups from the north and the east which were traditionally seen as war like thus creating armed ethnic allies. This created a lasting

resentment among various people of Uganda which prevailed through the post-colonial period (ibid, p.3) Therefore, the indirect allusion made by the author forces the reader to bring in the ethnic division created by the British as an important factor of the conflict and the civil war of Uganda portrayed in the novel. That the protagonist Isaac as a member of a disadvantage ethnic group after the Ugandan independence joins the violence and the civil war because he was alienated by the ethnic group that is in power.

The history of Ethiopian students' protest against Emperor Haile Selassie is also implicitly incorporated in the novel. Even if at the surface the author tells us that the revolution that is being narrated is Ugandan there are hints that the author is also talking about the Ethiopian students' movement of the 1960s and 70s. The reader is therefore expected to put the history of Ethiopian students' movement of the 1960s and 70s at the background to fully comprehend the novel. In the novel, the story of the university students and Isaac's and the narrator's revolutionary scheme more or less matches the pattern of the 1960s Haile Selassie I university students' protest. Like that of the Ethiopian student movement the revolutionary story of the novel is made to be initiated by the influence of foreign students in the university. The narrator says:

> I spent my first few weeks in the capital trying to imitate the gangs of boys that lingered around the university and the cafés and bars that bordered it. Back then, all the boys our age wanted to be revolutionaries. On campus, and in the poor quarters where Isaac and I lived, there were dozen's of Lumumbas, Marleys, Malcolms, Césaires, Kenyattas, Senghors, and Selassies, boys who woke up every morning and donned the black hats and olive-green costumes of their heroes. I couldn't match them, so I let the few strands of hair on my chin grow long. I bought a used pair of green pants that I wore daily, even after the knees has split open. (p.4).

The above text explains that in the university where some of the novels' story takes place there were a variety of students who come from different African countries. In the history of the Ethiopian students' movement it is stated that one of the aggravating factors of the students' protest was the residing of many foreign students at Haile Selassie I University. Hussein (2006) states that "The second decade (1960-1970) which was characterized by the rise of student political activism and social critique, witnessed the coming and failure of the coup, the decolonization of Africa (there were African students on government scholarships). These internal and external events had a direct and indirect impact upon the political and social outlook

of university students…" (p.294). Bahiru (2014) also notes "in this regard the coming of African scholarship students in 1958 forms an important development in increasing the political consciousness of Ethiopian university students" (p.101).

The dissatisfaction of the narrator at the beginning of the novel regarding the Pan-African dream and the reality at hand in the capital Kampala (p.3) also echoes the historical accounts concerning the Ethiopian student movement of the 60s and 70s that recount the disappointment of the scholarship students who come to Ethiopia with a bigger picture but are shocked to find the country backward and poor. Concerning this Colin (1976) notes:

> There was another important catalyst, on a smaller and more parochial level. At the Accra Conference of Independent African States in 1958, Haile Sellassie offered several scholarships for students from other African countries to attend University College Addis Ababa. The same year fifteen such students arrived, and by academic year 1960/1961 there were 27 non-Ethiopian Africans in a total enrolment of 381. Three years later the number of scholarship holders had doubled. Most were from east African countries, with a few from west and southern Africa. These students came from highly politicised societies, in which the national liberation struggle had reached or was about to reach its climax. Their leaders—Nkrumah, Senghor, Sékou Touré and Nyerere—were the intellectual vanguard of the continent, poets and philosophers. They found Ethiopia, with its proud tradition of independence and resistance to colonialism, not only appallingly backward and poverty-stricken, but politically apathetic as well. (p.5-6).

This parallelism of the historical accounts and the novel therefore denotes that the descriptions and incidents in the novel are not original ideas of the author and also do not refer to empirical realities in the world but previous texts that are part of already constructed historical discourses which in the postmodern are considered by themselves constructions.

The stories in the novel that are related with campus heroes and university publications are also associated with the Ethiopian student movement of the 60s and 70s. For instance, the narrator talks about a campus star who is admired by all the students. The narrator says:

> The real star of the campus for Isaac, and many others, however, was virtually invisible. He was supposed to be tall, young, handsome, and well read and wore only olive-green pants and shirts. Isaac claimed to have seen him from afar as he was leaving the campus. He said he was certain he was either Congolese or Rwandan. … . There was an article in the campus newspaper with the outline of a head and a series of quotes from students who claimed he was a myth. The next week, messages began to

> appear on the buildings and supposedly in the classrooms as well." (p.27-28).

It is possible to connect this passage with two incidents in Haile Selassie I university in the1960s. The first which needs to be brought into the texts because of the phrase "star of the campus" is related with a scholarship student who was able to establish an independent student paper called "Campus Star" which criticized the UC Newsletter of its attachment with the student administration. Bahiru (2014) notes that as early as 1952 there were various attempts by students of university college of Addis Ababa to air their opinions and write papers for Writers' Club, university College Calls and UCAA Newsletter. However, these papers were limited to publishing best shows in town, humorous quotations, caricatures proverbs, short notices, sport news and the like and were banned for indulging in politics and religion. A Kenyan activist student Omogi Caleb and known as the Campus Star however was able to establish a radical and independent paper later called News and Views (78-79). The second case is the 1960 Ethiopian coup. In 1960 the imperial government of Haile Selassie was tested by a coup which emerged from his Imperial Body Guard. Even if the university students did not participate in the coup their leaders were invited by the coup organizers after they heard about the change of government over the radio and the coup leader Girmame Neway who is not known by the students had become the campus hero. Concerning this Balsvik (1985) notes that:

> The students had no role in planning the coup. Hardly any of them knew Girmame, except for a few who had been active in the Haile Sellassie I Secondary School Alumni Association. The students had only heard rumors about a dynamic sub provincial governor down in Wollamo and later Jijiga who dressed in khaki. The students at UCAA learned of the coup on Wednesday morning when, sitting in their classes, they heard loudspeakers in the street announcing that the crown prince would speak on the radio. They listened to news about the change of government and heard the proclamation read by the crown prince, later distributed on the campus. The full text was translated and printed in News and Views. (p.93).

The above quoted historical account matches the description given to the campus star and the events that are made to surround him in the novel. The depiction of the off-campus accommodation of Isaac and the narrator is also related with the living condition of HSIU students post 1962. Regarding this Balsvik (1985) notes that until 1962 HSIU students were privileged with the government scholarship which included room, board, tuition, textbooks, uniforms, medical care and housekeeping services. Nevertheless, in 1962 the university closed

its dormitory service and allocated 50 birr of stipend which made students face dilapidated housing without electricity, toilets, sanitary facilities, private study spaces which they rented in slums near brothels and bars. Students began to show up at school with canvas shoes, dirty shabby coats and khaki trousers which they wear week after week. Students were worried about affording notebooks, haircuts; soap and shoe polish (p.31-37). Like the students of Haile Selassie I university, Isaac and the narrator were made to face the worst living condition in the novel. The narrator presents this:

> He was living with friends of cousins, who had agreed to house him on the floor in their living room. I was renting a cot in the back of a dry-goods store that on the weekends became an impromptu bar for the owner and his friends. On Friday and to Saturday nights, I wasn't allowed to return to the store until 2or 3a.m., after the bed had been used by the owner and his friends to entertain themselves with some of the young girls in the neighborhood. (p.6).

The description of the protagonists' shoes, "He knelt down and took off one of his shoes and wiggled his dirty toes in the air. He held the shoe, which like my own was covered in dust and had been repaired so many times there was hardly anything left of the sole." (p.24) also strengthens the association created by the author between Isaac and the narrator and the Ethiopian students who were made to live with a 50-birr stipend off campus. The students protest by sitting in at the open fields and the brutal police attacks and tear gas (p. 79-81) is also borrowed from the history of HIUS movement. According to Balsvik (1985) in 1967 HSIUS demonstrated in the campus and were brutally attacked by police and were tear gassed while crawling (p.185-186).

4.1.3. Intertextuality with Mythology and Tradition

Mythological stories and cultural practices are also incorporated to develop the novels. Part of the story of Nega's novel *The God Who Begat a Jackal* is taken from the African Mythologies of the Mawu-Lisa, the Amma and the Solomonic dynasty.

The mythology of the Mawu-Lisa expressed in the novel (p.3-4) is a creation mythology of Benin. According to Lynch and Roberts (2010) in this mythology the world is created by Aido-Hwedo's (cosmic serpent) movement. The serpent carried Mawu-Lisa in his mouth and created the earth's surface with its movement. Mountains are formed with the serpent's excrement. When the creator had finished creating the world it coiled itself in a circle and got underneath the

earth to hold it in place (p.46). The Amma mythology which is incorporated in the novel (p.64) is also a creation mythology of the Dogon people of Burkina Faso and Mali. In this creation story the earth is created by a lonely egg shape creator called Amma. The cosmic egg was composed of materials and structures of the universe that can be used to create the earth. Amma's first effort failed and for the second time she planted a seed within herself and produced two placentas with sets of twins. One of the twins broke out and tried to create his own universe but failed and Amma used a fragment of this twin's placenta to create the earth (ibid, p.28). Postmodern literature exposes the marginalizing schemes of dominant ideologies that moved parallel accounts to the periphery. It seems Nega has incorporated these mythological narratives in the novel to highlight the plurality of the creation accounts.

The author also implicitly incorporated the mythological account of the Solomonic dynasty in the novel. In the text one of the Areru twins, Areru the Taller was wounded after the siege of Harar (p.62). After his recovery he began eating too much. He wasn't able to stop eating. The town's elites tried every medication but they failed. Areru terrorized the town when he began robbing the town's kitchen and started to hunt roosters, pigs and cats. So, with the order of Count Ashenafi he was tied to a tree and his mother started to give him a human serving of food (p.67-68).

What links Areru the Taller to the mythology of the Solomonic dynasty is what Aster the protagonist in the novel did while her father along with Gudu were gone for the raid of Harar. Since the war had taken more time than anticipated Aster started to offer prayers at the shrine and a seer tells her, "'A two-headed hawk has darkened the horizon,' the seer began, one fine morning. 'The dove of peace is in danger, but one shouldn't lose hope, for the fig of righteousness is still green and alive.'" (p.107). After this premonition Aster went to the place where Areru the Taller was tied and she gave him food and tried to comfort him (p.107).

In the mythology of the Solomonic dynasty a similar event is told while narrating the origin of Makeda. Ann and Roberts (2010) stated that according to the legend Ethiopia was ruled by a giant serpent called Arwe. The serpent's appetite was so huge that he ate everything the people grew. People submitted to him because they feared he will cause an earthquake and destroy their village if angered. One day a stranger arrived and told them he will destroy Arwe. The man gave the serpent an offering of a white lamb and juice and the serpent died. When the man grew old,

he told the people to take his daughter Makeda and Makeda became the Queen of Sheba (p.115). It seems the author has given Areru the taller the trait of Arwe. Aster's giving him food in the difficult times parallels the offerings the villagers gave to Arwe. It seems she is trying to make him happy to stop him from committing any dangerous supernatural deed like the serpent of the Solomonic dynasty. This intertextual reference guides the reader to bring parts of Ethiopian history that are classified as legend into context. The author's presentation of legend, myth and history at parallel plane distorts reality. Therefore, the reader adopts a relative stand to the presented history and questions the conventional one.

Nega has also incorporated traditions of the Ethiopian people in his novel. This is evident in *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades.* Most of the narrators' expressions and the characters' actions are taken from tradition and readers who are familiar with the engraved societal practices and norms can notice that the author is not saying anything new but is bringing a number of ordinary cultural practices to a certain contextual plane.

Concerning this the author openly says in the latter part of the novel, "THIS BOOK DRAWS HEAVILY on existing beliefs and practices."(p.329).While bringing these texts in the novel the author also brings another postmodern intertextual aspect 'pastiche'. The novel does not follow the provisional novel writing style. It follows a style of journal writing. It opens with an author's note which reads more like an introduction to a research report than fiction. This withholds the demographic description of the novels setting, the method the author used to write the novel and some background information about the Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity (p.ix-x). An expression that looks like a key to transliteration is also incorporated. It reads, "When a parish priest is addressed as *Abatae,* for instance, it means "My father," but when abbreviated as the title Aba, it has a less intimate meaning. Women are often referred to as *Etiye,* which means "sister," but not with the same sentiment as when the word is used to address a nun." (p.x).

The afterward given by the author at the end is also written like a conclusion of a research report. In this part the author tries to summarize and reflect upon some of the events in the novel. For example, based on the neck pouch of Aster the author tries to conclude that such a practice is common for Ethiopia. For these he refers to the tale of the neck pouch of the Ethiopian king Menelik which was believed to withhold his righteousness (p.329). The conclusion the author

gives about the game of Gena is also a good example for a writing style and content for a conclusion of a research report. It reads:

> The game of *Gena* as it is played by two of the protagonists in this narrative seems to be a form of bloodletting. Nothing could be further from the truth. Everyday soccer leaves more bruised ribs and bloody noses than either *Gena* or the game accompanying the festival of Ephiphany, *Guks.* It is true, however that on the off chance that such mishaps do happen, there are rules in place, unwritten but no less binding, stating, "There is no compensation for life or limb lost, as a result of *Gena* gone wrong. Nor shall one contemplate vengeance. (p.329).

4.1.4. Intertextuality with the Holy Bible

The authors have also used narrative styles and texts from the Holy Bible. There are explicit and implicit hints in Dinaw's How to Read the Air and Nega's The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades that show the novels connection with the *Holy Bible (King James version)*.

Dinaw's *How to Read the Air* is a story of the narrator and protagonist called Jonas who was born from Ethiopian immigrants called Mariam and Yosef in Peoria Illinois of the American Midwest. The Names Mariam (Mary), Yosef (Joseph) and Jonas (Jonah) have biblical background so before attempting any exploration of the novel the first task of the reader needs to be looking for clues in the novel that will link the characters with the religious figures in the Bible.

The author has given implicit hints throughout the novel that display his characters' bond with the religious personalities. The link made between Mariam Mother of God and Jonas's mother Mariam is first built on the view that Mariam is the new Ark of the Covenant. In Christian religious discourses Mariam is referred to as the new Ark of the Covenant as she held with herself the divine presence of God. There are various evidences in the Old as well as the New Testament that support this. In The Old Testament it is written "God the Holy Spirit over shadowed and then indwelled the Ark. The Ark became the dwelling place of the presence of God" (Exodus 40:34-35). The New Testament says, "God the Holy Spirit overshadowed and then indwelled Mary. At that time Mary's womb became the dwelling place of the presence of God" (Luke 1:35). In the Old Testament it is written that, "The ark of the covenant contained the Ten Commandments (The words of God), a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that came back to life" (Deuteronomy 10:3-5; Hebrews 9:4). The New Testament reads, "The womb of the Virgin

contained Jesus: the living Word of God enfleshed, the living bread from heaven, "the Branch" (Messianic title) who would die but come back to life" (Luke1:35). There are clues in the novel that correspond to the verses listed above.

The first hint in the novel reads, "A tiny stitch of blue fabric from a pair of padded hospital socks picked up two weeks earlier peeked out over the edge. She pressed the sock back in with one finger, granted the zipper its closure, and with that, acknowledged that on the occasion her husband had won" (p.9-10). In the Old Testament (Numbers 15:38-39) the people of Israel were told to put upon the tassel of each corner a blue cord to look upon and remember the commandments of the Lord. As we have seen earlier Mariam is considered The Ark of The Covenant and the author's attaching a blue cord to the suit case of the fictional Mariam like the cords attached in the Israelites tassel has the purpose of telling Mariam of the fiction is withholding the word of God within her and in the case of the novel it is Jonas. The other clue given in relation to the Ark is related with the verse in the Old Testament that says, "When the Ark was outside the Holy of Holies (when it is being transported) it was to be covered with a blue veil" (Numbers 4:4-6). In the novel Mariam is shown wearing blue when she goes out:

> What can I say is that morning she put on a light blue dress and for an hour curled her hair so that the ends turned inward her neck. (p.90).
>
> She left me just a few feet away from the school, kneeling down on the curb behind a rusted red van so she could hide in its shadow and see me clearly as she told me the first in a series of lessons that she later referred to simply as Things You Must Never Forget. (p.91).
>
> A piece of dark blue fabric from the end of her dress trailed her for a fraction of a second and remained fluttering in space even after she had rounded the bend. It could have just as easily been a patch of blue stolen from the sky and delivered to earth for all the consideration I put into it. (p.92).

Mariam's wearing of blue when she goes outside as indicated in the above excerpt parallels the norm of covering the Ark of the Covenant of the Old Testament with blue when taking it outside. A blue garment seen worn by Mariam in religious icons can also be another confirmation. The other clues that relate Mariam of the novel with mother of God are the texts that state the uniqueness of her and her offspring. The feeling of Mariam that is expressed as, "It made her feel, in its own quiet fleeting way, as if she were a woman to be reckoned with, a woman whom others would someday come to envy (p.6)." parallels Elisabeth's gracing her that she is blessed

among the women in Luke (1:42-43). Mariam's belief that her children will be extraordinary and will not be given trivial names like Adam and Sara (p.7) and calling her sister's children 'just another baby' (p.60) is a tip given to the reader to associate Mariam with Mother of God.

Jonas the narrator and protagonist of the novel can be linked to the Bible; however, his association is not a direct one. Jonas in the Old Testament is a prophet who has spent three days and nights in the stomach of a big fish because he defied God's order to go to Nineveh. After he prayed unto God the fish vomited him on dry land (Jonah 1, 2:1-10). In the New Testament this Jonas is mentioned at three places "For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the son of man be to this generation (Luke 11:30), "The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here" (Matt 12:41), This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah" (Luke 11:29). Like the people who were questioning Jesus and Jesus's response that he will not give them a sign except the sign of Jonas the author is trying to tell the reader that the story is about Jesus but he cannot give a clue except for the name Jonas. And Jonas is seen in the novel being associated with Jesus's teaching and miracle.

Nega's the Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades is also related with the Holy Bible. It is necessary to put under the background some texts and ideas of the Bible to understand what the author is trying to address. In the novel it is through the phrase 'forbidden fruit' (p.1) that the first intertextual relation is created between the novel and The Bible. Though the author rewrote the story of part of the book of genesis the narrative sequence and some of the words and phrases used in the novel's story robs it its originality and appends it to the Holy Bible.

The protagonist of the novel, Azeb at the beginning of the novel is seen beseeching her older sister Genet to give her testicles of a sheep that was being simmering in an open fire. Her sister refuses because the testicles which are regarded as forbidden fruits in the society are sacred for women because it is believed that they will give women aphrodisiac (manly) behavior. Nevertheless, Azeb snatched the testicles and took a hideout and poked on it. But she finds out that it is not that tasty. Realizing her fault, she soon began crying. Dusk settled but she feared to return to her family. Then all of a sudden, she heard her name being called out (p.1-2). Though it seems the author mainly borrowed the text for a parodic end which we will discuss later the idea

and the pattern he followed to narrate his story makes his narrative devoid of its originality. God in Genesis (2:17) said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But Eve and Adam defied the one restriction God imposed on them. Tricked by the serpent and tempted to become god Eve ate the forbidden fruit herself and also gave it to Adam. Indeed, their eyes got opened and they realized they are naked so they wore fig leaves. Adam and Eve felt the presence of God in the garden and hid themselves among the trees. Then God called out to Adam (Genesis, 3:3-3:10).

The stories of the two texts and the narrative pattern they followed are almost similar. From all the trees of the Eden garden Adam and Eve ate the forbidden one and from all the sheep parts that are allowed to be consumed by women Azeb got tempted by the forbidden one and ate it. Realizing their fault Adam and Eve hid themselves from God. Likewise, after her spoil it appeared to Azeb that what she did was wrong so she stayed by the river side even after dusk settled. Azeb's family later called out for her like God called Adam. As God said Adam dies at the age of nine hundred and thirty (Genesis, 5:5). At different stages in the novel we observe Azeb failing in womanly chores and being successful at manly deeds. Azeb's mother worrisome follow up and Azeb's failure are good evidence for this, "Azeb wasn't fond of kitchen chores, but Werknesh made sure that her youngest daughter learned the culinary skills without which she could not mature into proper womanhood." (p.7). But Azeb's womanly behavior fails to match her mother's and the society's expectations and we observe her failing to season a stew (p.9), bake injera (p.9-10) and hide her hunger (p.17). The fate that awaited both Adam and Eve (death) and Azeb (failing as a woman) is a result of their breaking of the rules put forward for them.

The parallelism created between the two texts brings into context another dimension to the justification of Azeb's behavior. The reader may start to doubt maybe she is what she is not because of her rebellious nature but because of the curse that is brought upon her due to the fault she committed. This additional interpretation also brings texts into the intertextual pool from the traditions of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian religion. Preceding Azeb's testicle event when Azeb was only eightieth day her mother had committed a mistake which was unacceptable in the orthodox tradition. It reads, "The incident that troubled Aba Yitades years later didn't take place until after the Eucharist service. Instead of taking the baptized girl through the south exit, which was reserved for women and girls, Werknesh committed the indefensible mistake of exiting

through the north door—the one meant for men!" (p.6). This can also be another reason why the reader can use to validate Azeb's behavior, the events she gets into and her actions. Since the purpose of intertextuality in postmodernism is to highlight the multiplicity of views and truths Nega's references to the Bible are frequent and they foreground ideas for multiple interpretations of the novel.

4.2. Parody in the Selected Novels

Parody in postmodern literature is a rewriting of past texts. As it is already discussed in the intertextual analysis the novels have used intertexts from non-fictional and fictional works. However, this relationship has gone a step ahead and the authors subverted the intertexts to a parodist end to tackle various postmodernist issues. In what follows the authors parodist rewriting of the intertexts will be discussed.

Negas' novel *The God Who Begat a Jackal* is a parody of the history of Ethiopia especially the professional and conventional writings. Even if the author in the historical post script says, "The God Who Begat a Jackal is set in what is today Ethiopia during a period that would have been between 1750 and the late 1800s, when the country was beset with feuding emperors, feudal masters and vassals, slaves and slave-runners, religious tensions and class hatred" (p.235). Instead of beginning with events that were supported by this history the novel starts with the narrator's account of his ancestry which reads:

> Deep within the conquering blue sky, far beyond the feathered patrols and their scouts, lives the all-seeing Mawu-Lisa, God of my people. With two faces on one hand, Mawu-Lisa is both man and woman. Mawu, the woman, is in charge of the night; Lisa, the male, directs the day. (p.3).
>
> Long Before men organized their caves and went hunting for antelopes, warthogs, gazelles, and oryxes; even longer before there was any game to hunt, before there were any of the creatures that we would recognize today, a pair of twins roamed the African steppe: a male child named Da Zodji, and a female, Ananu. They were the first to be born to Mawu-Lisa and were sent to populate the earth. (p.3).

This exposition places the story in a mythic time and legendary accounts which in conventional history writings of Ethiopia are overlooked and referred only as legends. The historical accounts set boundaries between history and legends and acknowledge histories that can be verified through material culture. The author especially parodies the form and content of history to expose its patriarchal nature and the limitations of the justifications that are used to genuinely

mark history (Ethiopian). Hutcheon (1989) states, "Postmodern texts consistently use and abuse actual historical documents and documentation in such a way as to stress both the discursive nature of those representations of the past and the narrativized form in which we read them" (p.87). Likewise, the novel plays with actual historical conventions to expose their subjectivity and marginalizing nature. For instance, in the actual Ethiopian historical discourse there is an argument concerning the precise time in which Ethiopian history began and the time of Queen Sheba was one of the considerations till it was categorized as a mere legend. Concerning this Bahiru (2002) notes that traditionally the journey Queen Sheba (Azeb, Makida) made to king Solomon of Israel around 3000B.c. has been taken as the beginning of Ethiopian history. However, he argues that this thesis has two major problems because firstly it is difficult to prove that Queen Sheba made the journey from Ethiopia. Secondly, even assuming that she undertook, the journey only marks the formation of a dynasty not a birth of a nation's history. He narrows the origin of Ethiopian history to the much unknown pre-Axumite kingdoms and the Axumite empire which were verified through recent archeological and linguistic studies, bone fossils (skeletons) and stone inscriptions. Bahiru explains that the faces of one of the pre-historical evidences are archeological and linguistic hints of the domestication of plants and animals (p.5-7). Lynch and Roberts (2010) in their time line of African history also appropriate Ethiopian history to the kingdom of Axum whose ruler (he) was converted to Christianity (p.ix-x). Ahmed (2015) while explaining state formation in Harar also says that it is impossible to identify the precise year based on written sources. He suggests further exploration of archaeological findings basing his argument on a thesis that peoples of antiquity began with the domestication of animals in the region 7,000 years ago (p.38-39). It seems that these views narrowed the origin of Ethiopian history to the findings of 'the material cultures', the so called conventional historical verifiers who favor the advent of Christianity and the patriarchal line as markers of the inception of Ethiopian history.

The author starts this historical narrative to the reader using an African mythology which defies the conventional historical recordings. The narrator in the above excerpt describes that he is an ancestor of Mawu-Lisa who is both male and female that rules the moon and the sun. The author's choosing of this African mythology as a template to narrate the story has a critical purpose of putting historical accounts like discussed above under scrutiny. Unlike the above historical accounts, the myth depicts the existence of the God Mawu-Lisa and the children before

any humanly chores were invented. It deconstructs the above historical accounts that narrowed Ethiopian history to the period of the Axumites mocking the archeological and linguistic evidences that do not recognize Queen Sheba's kingdom.

The mythology narrates that the offspring's of Mawu-Lisa the male "Da Zodji" and the female "Ananu" were wandering in the wilderness of Africa doing nothing. They did not hunt; domesticate any plants or animals and they did not leave any cave writings or material evidences but they were there just roaming around the lands. The author is mocking the historians of their reliance on material culture and ignoring the African oral tradition. The historical accounts discussed above excluded the kingdom of Queen of Sheba because they needed proofs of 'game hunt' and this undertaking limited the origin of Ethiopian history associating it only to the male sex. This parody also criticizes another larger context. The marginal and the west dominated historical scholarship that rely on written documents to legitimize any historical accounts. It seems the author is saying that we need to open the past for reinterpretation and multiple views. The placing of the official history in the mythological context also implicates history as another meta-narrative (myth).

The association of the story with the mythology also creates a space for the questioning of the conventional history that appends itself to Christianity. The scholars acknowledging of the Axumite Empire as the first history has a tendency of excluding the history that was associated with paganism and it seems the author of the novel is criticizing such exclusions of history. In Budge's (2000) translation of the *Kěbra Nagast* it is stated that during her conversation with King Solomon Queen Sheba had spoken of the faith of her people and herself. She said that they worship the sun and call him "Our King" and "Our Creator" and some of her people worship stones, trees, carved figures, images of gold and silver (p.24-25). This legendary account also strengthens that the author is narrating this excluded history and also parodying the selective and subjective nature of history hinting our history stretches to our pagan times. From all the African mythologies of creation the author's choice of Mawu-Lisa who is both female and male is reasonable. Through this mythology the author tells our historical origin is both founded on the deeds of women and men and thus exposes the patriarchal nature of history that weighs the history of men.

The parodic rewriting of the fame of King Solomon and the Voyage of Queen Sheba also strengthens the author's skeptical attitude towards the marginalizing nature of history. In the official legendary accounts like in Budge (2000) King Solomon is portrayed as the wisest man on earth who was building the House of God. The King sets out messages to all merchants to come and take gold and silver from him in exchange for whatever they have in hand that will be used for construction and a merchant from Queen Sheba's country was one of them. When he returned, he told the Queen about the Wisdom of the King. His fame possessed the Queen and she set out for him. She reached Jerusalem and stayed to learn about his wisdom. After six months she sent a message to the king that she needs to attend to her people. The king who had four hundred wives and six hundred concubines at the time taken by her splendid beauty wanted to sleep with her and tricked her by his wisdom and did his will (p.16-31).

In the novel the author parodied this account portraying Aster as the wisest woman on earth whom people make pilgrimage to. Aster attracted the attention of a "young emperor" after her fame flooded his entire kingdom. Her news reached the young emperor and sent her a commendation in a sealed envelope accompanied by regal surreys that bear a royal insignia. After the royal visit Aster's father built her a four-room bungalow far from the main residence in a glade hidden by giant fig trees and started collecting fees for his daughter's services. At the time the young emperor was lavishing abusing young beautiful women at his chamber. Though rumors were circulating about the emperor's scandal Count Ashenafi sent Aster to serve the emperor. Aster stayed at the royal chamber charming the royalty with her wisdom. She exposed threatening plots against the monarchy and the king. She was awarded by the emperor the "Order of the Virgin Moon" and later the king drugged and raped her (p.24-33).

The author subverted the story giving King Solomon's wisdom to Aster and Queen Sheba's seduction by the King to the young emperor. This diversion gave power to the female Aster. It seems the author is implicating the unfair popularization of conventional histories and legends that magnify stories of male than their counterpart. The author's substituting the story of King Solomon's construction of the "House of God" by the story of Aster's four-room bungalow built near a giant fig tree also plays a vital role in exposing the partiality history has towards some aspects favoring another especially hinting the favoring of Christian history in the Ethiopian context. The changing of Queen Sheba's willful intercourse with Aster's rape also has the

purpose of questioning the metanarratives of sexuality that mostly accuses women initiating sexual drives in men.

The author also used the mythological context to parody race relations in Ethiopian history. The author portrays Mawu-Lisa as a human being stating, "With two faces on one head, Mawu-Lisa is both man and woman (…) we would recognize today, a pair of twins roamed the African steppe: a male child named Da Zodji, and a female, Ananu. They were the first to be born to Mawu-Lisa and were sent to populate the earth" (p.3). Then the rival, which later gets into war with the Mawu-Lisa, Amma is describes as a lowly god who united himself with a female earth that had jackal as his first born. Amma realized his mistake and once again united himself with earth and fathered twins who looked human above the waist and snakes from their bottom halves. They have crimson eyes, tongues long like giraffes, arms sinuous and without joints and bodies covered with short green hairs. Their name was "Nummo" and upon returning to earth they produced twins of humans, antelopes, warthogs, zebras, lions, buffaloes, hyenas…etc. (p.64). In the novel the descendants of the Mawu-Lisa are the emperors, the counts, fief holders and noble men.

The Ammas as stated above are representatives of the slaves and the vassals. There are evidences in the novel that implicate this unfair racial and class relationship. The events surrounding Aster's birth are stated as, "True to the count's word, a few days later one of the girls in his servitude gave birth to twins; that evening, Countess Fikre unveiled her secret. Many more infants came to be born that night. Nine vassal homes celebrated a new addition to the family. The barns, too, stirred with life: a horse, two cows, a donkey, two, goats, and a stray devil brought forth their young" (p.13-14) illuminates this issue. Countess Fikre from the higher class gave birth to a baby girl while the servant girl gave birth to twins as the Ammas did as expressed above. The animals in the barn also gave birth to twins which parallels them with the servant girl. The twins of the servant girl like the Nummos of Amma share the same name. The narrator tells this, "Raised on a meager diet, the Areru twins were so emaciated that they cast no shadows, even on a sunny day. (…) But the most enduring reminder of their poverty was the fact that they shared the same given name: Areru" (p.23-24). This represents the Mawu-Lisa as the upper class and the Ammas as the lower class. This parodic rewriting of the societal and class make ups of the Ethiopian history exposes the oppressive and cruel suppression of the lower classes by the

nobility. Thus, parody does not revisit the past only to expose its deficit but to comment on contemporary situations.

The author's re-contextualizing of centuries old historical and cultural black spots has a tendency of foreshadowing the crisis countries will face if they do not learn from their past mistakes and fashion their government in a fair, participatory and diversified manner. Otherwise like the story of the crusade in the novel their country will end up in a vicious circle of dictatorship, conflict and poverty.

Dinaw also parodied The New Testament of the Bible and James Baldwins' novel *If Beale Street Could Talk* in *How to Read the Air*. He used the texts to highlight the postmodernist skeptical attitude towards metanarratives of science, myth of objective reality, questioning of universal truths and to expose the myth that label America as a land of immigrants.

The author has given various implicit hints in the novel to enable the reader to make an association with The New Testament. This begins by introducing trans-world identities. Mariam (Mary), Joseph (Yosef) and Jonas (Jonah) are names given for the protagonists in the novel. However, these biblical figures are not inserted in the novel with the basic personality traits they have. Dinaw ironically distanced his characters from the biblical figures. It seems he has assumed what these icons will be if they are brought in our world of the 1970s. For instance, unlike Mary the peasant woman who grew up in a temple attending its chores and the sick till her betrothal to Joseph, Mariam of *How to Read the Air* spent her years prior to her marriage with Yosef attending to worldly chores and fulfilling her selfish needs. Mariam of *How to Read the air* is expressed as:

> She made each month typing letters in the Ministry of Agriculture—"failing crops and historic food shortages are to be expected"—and put them to use in the modern way. She bought shoes: black, brown, tan, red, blue, white, gold, purple, all with heels, straps, and the all-important gold stamp: Made in Italy. She bought cigarettes imported from England, a bottle of scotch to entertain friends with. Mariam took taxis instead of buses home from work when it rained in the winter or when the crowd had swelled to a near-violent breaking point in the summer. At those moments she would step gingerly from the curb just a few feet away from the bus stop and raise one arm (the left one, carrying two gold bracelets and a quarter-carat diamond ring), quietly imagining the jealous stares of the women she worked with, of the dozens of other women she didn't know and had never met but who happened to be standing there at that moment

> with their children or husband next to them, their heads still wrapped in a shawl, their eyes cast down. (P.60-61)

This association is done with a strategic distancing. Mary the peasant woman who lives in poverty is substituted with Mariam a secretary in the ministry of Agriculture who leads a luxurious life. Mary who attends the temple's chores and looks after the sick is transformed in to a sadist Mariam who enjoys the suffering and poverty of others. In the above text, it is clearly stated that Mariam's job is typing reports of agricultural unproductivity, draught and famine. Using her salary, she buys luxuries, expensive, imported clothing and jewelry ignoring those who live in poverty. The author puts these texts in a parallel plane not to mock the idea of God's favored Mariam in the modern world. As it is the goal of postmodern parody the author goes beyond the two texts and tries to criticize the myth of modern institutions. Through exposing the failure of the Ministry of Agriculture in which Mariam is a secretary Dinaw is attacking the myth of modern institutions which promised human progress and emancipation through science, but this has become obsolete. Mariam's institution instead of reporting the productivity gained through the aid and strategies employed by the Ministry is reporting its failure.

The criticism of metanarratives of institutions is further strengthened in the novel through the author's rewriting of the Biblical version of Jesus's teaching and His time in the city and around the villages after He crossed the sea with a boat. In the Bible in the Gospel of Matthew it is stated:

> And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, the harvest truly [is] plenteous, but the labourers [are] few; Pray ye therefore theLord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. (Matthew 9:35-38).

Its' parody in the novel is read as follows:

> Gashe Berhane Getachew was one of the few Ethiopians she knew who had actually lived in the United States, a scholarship child of the former emperor, sent abroad to study agriculture in Kansas; his words, as far as he and everyone in the family were concerned, were nearly sacrosanct when it came to America.
>
> "They didn't know what to do with me," he told her. "When I got there I asked them where their peasants were. All that land and no peasants. My

> teacher told me, 'I don't know how it is where you come from, but we don't have peasants here.' Liar. They had plenty of them, everywhere. They just kept them far away from the university so I couldn't see them. Please, when you get to America, find the peasants for me."
>
> That became his running joke with her until the day she left. "The peasants Mariam. Remember me to them." If someone new was present, he would exclaim, Soon our young lady here will be leaving to find the United Peasants of America." (p.181-182).

In the Bible's version Jesus saw a number of people who are worried and left alone, He pitied them viewing them as sheep without a shepherd. He then tells his disciples to beseech the Lord of the Harvest to send more workers because the harvest is plenty but the workers are few. Jesus's speech is figurative. He is saying so many people are in need of support and He alone cannot help all of them. The verse "And when he had called unto [him] his twelve disciples, he gave them power [against] unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. (Matthew10:1-2)." The ideas of "Harvest", "Lord" and "workers" are subverted in Dinaw's version. The subversion is not to make fun of the text but to expose the myth of Modern Agriculture and the repressive motive of the Super Powers behind it. In the novel Gash Berhane Getachew (worker in the Bible's version) is sent to America by the Emperor (Lord in the Bible's version) to study agriculture but when he got there he neither finds peasants from whom he thought he will acquire the necessary wisdom nor is empowered to impart the American experience to help the people in need like Jesus's disciples who were given power. The author is criticizing the myth of science that promises to impart prosperity and better life to a society it is used as a weapon by the super powers, in Ato Berhane's words "United Peasants of America" (p.182).

The author exposes the plot of these super powers in the novel before the narrative moves much ahead. In the novel the protagonist Yosef is seen taking lessons from a man called Abrahim. He clarifies to him how the port town of Sudan works and explains about the food cargo's as:

> 'The food is supposed to go to the south. It comes from America and Europe and from all over the world in great big sacks that say USA. Instead it goes straight to Khartoum with the weapons. And do you know why? Because it's easier and cheaper to starve people to death than to shoot them. Bullets cost a lot of money. Keeping all the food in a warehouse costs nothing. Even better you can sell it to buy more bullets and soldiers just in case what you have isn't enough already. Everything destroying this country is happening right here.' (p.213-214).

The narrator is demystifying the enlightenment narrative of "progress through science" rendering that science and the technology are in the hands of the super powers and are benefiting no one but themselves. The powerful are manipulating science and its' products to create instability in sovereign developing nations to indirectly control and exploit them.

The myth of objective reality is also a postmodern issue tackled through parodying of the Gospel of Luke. In Luke (1:1-7) the narrative begins with the narrator promising Theophilus that he will write an exact account of what Theophilus has been thought so far like the writers before him. He then introduces Elizabeth and Zacharias as righteous husband and wife who walked through all commandments and ordinances of God without blame. *How to Read the Air* begins with the narrator hesitating to tell the exact time the trip of his mother and father will take because signs, historical landmarks and his mother's bathroom breaks cannot be determined. He viewed his mother and father as newlyweds who cannot accept to walk through the lavishness of the new marriage (p.3). Dinaw subverted the objective vision of the narrator of Luke that he is capable of writing the exact account of the teaching to a subjective stand of the novel's narrator that a precise measurement is impossible because there are various situations that are capable of changing the result.

The author does not stop implying the relativity of truth. In the coming paragraph again rewriting the following Gospels of Luke he optimizes how we are blinded by the assumed universal truths which in the postmodern are considered metanarratives. In Luke (1:8-23) While he was burning incense in a temple Zacharias saw an Angel of the Lord standing at the right side of the altar. The Angel told him that his wife Elizabeth will give birth to a son and he will call him John. Because Zacharias did not believe the Angel, he lost his speaking ability and became dumb. People were waiting outside but Zacharias was not able to speak so he winked at them and they understood he saw a vision in the temple.

Dinaw used this template to impart to the reader Mariam's attitude towards her husband. Unlike Zacharias who saw a vision (Angel) in a temple Mariam was standing in front of a bathroom mirror thinking about what the woman at parking lot of the Baptist Church told her about husbands. Mariam acknowledged the truthfulness of the woman's view and repeated the woman's words back to her (p.3-4). Dinaw did topple the verses of Luke by substituting the Angel with a woman at the Baptist Church, the vision of Zacharias with the reflection of the

mirror; Zacharias winking with Mariam's repeating the words back and Zacharias denial with Mariam's acceptance. Mariam was echoing the woman's words back without questioning like all those who have adopted blindly the big narratives of the super powers.

The author's rewriting of the New Testament does not stop criticizing the enlightenment project; it also attacks the universal assumption about refugees. In the novel there is a point where the narrator tells his job at the refugee center is reading and rewriting the asylum applications of the refugees so that they could be granted an asylum in America. He tells first his job was to assign the applications under the categories of the persecuted and the not so persecuted (p.21-22). This narrative is written parodying Luke 5 and 6. In Luke (5:31-32) Jesus says he did not come to call the righteous but the sinners. In the novel the sinners represent refugees. Jonas account of his relationship with the refugees' marks these. It reads:

> I saw the clients mainly as they came and went through the dimly lit corridors of our offices, which were undoubtedly worn and in desperate need of new carpet. I often exchanged nothing more than a brief hello and goodbye with them. Had it not been New York, the range of faces that passed through our doors would have seemed extraordinary to me, but there was no chance of claiming that here. Any attempt to do so was thwarted by a greater chaos waiting outside. (p.22).

The above excerpt has re-written Jesus's healing modes stated in Luke. The coming and going of the clients represents the devils' coming out of many crying out (Luke 4:41). The worn carpet represents the leaper Jesus cured in the city (Luke 5:12-14). The hello and goodbye represent Jesus's ordering the man with a withered hand to stretch his hand so that he will be cured (Luke 6:6-11) and the chaos outside represents the complaint of the scribes and pharisees (Luke 5:21-24, 30-31,33 and 6:1-2,6-9).

Jonas rewrites the applications of these refugees to appropriate their narratives so that they will meet the criteria of the selection. Like Jesus's curing of the sinners Jonas is healing the papers. In the Bible Jesus teaches his disciples that blessed are the poor, the hungry, the mourners, the hated, the criticized because they will inherit the kingdom of heaven (Luke 6:18-23). Jonas rewrites the application letters inventing and borrowing stories from various sources to enable the refugees to inherit the heaven of the earth, America. For these Jonas tells them he uses the common assumptions that are narrated about the poor distant foreign lands (p.24). He writes that the refugees come to America because they were bombed at, their homes were burned and

destroyed, their families were slaughtered, they were tortured, raped, detained, forced to talk against their will, they were attacked because of their religion and so on (p.22). Dinaw through this parody exposes the monolithic narrative that the west had developed towards immigrants. This totalitarian view does not have a space to develop varied perspectives that will characterize different localities.

The novel *If Beale Street Could Talk* is also parodied in *How to Read the Air*. Dinaw rewrote some of the texts of James Baldwin to question the myth that view America as a land of immigrants. In *If Beale Street Could Talk* the Protagonist Tish conveys her visiting experience of the jail Fonny was in sensually while taking the bus instead of the subway back home. Tish views the corridor of the jail as Sahara Desert which the poor always crosses and the lawyers as scavengers in the desert who smell the fallen to make sure they are dead, unable to fight. She says she is not ashamed of coming to the prison and the hardworking black ladies and the proud Puerto Ricans need not to be ashamed of their jailed loved ones. The ones who must bear all the shame are the people who built the jails (*If Beal Street Could Talk*, p.7). This matches Jonas's outlook towards the refugees who come and leave through the corridors of the center. He describes them as worn out carpets desperate for change and disqualifies one of the lawyers' view of them as the perfect microcosm of greater New York (p.22-23). He says, "I was convinced that our office was not a microcosm of anything; it wasn't even a reflection of a larger whole, which in fact was a myth to begin with. Our African clients were all in the Bronx, the Chinese in a different section of Queens from South Asians, while anyone from Caribbean was in Brooklyn; all we had were thin, crooked, and fiercely territorial wedges stacked next to one another" (p.23). Tish's viewing the prison as a place of the poor whether black or Puerto Rican matches Jonas's presentation of the clients as marginalized minorities who live set aside at different corners of New York. The immigrants are not part of America; they are just immigrants like Tish's poor minorities who are oppressed by the white supremacy.

Like the poor in *If Beale Street Could Talk* the clients ask for help shamefully and this makes it difficult for Jonas to look at them. He averts his look even if his boss tells him to look into the eye because they will not know that he respects them if he does not look them honestly in the eye (p.23). This is ironic, as in *If Beale Street Could Talk* the author is telling that Jonas's shame is out of place. The task of averting an eye needs to be Bill's the white boss and his likes. Later in the novel we will learn that not only food but also weapons are being donated by USA and

Europeans in conflict that are broken within one nation (p.213-214). Instead of helping to put out the conflicts they aggravate them. It seems that the author is saying since they are the ones who are producing the immigrants it is them who need to be ashamed not the refugees.

Dinaw's second novel *All Our Names* as discussed above is also a complex body of different texts which can also be taken as parodies. Dinaw makes use of parody as a tool to question the narratives behind Pan- Africanism. At the beginning of the novel the reader listens to the reflection of the narrator concerning the state of Pan-Africanism in the capital. He says:

> The capital in those days, was booming, with people, money, new cars, and newer buildings, most of which had been thrown up quickly after independence, in a rush fueled by ecstatic promises of a socialist, Pan-African dream that, almost ten years later, was still supposedly just around the corner, that, according to the president and the radio, was coming any day now. By the time Isaac and I arrived in the capital, many of the buildings had already begun to show signs of wear, having been neglected or completely forgotten, but there was still hope in the brighter future to come, and we were there like everyone else to claim our share. (p.3).

It seems that the author is questioning the Pan-African movement marking that all the talks of the movement are not walked. And the movement is turned into a mere faith with which the people are looking forward that someday something will drop down from somewhere. This attitude of the author is observed while he parodies the basic essence of Pan-Africanism. According to Kifle (1964, p.2-4) Pan-Africanism is viewed from the African and the New World perspective. In Africa the idea was conceived with the advent of colonialism which through imperialism put the entire continent under alien subjugation. It became a philosophy of political action against the colonial system and salivated for self-governance of the African people. In the New World 'Pan –Africanism' is a means of expression for the people of Africa which were forcibly transplanted from their natural habitat concerning the indignities they suffered from their skin color and their search for lost dignity and identity in the abandoned continent. The author questions these two pillars of the movement in the novel.

Concerning self-governance, it appears that the author is trying to expose that the movement is a failure because even after independence the hands of the West are still felt in the continent heavily. In the conversation taken at the narrators' home between him Henry and Helen the author indirectly reveals this fact. It reads:

> "'Diplomat' sounds much more exciting. To be honest, I was an old fashioned government bureaucrat. I started off stamping visas in Tanzania. I hated it. Not the job, but the country. I used to say staying out of Africa was the smartest thing America ever did. I went there because I thought it would be the easiest way to get to Europe someday, but then independence came, and suddenly Africa seemed like the most interesting place to be. The French and British and Belgians were running out as fast as they could, and we became the biggest players in town. When I was moved to Kenya, I could pick up the phone and get the president on the line. I sat in hotels and gave lectures on democracy and our constitution. (p.159).

The above quoted excerpt discloses that even if Africans were able to secure their independence they could not escape from the neo-colonialism of the new faces like America. So, the Pan-African narrative of self-governance is a myth because the real operators of governments in Africa were foreign powers who were able to influence the whole system and impose their policies and interests. The Pan-African vision of protecting African natives in foreign lands is also projected as a myth in the novel. The author using the narrators' life and reality in America questions this fact. The narrator, an African native and an immigrant from Ethiopia leads an alienated life and is being discriminated at various points in the story. Helen his girlfriend describes this fact saying, "If there was anything I pitied him for, it was the special loneliness that came with having nothing that was truly yours. Being occasionally called "boy" or "nigger", as he was, didn't compare to having no one who knew him before he had come here, who could remind him, simply by being there, that he was someone else entirely." (p.23). Thus, the narrator due to the discrimination he faces in America is also facing an existential crisis which activists of Pan-Africanism are saying the cause of their movement is alleviating such problems for African natives. The incident at the dinner which the narrator of the American story Helen describes presents the true face of racial discrimination which the Pan–African movement failed to address. She says, she arranged a lunch date for her and Isaac at a dinner which was never officially segregated but only used by the whites. After she and Isaac arrived there the owners were not comfortable and people started staring at them. They were asked to take their food away and when they refused Isaac got served with a stack of small thin paper plates, plastic fork and knife while Helen's order came with the standard creamed-colored plates used for everyone other than Isaac (p.35-39). Such incidents were realities of African natives in foreign lands.

According to Kifle (1964, p.3-9) since the first Pan-African congress held at the conclusion of the first world war various demands and declarations were set at different conferences that were

meant to actualize the total emancipation of the whole of Africa from foreign influence, equality for the American negro and meaningful economic development. Dinaw however is questioning these declarations through his novel that is set in Africa and America in the eighties by pointing out that they are not yet achieved. For instance, he parodies the declaration of the Manchester congress which says "On the economic and social situation the conference demanded that the peoples of Africa should develop their own industries; own and exploit for their own benefit their natural resources, including land; and that the people should be entitled to free public education and health services." (ibid, p.10). A case of cafeteria ownership narrated in the novel addresses this issue as follows:

> The owners of Café flamingo were rumored to be multiple things: Lebanese business men; distant cousins of the president, or one of his close allies. No one knew for sure, and it was better to believe that the café, and those who dined there, were in proximity to some form of power. The truth, as I learned later, was more simple and complex. The café had been opened by a French-American couple who fled the country after independence. The two middle-aged African women who worked there day and day out were not the help, but the wives of the two brothers who had legally claimed that the café as their own after its abandonment, and who for years had run the place as if it were their own. They did so, however, not as businessmen but as loyal friends and followers of a young man who had just returned to the capital after years of exile in England. (p.42)

According to the above quoted description, it seems that the author is designating that the narrative of economic emancipation of the native African masses that was sung by the Pan-African movement is a fairytale. The African people are still oppressed. The African people are still exploited and were not entitled to property ownership. The economic activities in the continent are manipulated by the long hands of the imperialists and the people are systematically exploited.

The author also parodies the Ethiopian student movement of the 60s and 70s narrowing it to a revolution started by two idle young men who mock students because they have nothing to do except fooling around. These students later started writing and distributing fliers that withheld the so-called points of their paper revolution (p. 24-29). As discussed under intertextuality there are various evidences that prove the parody of the student movement is directed to Haile Selassie I University students. Like the real history the initial protests were made to appear on campus papers. According to Greenfield the first protest of the students was reflected at Haile Selassie I

university in 1961 when a poem entitled "The poor Man Speaks" was read before Emperor Haile Selassie at the celebration of the college open days. Though attempts were made to suppress the poem copies were sold at black markets. The following year poems were written in the tradition of "The poor man speaks" (http://digital.lib-msu.edu/projects/africanjournals/).

In the novel Dinaw also parodies the student revolutionaries of the time focusing on their mis understanding of most of the political ideologies of the time, their lack of preparation and experience, their greed for fame and lack of unity. The author parodies the shallow ideological consciousness of the student revolutionaries through the expression of the narrator. The following is worth considering:

> I spent my first few weeks in the capital trying to imitate the gangs of boys that lingered around the university and the cafes and bars that bordered it. Back then, all the boys our age wanted to be revolutionaries. On campus, and in the poor quarters where Isaac and I lived, there were dozens of Lumumbas, Marleys, Malcolms, Cesaires, Kenyattas, Senghors, and Selassies, boys who woke up every morning and donned the black hats and olive green costumes of their heroes. I couldn't match them, so I let the few strands of hair on my chin grow long. I bought a used pair of green pants that I wore daily, even after the knees had split open. (p.4).

Through this the author is criticizing the revolutionaries in that most of them joined it without even knowing what they are doing. Most undertakings were imitations rather than battles for a real cause. Due to this like the narrator who hanged on to 'the knee split uniform' they were stuck on to the ideologies as if they were their religion. This is also a fact raised in the historical discourses. As discussed under intertextuality one of the reasons that initiated the Ethiopian student movement is the coming of scholarship students to Haile Selassie I University. The political consciousness of the students of Ethiopian students at the time was poor and students that come from various African countries were disappointed because of this. Regarding this, Darch (1976) states that the scholarship students that come from highly politicized African societies were no match for the Ethiopian students. The guests find the students politically apathetic. Haile Selassie's students were not well read. Moreover, they were not familiar with the writings of the African men and were unaware of the problem of neo-colonialism. The African students played an important role in awakening political consciousness in their classmates though it was difficult for them to deal with the add mixture of feudalism and neo-colonialism (p.6). According to the above excerpt thus it seems Dinaw is mocking the Ethiopian students that

except for the makeup they were not mature enough to lead a successful revolution. They were in a hurry to be revolutionaries than trying to understand and systematically approach the problem in their country. Bahiru's (2002, p. 226) reflection on this issue strengthens Dinaw's view, it says:

> In a social order which banned overt political dissent, Ethiopian students assumed the burden of opposition with heroism and dignity. It was a task for which the Ethiopian past had hardly prepared them. The absence of a democratic and critical tradition left its mark on the character of the movement Dissenting opinions were treated with intolerance. Ideological disputes were vaguely reminiscent of the doctrinal controversies of the Zamana Masafent. Marxism- Leninism was embraced as a creed rather than as a system of thought to help interpret the Ethiopian reality. Slogans came to be mistaken for theory.

The author does not stop parodying the students' ill preparedness and poor political consciousness. He criticizes their lack of unity and greed for power. The narrator says, "Isaac wanted to celebrate the paper revolution's first victory. "Very soon," he said, "the whole campus will know who we are. After that we'll be famous." We felt that we were getting somewhere, that we were more than just idle spectators of campus life and more than just friends. We formed a team, and our opposition was anyone who wasn't us." (p.41) notifying that the leaders of the revolution he and Isaac were not concerned about the effect of their protest but the place they are going to secure in their society and that they are ready to clash with anyone who dare to cross their path. The Ethiopian students' division and ideological opposition is interpreted by the narrator in the following quoted passage:

> Among the students there were warring parties split along thin ideological lines. It was Isaac who taught me how to divide the students spread across the lawn in a state of constant protest into two camps: the real revolutionaries and the campus frauds. (p.24).
>
> On either side of us were two opposing camps of student communists. Each day they unfurled signs announcing the People's revolution and the Communist Utopia. Their portraits of Marx and Lenin grew larger every week. They yelled insults at each other from their separate camps-rarely in English, the language of the capitalists.
>
> "You know what they fight over?" Isaac said. "Posters–who has the bigger flag. (p.55).

Instead of fighting against the common enemy together for the common good of their country they were engaged in attacking and fighting each other on issues that were trivial. The author

diminished the students' partition parodying as if caused by a disagreement on a poster size mocking rewriting the historical accounts in a funny way. Bahiru (2002, p. 225-226) addresses this incident saying:

> As students on the home front are absorbed in the day to day reality of their country, ESUNA's *Challenge* and ESUE's *Tataq* ('Gird yourself) evolved as theoretical organs of the student movement. But there was hardly any meaningful symbiosis between the practical struggle at home and the theoretical discussions abroad. The last years of the old regime also saw the Ethiopian student body abroad rent in bitter and acrimonious divisions-divisions which were to be transposed to the Ethiopian scene in the course of the Revolution, with disastrous consequences.

The historical revisiting of the Ethiopian student movement is not done by the author for the sake of intertextuality and criticism of the past incidents but since it is a case of postmodern parody it is done to reflect on current issues. This is done in order that readers will be able to view various revolutionary movements and political groups through the shortcomings and successes of the past. Unity and clear understanding are basic for any cause according to the author.

Dinaw's deliberate omission of names of historical figures, places and dates from the novel is an aspect of parody. Instead of stating their names the author pictured the historical figures by exaggerating on their typical behavior and actions known by the public. Since the purpose of postmodern parody is ironically revisiting history to complement on current situations the omission gives the reader a freedom to associate the cases to wider contexts and issues. For example, in the novel even if the narrator tells he was in Kampala ten years after its' independence (p.3) and after its first coup (p.23) he only referred to [1]Idi Amin as 'The President':

> They started coming shortly after the president took power and claimed the country was the first African socialist republic-"a beacon of freedom and equality where all men are brothers" was how he phrased it in the radio announcement given after he staged the country's first coup. […] He was from the military, but claimed he wasn't an army man, just a poor farmer who had picked up the gun to liberate his people, first from the British and then, after independence, from the corrupt bureaucrats who followed. (p.23).

[1] Idi Amin Dada was the third president of Uganda who served as Major General and later as commander in Uganda's people's defense force. He took power through a coup on January 1971overthrowing Milton Obote.

Here the background text is Idi Amin's speech broadcasted on the radio after the successful coup in 1971 that overthrew Milton Obote and brought General Idi Amin Dada to power. The author uses this text to foreground the dictatorship, racist and bloody reign of the president leading the reader to make a reference to previous historical texts and the stories time realities regarding Idi Amin. Idi Amin's parents were farmers but at the age of 18 he was enlisted in the [2]Kings African Rifles and fought against the Japanese in Burma. He also fought against the [3]Mau Mau from 1953-1957 and later was promoted to sergeant and admitted to a training program in Britain. The author brought the speech to expose the lies and dictatorship of Amin. Before he took power, he spent most of his life fighting for the colonialists and the author is hinting he is not a socialist as he is claiming. His speech in the novel however is a total paradox like the one Isaac borrowed and used to interrogate the students, ""Have you ever been an imperialist?". He asked them. "Have you ever tried to colonize a country?" "Do you listen to British Radio?" "Do you know who the Queen of England is?" "Have you ever been friends with a European?" "Have you ever wanted to go to America?"" (p.57).

He is also mocking the message of the president which is painted with I am for the people color and the myth of equality and freedom. Idi Amin ordered the killing of thousands of rival tribes who were supporters of Obote and who opposed his accumulation of personal wealth. The namelessness of the president and the omission of dates and places guide the reader to critically examine the situation in broader context (all African Presidents) and as it is a goal of postmodern parody the reader views current situations within the context of the past.

Postmodern Parody not only revisits past history but also past texts in order to ironically reflect upon for example the mythic feature of history. In one of the Dickens' novels *A Tale of Two Cities* the French Monseigneur is described as follows:

> Monseigneur, one of the great lords in power at the Court, held his fortnightly reception in his grand hotel in Paris. Monseigneur was in his inner room, his sanc-tuary of sanctuaries, the Holiest of Holiests to the crowd of worshippers in the suite of rooms without. Monseigneur was about to take his chocolate. Monseigneur could swal-low a great many things with ease, and was by some few sullen minds supposed to be rather

[2] Kings African Rifles was a multi –Battalion British colonial regiment served within the continent and outside during the world wars from 1902 until independence in the 1960s.

[3] Mau Mau was militant African nationalists that originated in 1950s among the kikuyu of Kenya that advocated violent resistance to British domination in Kenya.

> rapidly swallowing France; but, his morning's chocolate could not so much as get into the throat of Monseigneur, without the aid of four strong men besides the Cook. (*A Tale of Two Cities,* p.146).

This portrayal is closer to a fairytale than a story that can be found in the empirical world. Since it is part of a fictional writing this cannot be a point of argument. However, the parallelism created with the novel *All Our Names* brings in the issue of postmodernism that views history as a construction. As discussed above part of the Ugandan history related with its post-independence is incorporated in the novel and one of the actors of this history Idi Amin is implicitly incorporated. At one point in the novel he is viewed as a man with a strange appetite. It reads:

> It was hunting at its simplest: the grasshoppers swarmed around the lights and knocked themselves out by the dozens on the metal sheets that surround them. They were collected in barrels and then sold by the handful in little brown bags or plastic sacks, half dead or freshly roasted, a delicacy for even the poorest. It was said the president ate them by the dozens, roasted or boiled and then dipped in chocolate. (p.121).

This excerpt parallels with the French Monseigneur's strange morning ritual of feeding. Besides, the story of Idi Amin is made to refer to previous fiction rather than the world. This ironically shows that the narratives related to Idi Amin or Ugandan history are mostly mere constructions that does not refer to empirical realities except already constructed texts. This parody thus reveals that history also does not escape partiality and constructdness.

In *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades* Nega has also made parodic references to the Holy Bible and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Thereby critically approaching patriarchy, non-contextual and subjective interpretation of the Bible and the religious commitment of church officials to implement the rules of the Bible/religion. For this Nega tackled some biblical concepts rather than dealing with the whole book. He focused on the general and conventional sense of the texts and re-visited each Biblical book in essence with focusing on each story in particular.

The story of the "forbidden fruit" discussed above is one of the excerpts. Nega approaches the Book of Genesis (Holy Bible) which is sacred and of spiritual with mockery to tell about a young girl's struggle against the traditions imposed on her by the society. He substituted the forbidden fruit in the Eden garden with testicles of a sheep. In the Bible thus the woman is portrayed as misguiding and it seems Nega is trying to address this issue. In the novel after she ate the testicle

forbidden for females Azeb realizes her fault and got scared. The author describes the situation stating, "Her curiosity sated, she tossed the half-eaten morsel away. Then the gravity of her *mistake* (emphasis added) dawned on her, and she began to cry." (p.2) (Emphasis added). Thus, Azeb's deed is considered a sin. It appears by portraying the women faulty Nega is criticizing the patriarchal society of the novel which ignores the fault of men and presents women that break the humorous norms of the society like that of the 'forbidden fruit' and religious traditions like that of exiting through the north door (as discussed above under intertextuality) of the church punishable supernaturally. Like Eve was punished by God, Azeb is also presented as if punished by the God in the novel denied being a woman. The author strengthens this issue while he narrates the incident Aba Yitades faced as a deacon. After he began performing at Palm Sunday, he was admired by many and became the talk of the village. The village women tried everything to get his attention but he was always tongue tied. But one day a village divorcee asked him to bless assumption bread and tricked him to fall into bed with her (p.38-41). Nega brought the incident into context while Azeb and her father Aba Yitades were walking to the church. Aba Yitades confronted a pajama-clad woman. It reads:

> The woman, a dashing divorcee, had made a name for herself by violating all but one of the Ten Commandments. Seeing her in her provocative garb awakened a raw emotion in the priest. As he fought to keep his feelings under control, it dawned on him that she was inspecting the deserted street for prying eyes. She was clearly satisfied that there were none, for she had no sooner gone back inside than a man, a married man at that emerged from behind her and dashed towards the bushes across the road.
>
> The enraged priest devoted the balance of the journey to the Book of Ezekiel—the "Two Adulterous Sisters." (p.13).

In the above excerpt the author emphasized the sin of the woman ignoring the temptation of Aba Yitades. It seems that the author is trying to criticize the patriarchal society like the one portrayed in the novel that acknowledges sexual desire as natural for men and unacceptable for women. Bringing in the Biblical story of the adulterous sisters it seems that the author is trying to expose the patriarchal nature of the Bible as well as the society from which the novel springs. Ezekiel (23:1-23:49) narrates a story of two adulterous sisters who committed whoredom with men and their idols who come from different places in their youth and adulthood who were later punished by God. Their children were taken away from them and they themselves were slayed by their lovers. In the Biblical story only the sin of the two women is told and the men are

portrayed as captains and rulers, clothed most gorgeously, desirable young men, great lords (Ezekiel 23:12,23:23). Nothing negative is incorporated about them. On the contrary, they are sent by God to pass judgment on the women (Ezekiel, 23:210, and 23:23-23:27). Likewise, in the two incidents the faults of Aba Yitades were not recognized and all the blame is laid on the woman.

The author also followed a parodist approach to some texts of the Bible to criticize the harmful practices of the society that has nothing to do with religion or the sacred book. Nega's humorous re-handling of the bible is a result of his juxtaposition of the blessed with ordinary life events. The humorous approach is important because it directs the parody away from the Bible and lines it to the person/society which is a characteristic of postmodern parody. In the novel most of the time Aba Yitades is observed attaching the disciplinary measures he imposes on his family with the Holy Bible which is mostly used out of context. It seems that the author is trying to expose how religious officials and the society are using the Bible (religion) as an oppressive mechanism on the ordinary people (parishioners).

For example, Azeb's mother Werknesh in one of her efforts to make Azeb a better woman orders her to bake injera. When Azeb's was not properly baked, she tossed it into the ash and forced Azeb to eat it. But Azeb refused and darted out of the house. Later in the evening, she came back escorted by her godmother but her father Aba Yitades was furious and asked what Deuteronomy teaches about a rebellious child. When no one responded he said if a man has a rebellious child who disobeys his parents the towns' men should stone the child to death (p.9-10). But the action of Azeb which her father tries to match with the rebellious child referred in Deuteronomy (21:18-21:21) is exaggerated and not appropriate for the context. The so-called rebellious children referred in Deuteronomy are gluttons and drunkards and Azeb's case is different. She refused to eat an ashy injera and the Biblical text on which her father bases his disciplinary argument is not appropriate considering the overall behavior and action of Azeb. The fifth Commandment "Honor your father and mother" which the priest tries to use against Azeb is also another biblical text which the author uses to pose his question on the forced use of Biblical texts by religious persons. Though Azeb is presented as a child not fond of kitchen chores she is always ready to lend a hand for her family and the village elderly. At the age of six she was able to gather firewood, collect water from the stream and run errands. She also does laundry for her family and the village elderly (p.7). But her father accuses her of not honoring her father and

mother because she refused to eat an ashy injera. He brings into context Hebrew chapter 12, verse 8 that is stated regarding a child's discipline (p.11).

But the intention in the Bible is different from what Aba Yitades is saying and it appears that the author is trying to address this. Aba Yitades continues to accuse Azeb using texts from the Bible and when beseeched for forgiveness the priest says "This is a matter of the Scriptures," (p.11). But the scripture (Bible) does not strictly and directly address specific issues related to Azeb. The incident of one of the "Ash Wednesday" (p.67) is also another illogical application of the religious laws by the priest. Since the market day in Mechara is Wednesday Aba Yitades has developed a custom of roaming the market to catch his parishioners' wrong doings. And as he has intended, he catches a young lady buying eggs. He probes why she is buying eggs on a fast day and she answers him it is for her girl who is barely four but he says the girl is old enough to observe fast and he incriminates the woman by writing her fault on his black ledger (p.66-67). Through incidents stated above, it seems that the author is trying to implicate the aggressive application of the Biblical texts to disciplinary measures rather than teaching the scriptures. Because throughout the novel Aba Yitades is mostly seen referring to the Bible when he finds out his family members or parishioners doing what he considers unacceptable. Except for his services as a choir boy in Eucharist services at Palm Sundays at his deaconate years (p.36-40) Aba Yitades is never portrayed performing biblical teachings. It seems the name "Yitades" the author gave the priest has an ironic association to the parodic approach Nega took towards the unfair orthodox applications of the religious, Biblical rules. The word "Yitades" means needs to be reformed. This implies that religious practices need to be reformed.

The author has also used religious contexts in the novel to parody the religious figures who are preaching what they are not abstaining themselves from. Abusing of power for their personal satisfaction is also another point the parody is built on. For instance, in the excerpt that we have discussed above buying eggs on fast days is condemned by Aba Yitades as a sinful act even in the case of a four-year-old (p.67). Nevertheless, in addition to the above incident, we observe Aba Yitades one Wednesday afternoon catching a butcher selling raw and roasted beef on a fast day. The worried butcher approaches Aba Yitades, and the priest tries to accuse him of selling unchristian meat. The butcher sensing the danger of the priest's comment in destroying his business agrees to correct his wrong doings and gives Azeb a bribe of meat. It says, "Over the priest's ringing protests, the butcher carved up a sizable slice of prime beef, rolled it in old

newspaper, the customary wrapper, and handed it to Azeb to take home to her mother. Such a windfall wasn't entirely unwelcome, since the last commemoration observed in Mechara had been almost three months ago." (p.71). This designates how corrupt the priest is and the fact that it was a fast day does not even stop him from taking meat that he claimed earlier as unacceptable.

The priest is also seen abusing his position to fulfill his ego and the author brought in to context the religious custom of Good Friday celebration to question the loyalty and discipline of church officials towards their religion. In the novel it is indicated that the reason that made Aba Yitades turn his face in to the religious world is the event that happened at his initiation rite when he was ten. His father took him on a hunting expedition so that he can prove his heroism like his ancestors. But Aba Yitades was fearful and was not able to kill the beast. He became the laughingstock of his village and was regarded as coward that contaminated his family's good name. His father dies and his mother abandons her village and with no one in a position to control his future he enrolled himself in a local seminary. But the people of his village and his father's kin were unable to forgive him. Yitades sought a shelter in the confines of the church and later became a parish priest of St. George of Mechara (p.32-53).

After his priesthood he had begun guiding parishioners at different church holidays. On one of the Good Friday celebrations the priest is seen giving penance to his parishioners. The people came to him one by one and confessed their sins and he ordered them to prostrate according to the weight of their sin. The farmer who ploughed his land on Passion Week is ordered to prostrate ten times; a man who has cut his wood ten times; a woman who washed her laundry ten times. And then a man whom he recognized from his old village, a loathed cousin, tells him that he has cut his wood he orders him to prostrate himself fifty times (p.65-66). His priesthood does not stop Aba Yitades from using the window of opportunity Good Friday brought to his hand to avenge his cousin. Unlike the man who was ordered to prostrate ten times for cutting wood his cousin is given fifty prostrations for an identical sin. Thus, through this it appears the author is not only trying to question Aba Yitades as a fulfilling body for the holy position that he has already taken but the purity and loyalty of the religious officials that are giving various services at the church. Since it is postmodern parody it goes beyond the stated church in the novel and expands its critique to the world criticizing various religious institutions.

Thus through the intertextual relation created with Biblical texts like the Ten Commandments (Exodus, 20:3-20:17) within which the protagonist of the novel Aba Yitades tries to build his teachings and disciplinary measures it seems the goal of the author is not only criticizing the contextual and sometimes exaggerated application of the rules by the priest but also by bringing the texts in context Nega is exposing Aba Yitades's breaking of one of the Ten Commandments repeatedly. Unlike his preaching and orthodox stand towards his religion he is seen breaking the Third Commandment "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." (Exodus 20:7). Though as a priest he has taken God's name upon him as a Christian and as a servant Aba Yitades is not living according to the teaching of the gospel. He is not seen practicing what he is talking. Since postmodern parody goes beyond the case incorporated in specific texts the purpose of the author is not limited to questioning the religious bodies in the novel but stretches it to the outside world and forces the reader to develop a skeptical attitude towards all religious figures.

The author has also constructed his parody through the intertextual relation he created with traditions and stories that he took from the Ethiopian world of folklore. The critique he posed on the Ethiopian Orthodox church officials and parishioners is one based on the association created with folk traditions. The tradition of offering sacrifice for a "rekebot spirit" which is practiced by most Ethiopians is a tradition incorporated in the novel. In this tradition the person who is carrying out the coffee ceremony scatters the snack prepared for the ceremony and spills coffee on the ground before she/he or the attendants eat the snack or drink the coffee. In the novel Aba Yitades before his marriage is seen practicing this:

> After Dinner, Yitades brewed the day's third round of coffee (the first round was served in the morning, as in all households; the second, at midday). Still guardian of tradition, he kept six cups on the coffee tray. The mandatory snack basket was placed to the left of the tray, the coffee pot to the right. He sprinkled the first cup of coffee at the doorstep of his lodge for the *rekebot* spirit. He next served his invisible companion from the snack basket, tossing pieces of bread or roasted legumes at the doorway, before helping himself. (p.37).

This traditional practice is also observed in the hotel of Azeb's godmother an orthodox Christian nun, "As in all households, the first cup of coffee was sprinkled at the doorway, for the *rekebot* spirit, and then a handful of roasted legumes. A litany of supplications followed, which had long since lost their meaning to the regulars." (p.103-104). The author viewed the ceremony rather as

a spiritual rite than a social event in the novel as it is the case in most households in Ethiopia. Concerning this practice Metasebia (2013, p.30-32) referring to Gebre-Medhin (1998) and Pankhurst (1997) notes that coffee ceremony has its roots in ritual worship of nature and feminine spirit. The original practices within the cult of original coffee cultures were done to worship goddess Etbara (Etete) who was the longest worshiped mythological power before the advent of Judeo-Christianity and Islam. She adds that in Ethiopia this is still practiced by the Oromo and can be related with the zar cults which were started in the northern highlands of Ethiopia that centered on the belief of spirits having the ability to take possessions and concludes though today coffee has become rather a social function. Earlier, it was a spiritual practice and traces of its early rites are evident today. It seems that, Nega has brought the practice in to context to mock the Christian stand of his two protagonists who are also prominent figures of their faith (priest and nun) because both are seen indulged in two spiritual worlds the Christian and the pagan. Thus, their being genuine falls under scrutiny. Since parody transcends texts under discussion the intertextuality opens a door for the reader to question religious institutions/personas that claim their call is from God but is practically mixed up with traditional beliefs.

4.3. Pastiche in the Selected Novels

In all the novels the authors have adopted pastiche to boldly display the postmodernist view that no text is original. For this they pasted together languages from various fields, mixed different styles and combined text fragment taken from different works.

In *The God Who Begat a Jackal* Nega has pasted together languages related to science, technology, psychosexual therapy, history, journalism, music hall and cybernetics as stated by Waugh (1984, p.146) a characteristics of postmodernist fiction. The novel uses science language that encompasses different fields. Issues of life sciences are dominant in the work which is unusual for a fiction. The author does not shy away to present a catalogue of wild life from the onset of the story till the end. Though he does not explicitly state the field it looks he has a special interest in biology. Names of animals that range from mammals to insects and from the wild to the domestic are available dispersed all over the novel. Insects like stinkbug (p.6), lice, jigger-fleas (p.9), houseflies (p.19), stork fly (p.22), fire ants (p.67), wasps (p.85) etc., invertebrates like gecko (p.13) and lizards (p.16), domestic animals such as cow, donkey, horse,

goats (p.13), cats, pigs, roosters (p.68), wild animals like elephant, wild beasts, zebras (p.4), impala (p.13), hyenas, jackals (p.18), cape buffalo, lions (p.47) etc. the author also lists different plant species among them are acacia (p.4), baobabs (p.5), soap berry shrub, fig tree (p.17), gum Arabic (p.18), lumber (p.22), eucalyptus (p.68). Vegetables like cabbages, tomatoes, red beets, sweet potatoes (p.160) etc…. Dominance of such vocabulary may make readers feel that they are reading biology journal than fiction.

The author does not stop on life sciences he also touches on astronomy. Words like cosmic signs (p.5), stars (p.7), universe (p.14), eclipsed (p.43) etc. are few examples. Words and expressions of health science are also evident in the novel. Personal hygiene (p.23), alimentary canal (p.25), anthrax (p.47), leprosy (p.49), arthritic fingers (p.191), diagnosis (p.16) emergency cases (p.25) and pediatric language such as bloated stomach (p.10) washed, oiled, nursed, crib (p.14), crawl (p.15), bowel movement (p.25) are among the medical words used in the novel. And, it seems that the author is conscious of his language use because most of the words listed here and the rest appear more than once in the novel. Moreover, the author lists different fields of medical science in what seems an effort of categorizing the scientific terms he incorporated in the novel. The words stated related with Aster's eligible marriage candidates with hold many of the scientific issues incorporated in the novel. It reads:

> Astrologers read the horoscope of a would-be groom; genealogists investigated his genealogy; hematologists looked into his hematology; neuroanatomists studied the soundness of his neuroanatomy; neurophysiologists scrutinized his neurophysiology; and when the young man sighed an audible sigh of relief, believing that he had skipped the last hurdle, he was thrust into a room full of paleoanthropologists, behavioral ecologists, nephrologists, and six extraterrestrialists. (p.117).

The study areas listed in the above passage more or less summarizes the scientific issues incorporated in the novel and indirectly reveals the author's consciousness of his diction. Even if it is not overriding like the languages of science language of technology is included in the novel. Words and expressions like, zombie (p.95), machine (p.112), engine (p.113), coded message (p.118), patent the technology (p.159), irrigation system (p.159), safety precautions (p.160), toys (p.168) bring technology into context.

Language of psychosexual therapy is also apparent. Words and expressions like, Fetish (p.13), savant (p.21), castrated (p.24), maniacal (p.102), panic (p.103), molested (p.112), perverted

(p.127), fornication (p.140), sexual excesses (p.149), public intercourse (p.151) erection (p.166), sodomy (p.152), a constant craving for sex (p.174) etc. are contained within the novel.

One of the characteristic features of the novel is also its use of historical words and expressions. This may not be much of an issue since the author directly addresses that his book is based on the history of Ethiopia ranging from 1750 to the late1800s (p.235-238). However, some of the words and expressions are outlandish to the time and place in focus. Attire (p.9), calligraphy (p.18), musket, conquered, regal surreys, regal insignia (p.21), aristocracy (p.43), royal edict (p.99), musketeers (p.101) colony, (p.103), *nouveaux riches* (p.117), dueling (p.118) runaway slaves (p.162), slave runners, annexed (p.163), catapult (p.112), mangonel (p.113), crusade (p.138) inquisition (p.140), Roman Laws (p.148), Bishop of Saintes, King of France Louis, Simon de Montfort Count of Leicester (p.201) are some of the words and phrases that forces readers to bring different historical settings and events to the context.

There are many words and expressions that are related with journalism also in the novel. Scandal (p.21), news (p.70), campaign (p.103), policy makers (p.89), quick victory, ten-to-one superiority, the ball that had slipped out of his fingers, remote corner, absence of information, struck upon an idea, hold the key (p.104), nominated as (150) national boarders, rally support (p.149), public debate (168) are some of the journalistic expressions used in the novel.

Words related to music hall are also used. For instance, sounding board, rhythm, singing, troupe, ode (p.44), choreographed (p.45), rehearsing (p.69), theatrical movements, performance (p.70), choir, melodies (p.132), siphoning (p.158), dance (p.191) etc.… are everywhere in the novel. Language of cybernetics such as, information (p.51), monitored (p.15), proper social conduct (p.16), methodical and coordinated (p.17), sessions (p.19), registering (p.24), measured (p.27), accurate prediction, intensity, trained mind (p.25) etc.… also occur in the work.

The author's mixing up of the above varied fields together creates a chaotic atmosphere in the novel. These confuses readers because it is not easy to have a focus being confronted with issues of different disciplines and periods at the same time. Through this experimentation it seems that the author is trying to deconstruct the dominant assumption behind novel writing and expose chaotic state of the postmodern society.

The novel is characterized by a collage of different forms of popular culture and other texts. For example, the dueling Count Ashenafi proposed for giving away his daughter is taken from one of

the popular cultures: children play. Fighting is one popular pass time in children and children including myself (the researcher) used to engage in such activities. In the popular children play two opponents stand at opposite directions. Circles will be drawn by the judges. The audience (children) cheer and encourage one of the opponents to dust off a side of the circle so that the fight starts. The narrator presents a similar event as, "All that was required was two large circles drawn on the ground, each one representing the mother of a combatant; whoever erased the other man's circle (Mother, actually) had violated his opponent's honor, justifying a duel." (p.118).

The joke concerning the riddled umbrella is similar and most of us have grown listening to it. It reads:

> "Two men were walking to the alehouse,' he began. 'It was a cloudy day, and one of them carried a closed umbrella. All of a sudden, it began to pour.
>
> '"Hurry up and open the umbrella," urged one of the men.
>
> '"No use," squirmed his friend.
>
> '"What do you mean 'No use'?"
>
> '"The umbrella is riddled with holes."
>
> '"Then Why bother to bring it along?"
>
> '"I didn't expect it to rain."' (p.73-74).

The riddle concerning the skull and the scale (p.37-38), the story of the famous poet (p.76-77), the fable that deals with a pot that gives birth and dies (p.218-219) etc... are stitched to the novel together with the above mentioned fragments obtained from different sources.

In addition to the novels discussed under intertextuality the autobiography of Lobsang Rampa *The Third Eye* is also used by the author. The issue of *The Third Eye* is brought in the novel when the narrator announces that Aster's education is meant to open her Third Eye (p.18). Then obvious associations are created with various fragments. The label 'the all-seeing' that the narrator gave to the God of his people in *The God Who Begat a Jackal* (p.3) is taken from The Third Eye. In *The Third Eye* we read the narrator calling Buddha All-seeing one (*The Third Eye*, p.100,146). The Sage of Sages' speech that reads, "'In the midst of life we are in death.'" (P.19) is also taken from the Tibetan's belief presented in *The Third Eye* that says, "Death is Birth. Dying is merely the act of being born in another plane of existence." (*The Third Eye*, p.101). Lobsang, after his Third Eye is open, he begins to see people as they are and not as they pretend

to be. He learnt how to help people who are sick in the spirit and the flesh. Just by looking he was able to determine the state of a person's health and true thoughts. (*The Third Eye*, p.76-78) Aster began to communicate with departed spirits, foretell the onset of disease before the patient showed outward symptoms, began to tell peoples' true thoughts (p.24-27).

The idea of the festivity held for Aster at the age of seven is also taken from *The Third Eye*. The mood of the party is expressed in *The God Who Begat a Jackal* as, "Countess Fikre hovered over the crowd, urging the guests to drain their cups, beckoning the attendants to top up the half empty glasses. Count Ashenafi waited until the guests were happily drunk and, therefore, receptive to wit and wisdom, before inviting the Sages of Sages to deliver a fitting address." (p.18). An almost similar text is found in *The Third Eye* that reads, "All this was a mere warming-up for the events to come, when the priest-astrologers would forecast my future and direct the path I should take through life. (…) As the day grew old and the lengthening shadows crawled more quickly across the ground, the activities of the guests became slower. They were satiated with refreshments, and in a receptive mood." (p.36).

The hermit who has solved the mystery behind the anecdote in *The God Who Begat a Jackal* is seen taking fragments from *The Third Eye*. In *The Third Eye* hermits are represented as follows:

> In Tibet there are some who can best develop in company, and others who have to retire to solitude. These latter men go to out-lying lamaseries and enter a hermit's cell. It is a small room, usually built on the side of a mountain. The stone walls are thick, perhaps six feet thick so that no sound can penetrate. The hermit enters, at his own desire, and the entrance is walled up. There is no light whatever, no furnishings, nothing but the empty stone box. Food is passed in once a day through a light-trapped, sound-proofed hatch. (The Third Eye, p.87).

In *The God Who Begat a Jackal* the narrator describes a hermit as:

> A monk attains the status of hermit by trading the material world we live in for a straitened life lived in seclusion. Should he choose to enclose himself in a jail-like cell, he could end up staying there for anything from a few months to years, even a life time. While in the enclosure, he would cease to communicate with the outside world in any normal manner. He would be reachable only through a small opening in the roof or wall, through which food and other necessities could be delivered to him and through which he could send out messages and deliver spiritual counseling. (p.50-51).

These and various fragments incorporated in the novel are prove that the author (Nega) has played more the role of a compiler than an author's which is typical of postmodern fiction.

Dinaws*' How to Read the Air* is also a pastiche of texts and forms borrowed from various texts. He composed his novel by collaging texts and forms taken from The Holy Bible, Dickens's *Hard Times*, James Baldwin's *If Beale Street Could Talk*, Franz Kafka's short story *A Report to an Academy* and Poems. Thus, his novel is a collage of fiction, non-fiction, novels, a short story and poetry.

Part one and chapter one of *How to Read the Air* for instance is a collage of chapter one of Luke's Gospel and Book one chapter one and two of *Hard Times*. The first paragraph of the novel as it has been shown in the parody analysis previously adopted Luke 1:1-7 as a template to express the view of the novel's narrator hesitation of telling the reader the exact time span the vacation of his parents will take unlike the Gospel's narrator promise of writing the exact teaching. This also matches paragraph one of Book one chapter one of *Hard Times* within which adopting teaching facts as a principle is preached in the upbringing as well as schooling of children (*Hard Times,* p.1).

Paragraphs two and three of the novel match the narrative of Luke (Luke1:8-55). In Luke's narrative Zacharias is annunciated by an Angel that he will beget a son and he will call him John. Zacharias hesitated and lost his ability to speak so he failed to communicate with the people outside except for a wink. In the novel Mariam is seen standing in front of the mirror thinking about what the woman in a Baptist church told her about the reality of husbands (P.3-4). This can be taken as the substitute for Zacharias's annunciation. Mariam then answers the woman that it is true and repeats the woman's words for husbands (p.4). Even if it is subverted for parodist purpose Mariam's communication parallels Zacharias denial and losing his ability of speaking.

Mariam's explanation and definition of her surrounding and her husband concretely in paragraph three (p.4) adopts the objective viewing of the school room and the speaker in Book one part one paragraph two of *Hard Times*. It is stated, " The scene was plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school room and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall." (*Hard Times,* p.1). In *How*

to Read the Air like the speaker in *Hard Times* who aligns his speech with the sleeve of the master Mariam aligns her words with the words of the woman at the Baptist Church. The expressions about the contrasting facial features of the speaker in *Hard Times* is used to reflect Mariam's view that she and her husband have sizable differences that are irreconcilable. The appearance of the speaker's eye is used as a model to express *How to Read the Air's* Yosef hiding in his car and his wife Mariam watching him hiding behind the curtains of the living room (p.4).

Paragraph five of the novel adopts paragraph one Book one chapter two of *Hard Times* and Luke (1:56-74). In *Hard Times* the paragraph is devoted to characterizing the protagonist Mr. Gradgrind as a man of facts as follows:

> Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir - peremptorily Thomas - Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic. You might hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the head of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind, or John Gradgrind, or Joseph Gradgrind (all supposititious, non-existent persons), but into the head of Thomas Gradgrind - no, sir! (Hard Times, p.2).

In the above excerpt Thomas Gradgrind is described as a man who tries to approach everything (life) objectively and believes he will do using the multiplication table he always keeps with himself. *How to Read the Air's* paragraph five is parallel to this. Mariam is seen trying to express her relationship with her husband in numbers, "At this point in their marriage they had spent more time apart than together. She added up the days by rounding up some months, rounding down a few others. For every one day they had spent together, 3.18 had been spent apart." (p.5). Like Mr. Gradgrind Mariam is seen obsessed with the idea that the key to understand everything is measuring and weighing, "She knew the number at the end, and that number, because it didn't need translation, was power, and the fact that she knew it as she went up to the register filled her with a sense of accomplishment and pride (…), as if she were a woman to be reckoned with, a woman whom others would someday come to envy." (p.5-6). Paragraph five also aligns with Luke (1:34-74) because as it is seen in the above excerpts Mariam's expression of her separation

with her husband parallels Mariam's mother of God's son stay at Elisabeth's, her feeling of uniqueness matches Elisabeth's telling of Mariam in Luke1:42-43 that she is blessed among the women.

The collaging of the Gospel of Luke and *Hard Times* is consistently carried out throughout chapter one of the novel. The chapter closes collaging the preaching of John the Baptist (Luke:1-19) about the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins and his warning that trees who do not bear good fruits will be cut and Mr. Gradgrind's objective description of Stone Lodge his house (*Hard Times*, p.8). Mariam in the novel describes her home as a well shaded two-story duplex with large oak trees that shade their leaves in the fall season which the woman in the Baptist church told her is a beautiful season (p.11). Dinaw with the words 'fall' and 'Baptist' inserts the text of John's preaching at the background. Mariam's describing of her grandfather's death falling on the fireplace mantel specially symbolizes John's preaching that trees that do not bear good fruits will be cut.

Dinaw's second novel All Our Names is also a pastiche. Narrative styles, fragmented words, stories, descriptions and characters are pasted together from Dickens's novels, history of Ethiopia and Uganda to compose *All Our Names*. In *All Our Names* it can be observed that Dinaw is in no way trying to pretend that the story of the novel is his original work. Through his explicit and implicit references, it seems that he wants the reader to acknowledge his homage. The bold borrowing of a narrative style from A Tale of Two Cities is a good example. Like *A Tale of Two Cities* that narrates the stories from France and England All Our names is presented from dual settings Kampala (Uganda) and Laurel (The American mid-west). Additionally, the way Dinaw opened his novel reminds readers of *A Tale of Two Cities*. A Tale of Two Cities begins by narrating the political and social environment of France. The economic and social disaster in 1775, the hardship and the violence people face. Foretelling of its future is also done (*A Tale of Two Cites*, p.3-6). Similarly, *All Our Names* begins by describing the political and economic situation in Uganda ten years after its independence. Its economic deterioration and the failure of Pan-Africanism which still people believed will be actualized in the future and the president is preaching so (p. 3).

The novel is also composed by combining fragments of stories taken from other texts. One of Isaac's narratives what the narrator of *All Our Names* calls, half fact, half myth version of history

(p.8) is to some extent drawn from a story told about London in *A Tale of Two Cities*. In *All Our Names* Isaac tells the narrator about the university as follows:

> "Did you know," he said, "until a decade ago no Africans were allowed to live near the University. This is where the British were planning on building a new palace for the king. If they had lost World War II, they were going to move all the English People here, and this part of the city was going to be just for them. They were going to make everything look like London so they wouldn't feel so bad about losing. They were going to build a big wall around it and then change all the maps so that it looked like London was in Africa. (p.8-9).

The myth of London's destruction in *A Tale of Two Cities* is narrated below:

> It was the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Spiritual revelations were conceded to England at that favored period, as at this. Mrs. Southcott had recently attained her five-and-twentieth blessed birthday, of whom a prophetic private in the Life Guards had heralded the sublime appearance by announcing that arrangements were made for the swallowing up of London and Westminster. (p.3)

Though he modified it relating it to WWII and moving England to Africa it is obvious that Dinaw has taken the idea of London's destruction from *A Tale of Two Cities*. The case of the students' shoes used by the narrator and Isaac used to categorize the students as rich and poor (p.25-26) is also taken from *A Tale of Two Cities*. In *A Tale of Two Cities* Monsieur Manette who has been in prison for 18 years at the Bastille did fall into a habit of making shoes and is seen describing the lady's and a present style of shoes (*A Tale of Two Cities*, p.57).

Pieces of stories and actions related to Joseph in *All Our Names* can also be located in *A Tale of Two Cities*. In this novel the leader of the revolution Monsieur Defarge is an owner of a wine shop. His plot is organized by other three men whom he meets at his shop and later at the battlefield (*A Tale of Two Cities*, p.45-46, 296-297). Joseph of *All Our Names* is also an owner of a café called Flamingo that he uses to recruit revolutionaries. Isaac the revolutionary first met Joseph at the café. Later like Defarge Joseph is seen meeting three men who seem working for the same cause as his at his home (p. 120-123).

Parts of descriptions incorporated in *All Our Names* at the massacre of the town which the narrator took refugee fleeing the war in Joseph's village are taken from the bloody massacre that took place at Saint Antoine in *A Tale of Two Cities*. At the massacre of Saint Antoine people (men and Women) armed with hunger and revenge taking anything they can lay their hands on,

like muskets, bars of iron and wood, knives, axes, pikes lead by the patriots marched from Saint Antoine and stormed the Bastille (*A Tale of Two Cities*, p. 296-299). In *All Our Names* in a similar incident people armed with guns, machetes, hoes, and axes attacked refugees that came to their village (p.220-221). The description of Tellson's bank in A *Tale of Two Cities* is also used by the author to describe one of the buildings described by Isaac in *All Our Names*. Tellson's bank is presented as a small, ugly and dark establishment which its partners were boastful of its appearance and use it as a weapon to attack other businesses. The partners were also too committed to preserve its appearance such that they disinherit their sons that recommend to rebuild (*A Tale of Two Cities*, p. 69). As such a building is presented in *All Our Names*:

> I pointed to a pair with blacked-out windows across the street from us."And who is supposed to live there?" I asked him.
>
> He stretched out his arms. Those aren't buildings," he said. "Look how ugly they are soon everything in the capital will look like that. That's the government's secret plan. We built them to keep the British from ever wanting to come back." (p.9).

Similarly, the appearance of Tellson's bank is used as a weapon to attack other businesses. The appearance of the building in the city of Kampala is described as something used to scare the British away.

Dinaw also adopted some characterization techniques from Dickens. For example, the way Isaac the revolutionary is portrayed in *All Our Names* reminds readers of Sydney Carton. In *A Tale of Two Cities* Sydney Carton is an orphan, made to sacrifice his life for Charles Darnay the French Marquis giving his name and his life at last (*A Tale of Two Cities*, p. 489-492,496). In *All Our Names* Isaac the revolutionary is also an orphan. He gave his passport, with his name and his escape from the war-torn Uganda to America to the narrator. At last he dies there (p.254-255). Isaac the revolutionary also is made to adopt some of the actions of Dr. Manette of *A Tale of Two Cities*. Dr. Manette's ability of identifying shoes and his hideout a dark stair case built for a depository for firewood (*A Tale of Two Cities*, p.57, 361) is somewhat shared by Isaac the revolutionary in *All Our Names*. Isaac is seen teaching his friend the narrator to categorize shoes and hiding in an abandoned dark science lab (p.24-25,45-47, 81-83).

Fragments are also taken from *Great Expectations*. Characters are described in *All Our Names* the way they are described in *Great Expectations*. As discussed above under intertextuality in some cases the author directly tells the reader that he took stories from Dickens' novels. For

instance, he tells that Isaac is Pip. In *Great Expectations* the protagonist Pip is seen lying to his family about the day he spent with Miss Havisham because he was so ashamed to tell the humiliation he faced because of his poverty and appearance that made him common (*Great Expectations,* p.66-68). Likewise, the protagonist and the narrator who later took the name Isaac is presented as a liar who was forced to do so to escape his deprived reality of poverty which hindered him from becoming a university student. He chose denial over acceptance (p.7). Isaac's guardian in America Henry is also made to share some of the behavior of Pip's guardian Mr. Jaggers in London. In *Great Expectations* Mr. Jaggers Pip's guardian is portrayed as a man of business who is not interested in getting in to his customers personal affairs except for what he has signed to deliver. After Pip finds out that his expectations were not from whom he was expecting his guardian insists he does not want to know (*Great Expectations,* p.496). In *All Our Names* Henry Isaac's guardian in America is also seen doing the same thing. When he finds out that the narrator is not whom he expected him to be he restricted himself to the official matters and tells that he does not want to get involved in people's personal issues (p.176-177).

Formal pastiching is also widely observed in the novel. We find forms of horror movie sagas, detective plots, travel writing and action thriller. For instance, the first meeting of Isaac and the narrator is presented like a horror saga putting the reader in a frightening mood, "Once the crowd had thinned, Isaac made his move. He loped. His shoulders descended and rose with each step, almost feral in movement. I felt hunted. I thought, "He's coming for me," and though I knew there was no physical injury at stake, I was right in assuming there was something at risk." (p.8). This description pushes the reader to picture revulsion within which the narrator is on the verge of being possessed and harmed. The narrative of the incident where the narrator comes across people who tried to put him away from the roaming bullets is also presented likewise, "Several pairs of hands reached through and grabbed me by the neck and arms. I knew better than to shout, but I still tried to fight my way free. I swung my arms and legs; a powerful forearm wrapped itself around my neck and squeezed; another took hold of my legs and lifted me off the ground." (p.170).

Travel writing style is also visible in parts of the story where Helen narrates her relationship with Isaac. She presented it as a researched phenomenon that needs to be reported in a journalistic writing format. She considered all the places they went together as concepts that needed definitions and analysis:

> 1) Shopping for food: After sex and children, what could be more intimate in America than choosing what kind of meat to cook? The grocery store was the first place in our town that I knew for certain we had conquered. We went once, sometimes twice a week. We laughed in the aisles, took turns pushing the cart. I gave him cooking lessons at the meat counter. Those were all important victories.
>
> 2) The post office: I had to admit that had been a terrible loss, and because it was a government office I felt I had to weigh the defeat a bit more. One post-office defeat was the equivalent of two grocery-store victories. Mail was dangerous, personal letters especially. They pointed to great distances and old, Mysterious lives I knew nothing about. There were tellers instead of clerks, forms that had to be filled. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to win in a place like that.
>
> 3) Anything else that was related to shopping: furniture, plates, cutlery—we had chosen all that together, right under the skeptical eye of the clerks. Had Isaac and I touched each other once, I would have said we dealt an important blow against segregation, but I had to be honest. I knew we had never touched except by accident, so I had to temper the victory with the knowledge That we could have done better. (p.34-35).

Action movie styles are also one characteristic of the novel. Incidents and character activities are told in fast and short sentences that will let the reader see actions and movements in the narrative. The description of the scene of the men leaving after the conference that was held in Joseph's house, "Mere minutes after the last man left, three pickup trucks carry—ing loads draped under brownish— gray tarps pulled quickly in to the court yard. They had been waiting nearby the congregation to vanish before entering." (p.145) is rather an action movie scene than a narrative in the novel.

The detective plot is also another style adopted in the novel. Helen the protagonist and the narrator are shown playing detective in the novel, "I had taken my time walking back to my car, and before parking near his apartment, I circled, looking for the car he had driven off in." (p.111). She does not stop spying on Isaac; she is rather prop ups herself to a detective trying to solve a mystery of Isaac's behavior. "Taken together it could mean only one thing— he was a spy, or perhaps working undercover, which meant that the real question wasn't who he was, but whom he was working for. Was he friend, or foe?" (p.112). Helen tries to put the clues together to obtain some meaning out of them thus leading the reader to the realization of the irony of constructing patterns and mistaking them for reality like detective novels. Thus, the pastiche of different styles makes the novel to resist the conventional definition of a novel by failing to be

categorized under an umbrella of one type/genre of a novel which is what postmodern writings strive to achieve, chaos.

It is clear from the discussions on intertextuality, specifically with the analysis of parody and pastiche in *All Our Names* that Dinaw does not try to hide his sources of information. Either they are mentioned directly, or the similarities in the stories or the details will be so apparent that they cannot be overlooked.

Nega's novel *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades* is no different from the novels discussed above. It creates within its verbal narrative a literary pastiche that pays homage to traditions, legends, and past literary works that could be problematic for one to say the book has come out of the real world. The author himself does not deny the fact that he incorporated cultural memory in his fiction. In the author's note part of the novel he says, "The historical figures, however, are real; the events verifiable. The setting of this work, the village of Mechara, does exist and is described here from memory undermined by twenty-year-old nostalgia." (p.xi) confessing what is being narrated in the novel is not a product of his sole imagination.

The most obvious characteristic of the novel is its accumulation of descriptions of traditional practices, tales and legendary stories that the author took from the society and pasted them together in his narrative. The leading tradition presented in the novel is the custom that surrounds child birth. Like placing a touch of butter in a baby's mouth, emerging a week after birth with a baby in one arm and a knife with the other and placing an iron product on the bedside to scare off evil spirits (p.5). The custom of coffee cup reading to predict the future in a person's life (p.12), making suspected strangers spit on babies to prevent the negative effect of evil eyes (p.27), coffee ceremony and sacrifices for the rekebot spirit (p.37,103), the tradition of holiday celebration specially the game of Christmas (Gena)(p.82-83), a traditional wedding ceremony (p.140-142), the custom of crafting, consecration and transportation manner of the Holy Covenant (Tabot) of the Ethiopian Orthodox church (p.164-166) are some of the customs the author incorporated in the novel borrowing from the existing traditions of the people. The presentation of these cultures diminishes the author's role to a documenter because the texts are not elevated for a special effect and they are neither fashioned to affect the plot of the fiction.

Raw incorporation of tales and legends is another pastiche element in the novel. The tale of a generous widow who got a reward of a fabric who catches dreams for her hospitability, the story

of resourceful Kebede who cooked a soup out of pebbles and people who change themselves to a hyena in the dead of a night (p.85-86) are all tall tales that were taken from the Ethiopian folk narratives. The legend of Queen Sheba and the story of the Ark of the Covenant (p.162-166) are also texts that were inserted in the novel.

The borrowing of events from a literary text is also observed in the novel. Nega took texts from the famous Ethiopian novel of Hadis Alemayehu *Fikir Iske Meqabir*. In the novel the events that surrounded the protagonist Aba Yitades's deaconate years are taken from the events that the protagonist of *Fikir Iske Meqabir* Bezabih is confronted with. In the novel Yitades after receiving his deaconate at the age of twenty has begun serving at the church as a choirboy and his performance (voice) became the talk of the village. He was admired by many and was able to attract many parishioners to the church. Young women have begun to compete to gain his attention and found amusement from his shyness (p.37-41). *Fiqir Iske Meqabir's* Bezabih is also seen getting in to the same situation. After he finished his schooling Bezabih started serving his church and his vocal skill could win the heart of his villagers and a number of parishioners have started to frequent the church. Girls his age have begun showing interest in him and have started expressing their interest by different techniques to make him blush with shyness (*Fiqir Iske Meqabir*, p.41-44).

Some of the events attached with Werknesh wife of Aba Yitades are similar to the events that are related with the protagonist of *Fiqir Iske Meqabir* Seblewengel. Werknesh because of her parents was not able to get married at the age which was considered right by her society. Her situation is described thus, "His own daughter, Werknesh was an old maid at the age of twenty-eight, waiting for an eligible man who never showed up." (p.46). Likewise, Seblewengel was unable to wed at the right age because her parents have scared away men beseeching for the hand of their daughter because no one was equal enough for them. The villagers started calling her an old woman at the age of twenty-four and the marriage proposal which came under the title of a virgin is downgraded to a divorcee (*Fiqir Iske Meqabir*, P.84-87). The code Aba Yitades's wife Werknesh uses to communicate with her lover is also synonymous with the code expressed in *Fiqir Iske Meqabir* that women use as a cover up for their adultery. It reads:

> At the heart of this later practice was a middle-aged *dabtara* who lived by himself and whom Werknesh had known for much of her adult life. "Go ask him if he wants his *netela* washed," she would say to one of her

> daughters, usually on a Saturday. "If he says yes, see if he wants it rushed." Sometimes these instructions were given in the presence of Aba Yitades, but the message, pregnant with illicit longing, aroused no suspicion as it was not uncommon for families to come to the aid of the needy. The afternoons the *dabtara* wanted his netela washed— and he often responded in the affirmative and with a note of urgency—Werknesh left home when the coast was clear, returning in time for the third coffee ceremony, which at the priest's home was performed at sunset. (p.63)

Similarly, Habitish a servant girl in *Fiqir Iske Meqabir* is observed explaining the codes for hidden love affairs. Habtish tells Seble and Bezabih that requesting to wash a woman's dress is a code for asking a love affair and a woman agreeing is accepting the offer (*Fiqir Iske Meqabir*, p.308-309).

It has been discussed above under intertextuality that the four novels have made various implicit and explicit references to other texts. These references have brought plural views to the issues raised by the novels prohibiting the upper hand of a single or dominant narrative. Through parodying prior texts, the authors have also questioned different metanarratives. By pastiching different formal aspects and fragments of texts the authors revealed that their works are not original but homage of already constructed texts which is a basic concept in postmodernist writings. In the following chapter ontological concern and metafiction which are also basic elements of postmodernist writing will be considered.

Chapter Five: Analysis of Ontological Concern and Metafiction in the Selected Novels

5.1. Ontological Concern in the Selected Novels

Ontological concern is a major aspect that characterizes postmodernist novels. As it is already discussed under the theoretical framework, ontological concern deals with questions of existence. Postmodernist authors display the existence of multiple realties or worlds pausing questions that create indeterminacy on the side of the readers. They prevent readers not to settle into any given reality by viewing them as linguistic constructions not reflections of the empirical world. The authors have foregrounded ontological issues using different techniques.

In *The God Who Begat a Jackal* Nega incorporated ontological issues through the exploitation of the genre of the fantastic which McHale (1987, p.74-78) calls the "postmodern fantastic" that is characterized by the employment of the marvelous unlike the fantastic which hesitates between the uncanny and the marvelous. In *The God Who Begat a Jackal* worlds are made to confront each other. The world of the supernatural is confronted with the normal. However, this confrontation is not characterized by epistemological hesitation that tries to examine the existence of other worldly beings through laws of nature which minimize them to psychological issues like hallucinations and deceptions. The existence of the other worldly beings is treated as normal (banal)in the novel. None of the characters in the novel are engaged in a hesitant explanation between the natural and the supernatural. They are observed accepting the wandering of these beings as ordinary. The other worldly (supernatural) beings in the novel are stripped of their fantastic effect and are not as amusing as the fantastic.

At the beginning of the novel we find the protagonist Teferi and his father taking a journey to oversee the estate of a Count. Teferi's father is an overseer of this count. On their way they were confronted with an *ergum* in the midst of a dust devil.

> With no villages in sight and no human company on the horizon, the world suddenly seemed like a very solitary place. I began to cry, even more so when Dad told me our horse had been lost to an *ergum*. Wandering souls, suspended between the dead and the breathing, *ergums* are responsible for much of the danger that befalls pilgrims. Many a traveller has been lost without leaving a trace of his worldly existence, not even a trail of bones and skull, after being kidnapped by an *ergum*.

> *Ergums* are more ominous than the most loathed spirits, for, unlike spirits that content themselves in their invisible world, *ergums* readily slip between the different realms. Often, they pose as pilgrims. Only a trained eye can catch one before it does a menacing deed. The remedy lies in the powers of *markesha*, a concoction that, when sprayed onto the face and eyes of a known *ergum*, will turn the creature into a pile of dust. (p.5).

The quotation above reveals that in Teferi's world *ergums* are taken as co-inhabitants of the humans and it is common to confront them every now and then. It is a normal occurrence in the community that people developed a potion called *markesha* to fight them. Neither Teferi nor his father are shown hesitating to acknowledge the existence of *ergums* in the novel. The normality of these supernatural beings creates crisis of representation in the novel. The author through a confrontation of two ontological landscapes, the world of humans and the world of *ergums* introduced a third landscape a space where humans and *ergums* live together. This creates a sense of indeterminacy on the reader, forcing him/her to question which world is this and further doubt the reality of the projected world which of course is considered "a made thing" (fiction) in postmodernism.

Characters' indifference towards the paranormal beings heightens the acceptance of multiple worlds in postmodern fiction but this is more emphasized through the resistance of the normality of these paranormal things. In the postmodern fantastic the supernatural is not only considered normal but a resistance is made to develop against it and characters are shown trying to stop the invasion of the other worldly beings through a competitive dramatization of the confrontation. The existence of the beings is acknowledged unlike the uncanny where the beings are taken as manifestations but in the postmodern fantastic the fantastic invasion and rationalistic resistance are dramatized. In the above excerpt it is stated that the community uses *markesha* to fight *ergums*.

The case of the *ergum* charmers is also similar. The community of Deder accepted these paranormal beings who grow a foot of nail in a minute (p.56) as ordinary inhabitants of their world and seek their help in their unfortunate times. The author states, "It was never easy to find a reputable *ergum* charmer. We came across one only after six weeks of exhaustive searching. A caravan of camels escorted a donkey-drawn carriage that carried the expert. The convoy stopped at marketplaces and auction stalls, wherever a paying crowd had camped overnight for an audience with a lost relation." (p.55) expressing that *ergum* charmers are conventional parts of

the portrayed world. Abettors, who are immortal and that roam in the fictional world in various forms (p.110-111) are also dwellers of the world of *The God who Begat a Jackal*. The author allowing the natural and the supernatural beings to populate his world together seems to acknowledge the existence of multiple worlds. However, this pushes readers to develop a skeptical attitude towards the reality presented in the novel and consider it as a construction rather than a projection of the everyday world.

Mystification is also a cause of ontological instability in the novel. Aster's multiple unusual stunts validate this. The protagonist Aster beginning from her childhood is seen performing superhuman things. Before her sixth birthday she walked through a solid wall (p.16). Before she was eight, she began moving objects using her eyes, foretelling the onset of different things and speaking with the dead (p.24-26). Her bodily change after he thirteenth birthday however is a turning point for readers. It proves Aster is not a simple whisperer and magician but a super natural being. Her transformation is presented as, "Aster's skin had been washed of its earthly colors, becoming transparent, revealing what no living soul had ever seen before in a breathing person: internal organs, the structural skeleton, blood rushing through veins, teeth visible through clenched mouth, eyes rolling in space. Overnight, Aster had turned into a living glass with unsightly content." (p.34) and at the end of the story she shot up to the sky (p.228). The case of the family diviner is an addition to these. The family diviner, while shouting at Aster, converts to a different being. The narrator says, "Smoke bellowed from his nose and ears. His eyes shifted markedly; his hair turned moss green. Having lost control of himself, he drifted upward, rising higher and higher, until he could go no farther because of the sturdy rafters." (p.87-88). Such transforming characters are many in the novel. The author's letting of these bodies to inhabit the everyday world creates ambiguity in readers over claiming the work as true or false.

The author's hesitation between fact and fiction has also created ontological instability in the novel. In the Historical Postscript (p.235) the author states that he has written about Ethiopian history that spans from 1750 to late 1800. However, in the novel we notice that he is trying to deconstruct the history calling it a matter of story books (p.192). He also openly states that he has written fiction saying, "*The God Who Begat a Jackal* is a work of fiction." (p.237). Thus, the reader gets in to a state of indeterminacy to accept either.

In Dinaw's novel *How to Read the Air* ontological concern is foregrounded by mixing up reality and fiction. One is created through mixing of actual historical events with fictional ones without clearly defining what is factual and what is fictional. In the novel the narrator expresses his father's need to visit a historical fort saying:

> It was three thirty in the afternoon on a Wednesday and they were only twenty miles outside of the city, which meant that they were still one hundred and forty-three miles away from the fort Jean-Patrice Laconte had built in 1687 when first settling this land for the French. The remains of Laconte's fort were historical landmark number one along the road to Nashville and, with the exception of a potential detour to Springfield to see Lincoln's home, were at the top of my father's list of the important places in history he wanted to see on this trip. (p.85-86)

The Lincoln's home in which Abraham Lincoln lived from 1844-1861 before becoming the 16th president of USA in Springfield, Illinois (https://nps.gov/liho/the-lincoln-home.htm) is a real historical site. However, the Laconte's fort which is repeatedly discussed in the novel as a historical landmark on the road to Nashville is not a real historical place. Nevertheless, the author has gone to the extent of presenting it as a part of historical narrative printed by an immigration office along with historical facts concerning Lincoln and the post-Civil War years (p.87). He gives a detailed account of its construction, the French builder Jean-Patrice Lanconte and the process of its preservation (p.132-134). The whole history is presented in detail with historical dates which makes the fort as real as the Lincoln's home. Furthermore, the author does not exert any effort to lay a distinguishing mark between the two sites. This juxtaposition of the real and the imagined makes readers to hesitate between the fact and the fiction developing a skeptical attitude towards what is being presented as real.

The author has also created ontological offense in the novel through trans-world identities. Real world figures are incorporated in the novel along fictional ones. For instance, though the idea of the Laconte fort is fictional Jean-Patrice Lanconte is a real person. He is a popular French film director, actor, comic strip writer and screen writer. He becomes very popular in the US around 2000 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrice_Leconte).The author also brings another historical figure in the fictional context, "What could make a man like Jean-Patrice Lanconte, citizen of France, battle-scarred veteran of two wars, father of six, and a friend of Robert de la Salle, construct a fort where it was all but impossible to kill your enemy as he advanced?" (p.136). Robert de la Salle a builder of forts was a French explorer and trader in North America. He is best known for

his early 1682 expedition in which he canoed the lower Mississippi River from the mouth of Illinois River to the Gulf of Mexico and claimed the entire Mississippi River basin for France and from 1680-1687. He also built the great lake forts (https://www. encyclopedia.com/people /history/ explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/robert-cavelier-sieur-de-la-salle). Here the author allowed his novel to be breached by characters from the real world and nonfiction (history) which creates a barrier for readers to acknowledge either.

The author included ontological foregrounding in the novel by outlining that the references made by literary texts are also constructed thus implying that literary texts do not imitate the world but the discourses they are made of. In the novel one of the story lines follows the narrator's father and the narrator presents the immigrant life of his parents. However, in the development of the story we learn that most of the events that are related to his father are imagined, He says, "I could never have asked him what exactly Abrahim had done for him, or what their relationship had been like, but I had never asked him anything to begin with, not about his past, his current intentions, or his plans for the future. By the time I was old enough to be genuinely curious about what type of man my father had been before I knew him, I had made up my mind already." (p.209). and confesses that he only knows some fragments of his father's life:

> "He was sixty-seven when he died. He was born in a small village in northern Ethiopia. He was thirty-two when he left his home for a port town in Sudan in order to come here."
>
> And while I could have ended there I had no desire to. I needed a history more complete than the strangled bits that he had owned and passed on to me—the short brutal tale of having been trapped as a stowaway on a ship was all he had to explain himself. It made for such a tragic and bitter man, and as he got older it must have been even worse. I imagine the past died multiple times within him as his memory faded and whatever words he had left to describe it disappeared alongside. And so I continued with my father's story, knowing that I could make up the missing details as I went, just as I had once done for Bill and his brood of migrants at the center. (p.169-170).

The above quotation explains that the narrator except for his father's age and the route he takes to reach US he does not know anything and like the asylum application letters he fills his father's story with imaginative ones. However, what is important here is the stories he uses to fill his father's as well as the immigrants' narratives. He says:

> It was easy to find the necessary details; they resurfaced all over the world in various countries, for different reasons and at different times. I quickly discovered as well that what could not be researched could just as easily be invented based on common assumptions that most of us shared when it came to the poor in distant, foreign countries. Bill put it to me this way once: "When you think about it, it's all really the same story. All we're doing is just changing around the names of the countries. (p.24-25).

The situations he described in his writing are already revolving in the world. He emphasizes that the 'histories' are constructed for different reasons. It seems that he is trying to notify that they do not have anything to do with what really happened on the ground. He also adds that 'common assumptions' are also sources for his fabrication. Common assumptions in the view of postmodernists beyond history include ideologies, different theories, philosophy, etc.… We observe in the development of the story the narrator hinting at these assumptions. Among these are assumptions about Africa:

> They fell hard for anything that sounded like that, and were quick to imagine the missing details on their own. They assumed war first, hunger and poverty second; despite their best intentions, and how many times they had recently heard someone say that Africa was more than just the sum of that, I knew these were the only images they had. Africa was everywhere in the news and the pity for it and its inhabitants had spiked a thousand fold as a result. (p.98)

It seems that the author is confessing that all he has told them has nothing to do with the real situation in Africa. He had referred to the metanarratives (assumptions) already accepted as facts by the larger world including his white students. He strengthens this case by comparing his father's stories with the stories he invented for the asylum applicants, "The stories all came naturally, just as I had shown myself more than capable of coming up with last-minute narrative fillers for the asylum applications I once worked on." (p.97-98). As we have discussed in the preceding paragraphs it is clear that the author takes these stories from already developed metanarratives concerning immigrants.

Ontological questioning can be regarded as a major issue in *All Our Names* too. In this novel Dinaw used different techniques to foreground the reality/truth status of issues/events in the fiction and the mode of existence of characters. The merging of the real and the fictional world is a technique used by the author to create an ontological instability in the novel. From the beginning we observe the protagonist and the narrator of the Kampala story Isaac identifying himself and being identified with the ontological world of real-world figures as well as

characters of other works even though he has a different ontological status. For example, he is seen alluding himself with the African writers and scholars. He says:

> "A decade earlier, there had been an important gathering of African writers and scholars at the university. I read about it in a week-old newspaper that had finally made its way to our village. That conference gave shape to my adolescent ambitions, which until then consisted solely of leaving. I knew afterward where to go and what I wanted to be a famous writer, surrounded by like-minded men in the heart of what had to be the continent's greatest city." (p.4).

According to (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Writers_Conference) the narrator is referring to a conference held in 1962 at Makerere University (by then Makerere College) after Uganda got its independence from the British. The conference was attended by a number of African writers such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Lewis Nkosi, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (then known James Ngugi) and Rajat Negoy and the magazine was "Transition". The narrator is saying that he has come to the place of his role models. whom later in the story he tries to read their mind saying, "No one trusted even semi-private spaces; it was windowless rooms or nothing at all. I wondered somewhat romantically if that was how the writers who had met in the capital had felt— not wanted or hunted, but like outlaws." (p. 145). He is trying to be a member of these writers' circle and tries to share their feelings.

In compliance with postmodernism the boundary between reality and fiction as well as borders that separates characters from chronological periods is diffused. The narrator and the protagonist of the novel have penetrated the world of the real authors declaring he had lived in their time and is to some extent capable of reading their psyche. This foregrounds a question "which world is this?" according to McHale (1987, p.10) one of the questions raised by postmodernist fiction. Is it the narrators' world or the writers? It cannot be determined. This results in questioning of the truth status of the fiction as well as the real world. The presence of real-world personages like Dinaw himself, whose voice we hear in the last chapter of the novel saying, "I stood up, though he had told me not to. For the first time he called me by the name my father had given me when I was born. "D—, don't get up." (p.253) is also an authorial intrusion which creates uncertainty of the mode of existence of the author. McHale (1987) and Waugh (1984) denote that the effort of the author to hang into his/her creator status diminishes the author as well as the fiction into fictional artifacts. Here Dinaw's effort of making himself visible to boldly remark that he is the maker of the text exposes himself as being produced in the reading process. Thus, the author and

the text thus empty themselves to made things rather than reflecting anything from the outside reality. However, one will wonder whether the 'D—' can refer to every other name that starts with 'D' but hints are given earlier that lead us to think otherwise. In part of the story where the narrator hides to escape the civil war in Joseph's village he says:

> I told the man who escorted me to the village my real name, the one given to me at birth. Both he and his son laughed when they tried to pronounce it, and each had his own variation. We had a few common words among us, which took all the pressure off the silence and left me happily wordless. By the time we arrived at the clearing, my name had been transformed into Daniel—a Biblically familiar name among the devoutly Christian people who lived there. (p.213).

The above excerpt as well as the tip-offs that tell the narrator is from Ethiopia (p.177-179) directs the name to the author. Here is an instance of authorial intrusions. It reads:

> We drove for maybe two, three hundred feet, lurching and stopping the whole way. That was all it took— three blocks— before I knew I was finally seeing the city as I had always imagined it, both from afar and while living there. I had imagined crowds composed of men in suits and women in blue and purple dresses, and here they were, along with the traffic cop in white gloves I added from time to time. Of course, I had been I had seen them all before—I had stood on at least two occasions at the very same intersection we were idling in— but until that moment I had never understood that I was living a Fantasy I had built out of books and radio shows. I was too busy being a character to see that. (p.106).

This is a key excerpt that shakes the ontology of the novel. The author makes an explicit statement that he is telling his readers what he has been imagining for long. He also confesses that his imagination is honed by already constructed texts such as books and radio shows (as it is discussed previously under intertextuality. It may be that the author in this case is referring to Dickens' novels, books on Ethiopian history and radio broadcasts that are related to Idi Amin and Uganda) and is not capable of fashioning such a narrative except acting as a function and thus collect texts from different sources. He further complicates his existence by telling readers that he is also one of the characters in his novel strengthening the postmodern view that his existence is illusory because he is a result of the language of the novel. It seems that through all this narration the author is illuminating that nothing presented in the novel has any relation with the empirical world and as it is a case in postmodernism the text does not spring from a unified and original source which in Modernism this source is considered equivalent to God.

Furthermore, Dinaw's placing of himself in the novel as a character (protagonist), narrator and author disperses him to plurality of selves and tends to make readers wonder whether he exists.

The author's dispersal into plurality of selves also aligns with a concept discussed in the theoretical framework about "trans-world identities". According to McHale (1987) and Lewis (2001) trans-world identity is related with allowing of real-world figures, fictional figures and other world bodies to occupy the same ontological space. Thus, in the novel the author's occupying of the same ontological space as the other characters can be taken as a case of trans-world identity. This creates dilemma in the reader whether to acknowledge the ontology of the real world that the author is from and the fiction. The incorporation of real-world historical personages in the novel like that of Idi Amin (implicitly incorporated in the novel as discussed under intertextuality) is also a case of trans-world identity and this blurs the ontological boundary of the fiction as well as the real world. It will be difficult for the reader to decide whether this is a reflection of the real world.

The protagonist is also seen sharing the same ontological landscape with characters from other works. As it has been discussed under intertextuality, he is associated with the real-world author Dickens. Helen, the protagonist describes him as someone she imagines talking in a Dickens novel (p.17). The narrator himself strengthens this association saying:

> I took my copy of Great Expectations in to the courtyard and sat near the tree. I didn't read the book as much as I recited it; I could have gone minutes without looking down at the page and not lost a word, just as I knew my father and uncles must have done with the stories they told me and their own children. The stories were lifeless until they made something out of them, and that was what I did that morning. London was now Kampala; Pip, a poor African orphan wandering the streets of the capital. (p.164).

From the above excerpt it is can be inferred that the narrator is claiming reading this particular text has helped him view his surrounding differently and the characters of *All Our Names* are made to take the same path as the characters of Dickens' novels, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*. This creates indeterminacy in the readers' mind. Readers ask themselves to which world do the characters in *All Our Names* belong. Readers ask themselves is the world incorporated in *All Our Names* the world of Dickens novels. So, readers keep questioning the ontological status in *All Our Names*.

The other technique used by the author to create indeterminacy and uncertainty of a reality presented and mode of existence in *All Our Names* is what McHale (1987) calls an analogy of fictionality that denotes the empirical world which literary works refer to is also a text which is constructed. There are various examples in the novel that reveal this fictionality by destabilizing the ontology of the novel as well as the assumed reality. The narrator of the novel in an incident where his friend Isaac introduces him to the campus heroes describes an event, "They're from Rhodesia," he told me, "but don't use that word around them. If you say 'Rhodesia' they'll tell you no such place exists. One boy told me that if I wanted to find Rhodesia I'd have to live inside of a white man's head. I like them, but they don't trust anyone." (p.27). This elucidates that things are nothing but mental imaginations and even assumed things only refer to things that are already constructed. In this regard Rhodesia can be taken as not a place that can be located on a map but in already developed discourses of the colonialists. This poses a question on the plausibility of the narrative presented which extends to create a sense of uncertainty to the empirical reality the novel is supposed to reflect. Likewise, the campus hero whom the narrator and the whole university community admire is also presented as someone who lives in the imaginative world of the characters. It reads:

> The real star of the campus for Isaac, and many others, however, was invisible. He was supposed to be tall, young, handsome, and well read and wore only olive-green pants and shirts. Isaac claimed to have seen him from afar as he was leaving the campus. He said he was certain he was either Congolese or Rwandan. He's tall and serious like a Rwandan," he said, "but it's the Congolese who know how to fight. Maybe he is both." Maybe he doesn't exist," I said. "Maybe he lives only in the black man's head." (p. 27-28).

The above excerpt denotes that the campus hero whom most of the students in the campus associate with grace and the portrayed periods' revolutionary outfit is not seen by anyone except for Isaac's uncertain remark that he has seen him from afar. Isaac, asserting that he is either Rwandan or Congolese tries to justify the heroes' identity with descriptions that have tendencies of stereotypical images than witnessed realities. Through such narratives it seems that the author is trying to tell readers that his narrative is fictious and is related to already constructed discourses like Rwandans' are serious and Congolese knows how to fight which is part of an already established myth than an external reality. Such hints by the author force readers to question truth status of the novel.

Incorporating of multiple realities in a text is also a technique the author applied to create indeterminacy in the narrative presented in the novel. The case of the plastic flower is a good example. In the novel Helen the narrator of the American story is seen visiting an elderly woman called Agnes and gives her plastic flowers as a gift. Later in the narrative Helen is seen putting the flowers in a glass filling its bottom third with water (p.77). This is confusing for the reader because the incident destabilizes the state of the flowers. Putting plastic flowers in water is nonsense in the supposed real world so the reader begins to doubt the ontology of the world portrayed in the novel.

The narrators' hesitation on telling what things are and what exactly happens in a story is also a way multiple reality are presented in the novel. For instance, the narrator while describing the man who sells newspapers he says, "There was nothing special about him—he was maybe a decade older than me, had his hair cut close and was dressed in matching pants and shirt, either *beige or blue*." (emphasis added) (p.88). He does not tell the exact color of the man's outfit. This makes the reader to question the reliability of the narrator which induces readers to questioning the truth of the narrative. A similar situation is observed while the narrator argues with himself to tell or not to tell Isaac about the man who was at the café while Isaac was beaten (p.120). He doubts, "I wasn't sure what I would have said had he been. That man there saved you from being beaten to death, or that man watched for several minutes as those boys nearly beat you to death." (p.120).

Unreliable narration filled with uncertainty is also a characteristic of the novel. At various points in the novel such narrations are seen destabilizing the ontology of the novel. For example, in an incident Isaac asks the narrator to choose a name for himself. He says, "I chose Langston. "He's a poet?" he asked me. "Yes," I told him, and wasn't even certain that he was a poet." (p.41). Although readers who are familiar with the American Negro literary movement especially the "Harlem Renaissance" can easily tell that Langston is a poet the hesitation of the author clouds the truthfulness of all the stories told by him. This costs the novel its reality status. A similar case is read while the narrator tries to describe an abandoned market he has come across with Isaac. He says, "Standing near a vegetable stall, I had written in the first blank page I opened to, "There are hundreds of places exactly like this." I knew I didn't really believe that, but I felt better having put those words down." (p.246). The author is telling that what he is writing does not reflect his belief. The event linked with the narrator's knowledge of Dickens novels is also a

good addition to this. At the beginning of the novel we observe Helen giving the narrator a book tells him that it is Dickens and asks him whether he has read it (p.18-19). He responds no but later in the story while telling Helen about the first time he arrived in America and his encounter with Henry reveals that he has already read Dickens before he came to America and had a discussion concerning the author (p.175-177). Thus, the author's lack of confidence and deliberate miss information confuses readers.

The issue of description/creation paradox that Waugh (1984) discusses as a cause of ontological havoc is also widely observed in the novel. Narrators are seen explicitly hinting that what they are narrating has come into existence through words. Helen's reflections on the words of the elderly woman who decided to be called Rose changing her real name Agnes after her husband died is a good example. It reads:

> As she spoke, I was also trying to see if her stories filled the apartment in any meaningful way, if they could take up space, like a trinket picked up in an airport that sat on a mantelpiece, yet somehow more substantial than that. If listening to her talk for ten more hours would have answered this question, I would have stayed; there was so much emptiness in life that had to be filled, and I was just seeing it. (p.79).

In the above excerpt Helen is saying that her world is dominated by emptiness and she needs stories/words that will resurrect her imagination. She indicates that reality is nothing but a phenomenon that will come in to being through words and she is literally proving this by the narrative of Rose. Rose and Helen are enjoying the alternative world that has come into existence through Rose's narrative of the past. Helen's reference of love and a happy life are not her experience in the empirical world but are the stories of Rose. Later in the novel we read Helen trying to relive the stories of Agnes by planning a trip to Chicago with Isaac. She made a stop so as to tell Rose that she is on her way to Chicago and she will stay at Knickerbocker Hotel if possible, in the same room where once Al Capone had lived (p.216-217). Later in the story we watch Isaac and Helen driving to Chicago but unable to find the Knickerbocker Hotel (p.225). This indicates that the reality to which Helen tries to hang into is only constructed through words which will not be located in the real world. This creates indeterminacy concerning the reality presented in the novel as well as the supposed reality in the real world because what Rose claimed that she had lived through and Helen found at last contradict. The narrator's effort of

interpretation of the president's speech that is broadcasted on the radio also strengthens this view. He says:

> We listened to it a second time. Halfway through, I was convinced that Isaac and I had been wrong to speak so boldly about the government's demise—it was we who were finished. But then there was slight pause in the speech that I hadn't heard the first two times—a second, or maybe only a fraction of a second, but long enough to create the image of a man sitting alone in a room rereading the same words out loud—and just like that, I returned to thinking it would be over soon. The government would fall, and we, or someone like us would rise. (p.166).

In the above quotation the narrator is trying to give two meanings for the same speech. Considering the president, the writer of the speech and the narrator a reader we can reach to a premise that meaning/reality is constructed using words and the reader/listener has a role in constructing one. This justification pushes us a step further and forces us to bring the issue of the postmodern that denounces the author as a function, absent except for compiling texts. This leaves texts open ended and instead of assigning a single meaning to a text, postmodern plurality is celebrated.

Heterotopian spaces are also made to create ontological instability in the novel. Postmodern heterotopian spaces are imaginary places which don not have real localities; they are created by authors using different techniques. In *All Our Names* such places are made possible by the author. The novel's heterotopia is mainly created by bringing together fragments of places, historical events and figures and mythic worlds in unusual laws or patterns.

The Kampala portrayed in the novel, except for the name, is different from the real Kampala. There are clues in the novel that reflect its fictional representation. The first clue is the superimposition of Addis Ababa on Kampala. In the novel things we only observe in Addis Ababa are attributed to Kampala, "I could walk to one of the main avenues to read the newspaper headlines that were spread across the side walk on all the busy streets across the capital. If you had the money, you could pay a few cents to read one of the papers in private before laying it down again." (p.88-89). It is only in Addis that we observe people reading magazines and newspapers in cafés and road sides paying cents for the service provided. The land marks of Addis, the white roofed blue taxis were made to wander the streets of Kampala, "The small blue-shelled, white-roofed taxis, even the most dilapidated ones, belonged only to the rich and to the white." (p.105). We also find villas of Addis in Kampala, "The bigger houses had their gates

lined with barbed wire and shards of broken glass, and the last house on that narrow gravel road, where we finally stopped, had two men posted on the roof." (p.107). It is a way of keeping homes secure using shards of glasses in Addis Ababa and throughout the country.

Kampala is also a city which let the protagonists live up to their imaginations. In the novel we find places which are creations of the character's imaginations. It is widely observed in the novel that Isaac and the narrator created heterotopias and used them as outlets from the particular realities they are confronting. For instance, at the end of the novel transgressing all the barbaric, ghostly, war zone of the village Isaac all of a sudden leads the narrator through a bush and a jungle to make him confront something like a palace in a fairy tale. It reads:

> We walked back towards the market. When we reached the last stalls, Isaac led us in between them onto a path that was barely visible and looked as if it led directly into the bush. Waist-high grass gave way to a dense pocket of trees. I expected Isaac to tell me that my only option was to take my chances in the wild, like the refugees I had seen that morning, but just as abruptly as the forest began, it ended. Before us was a wide circular clearing, at least a hundred feet in diameter, in the center of which was a single story house, made of concrete and wood and painted white on all four sides. (p.248).

Taking the reality and the situation he was in into consideration, it is impossible for Isaac to have such a place. The geographical location by itself is mythic. It is in a fairytale that we find palaces in the middle of nowhere and in jungles. At the center of the entire bloody massacre, death and warzone we find a one-story magical castle. It is not an ordinary palace it is white and it is one story. The reader is also confronted with characters that perform nonhuman activities. The old man who was given the responsibility to take away the narrator from the conflict zone and hide him in an enclave in a nearby village where he is seen talking to donkeys, "He pointed to the man, who appeared to be whispering some-thing important to one of the donkeys" (p.211). The supernatural and the ordinary is mixed in the novel.

The nameless university in which Isaac and the narrator roamed before the riots and uprisings turned to conflicts is another heterotopia in the novel. The university is portrayed as a space which is frequented freely by non-students like Isaac and the narrator. It is observed easily turning into a playground for young men who play a make-believe game like children. The following passage is worth considering:

> When I saw him, I knew he was at the university not because he was supposed to be, but because, like me, he felt that was where he belonged, among the bright, future generation. Like me, he had told everyone he knew and met that he was a student, and at that time both of us were convinced that someday we would be. It was with this understanding—that we were both liars and frauds, poorly equipped to play the roles we had chosen—that Isaac approached me. (p.7).

In the everyday world universities are not borderless; there are restrictions for non-university communities. People are not allowed to wander as they like let alone make it a center of their uprisings or a damping site for their placards and posters. In the novel the America portrayed is not the America we know in encyclopedias. Through interpolation cities that cannot be located in the actual map of America were incorporated within its border. While driving Isaac out of Laurel Helen asks Isaac to look into the map and choose their route. But in the map, he finds out that all the big and famous cities of our world are found in America, "I asked Isaac to take out the atlas in the glove box and choose the route. He was delighted when he found a Cairo, an Athens, a Paris, and a Rome in America." (p.224).

These heterotopical spaces make the reader question the ontological status of the fictional world and be skeptical towards the historical and the fictional stories narrated in the novel. They reduce everything reflected in the novel to fiction.

Ontological concern is also a case in *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades*. The major ontological instability of the novel is created through what McHale (1987, p.47-57) calls superimposition. The author has portrayed a fictional world (Mechara and the nearby villages) that could not be accepted as emerging towns in Ethiopia in the time where the story is set. Almost half of the attributes given to the places could not characterize them.

The fictional world possesses two faces. It's one side is carved as primeval and conservative where men were expected to prove their courage and tenacity by killing wild beasts (p.32-35), people take baths once every few months in a river(p.60), people believe when a *dabtara* (religious official) dies it turns to a *guereza* (monkey)(p.94), people consider panties left unattended in a clothes line results in a girls loss of virginity (p.143), etc. On the contrary this fictional world is also portrayed as a hub of civilization. The place is portrayed as a place of luxury where some of the people own family rooms with white washed walls and towering armoires with full length mirrors (which is not even available in most homes in Ethiopia's Addis

Ababa currently let alone in an isolated village in the 1950s Ethiopia) (p.50), where girls lounge at dry goods store and teahouses with glass windows (p.60-61), overwhelmed by a motor revolution; "almost immediately, a fleet of stylish Peugeot taxis, Fiat auto-buses, Volkswagen minivans, Land Rover and Toyota trucks" (p.148), where people drink 'brandy on the rocks' (Ice cube in a brandy) and smoke Marlboro cigarettes (p.107-108), people watch motion pictures with overhead projectors (p.153-157), in this village funerals are also carried out in fashionable caskets:

> The Arab store keeper was the first to recognize the clear advantage of this new trend, and he imported caskets that, unlike the traditional boxes made by inept hands, were skillfully put together. If you have to be the centre of attention," he declared, "You may as well dress up accordingly." And without Aba Yitadse' staying hand, he could exercise his unbridled imagination. He offered caskets in the shape of a mammoth banana, a Coca-Cola bottle complete with its red and white logo, one that resembled a green Land Rover vehicle, and "Just about anything your little heart desires." *If you can fashion it from timber and tin, we will make it for you was his motto.*(p.220-221).

The villagers are also seen going bankrupt due to lonesome Christmas gift bills (p.225-227). All this is associated with a small isolated village in the 1960s Ethiopia. Nevertheless, this is impossible for the village in the time where the story is set and some of the events like bankruptcy due to Christmas gifts and burial using fashionable caskets are not possibilities even in current Ethiopia. It is easy for readers to sense the mismatch. The author has also tried to indirectly hint that he has borrowed some colors of his fictional world from America. For instance, concerning the motor revolution in the village he says, "The Upsurge in automotive creativity, which had placed Mechara firmly on the Map and on a collision course with such world-renowned motor towns as Detroit and Toyota city, was the brainchild of the famous governor. He had felt let down by the shortsightedness and lack of vision of the major automakers." (p.147). This fact is also strengthened when after many years Oona the childhood friend of Azeb in the comfort of her Vermont home recalls the court house in Gelemso. She remembers:

> "stepping inside the superior court felt like walking into a different world altogether." The sprawling edifice of hand-carved limestone stood on a tree-lined boulevard. The inside walls were inlaid, at eye level, with luxurious *ted* wood. The concrete floor was finished with imported terrazzo tile, so thoroughly polished that is gleamed under the morning

> sunlight. Three giant electric fans wheezed from the five-meter-high ceiling.
>
> Gazing down at the packed courtroom from their padded chairs were three judges, two males and one female, each dressed in a black gown. […] "In short," Oona concluded, "the setting was no different from what one sees in this country. In a span of a few hundred kilometers, a mere four hours' drive, I had witnessed a transformation of a decrepit feudal system into a modern age. The future had arrived." (p.310-311).

Oona is remembering her day at a court in Gelemso and is saying that what she has witnessed there is similar to the one happening in a place four hours' drive away from her home town Vermont. But it is not difficult for the reader to understand that putting a 1960s isolated rural village in Ethiopia in a parallel plane with an American town is nothing but a mere illusion. This superimposition causes the reader to question the reality status of the fictional setting because it will be difficult for them to locate it in the so-called empirical world. It seems the author has meant to give his setting a mythical existence, an antique place with some technological advancement. Thus, the reader develops a skeptical attitude to the reality represented in the novel and his/her own reality.

By mixing the ordinary and the sacred Nega has tried to shake the ontology of the novel as well as the outside world the novel is supposed to reflect. The reader is pushed to raise one of the ontological questions: which world is this? stated by McHale (1987). Following the protagonist Azeb we can observe how evident this is. At the beginning of the novel as we have already discussed under intertextuality and parody, we come across Azeb eating testicles of a sheep which is forbidden for girls because it is believed it will give them an aphrodisiac (manly) quality (p1-2). The reader wonders that what Azeb does and gets in to later in the novel may be a result of these event and begins to consider the existence of such supernatural possibilities of events in the portrayed world of the novel. In the author's note part of the novel Nega states that the setting of the novel is real. He says:

> The historical figures, however, are real; the events, verifiable. The setting of this work, the village of Mechara, does exist and is described here from memory undermined by twenty-year-old nostalgia. I had the privilege of visiting Mechara before the all-season highway brought unwanted outsiders in droves, and before the locals began to lose their unique identity along with the pristine beauty of their homeland. (p.ix)

The setting "Mechara" described above is a real town found in Eastern Ethiopia. It is in this real town that people who break rules of some traditional or religion-based beliefs are portrayed to face unusual events. This makes the reader question the reality status of the novel as well as the outside world which the author claimed that he has based his story.

5.2. Metafictional Analysis of the Selected Novels

Metafiction is a feature of postmodernism that is dominant in the selected novels. The authors used various self-reflexive tools to expose the constructdness/textuality of their stories thereby contradicting the assumed reality status of their works. For instance, in *The God Who Begat a Jackal* Nega's discussion concerning the novel, his intrusion and direct address of readers presents the novel as a constructed thing rather than a piece that reflects an empirical reality. In *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades* he also problematizes the reality presented in the novel by giving a background of his writing process and by frequently intruding in the novel thereby reminding the reader what is being read does not call upon any outside reality but is constructed. Dinaw's novels *How to Read the Air* and *All Our Names* are also characterized by literary self-consciousness of the narrator and the critical views he expresses. Thus, showcasing a confused boundary between the literary work, literary theory and criticism. Dinaw's metafictional experimentation goes along with Waugh's (1984, p.122) statement that is stated as, "metafiction is "[a]ny text that draws the reader's attention to its process of construction by frustrating his or her conventional expectations." The metafictional takes of Dinaw has exposed the constructdness of the novels; they do not refer to any realties outside of themselves rather they are subjectively composed.

The authors are also observed reflecting their skeptical attitude towards the metanarratives of history, religion and various dominant narratives through a technique of histographic metafiction. All the novels have questioned history's subjectivity, partiality, textuality, lack of objectivity etc. Nega in his two novels has criticized religion. He viewed it as a tool of oppression and argues that the motivation behind is money. He tried to expose its textuality by making readers aware of possible alternatives. Dinaw on the contrary reflected his skeptical attitude towards Eurocentric conclusions. Below the metafictional aspects of the novels will be discussed in detail under self-reflexivity and histographic metafiction.

5.2.1. Self-reflexivity of the Selected Novels

Self-reflexivity as addressed earlier deals with the self-conscious state of fictions of their fictionality. Nega and Dinaw have written as much about their writing process as their stories. For this they gave comments on their writing process, intrude through comments and direct addresses exposing themselves as makers of their fictions, incorporated literary theories and criticisms in the middle of their stories.

In *The God Who Begat a Jackal* Nega's bold self-reflexive move is evident in the "Historical Postscript" part of the novel (p.235-238). In this section though unusual for conventional novels the author writes about his writing which is a typical characteristics of postmodernist fiction. He gives a kind of background for readers which guides them how to read the novel. He gives information on the assumed historical period of the story explaining the political atmosphere in Ethiopia. He describes the power struggle, the religious and political situation in the depicted time. The author also engages himself in critical literary analysis. He tries to analyze his characters' credibility. Aster and the Abettor are his points of reference and he tries to justify their reality status (p.236-237).

Readers also grip the self-conscious state of the fiction through the authorial intrusions and comments. The author struggles to maintain his visibility by informing readers what will happen later in the novel. He begins his foretelling in chapter three where he states the final fate of the protagonist Aster. He says, "So began the turn of events that would propel the young girl from the heights of innocence and virtue into the abyss of anguish, sorrow, misery, and heartache, and, finally, into the folds of history, not as wronged person, but as a saint and legend." (p.28). At this stage of the novel Aster was only preoccupied with exercising her gift and using it for a good cause. However, the author summarizes her whole life then and there including her final days indirectly telling readers he knows everything because he is the author. This also applies to Amma and Mawu-Lisa faith followers' war. The narrator forecasts, "The long line of sunburned men drifted down a dusty trail, with the clanking sounds of iron chains trailing behind them. Count Ashenafi went back inside, little suspecting that this small incident, sparked by two rival slave families, would one day kindle a raging fire in his backyard, smothering many innocent lives and reshaping the valley beyond recognition." (p.59) informing readers about an upcoming war which occurs almost at the end of the novel. The early hint given concerning the fall of

Count Ashenafi is also another example. It reads, “Count Ashenafi saddled his horse, a full four months after he had taken up arms, little suspecting that the victory he had just celebrated would soon catapult disaster back at him with such vengeance and alacrity that the kingdom would be imperiled, along with everything he held dear to his heart.” (p.115). These early hints of the narrator make readers conscious of his existence and simultaneously remind them that they are reading fiction.

Directly addressing readers is another aspect of the author’s intrusion. At various points in the novel the author invites readers to get involved by asking them to share his thoughts and asking questions thus exposing the constructedness of his novel. For instance, in the part where he expresses the state of Gudu’s and Aster’s relationship he says, “Not that they indulged in any immoral act, mind you. For nothing that would cause an angel to blush passed in those nights. It was the mere act of sharing a breath of air, holding hands, or gazing into each other’s eyes in mute silence that comforted them.” (p.96) asking readers using the phrase ‘mind you’ to agree on his idea that the action of the lovers is not immoral. Similar invitations using the authors’ signature phrase ‘mind you’ (p.125, 146, etc…) are observed in the novel. The narrator also engages readers by asking them questions. For example, he asks readers a question in an effort to discard the speculation of the spiritual people concerning the mystery behind Aster’s illness saying, “How else could one explain the fact that a woman of her standing would throw away everything for some-one who was not entirely human?” (p.130) pressuring readers to agree with him and transforming them to a state of making the text.

The presence of the author is also felt because of the fragmented comments he gave on the characters and different situations. It does not seem that he is narrating what he is witnessing but expressing his views. The comment he gave concerning the love of Gudu and Aster is a good example. It reads, “What brought them together was a primeval love, love that is sown in isles of the blessed and harvested in hearts of the innocent. It is the sort of love that scholars are trained to denounce, wars are waged to stamp out. (p.125-126)”. Instead of reporting the actions of the characters the narrator is involved in assessing the status of their relationship comparing it with a state that is outside of the novel. The view he expressed related with Aster’s arranged marriage is also similar. He declares:

> Duke Ashenafi might have reminded his daughter that not every girl is privileged enough to have her family choose a husband for her. In fact, in

> much of the country, the family of a young woman is no more master of her destiny than she herself is. The mother of a peasant girl lives like a hen with a hen with a day-old brood, in constant fear of a predator lurking in the shadows to snatch up her young, because marriage by abduction is the norm for the toiling majority. (p.120).

In the passage above the narrator tries to justify Count Ashenafi's measure with a context outside the novel. The narrator's opinions stated above and similar texts all over the novel are not related with what is going on in the novel. They are the narrator's views, opinions and feelings which make readers conscious of an existence outside the novel; 'the author'. Such insertions make authors visible and uncovers the fictionality of a work.

At some places in the novel the author also confesses that his stories are constructions. The narrator recounting the Siege of Harar says, "Despair gave way to panic. The campaign that had been so hastily organized and launched had just remade itself, becoming a monster with a life of its own, intent on consuming the author who had breathed life into it." (p.103) indirectly revealing that the event is not being reported by a narrator who is also a witness but an author. The author especially emphasizes on the fictionality of his war stories. He makes his case using the hunchback monk. The monk as we have already discussed under histographic metafiction associates the events he gets into and the history he is making with actual historical texts (p.142,148). In this case it seems the author is calling out the readers to recognize his stories as facts. However, later in the novel we read the monk trying to expose the unreal status of the war stories in the novel illuminating on lack of evidences in historical texts. It reads:

> If Reverend Yimam had expected the campaign to be a stroll in the park, he was jolted out of his saddle when he discovered the park entirely missing, for there was nothing but an eerie skeleton of a village ahead of him. There were no enemies in sight, no watchtowers to aim his guns at. He reached deep inside the small recesses of his brain for a parable passed down by a farsighted ancestor, but nowhere in the dark caves of human history had a note been scribbled, much less a sketch, of a battle comparable in its ingenuity and caliber.(…) An enemy hiding behind high walls, like the tenants of Harar, or one materializing out of a cornfield, like a regular bandit, was something of the storybooks. (p.192).

In the above text the author is indirectly telling that his narrations concerning the siege of Harar and the first engagement of Kersa are nothing but mere imaginations. He strengthens this by associating his story with a romantic poetry. He describes Gudu and Aster as, "Gudu and Aster have been, and will always remain, the epitome of love to me, the true subjects of romantic

poetry. I can still picture the two arm in arm, foreheads pressed against each other, the tips of their noses rubbing." (p.96). Here the author instead of relating them with the history which he is claiming is writing he pushes them away from the empirical world associating them with romantic poetry.

Dinaw's *How to Read the Air* is also a self-reflexive novel. It is essentially a book about writing. The author confesses to the readers that his work is not a reflection of the world but he is imagining it out of words. The novel is all about English language (words) and literature, writing and reading and this can show how much the writer is concerned about his process of writing which is typical of postmodernist novels. The word 'word' is found almost in every page in the novel.

The narrator starts talking about words at the beginning while trying to define his parents' assumption of the vacation they are going to take. He says, "They called the trip a vacation, but only because neither of them was comfortable with the word "honeymoon," which in its marrying of two completely separate words, each of which they understood on its own, seemed to imply when joined together a lavishness that neither was prepared to accept."(p.3) Then he expresses the attitude of one of the protagonists Mariam towards English as, "Learning a new language was, in the end, not so different from learning to fall in love with your husband again, Mariam thought. While standing in front of the bathroom mirror early in the morning, she often told herself in what she thought of as nearly flawless diction" (p.4). The narrator's comment on Mariam's English language ability pushes his concern for language to another level. It reads:

> And in just the same way, she pushed herself to try new words and form new sentences in English, because just as there was a space reserved for her husband, there was another for English, and another one for foreign foods, and another for the names of streets near her house. She learned to say, "It was a pleasure to meet you." And she learned individual words, like "scattered" and "diligent" and "sarcastic." She learned the past tense. For example, I was tired yesterday, instead of: I am tired yesterday, or Yesterday tired I am. She learned that Russell Street led to Garfield Street, which would then take you to Main Street, which you could follow to I-74, which could take you east or west to anywhere you wanted to go. Eventually they would all make sense. Verbs would be placed in the right order, sarcasm would be funny, the town would be familiar: past, present, future, and husband, they could all be understood if given enough patience. (p.4-5).

Though the above comment is directed towards Mariam, it seems that the real reason of the description is the narrator's/author's desire to notify readers how he has composed his novel. Like the clue above the novel's story is fragmented and readers are expected to bring the pieces together that are dispersed in a confused time frame. The narrator's focus on words has also a purpose of notifying that the reality presented in the novel is a created using word. Mariam expression is a good evidence of this:

> The car horn honked twice for her: two short high-pitched bleeps that could have gone unnoticed but did not because she half expected, half prayed for them. When they came she pictured a bird—a dove, or something dovelike—being set free, its rapidly fluttering wings disturbing the air. Had she known more words in English she would have said the sound of the horn pierced through the silence, *pierced* being the operative word here, with its suggestion that something violent had occurred. (p.8).

In the above quotation Mariam described the car honk like a sound made by a freeing bird which is different from a violent piercing sound. The two expressions do not create a similar picture. Mariam used a different word and created a different reality which is not related with what she heard. It seems that through this the author is trying to show that his novel is built out of words and has nothing with a supposed worldly experience.

The other self-reflexive characteristic of the novel is a result of the author's confession that art (literature, picture, movie) is a result of one's imagination that has nothing to do with the empirical world. One of the ways used by the author to reveal this idea is pictures. In the novel we learn that the protagonist Yosef has sent a dignified picture of him, his hands on the wheel of a large car and with a perfect facial appearance to his wife before she joins him in the US (p.6). His wife's reaction was, "When she first saw the picture, she didn't believe the car was his. She thought he had found it parked on the side of the road and had seized the opportunity to show himself off, which was indeed almost exactly what he had done. Still, that didn't stop her from showing the picture to her mother, sisters, and girlfriends, or from writing on the back, in English: *Yosef Car*." (p.6). Here the narrator is telling that pictures lie and also writings. After a few paragraphs we learn that Yosef does not possess such a car his was less elegant and small (p.8) but his wife writes at the back of the picture "Yosef Car" though she knew it is not true. Thus, it seems that the author is telling that like the picture writing what one has imagined is not truth.

The author strengthens this idea using movies too. Mariam at one point in the novel is observed philosophizing about the word 'fall' and imagines her husband falling down their stair bouncing and tripling like the characters she sees in the movies who later gets up shaking off their fall, bending their bodies to their place (p.12). However, she was able to view this 'fall' apart from reality, "When real bodies fell, as Mariam knew well enough, they did not get up. They did not bounce back or spring into shape. They crumpled and needed to be rescued." (p.12) which is also what the author is trying to say. The author also treats news articles as imaginations. In the novel the narrator's father Yosef's reunion with his wife was reported in a local newspaper as, "His worst fears had been relieved the moment she stepped off the plane into the waiting terminal where he stood holding a bouquet of flowers, flanked on either side by a photographer and reporter from the town's local newspaper. (The headline three days later in the *Peoria Herald* would declare "True Love Reunited,"" (p.43). However, we learn after a few lines that there is no such a thing called true love between them because they do not even know each other very well (p.44).

Like *The God Who Begat a Jackal* mixing theory with the writing process of the novel is also a characteristic of *How to Read the Air*. The author at various points in the novel tells that he has written against the convention of different genres. Narrating the incident where his mother entered a forest at the Laconte fort, he advises his readers as:

> The reasons for her getting up don't really matter, at least not in the way they would if this were one of those childhood fairy tales in which the young maiden is called upon to enter the woods, from which she may not ever return. If it was that kind of story there would have to be a voice, something deep and slightly ominous, or the temptation of a miraculous treat, which would serve as the bait to ensnare her into a trap from which only her wits or a prince could save her. In either case, her folly or her greed would serve as her downfall, and anyone hearing the story would understand the lesson clearly: Stick to what you know. (p.140).

In the above text the narrator instructs his readers not to be taken by his narrative technique claiming the conventional fairy tale plot is much sounder than his. He also relates his feeling towards his father's box of belongings with children stories. He says, "According to the stories, children who opened boxes containing the last precious items of their parents were always granted some vital, significant revelation, or at the very least, dark secrets uncovered. Family histories are supposed to be riddled with such things, for without them how do we achieve that

much needed catharsis we're all supposedly longing for?" (p.152) suggesting his story should have ended alike and enable him to bring out what is eating him inside. The narrator does not stop critiquing his work using generic norms but also reveals how he fashioned his narrative. Pausing the story every now and then he reveals his brainstormed plots and ideas in the novel as given below:

> There are two directions the story can go in at this point. I can either see my mother peering from behind a tree, preparing to take flight in to the forest, where she wouldn't get far, the distance from here to the brook being only a matter of a few hundred yards, or I can't let her stand her ground and remain exactly as she is. The temptation to set her loose makes for a stronger narrative. (p.142).
>
> When I was afraid the story was moving too slowly, I moved the Narrative back into the heart of the port town. I filled its streets and harbor as best I could with a sense of mystery and danger not unlike the type that could be found in old black-and-white movies with raincoat-clad men in foreign settings, or even in more contemporary accounts of Africa that never shied away from reveling in the continent's darkness, both literal and imagined. The story needed intrigue and conspiracy and until then was wholly lacking in villains of any sort, and while I initially saw these sidelines as being at best only marginally related to the story I had begun, I quickly found that they had a purpose as well. (p.212).

Such revelations of the author blur the boundary that separates How to Read the Air from works of literary theory. Dinaw has transformed his novel to an academic work by mixing critical writing and creative writing.

In *All Our Names* the self-reflexive features of postmodernism are demonstrated using different mechanisms. Mingling the literary and the theoretical like The God Who Begat a Jackal and How to Read the Air is one. At various points in the novel the author is read talking about some theoretical aspects of literary writing. At one incident he tries to express what a story is, "He was good at telling stories— not great, like my uncles and grandfathers, who reveled in the theatrics. Compared to them, a story was a solemn occasion delivered in a calm, measured voice that nonetheless left a lasting impression on anyone who was listening." (p.128). through complementing the performance of his father and uncles the narrator is trying to state what makes a story better which is unusual mix up and intrusion in the middle of a fictional narrative except for postmodern ones. A similar case is observed while the narrator expresses his situation

after he was attacked in the capital's road and finds himself in a hospital bed. He is seen craving for love and rescue which he believes are basic ingredients in fairytales (p.108). He says,

> I had had similar delusions while bandaged in the hospital. I had thought of America and Europe, but in vague, monumental ways, of towering buildings and white marble memorials. I'd imagined finding a foreign wife here in Africa who would take pity on my broken body, a doctor with blond hair and blue eyes who fell in love with me, though we came from opposite corners of the world and I had nothing to offer besides my poverty. Rescue—that is the true heart behind romance and fairy tale; the spontaneous love that frees us from the tower, hospital bed, or broken world is always only the means to that end. (p.108).

He expressed his emotion in line with telling the reader how romance is structured in a fairytale and thus he wished he could have escaped the nightmare he was by getting in to a romance that rescues him.

Commenting on the writing process is also another self-reflexive mechanism the author used to expose the constructdness of the fiction. Helen the narrator of the novels' story from America tells the reader directly that she does not want to take much time to tell her story and that of Isaac's racial confrontation in the diner. One day Helen unsatisfied by her and Isaacs's outings that were limited to markets, stores and post offices insists to take Isaac to lunch in a nearby diner. But they face an ugly racial discrimination, the owner resisting to serve a black man (p.39). While narrating this incident Helen suddenly intrudes in the story and directly addresses the reader, "I was too busy creating a new story to linger on that thought. In this story, Isaac and I were still heroes. The fact that we chose to sit there and linger when every part of me wanted to run was proof of the sacrifices we were willing to make." (p.39) telling that she is writing what follows in the story within which Isaac and she are going to be heroes. She tells that even if she is still sitting in the diner, she is already developing the plot whereby their sitting will be part of the future story which will be read as the heroes' sacrifice that took them to victory. Helen's intrusion exposes that the characters in the novel are created by the author and do not refer to anything outside the novel.

The narrator of the story from Kampala also explicitly tells that everything that is being narrated on his part is constructed. He informs the reader that what he is experiencing at the moment of the narrative is what he has been imagining to tell his readers. He also notifies that he is also a character in the story.

> We drove for maybe two, three hundred feet, lurching and stopping the whole way. That was all it took—three blocks—before I knew I was finally seeing the city as I had imagined it, both from afar and while living there. I had imagined crowds composed of men in suits and women in blue and purple dresses, and here they were, along with the traffic cop in white gloves I added from time to time. Of course, I had seen them all before—I had stood on at least two occasions at the very same intersection we were idling in—but until that moment I had never understood that I was living the fantasy I had built out of books and radio shows. I was too busy being a character to see that. (p.106)

In the above quotation beyond destabilizing the ontological status of the narrative the author forces the reader to question the realities incorporated in the novel. This is related with what Waugh (1984) asserted about fictional characters in postmodernist literature saying, "The dreamer is then terrified that this man might discover he is only an image, a character in a fiction, but then discovers that he himself has been dreamt into existence by the man. Throughout many metafictional novels, characters suddenly realize that they do not exist, cannot die, have never been born, and cannot act." (p.91). Such unconventional practices of authors undermine the notion of reality in the novel pointing that it does not mirror any reality outside itself but to realities created by language.

The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades also heavily draws on making readers conscious of the nature of the fiction they are reading through the self-reflexive texts the author incorporated. The author in the opening of the novel (Author's note) and at the closing (Afterward) reflects on his fiction and his writing process, which is typical for postmodern fiction. Beyond reminding readers that they are reading fiction he tells how he fashioned his narrative. The explanation he gave of what became a basis for his novel is a good evidence of this. It reads:

> As a young boy, I spent some of my school breaks visiting my mother's cousins in the eastern highlands of Ethiopia, hundreds of kilometers away from my dusty hometown, Jijiga. The Parish priest in this Christian enclave was reverently addressed as *Yeneta*, a derivative of "My lord". What I learned from him and his extended family, coupled with my own research, has formed the basis for his work. I hasten to add, however, that none of the characters in this book bear any resemblance to either Yeneta or the good people of Kuni, the village in which he lived. (p.ix).

Using the above quoted text Nega wrote about his writing. Through the quoted text the author informs his readers from where and how he gets the ideas for his novel. Appending such explanations on works of fiction as McHale (1987, p.197-198) explains is an effort of writers

targeted in destroying the illusory reality of fiction by making themselves visible as creators of the world depicted in their fiction. The author's account is not limited to explaining the source of his story and the process of his writing he directly asks readers to accept his stories as true. He claims they are like the events in the world. It reads:

> THIS BOOKS DRAWS HEAVILY on existing beliefs and practices. As with many works of fiction rooted in reality, there has been some dramatization. The game of *Gena* as it is played by two of the protagonists in this narrative seems to be a form of bloodletting. Nothing could be further from the truth. Everyday soccer leaves more bruised ribs and bloody noses than either *Gena* or the game accompanying the Festival of Epiphany, *Guks.* (p.329)

On the contrary the author also states that some parts of his novel are not drawn from reality. He tells, "The communal bonfire adorning the Christmas scene in this work is usually seen during the Feast of the Finding of the cross. It is not, however, unusual to see *chibbo* during other festivities as well" (p.329). Here it seems that the author is trying to tip-off the reader that what he has written is not entirely true. The sentence, "As with many works of fiction rooted in reality, there has been some dramatization." stated above also brings in to context the other side of self-reflexive fiction; inclusion of theoretical views within fiction. Here the author is unfolding for readers one characteristic of realistic fiction; 'dramatization'.

In *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades'* Nega intensely intrudes in the story which makes readers to be conscious of the fictional status of the narrative. He is visible in the novel through his direct addresses of his readers and the explanations he gives on issues that are stated in the story but has nothing to do with the plot. This self-reflexive nature of the narrative is something that deviates from established literary conventions, which is one feature of postmodernism.

The writers' presence through his explanations is felt at the beginning of the novel and stays till the end. He intervenes in the prologue part of the novel saying "Testicles of sheep and goats were believed to have aphrodisiac qualities and were able to be consumed by men only. On women, the balloon-like organ had the most undesirable effects." (p.2). The author gave this account leaning on the event where the protagonist Azeb asks her elder sister to give her the testicles and was denied because the 'forbidden fruits' were not meant for girls (p.1). The author is addressing no one in the novel but his readers. Here the author is trying to clarify what the Mechara community calls a "forbidden fruit" (p.1) (sheep and goat testicles which are not

allowed to be consumed by women). This account of the author is not necessary except making him visible because the conversation that took between the two sisters clarifies everything and such revelation is not common in fiction. Similar interventions are evident in the novel like the explanations he gave of the metal held by new mothers' (p.5), the description of *injera* (p.9), the use of billet of wood(p.11), the tradition of remembering the dead(p.14), the description of 'Americans'(p.102), etc. These texts do not develop the plot or contribute to the development of the remaining elements of a novel but frequently remind the reader the author is there.

The author is also visible through the explanations he gives in brackets. Almost throughout the novel Nega pauses his narrative and clarifies some concepts and words in brackets. Such interruption is not customary in fiction. His first intrusion reads, "Even though only 180 fast days were observed in Aba Yitades' house-hold (there were 250 fast days, but only 180 were binding), a feast day marking the end of a fast held a special significance." (p.7). It is obvious the general information given in bracket it is not part of the narrative but an appendage that makes the reader to be conscious of the person beyond giving him/her extra knowledge. Similar cases are observed, "Gunfire erupted as anxious villagers made sure that no one over slept. (In the nation's capital, a cannon announced the event.)" (p.9), "When her young customers asked her to "bless" their purchase (a euphemism—they were looking for a free sweat),"(p.49), "Only later in the week did she learn that the girls would have preferred to use the showers in the hotel rooms, but the hotel manager demanded payment (a bribe, actually)" (p.103), The "80 BOND" LAW entitled Genet to half of the couple's property in case of a divorce; an equal right to annul the marriage if the union turned sour (it takes only one elder to release a couple from the "80 bond");" (p.137), "No living mould of Eve would dare raise a knife to break the celebration bread, much less slaughter a sacrificial animal. (As in many other Christian churches, women were not supposed to say the paternoster required before such events.)" (p.235), etc. The excerpts listed show how the author is craving for attention.

5.2.2. Histographic Metafiction

History, religion, grand narratives of science and technology and some institutional narratives are subjects that are questioned by the authors in their novels. They have tried to criticize them from different aspects highlighting their textuality, mythic stance and oppressive nature.

5.2.2.1. Critique of History

Both the authors have reflected their skeptical attitude towards history in their novels. Nega in *The God Who Begat a Jackal* explicitly states that he has written about Ethiopia (p.235) his scrutiny seems to lie on the tradition of history writing and the historians in the country. In his first attempt he scrutinizes Ethiopian History because it mixes legend and history. Count Ashenafi's daughter Aster after her supernatural powers are uncovered was given a proper training and had begun to have an audience to attend to different matters. Her valuable advises and a perfect judgment has bought her fame and people began to flood her village (p.16-27). The author comments on her situation and forecasts her fate saying, "So began the turn of events that would propel the young girl from the heights of innocence and virtue into the abyss of anguish, sorrow, misery, and heartache, and finally, into the folds of history, not as a wronged person, but as a saint and legend" (p.28). Highlighting the probability that her story will end up as a legend instead of being preserved as a logical historical consequence.

This is true for a number of Ethiopian historical accounts. The case of the Queen Sheba that is discussed previously under parody is a good example. Though many scholars of the country argue she is a real historical figure due to lack of a verifiable historical document she is considered as legend. The author views historians as major causes of this problem. It seems he wanted to highlight that the basic problem springs from the historians' belief that their knowledge is a personal property. The part he narrates about the oral historian is an instance of it. It reads:

> His knowledge had been passed to him through word of mouth and spanned fifty generations. It covered all battles concluded between nobles in the province, all slaves bought and sold, marriages ordained and annulled, prayers answered and celebrated, criminals sent to the gallows, and fugitives of justice. He knew of the infidelities of his subjects and the bastards they often left behind- the single most profitable and closely guarded piece of information in his archive. (Many a lord pays handsomely to keep his extramarital affairs secret from the prying eyes of a righteous monk.) And, like all oral historians before him, he kept his

> treasure out of print, passing it on to a chosen son in small installments. (p.90).

Aster in an effort to learn about life in the wilderness (p.89-90) confronts the oral historian who was considered a breathing archive. However, this man is observed selfishly keeping his knowledge to himself because he wanted to stay a sole benefiter of the information he had. Though very old he only gives fragments of his information to his chosen son (p.90). It seems that the author is trying to point two cases: the weak Ethiopian culture of documenting history in general and the selfish attitude of Ethiopian historians. In Ethiopia though the culture of calligraphy dates back to 4th century AD (Zarandona, 2009) historical documentation is not that strong and people have relied on word of mouth preservation. Beyond that the narrator is telling that the historians have failed in properly passing their knowledge either in print or other media because of their selfish attitudes.

The author also views history as the history of the powerful and the dominant through Count Ashenafi's struggle to secure a place in the history like the nobility he envies. Duke Ashenafi was lapped the title of a duke through the young emperor who deviated from his ancestor's traditions by rewarding noble titles to the commons. It is stated in the novel as follows:

> It gave pause for sobering reflection to the young emperor, who, unlike his late father, had chosen to turn his back on the nobles who had helped redraw the frontiers of the expanding empire, preferring instead the company of the nouveaux riches to whom he doled out titles based not on the purity of their blood but on the fortune they were willing to part with. Awarding the coveted title of duke to the count was, for His Highness, a small appeasement of the threat posed by the hereditary flock. (p.117).

Even if Duke Ashenafi's title was a result of the bravery he showed in the siege of Harrar he knew by heart that his title will not be accepted by many and to secure his place in the history he needs a noble linage. He tries to actualize this through giving his daughter Aster's hand to such suitors. However, when this does not materialize, he decides to engage the last two qualifiers in a combat of a duel. The narrator expresses Duke Ashenafi's new found trick as follows:

> He had all but given up hope when, one particular sunny day, he hit upon an idea that promised a sure way of securing a worthy husband for his daughter and immortality for himself. He decided to settle the matter, once and for all, in a duel among the final candidates. Dueling was an art of deadly combat that had long since fallen into disfavor with the public for its lack of refinement. But dueling over a bride was a novelty that had yet to make its way into history books. (p.118).

The nobility without any precondition of heroism, warfare or wealth secure noble titles and are always recorded in the country's historical manuscripts because of their blood line. Duke Asenafi who does not want to be forgotten looks for ways to get rid of his common background. When he fails to secure the perfect noble blood that will parallel his name with the name of the nobility through the arranged marriage of his daughter, he decides to give away his daughter through a dueling battle that he believes is noble. The narrator says, "Duke Ashenafi found in the old warrior not only a man he could toast as a worthy son-in-law, but also someone who had unwittingly helped him forge his place in history yet again" (p.119). The authors exposing of history as marginal is further developed through Aster's effort of recording the legendary accounts of the fugitives which are not recorded.

> Confronted with the certainty of her own adventures in the wild, Aster spent many afternoons reviewing the documented cases. In four short weeks she read nine large tomes and six ancient scrolls; she spoke to visiting elders about the unwritten accounts of legendary fugitives. Upon being granted a rare audience with the Oral Historian of the province, she spent five days, under the spell of his learning. (p.90).

Aster's observation of the gaping holes in the manuscripts exposes the marginal nature of history. The author through Aster's effort of documenting history exposes what history has been leaving behind. Especially Aster's encounter of the oral historian (p.90) and her learning about the history of the lower class (related with what Hutcheon (1989) calls the history of the excentrics) in the novel shows the partiality of the mainstream historical accounts. The oral historian is described as, "His knowledge had been passed on to him through word of mouth and spanned fifty generations. It covered all the battles concluded between nobles in the province, all slaves bought and sold, marriages ordained an annulled, prayers answered and celebrated, criminals sent to the gallows, and fugitives of justice." (p.90). Thus, the story of the oral historian narrates is not limited to the nobility.

History's marginality is also approached from its patriarchal nature. In the novel the narrator presents an incident where Count Ashenafi scraped of all choices decides to give away his daughter through dueling (p.118). Connecting with this event the narrator intrudes and says, "Dueling was an art of deadly combat that had long since fallen into disfavor with the public for its lack of refinement. But dueling over a bride was a novelty that had yet to make its way into history books." (p.118). This emphasizes that history has yet to go back and include the

marginalized groups; women being one. He strengthens his view by boldly exposing the patriarchal nature of history. He clearly states this saying "Hers was an obscured existence, lived in the shadows of her husband and daughter. Those who knew her held that she would be remembered in death, as in life, as a footnote to her husband's grand exploits." (p.222). speaking of the fate of Countess Fikre. The Countess though an important figure in her husband's kingdom was only recognized as the wife and through labeling her a 'footnote' it seems that the author is trying to expose that history to date is all about "his-story" not "her-story".

The author has also tried to scrutinize history from the point of its incompleteness and lack of empirical reality highlighting its need of refurbishment. In the part of the story where the battle of Kersa took place (p.198-210) the narrator at one-point states his fear that even after the end of the war and its documentation in history books still a rift of agreement on the tactics that lead to victory exists. He says, "Long after the battle had been relegated to the frayed pages of history, the strategy would be debated in academic circles and military colleges across the continent; the Abettors' guild would remain divided over the tactics that won the war." (p.205). There by stating the inability of history books to present everything in full. It seems that the author is trying to show a text (history as being one) is open to plural interpretations as it is a case of postmodern texts. In postmodernism texts are structured open ended to enable the reader to a window of multiple meanings.

The author also states that instead of reflecting on the reality at hand history constructs itself by referring to already existing texts. Count Ashenafi's siege of Harar is articulated in this manner. The narrator states, "If only Count Ashenafi had bothered to consult the history books, he would have read of warlords who had lost their shirts and saddlebags on a siege that lasted longer than their meager resources could support." (p.104) expressing that what happens to Count Ashenafi and his force is not new. It is synonymous with a reality documented in historical texts. It also seems that the author is trying to construct the story of the crusade using past texts. Reverend Yimam, the Supreme Pontiff of the Mawu-Lisa is repeatedly seen associating his crusade with different historical accounts. The narrator expresses this stating, "Reverend Yimam was a man of considerable learning and theological depth who had rounded out his education traveling across high seas. He had an intimate knowledge of the Inquisitions that had endured through the centuries across the Mediterranean." (p.142). Thus, an attempt is made to explain the similarity of the crusade and Reverend Yimam's history that is being made. The Reverend's way of

stamping out and penalizing heresy is also matched with the ancient laws of Rome (p.148). The construction of history basing on past historical texts continues at the part of the novel where the battle of Kersa is narrated. The penalizing of the heretics is magnified through Louis and Simon de Montfort, Count of Leicester (p.201).

Dinaw's *How to Read the Air* likewise scrutinizes history. The narrator in the novel reflects that history is a narrative that is nothing but imaginative. He made his stand obvious in chapter two where he describes his responsibility at the immigration center. There the narrator works as an editor where he re-writes some of the immigration applications of the refuges. He says, "In time I was given the job of editing out the less credible or unnecessary parts of some of the narratives, while at the same time pointing out places where some stories could be expanded upon or magnified for greater narrative effect." (p.24). The supposed real history of the immigrants is therefore a product of the editor's imagination. Thus, the author indirectly maintains that history is not different from literature. At the immigration center the narrator and the protagonist is viewed as a person of literature because he improves the stories (history) of the immigrants (p.24). The narrator sustains, "It was easy to find the necessary details; they resurfaced all over the world in various countries, for different reasons and at different times. I quickly discovered as well that what could not be researched could just as easily be invented based on common assumptions that most of us shared when it came to the poor in distant, foreign countries." (p.24).

Placing literature and history on a parallel plane thus diminishes history to an imaginative product. In the above excerpt it also seems that the narrator is saying history does not reflect realities that are bound to fixed times and places but is obtained from free-flowing discourses that are poured from already developed metanarratives. He argues by openly stating that history is a grand narrative, "If my fictional narratives lacked any veracity, it didn't really matter. Whatever real histories any of the people I encountered had were forfeited and had been long before I came along, subsumed under a vastly grander narrative that had them grateful just to be here, it was only a matter of whether they knew that or not." (p.204). Hence, the author is concluding that the supposed historical texts are no different from his work and historians cannot reach to the real histories because they are already lost. The sources of their writings are the dominant narratives which by themselves are constructed.

The author also questions the honesty of history writers. In the novel we observe the narrator being at odds with his girlfriend because of his modification of the histories of the immigrants. He describes the incidence as, "When I asked Angela if she wanted to join me for lunch, she simply said, "Sorry, Jonas. Not today," which was as close as she could come to saying that I had disappointed her, not because I had invented a new history for someone, but because I had seemingly no problem doing so. It was the ease with which I could lie that alarmed her." (p.26). Thus, the author is highlighting that historians lie.

The author also viewed history as an artificial product that is reproduced with non-sufficient and selective evidence. He conveys this as, "There is almost nothing left of Laconte's fort these days. What was once here has either slowly eroded with time or since been picked off piece by piece by bored kids or scavengers of American history, who have carted away what little remains to homes and workshops where the past is minutely and painstakingly re-created." (p.132). Here it seems that the author is saying that except for its name the fort is nonexistent. Since most of its part has ended in the hands of individuals what is reproduced could not escape the subjective impulse of its builders. Additionally, the author reflects that historical accounts are affected by who tells the story. He makes this point clear in a part where the war in port town of Sudan is narrated. The narrator states, "There were rumors of massacres on both sides. Who was responsible for the killing always depended on who was doing the talking." (p.229) expressing the existence of varied accounts of the war and thus suggesting the same happens when such events end in historical writings. The narrator strengthens this while he presents what happened with his parents'. He says:

> "I've been on this road before, on several occasions as a child with my father, and then again later with my mother just before she gave this land up for good and headed out east for the modern city and apartment of her dreams. I didn't know it at a time but two completely different versions of history were being offered to me in preparation for my inevitable role as both advocate and judge over what happened between my parents during this trip, […]. (p.116).

Besides, the author articulates that when time elapses historians fail to re-create what happened by giving the necessary details. He presents this using the fallen 'Twin Towers' of USA. On a summer boat party arranged by the narrator's office when the boat approaches the southern tip of Manhattan the clients began arguing on the location of the towers. Bill the head of the

immigration center corrects them and shows them where the towers were (p.27). Unlike the old times where he reveals the day with more personal experiences he just says, ""They were right there," he said. "Just behind those buildings."" (p.28) Since the clients have never seen the towers, they were unable to recreate the image of the towers from what they have seen in television and stay confused (p.28).

In *All Our Names* too Dinaw has questioned the totalizing impulse of historical narratives and their process of production. In histographic metafiction the issue of how we come to know what we know is also addressed. The skeptical attitude is not only launched on the historical narrative but also on the process of its production. Here it is important to note Hutcheon's point "Postmodernism questions centralized, totalized, hierarchized, closed systems: questions, but does not destroy (cf.Bertens 1986, pp.46-47). It acknowledges the human urge to make order, while pointing out that the orders we create are just that: human constructs, not natural or given entities." (1988, p.41-42). This strengthens that histographic metafiction makes the reader question the recording process of histographers and that is what the author of *All Our Names* did in the novel.

The narrator of the novel explicitly criticizes his account of recording history while he fails to write what was happening from an eye witness account. In the village where Isaac makes him take retreat and hide from the war a day arrived with flood of wounded refugees. The villagers were unwelcoming and massacred the people. The narrator tells the reader about the incident and his inability to write what was really happening.

> As they did so, I tried to write down what had happened. I thought of counting the dead, but I was too far away to do so. I tried next to describe one of the bodies, but all I could see was death—no eyes, no face, just a blank emptiness I didn't have the stomach to look at closely. When that failed, I tried to describe a woman dragging what looked to be an old man through the grass, but before I knew what to write, she was gone and then walking back, empty-handed. By the time I finally turned away from her, it was almost over. The bodies were hidden in the forest, which would swallow the remains before anyone knew to look for them. I had no names, not even of the village, which was too small to have existed on any map. And so I did the only thing I could think of. I waited until no one was watching me, and then left. As I walked back to Joseph's village, I drew amap of the route. I recorded every bend in the road, and the few forks that I came upon, along with sketches of a few long-abandoned

> thatch-roofed homes barely visible from the path. It was far from poetry, less than a journal, and worthless as history. (p.221-222).

The failure of the narrator in recording the truth resulted from his physical distance from the incident, his emotional involvement, lack of tangible resources on the background of the victims and his unfamiliarity with the place. In the excerpt quoted above the author tells that from where he was standing, he was unable to count the corpses and since everything was happening so quickly it was impossible for him to follow and record the incidents. Even in a moment when he was able to see he had become so emotional that he failed to observe objects independently. This narrative is therefore a critique of the limitation historians face and a proof of the textuality of history; it is constructed and subjective. History is recorded subjectively sometimes with honest mistakes and other times with deliberate omissions and misguides. In the novel it is Isaac who pushes the narrator to write. On one account seeing the narrator struggling to record the burial of heap of bodies of soldiers hovered by swarm of flies Isaac tells him, "if you're going to write something, write something nice," he said. "Something that will make people happy. No one needs to read this." (p.233), thereby complimenting history as a text modified to make it appeal for readers.

Incorporating wrong and hasty assumptions is also a focus of the author's critique. In the novel we are told that the narrator and Isaac have first met in the slums near the university. After formally introducing each other they got involved in the paper revolution Isaac initiated. One day they went to Café Flamingo to celebrate their victory which is a spot for rich university students. The narrator was ashamed and felt uncomfortable but Isaac who was feeling victorious tells him, "That's where we belong," he said, "in one of those expensive cafés with the rest of the students. Years from now, they will say, 'That is where Isaac and Langston the poet professor met.'" (p.42) mocking how historians write lies.

Blurring fact and fiction is also a characteristic of histographic metafiction. In the novel we find such accounts at various points to point that history is a construction, a myth. The author uses Isaac to make this point. One day walking away from the campus Isaac tells the narrator,

> "Did you know," he said, "until a decade ago no Africans were allowed to live near the university. This is where the British were planning on building a new palace for the king. If they had lost World War II, they were going to move all the English people here, and this part of the city was going to be just for them. They were going to make everything look

> like London so they wouldn't feel so bad about losing. They were going to build a big wall around it and then change all the maps so that it looked like London was in Africa, but every time they started building the wall, someone would blow it up. That's how the war for independence started." (p.8-9).

The narrator is always taken away by the stories of Isaac but he does not let the narrative do the same to the readers. The Narrator openly tells the readers that his friend is lying. Even if he says the stories of his friend give him a feeling of belongingness which he does not get from anywhere he does not hide the fact that Isaac has his own version of history. He exposes Isaac's account of history s half myth and half fact and forces the readers to suspect its validity. However, such stories in the novel support the postmodern accounts of multiple realities and the relativity of truths.

It also seems in the *Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades* Nega has viewed history as a meta-narrative and is specifically exploring the history of Ethiopia and the way it has been represented. In the novel the parish priest Aba Yitades is observed trying to document the deeds of his community. However, his writing is characterized by subjectivity, partiality, discrimination and unfairness. Aba Yitades's writing is thus a parodic representation of the partiality of history and in the context of the novel the partiality of Ethiopian history.

The incident in one Wednesday market of the village is good evidence. On this day as usual Aba Yitades wanders in the market to observe the obedience of his parishioners. Unfortunately, he catches one of his parishioners buying an egg on "Ash Wednesday" (Wednesdays are fasting days on which Ethiopian orthodox church prohibits its parishioners from eating animal products). After telling him it is for her youngest child the woman disappears from the market abruptly leaving the eggs behind (p.67).

The priest turns to the merchant woman and asks her who her parish priest is and documents what he calls guilt to his black ledger. Unlike his parish woman he does not ask her to justify her reasons he just entered, *"On Ash Wednesday, the year of our lord 1959, a young merchant by worldly name of Aster Kebede and Christian name of Daughter of St. Michael has brought to market a small basket of eggs in direct violation of the Lenten Fast. The said woman is from St. Peter's parish of Boke Gudo (not much of a parish). Her soul-father is Aba Shimeles.* (p.68*)."* In this quoted text it seems that Nega is trying to note that history (since the priest's writing is formatted like a historical writing) is more of a construction than a reflection and is characterized

by subjective and discriminatory accounts of its writers. In the quoted market incident both women broke a law but the priest lay a blind eye on his parishioner and wrote a convicting account of the merchant woman.

Nega thus challenges the assumption that historical documents represent reality exposing how it can be manipulated by impartial writers. The priest's impartiality/discrimination is not confined to protecting his parishioners he went further criticizing the parish of the merchant woman without an evidence. The priest writes, "*The said woman is from St. Peter's parish of Boke Gudo (not much of a parish)"* (p.68). Nowhere in the novel is the parish of 'Boke Gudo' described as poor or is given any comparative account based on the parish church of the priest. He just called it 'not much of a parish' and this is a simple subjective description.

Nega has also tried to question the authenticity of historical writing. The parish priest of Mechara in his "Black Ledger" has also written about the white families in Mechara. It reads:

> *An Italian family came to visit*, he began. Like many of his generation, the priest associated all white faces with Italians, who had made the existence of their race known during a brief occupation of the country during the Second World War. *They don't appear to be war like. The man goes by the name of Robert Harding; his wife, Vivian Harding. (What strange-sounding names!) their children are well brought up (they smiled often and bowed at the appropriate moments). The girl's name is Oona, the boy's Jeff. The translator is a native; interestingly, he is the one who was ill behaved. They all seemed to be interested in our faith, though none wore a neck-cord, not even the native translator!* (p.95-96).

In the above quoted text, the priest has written that the white families are Italian. Before the priest's effort of documentation, however we learn that the white families are American, ""I am Oona. What is your name?" the girl continued, not minding the correction. "Azeb." Where are you from, Oona?" "America?" (p.93). It seems that the author is intentionally exposing the lack of truthfulness in historical documents. Though it is possible for the priest to verify the identity of the white people like his youngest daughter Azeb (p.93) he chose to write what he felt is right. Thus, the author using the priest's Black Ledger has questioned who writes history and how true that history is which of course is a concern of postmodernist fiction.

Additionally, through his direct intrusion in the above quoted text the author has told his readers that the priest's generation has developed a custom of calling all whites Italian. Through this it appears that he is telling that historical writings are also affected by such bold generalization and

challenges the totalization impulse of conventional historical writings. It also appears the author has purposefully slipped-up from the conventional history when he says, "Like many of his generation, the priest associated all white faces with Italians, who had made the existence of their race known during a brief occupation of the country during the Second World War."(p.96). In Ethiopian history the first appearance of Italians is not associated with the Second World War but to 1896 where the Italian effort to colonize the country fails in the battle of Adwa where Ethiopians defeated the Italian army. The researcher believes that this fact does not escape the author but he has consciously written as if the Italians first came during the Second World War to expose errs of historiographers.

In *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades* Nega has tried to bring under criticism the marginalizing, an impulse of history. He makes this clear while giving a historical background for his story. In the opening of the novel he informs his readers about the sources for his story saying, "The parish priest in this Christian enclave was reverently addressed as *Yeneta*, a derivative of "My Lord." What I learned from him and his extended family, coupled with my own research, has formed the basis for this work" (p.ix). Through this he is indirectly telling his readers that what they are going to read is the story/history of Christianity, which is dominant and marginalizing and this histographic metafiction has a parodying tendency which criticizes Ethiopian History because the history of Ethiopia is mostly history of Christianity. Later in the novel we learn that the setting of the novel (Mechara) was previously a place of non-Christians, "The village has been founded by a small band of men and women following their conquering emperor. He opened up the entire region, which had originally been inhabited by unbelievers, to Christian settlers." (p.19). Though the land was originally occupied by people of a different faith their history was not included in the novel like the existing history books of Ethiopia.

5.2.2.2. Critique of Grand Narratives

In the selected novels an attempt is also made by the authors to question the grand narrative of Christianity, Eurocentric narratives and the myth of science and technology.

In *The God Who Begat a Jackal* Nega mainly attacks the metafiction of religion. It seems that the author believes instead of bringing peace and comfort religion is a cause of misery and war. The novel begins with the narration of the mythology of the god Mawu-Lisa and after giving the background the narrator tries to link his family tree with the disadvantaged Mawu-Lisa

descendants (p.3-4). What is important here is the linkage created with the feudal system of the Ethiopian context. The narrator says his side is from the unfortunate Mawu-Lisa siblings "Sagbata" and they are entitled to hard work and the fortunate ones are that of the 'Legba' family who leave on dues from their realms (p.3-4). The narrator's father as an overseer of Count Ashenafi is seen in the story trying to collect dues from the peasants that reside in the Count's estate (p.9-11). These peasants are hit by a stark poverty but this did not stop the narrator's father to justify his cause with a divine order. The narrator expresses the situation saying:

> A meeting was hastily called, and, standing before a gathering of angry tenants, Dad made a fiery speech. He began with the vassal-feudal lord relationship, highlighting the fact that such a partnership was initiated when Mawu-Lisa delegated one of the First Children, Legba, to oversee the activities of his siblings. It was a divine wish, Dad maintained, that a mere 10 percent of the multitude, those who could trace their bloodline to Legba, should own all of the arable land in the kingdom, engaging the landless masses to toil from dawn till dusk for the rare privilege of going to bed with a full stomach; it was in the stars, he said, that the landless masses should be called upon to spill blood in a battlefield in order to defend this sacred partnership. (p.10).

Since the author has confessed in the 'Historical Postscript' saying, "The God Who Begat a Jackal is set in what is today Ethiopia during a period that would have been between 1750 and the late 1800s, when the country was beset with feuding emperors, feudal masters and vassals, slaves and slave-runners, religious tensions and class hatred." (p.235) it is clear that the author is saying religion (metafiction) is manipulated by the people in power to strengthen their domination.

It also looks the author is arguing that money is behind religious extremism. He tries to address this with the story of the crusade. After Reverend Yimam introduced an inquisition people were summoned for heresy and began losing their property. The crusaders initially collected fines from the accused but later began confiscating people's property (p.139-141). The crusaders don't stop by robbing the people they also turn their faces to the temple and cleans it off all its valuables (143). The leader of the crusade Reverend Yimam also is seen after capturing Gudu persuading his men to spare Gudu's life in order to take the bounty money "two thousand birr" rather than killing him for the religious cause (p.209). We also come across the leader of the crusade Reverend Yimam at the end of the crusade with a huge load of valuables which a monk is not supposed to possess. It reads, "When the argument triggered a fresh round of laughter, he

set out to purchase his freedom. Pulling out a money belt from under his garment, he unfurled a fortune the size of which no one had ever seen before. Silver coins, golden ingots, lumps of jade, sapphire, emerald, ruby, and moonstone littered the ground at his feet." (p.231). These stories present that though they use religious interest as a cover the real motivation behind the leaders is money.

Critique of religion is also a characteristic of the Nega's other novel The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades. Nega like in *The God Who Begat a Jackal* paves a way for readers to question the conceptions of Christianity at different points in the novel. The debate that took place between the parish priest Aba Yitades and Abebe the bandit is good evidence for this (p.74-76). In this debate Abebe the Bandit confronts the priest saying the Ten Commandments which are thought by the church he thinks are wrong transcriptions of Moses (p.74). Here it seems that the author is trying to suggest that things that were considered absolute truths in the Christian faith like the Ten Commandments are but subjective constructions.

He tries to justify his argument using the Six and Fifth Commandments. He contends against the Six Commandment saying 'Thou shall not kill' but a child who curse's his parents, a man who commits adultery with his daughter in law or his neighbor's spouse, or a boy who losses his virginity copulating with a sheep are condemned to death. He argues it is not possible for a God who recommends capital punishment to have dictated this commandment (p.74-75). Abebe also challenges the priest saying he does not believe the fifth commandment is God's conception. He says, ""The fact that the Good Lord had never known his Father is proof enough for me that He couldn't have conceived the idea of honoring parents."" (p.75). Through Abebe's thesis thus it appears that the author is trying to suggest that meta-narratives like Christianity are open for scrutiny.

Relating with the issues raised along the Commandments Abebe the Bandit doesn't stop arguing on possible wrong transcriptions but also attacks the church of its failure in ethically honing its parish. He says that instead of resting on the Sabbath and ordering the people to do so it would be better if God used the Sabbath to refine his creations (p.75). Since most of the villagers of Mechara have drowned into sexual scandals it seems that he is not specifically talking of the Commandments but the bigger picture 'the Christian teaching'. It seems that he is saying the

church has focused on the laws instead of molding its followers. This debate gives the impression that the author is trying to criticize the teachings of Christianity.

Abebe further scrutinizes the religion in a way saying that it is not suitable for the parishioners and suggests that religion should not scare people but train them to genuinely communicate with their God. For this he brings into context a local faith (in Lyotard's 1984 conception local narratives). Abebe the Bandit brought the faith of Angwak people in a parallel plane with that of Christianity and tries to justify how right its practitioners are in their own way. He asks:

> Father, have you ever heard of the Agnwak tribe?"
>
> "Yes, I have. Why?"
>
> "A while ago, someone told me how they practiced their religion."
>
> "But I thought they were Pagans."
>
> "You may call them pagans, father, but those naked people might be on to something big. From what was able to put together, they build their god from the ground up by forming a mound from trinkets they have gathered. (After all, who created whom is almost secondary-as humans, what we need most is something we can worship.)….
>
> "Not all their prayers are answered, and these people appreciate the limitations of their deity. But if the god they have built with their sweat and labour proves insensitive to their needs, they don't shy away from expressing their displeasure. They shout at it, hurl stones at it, and in the end, if it proves entirely worthless, they tear it down, discard the old pieces, and set out to build a new god from a different bunch of materials."
>
> "Father, I am afraid you missed the point. What interests me, what I am trying to bring to your attention, is the *communication* part. The idea that you can give your god a piece of your mind without fear of wrathful retribution is first-rate thinking. Also, the fact that you can custom-tailor your deity to suit your individual needs and temperament is a ground breaking achievement." (p.75-76)

Bringing the Agnwak religion into context does not push Christianity to the side but reveals that there are also other options which withhold good practices. It seems that the author is suggesting that the meta-narrative of Christianity is not a timeless valid institution but can be opened to a discussion by activating readers. As Hutcheon (1988) shows that through histographic meta-fiction marginalized stories are brought into context to demystify dominant narratives. The Agnwak's faith is brought here by the author to address that big narratives like Christianity are not ultimate solutions for our problems.

Dinaw is also observed questioning the Eurocentric Narratives and the grand narrative of science and technology in *All Our Names*. For instance, in the first part of the novel the narrator exposed that the outlook of the West towards Uganda's tribes of the north and the south does not match the reality on the ground. The narrator describes his friend physically, "He was shorter but wider than me, each of his arms tightly laced with muscles and veins that run like scars the length of his forearms. He had the build but not the face and demeanor of a solider." (p.5). Then he narrates how his friend's clan is portrayed by the west, "his family was from the north, one of the tall, darker tribes that a man in Cambridge had decided were more warrior-like than their smaller cousins to the south."(p.5) The character in this case is different from what he is supposed to look like in the narratives of the West(English).

The Narrator of the American part of the story Helen is also heard delegitimizing the metanarrative of the West which defined Africans as ill-nourished and unattractive. She says, "My first thought when I saw Isaac was that he was taller and looked healthier than I expected. From there, I worked my way backward to two assumptions I wasn't aware of possessing: the first that Africans were short, and the second that even the ones who flew all the way to a small college town in the middle of America would probably show signs of illness or malnutrition." (p.13-14). When her boss from the Lutheran Relief service assigned her to be a "chaperone" to the African immigrant she went to bring him from the airport. But what awaited her was a surprise. Isaac's appearance was different from what she had imagined. She was stoned by his attractive figure and healthy look and realized how wrong the assumptions of her world were. She says, "I felt my little Midwestern world tremble just a bit under the weight of them." (p.14) Realizing that the picture drawn by the west has marginalized people like Isaac.

The reader also finds such demystification when the narrator and Isaac play their game of knowing who is who observing the university students and mocking them. Eventually the narrator finds out there is a group whom his friend and Isaac never mock: the revolutionaries from "Rhodesia". But Isaac tells the narrator that the group does not accept the existence of such a place and tells everyone it is a myth circulated by white men. He says, "They are from Rhodesia," he told me, "but don't use that word around them. If you say 'Rhodesia' they will tell you no such place exists. One boy told me that if I wanted to find Rhodesia I'd have to live inside of a white man's head." (p.27). Rhodesia is a name the British gave to their colonies after Cecil Rhodes who established Fort Salisbury in Mashonaland in 1980; after that they made a

habit of calling their new found lands Rhodesia. Later Rhodesia became Zimbabwe and Zambia. The white settlers came to be called white Rhodesians and began to conquer in the name of the British Empire. These settlers took themselves as the owner of the lands (https:// en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ white settlement in Zimbabwe before 1923) Here the author questions this naming and implies that these lands are sovereign and have their own name and border. It is the dominant powers' narrative that imposed the name on them. Acknowledging the name is accepting the fact that the lands belong to white Rhodesians. It seems that the narrator is underlining Rhodesia is an overwhelming illusory white supremacist metanarrative of owning larger colonies.

The author also questions the modernist narrative 'science and education results in progress and development of humanity'. When the uprisings in the town expand to the university compound one day Isaac and the narrator find themselves in a chaotic crowd. Then Isaac led the narrator in the opposite direction of the mob and ended in an abandoned science lab and started conversing about science and making a bomb:

> "Did you ever study any science?" Isaac asked me.
>
> I lied and said, "A little in high school."
>
> Isaac did the same. "Me, too."
>
> He walked to the large wooden cabinet that stood alone in the back of the room and removed the lock.
>
> "Don't worry," he said. "I wasn't the one who broke it."
>
> The cabinet had once held all the necessary supplies a classroom full of science students would have needed, but the only items left were a pair of plastic goggles and a single row of beakers and test tubes, many of which were slightly cracked and all of which were stained. Isaac took everything out and arranged it on one of the long black tables.
>
> "What do you think we'd need," he asked, "to make a bomb?" (p.83-87).

Through this conversation the author attacks the metanarrative of science and technology. Science and technology brought misery and war to humanity rather than progress which aligns with the view of postmodernists who refer to world war two and the Nazi concentration camps as results of the modern project. Regarding this Harvey (1989) says the modern project which was initiated by the enlightenment thinkers with an objective of using knowledge for the pursuit of human emancipation and enrichment embracing progress was condemned because it is turned

into death camps, world war one and two and nuclear threats (Hiroshima and Nagasaki) (p.12-13). In the novel the narrator and Isaac who were portrayed craving education and enlightenment are seen trying to abuse the tiny science knowledge they have. Instead of planning a progressive action they plotted a destructive project (making a bomb).

Chapter Six: Analysis of Temporal Distortion and Fragmentation in the Selected Novels

6.1. Temporal Distortion of the Selected Novels

In the selected novels the authors distorted time using different techniques to create indeterminacy towards the realities presented in the works as well as the reality of the empirical world which literary works are supposed to reflect.

Nega distorted time in *The God Who Begat a Jackal* using apocryphal history. The author openly confesses that he has included apocryphal history in his historical narratives. The engagement in Harar which the author claims concluded in 1890s (p.235) is characterized by such incorporations. The author openly states, "The curtain came down on Harar in the 1890s. Though much blood was spilled in the conflict leading to the surrender of Harar, there is no evidence that tenants of the walled emirate were ever subjected to siege warfare as suggested in this book." (p.235) indirectly informing readers that he has used one of the dark areas in the stated history to develop his story. In the novel we read a siege warfare held with the tenants of the walled town that lasted four months (p.101-115). The case of the inquisition of the crusade is also alike. The author expresses:

> Religion played a significant role in shaping the Horn of Africa, as it did in the Middle east and parts of Europe. Crusades were waged in Ethiopia involving two of the major religions of today. In the central and northern highlands of the country, families are still divided by the heavenly allegiances their ancestors were forced to make. The crusades of bygone years were responsible for many broken homes and the loss of thousands of lives. There is no evidence, however, that an Inquisition as described in The God Who Begat a Jackal ever took place. (p.237).

However, in the crusade story of the novel we read the launch of an inquisition and the measures taken on the people that committed a heresy. These people were forced to compensate their wrong doing by paying fines and giving away their possessions. (p.139-142).

In the Historical Postscript the author has tried to locate the historical setting of the novel between 1750 and late 1800s (p. 235) However, some of the material cultures involved in the novel diverge from the time of the story; the author has adopted the technique of anachronism. The weapons used in the siege of Harar, the catapult (p.112) and mangonel (p.113) were not mentioned in any historical documents as arms used in the Ethiopian topography. The catapult

and mangonel are ancient and medieval siege weapons. Catapult is used in ancient Greece around 399Bc and mangoel originated in ancient china in the 4th c BC (Wikipedia). Associating these materials with the Ethiopian context is illusive; it seems the author has wanted to reveal the unreliability of histographers.

The characters in the novel are also seen using modern household items. Like the saltshaker Aster moved using her eyes (p.24), the bedding of Aster at the Emperor's house presented as, "Her head throbbed, her body ached. When her vision cleared, she was struck by the unfamiliarity of her surroundings. The mosquito net draped over the bedposts, the chandeliers dangling from the ceiling, the heavy dressers around her, and even the room she slept in were all out of the ordinary." (p.31), the shoulder bags attendants of Gudu's performance possessed (p.45), the kerosene used to attack the intruders (p.118), the bed side lamp Duke Ashenafi lighted (p.187), the dining tools Duke Ashenafi got in advance for Aster's wedding that reads, "He ordered tables and chairs from a carpenter's lot, when he could have borrowed them from neighbors; he purchased utensils, plates, and glasses when they lay in abundance at the shrine warehouse for use in religious festivities." (129) are too much for the setting. There is no recorded history that justifies the use of such modern tools at the portrayed time in Ethiopia especially in Deder; a remote countryside. Associating such modern materials with the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ethiopia reveals fictionality of the novel.

Time is also distorted in the novel by mixing fantasy and history. Even if the author claims in his historical postscript that he wrote about Ethiopian history from 1750 to late 1800s it is difficult for readers to feel that they are reading about the realistic world. The novel is dominated by fantastic elements. The novel begins with a narrative of a myth which fails to assign a defined time to the story. It builds the setting as, "Long before men organized their caves and went hunting for antelopes, warthogs, gazelles, and oryxes; even longer before there was any game to hunt, before there were any of the creatures that we would recognize today, a pair of twins roamed the African steppe: a male child name Da Zodji, and a female, Ananu. They were the first to be born to Mawu-Lisa and were sent to populate the earth" (p.3). The narrator continues his story saying that he has descended from one of the Mawu-Lisa children and inherited a rebellious blood (p.3). Since this narrative associates the characters directly with an extraordinary being readers will not have a choice but to see the characters as they are. That is extraordinary beings. For instance, the narrator is observed telling a monk that a stinkbug has its

eyes on his food without seeing it. Later the reader witnesses a bug landing on the monk's food basket (p.6). Fantastic elements are not only associated with ordinary events in the novel. The historical narratives which the author claims as referring to the Ethiopian past are presented in line with extraordinary happenings. For instance, in the historical postscript the author conveys that part of the story is related with the Seventeenth-century Ethiopia that lacked a central army and was controlled by the feudal warlords who have a right on a third of the land they conquered. (p.235) In the novel, it seems that the story of Count Ashenafi's siege of Harar to force the tenants to submit for him (p.99-115) is based on the history stated above. However, this historical account is mixed with fantastic elements such as the story of the Abettor.

The Abettor who come to rescue Count Ashenafi is portrayed as immortal. He was shot with ninety-five arrows, carved into palm-sized pieces and served to hawks and storks but survives all the time and resurfaces in another place in one form (p.111). In another occasion he was set alight but changed his form to a number of animals and finally he fluttered out of the ashes as a crowned hornbill (p.111). This Abettor was involved in laying out a strategy that lead Count Ashenafi to victory (p.112-115), in the assumed historical engagement of the feudal lords of the Seventeenth-century Ethiopia. The case of Areru the taller is the same. In his involvement in the raid of Harar he got a head injury (p.62) but later he was changed to a monster who could not stop eating (p.67-68). Including fantastic elements in the novel that incorporates historical happenings in a conventional time and place makes readers wonder and question the plausibility of the literary text. It also creates tension between fact and fiction.

Temporal distortion is also a case in *How to Read the Air*. Though the novel is composed of a story from the past Dinaw has constructed his story out of layered fragments presented in a simultaneous continuous time where the events in the story are not relegated to the past, the future or the present. This makes readers wonder where the story takes place at the time of the narrative. This caused a general sense of fragmentation in the novel. The reader might experience frustration in his attempt to piece together the scattered events and reach out the meanings of the text. The novel opens with a paragraph that jumbles up all the tenses together:

> It was four hundred eighty-four miles from my parents' home in Peoria, Illinois, to Nashville, Tennessee, a distance that in a seven-year-old red Monte Carlo driving at roughly sixty miles an hour could be crossed in eight to twelve hours, depending on certain variables such as the number of road signs offering side excursions to historical landmarks, and how

> often my mother, Mariam, would have to go to the bathroom. They called the trip a vacation, but only because neither of them was comfortable with the word "honeymoon," which in its marrying of two completely separate words, each of which they understood on its own, seemed to imply when joined together a lavishness that neither was prepared to accept. They were not newlyweds, but their three years apart had made them strangers. They spoke to each other in whispers, half in Amharic, half in English, as if any one word uttered too loudly could reveal to both of them that, in fact, they had never understood each other; they had never really known who the other person was at all. (p.3).

The above quotation is composed of three sentences and it seems that the narrator is telling past events. However, a close reading reveals that the events are about the future, the present and the past. The first sentence presents an event from the future; the narrator is presenting his assumption of the duration his parents' journey will take. However, at this stage of the story it is obvious that the narrator's parents did not take the vacation yet. In the second sentence the narrator talks about the time of the vacation where he states his parents the 'newlyweds' understanding of the vacation they are taking. The last paragraph however is from the past that narrates the marital situation his parents were in before their vacation. Since these events are told in a simultaneous continuous time it is difficult for the reader to tell apart what is happening at the present time of the story and what is happened in past and what will happen in the future. The part where the narrator presents his father's love for country music also strengthens this case. The following passage is worth considering:

> My father's love of country music was one of the few things he had brought with him from Addis. (…). As he was sitting in an outdoor café terrace along the city's main Bole Road in 1973, a song had snuck in from a parked car radio (…]). He couldn't have repeated a single line, but that didn't matter, because he had understood the mood of the song, and he knew the spirit in which it had been written was the same as his. Decades later, when his English was fluent and he had learned all the standard clichés, he would tell me that the song "spoke to him." For now, though, there were better and more difficult ways of describing it, and he would have to say that the song reminded him of a certain type of sadness that came to him whenever he found himself alone. He had realized at a young age—eight, to be precise, in the weeks following his mother's death—that the world was a cruel and unfair place, and yet despite that, he hated watching it pass. He couldn't stand to see some days end, and that song said it all without having to say any of it. (p.38-39).

Here the narrator has brought together not only events from different times but places too. Addis, Peoria, Illinois and a country side in Ethiopia and 1973, 1976 and 1950s are connected by a

character's behavior, "a love for a country music". The narration starts describing how his father had fallen for country music a past event, then jumps decades to state his father's personal and artistic description of it which is a future event.

The novel is also characterized by random changes in time; it continually skips in a cycle from Yosef's and Mariam's story to Jonas's and Angela's story. The changes in time are never noted. It is the readers task to figure out whose story is being told. Furthermore, the author has created some parallelism between the two-story lines that create confusion on the readers to tell whose world is being portrayed and whose time it is. The narrator lays his story in the same fashion he presented the story of his parents. He began narrating his parents' life after three years have elapsed in their marriage (p.3-4) and goes backwards and forwards in time. Similarly, the narrator starts narrating his and Angela's story which begins at the third year of their marriage (p.14-15) and uses flashback and forward to reveal the whole picture.

The author has also made some actions and events that surround the characters in the two-story lines similar. Though the narrator's Father Yosef and his mother Mariam, the narrator himself and his wife Angela are portrayed in a different place and time. A number of events in the story creates a strange coincidence. At the beginning of his parents' story the narrator states, "At the time she had simply repeated the words back, almost verbatim, "Yes. That is true. Men can be strange," because that was the only way that she could be certain that what she said was understood by everyone." (p.4) presenting what his mother thought. Similarly, we read Angela saying, "It was strange," she said. "I had to say it three times before I really began to believe it." (p.15) describing her feeling when she became a lawyer. The two women have almost reflected the same feeling. This concurrence may be nothing alone; however, in the upcoming texts of the novel we come across various events shared by the two women. Their preoccupation with calculation is similar. We read his mother adding and subtracting things like time and grocery cost (p.5). Angela is obsessed with calculating the cost of their life and the narrator calls her action 'mathematical aerobics' (p.70-71). Mariam buys expensive shoes with her salary obtained from report writing on food shortage and crop failure (p.60) and equally Angela buys expensive shoe a day after her calculation reveals there is no way she can pay her debt (p.79).

The narrator is also seen doing and confronting similar things with his parents. Like his father whose first job as a refugee was serving tea (p.190) the narrator has worked as a waiter (p.16).

His father waited for Mariam at the airport after their three-year separation with a bouquet of flowers (p.43). Similarly, the narrator waited for Angela with a bouquet of flowers at the airport (p.144). The narrator also experienced the same events as his mother did. One day Mariam has come across a young white boy with bright red hair and freckles and this boy insults and tells her to go back to wherever she had come from (p.63). The narrator presents a similar incident, "Near the end of my first semester one of my students—a round, freckled-faced blonde who until then had never spoken in my class—finally asked me where I was from." (p.76). These and a number of parallel events created between the two-story lines somewhat erases the time and space difference between the two stories. Readers will be indifferent to the world portrayed in the novel. Two couples from different times are seen doing and thinking the same thus pushing readers to the extent of considering time travel in the novel. It seems that the author intended to present various perspectives on similar issues thus advocating postmodernism's feature of plurality of truths. These concurrences present a timeless vision of the novel.

In *All Our Names* time is also manipulated by the author to the extent that readers are left confused to locate the time of the novel's narrative. This is true about what has been discussed under intertextuality concerning the explicitly incorporated Ugandan history and the implicitly narrated Ethiopian student movement.

For instance, at the beginning of the novel the author confronts the reader with two temporal settings putting no clear demarcation between them. The narrator first claims that he came to the capital in the time where the city was booming with new cars and new buildings which overflowed the capital immediately after independence and then he says when he and Isaac arrived ten years after independence the buildings have already lost their charisma (3). It reads:

> When Isaac and I first met at the university, we both pretended that the campus and the streets of the capital were as familiar to us as the dirt paths of the rural villages we had grown up and lived in until only a few months earlier, even though neither of us had ever been to a city before and had no idea what it meant to live in such close proximity to so many people whose faces, much less names, we would never know. The capital in those days was booming, with people, money, new cars, and newer buildings, most of which had been thrown up quickly after independence, in a rush fueled by ecstatic promises of a socialist, Pan-African dream that, almost ten years later, was still supposedly just around the corner, that, according to the president and the radio, was coming any day now. By the time Isaac and I arrived in the capital, many of the buildings had already begun to

> show signs of wear, having been neglected or completely forgotten, but there was still hope in the brighter future to come, and we were there like everyone else to claim our share. (p.3).

What the narrator is saying is confusing. The exact time of their arrival is not clear. In the first few lines of the excerpt it seems he is talking about the time Obote came to power in 1962 after Uganda secured its independence from the British rule in 1962. Then he diverts this time frame and throws the reader to Idi Amin's time. Ten years after independence means almost two years of Idi Amin's rule because in January 1971 Idi Amin took over Uganda overthrowing Obote in a coup (Mutebi, 2008, p.9). This temporal setting gets more complicated when the reader later in the novel finds out from where and when the narrator came to the capital. He says his plan of leaving his village is too delayed first because of his father's unwillingness and then because of the draught that devastated his family. At that time, he says rumors circulated in their village that soldiers were revolting in the south. But things changed for the narrator when university students began coming to their village and started promising them a socialist revolution. It is at this time that his father told the narrator to leave. He took a bus to Addis Ababa and then to Kampala (178).

According to Bahiru (2002, p. 196-222) the above listed incidents parallel the Ethiopian history that covers the period 1958 to 1964. Because following the story of the narrator the mentioned draught is most likely that of the 1958 famine in Tigray. The revolt of the soldiers in the south is the 1960 Neway brothers' coup and the coming of university students refers the Ethiopian Students Service (EUS) which was initiated in 1964. Thus, if we base our time frame on this historical period most likely the narrator arrived in Kampala in 1964/65. This is the time of Obote. So, the paradoxical story of the narrator that he has arrived in Kampala after independence and 10 years after independence places his story as well as the history presented in the novel under scrutiny because putting the narrative in the conventional historical time is almost impossible.

The implicitly integrated Ethiopian history by itself is also temporally distorted. The Haile Selassie University students' revolt that we have already discussed under intertextuality spans from 1950s to early 70s. According to Bahiru (2002, p. 222-226) the students' movement has adopted different forms through time. The first phase was characterized by struggle for free press and union. Then the students changed their focus towards societal problems that they have tried

to address through poems of political satire and social critique. After the mid-60s a militant phase of the students' opposition began with which students came out to the streets with revolutionary slogans. It is this history of the student movement that was portrayed in the novel as the movement of the students of the unnamed university in the capital. However, as it has been discussed above the paradoxical time that the narrator and his friend Isaac claim have come to the university in the capital either after independence (1964/65) or ten years after independence (1971) could not be harmonized with the following events and actions in the novel. The events and actions lay out of the conventional historical period.

The narrator's first claim that he has come to the capital after his village is visited by university students brings into context the history of the 1964 Ethiopian Students Service which took place after the two phases of the Haile Selassie University students' movement. However, in the novel the first phases of student demonstrations that the narrator mentions are student gatherings in the campus that call out for student demands (p.7-8) and the paper revolution (p.28-30) with which students posted fliers in the campus. In the novel the conventional chronology of this student movement is distorted because unlike the history the movement is made to begin after 1964/65 and taking the second claim of the narrator that he arrived in Kampala ten years after independence it can be said it is made to begin after 1971.Thus everything is played in the novel backwards. These issues make readers question the reliability of what the character narrates.

The novel *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades* is also temporally distorted. It is depicted in the past but like what he did in *The God Who Begat a Jackal* Nega has included contradictory material and human cultures and mingled the historical and the fantastic. This makes the reader read the narrative skeptically.

Though the story of the novel covers the historical and cultural setting of Ethiopia that spans from the sixties to the early nineties most of the actions and events are that of the sixties. The author included the seventies and the nineties as an afterward of the novel's story. Some of the material cultures and lifestyles of the novel's society do not match the historical time of the narrative. Such technique of the author that Lewis (2001) and McHale (1987) calls anachronism created a temporal distortion in the novel. The first mismatch between narrative time and the community portrayed in the novel is created when Nega introduced construction workers with yellow construction hats and steel-tipped leather boots in 1960 Ethiopia (p.86). Such engineering

uniform is a joke not only for an isolated remote village of the 1960s Ethiopia but also for major towns in the country. Workers' safety measures are recent interventions in the country and still it is not surprising to see construction workers ill dressed for their job in the country even in the capital. The mourning fashion incorporated in the narrative is also out of place. Men are described as attaching a piece of dark clothes to their jacket sleeves at funerals (p.98). This is not at all a culture of Ethiopian people and it is not even observed in current Ethiopia.

The luxury and makeup appliances that Azeb's the protagonist of the novel's sister got for her wedding also does not go with the narrative time and the described culture of the society. The bride is dusted with baby powder and anointed with a rare perfume (p.140). A priest's daughter who lived in poverty in an antique village in 1960s will not be able to have such a luxury and no one in the novel was in a position to get these accessories. The beauty accessories of Ethiopian women of the time as described in books like *Fikir Iske Meqabir* that we have discussed under intertextuality are wild herbs and butter, specially the baby powder is out of context. Abundant stylish cars that were presented to roam the highways of Mechara are also out of place. The narrator says:

> Much to the chagrin of the governor, the highway official deemed the modified vehicles to constitute a public hazard, and banned them altogether. Many a transit operator wept quietly over a shared professional grief. For Beletu, however, this proved to be the dawning of a welcome new era.
>
> Almost immediately, a fleet of stylish Peugeot taxis, Fiat autobuses, Volkswagen minivans, Land Rover and Toyota trucks replaced the outlawed ramshackle vehicles. (p.148).

Mechara as the author told the reader in his note at the beginning is a real place that can be located in Eastern Ethiopia. However, the luxury attached with this rural place is illusory. The town even now is not enjoying such a luxurious means of transportation. The highway described in the novel is in reality a backward dusty road. The fashionable caskets with a shape of mammoth banana, a Coca-Cola bottle with the red and white logo and a green Land Rover vehicle (p.220-221) that was provided by the Arab merchant of the village are also superimposed on the village. This portrayal of the village makes the reader question the reality presented in the novel and also the assumed world the novel is meant to reflect.

Moreover, what McHale (1987, p.93) calls "creative anachronism in world view and ideology" is evident in the novel. Beletu the priest's middle daughter and Abebe the Bandit reveals the attitude and psychological makeup of postmodern societies rather than a mentality of Ethiopian individuals of the 1960s. What distorts the temporality further is the setting the characters were portrayed in. It is unlikely for the characters to feel the way they feel and to talk the way they talk having been born and living in an antique small village of Eastern Ethiopia. At the depicted stories time such modernization and cultural change is unlikely in major towns in Ethiopia let alone in an isolated small village. The author has not given a special justification for the behavior of the characters either. The characters are neither educated nor do they possess a special experience that is different from the rest of the villagers.

In the novel Beletu is portrayed as a victim of modernity. She is one of the first villagers who got to the massive information and information about advanced technologies that made their way to the village. It seems the author is trying to show the information drenched society of the postmodern using Beletu who has moved too far from the period she is portrayed in. The author introduces Beletu with a trait of a modern girl making her dislike the communal life and the village culture. She does things that are considered strange by the villagers. Especially her obsession with her physical make up and her attempts to improve it is considered unhealthy by her family and the villagers. She is obsessed with her personal hygiene, in a village where people bath once in a few months she is seen bathing a number of times within a week (p.59). What is more surprising is her manner of bathing. The author describes this, "Beletu defied tradition once more when she took her dip in broad daylight, as opposed to under cover of dusk or dawn. Her naked presence in the waters set off a heightened activity behind the adjacent bushes." (p.60). She is also portrayed as a bully who insults people. She is herd saying, "They have no use of their heads" (p.58) making fun of her sisters because they always do what they are only told and act according to the tradition of the community.

With the stated deeds and behavior of Beletu it seems that the author is trying to present the move from traditional to the modern because according to Barret (1997, p.17) "The rallying flags of modernity are freedom and the individual." Ignoring the warning of her families and the village gossip Beletu is seen living life in her own way. Unlike her sisters and the villagers who spend Sundays looking after the sick and the poor Beletu has developed a culture of lounging in a tea house and dry goods store once again defying tradition (p.60-61). However, her free and

individualistic lifestyle does not stay healthy for long. Her village began to be swarmed by mass communication technologies that came overlapping with each other. In one of her lounging at the dry goods store she comes across an old fashion magazine of the West which makes her fall in love with the 'enticing' world. She came across pictures of bikini-clad women, men in boxers, cars and electric utensils. Though she could not make out what they are she held the magazine with 'a death like grip' (p.60-61). Then the teahouse one of her lounging places started transmitting a radio broadcast. She fell in love with the singers and her adventures began to affect her emotionally. Her situation is presented as:

> And it was the teahouse radio that Beletu favoured. […] Beletu knew all the popular lyrics by heart, and the particulars of the vocalists never escaped her attention. She had fallen in love with many of the singers, many times over. At five o'clock, when the radio station concluded its three-hour weekly broadcast and the teahouse owner finally managed to turn the machine off without risking his glass windows, tears gathered in her eyes. She took the longest route home, avoiding all human contact. (p.60)

Beletu's confrontation with the new technologies and information and her response towards it can be articulated as the behavior of the postmodern society which is reined by the simulacra. According to Baudrillard as cited in Nunes (1995, p.316-318) simulacra refers to models of the real without origin or reality(hyperreal) and the hyperreal is not the real because no imagination envelops it anymore. It is substituting the signs of the real for the real. The simulation precedes the real or it can be described as the precession of the simulacra. This describes the situation of Beletu. Beletu has no prior experience with fashion or advanced technologies. She only confronted their simulation/ model; the pictures. She neither knows the artists except for the voices but she is suffering emotionally with the hyperreal because she has lost grip of what is real and what is its copy. By distorting the time using Beletu's psychological makeup and confusing the past with the future the author is trying to reveal the dangers of modernity foreshadowing the possibility of cultural and psychological conflict, for which postmodernists criticize modernity as its consequence.

Beletu's modern encounter ends costing her life. Later in the novel after the opening of the Mechara highway, the coming of the automobiles and the display of the first cinema (p.146-159) Beletu ran away from her village following a man. With the man she experienced a fairytale like life surrounded by wealth, comfort and luxury at his family's home but this utopia was short

lived. Her man needed to work and her life ended up in cheap cockroach-infested hotel rooms and later in a one-bedroom detached house (p.191-196). She could not accept this she tells him, "I will stay only if you fulfill my demands: a three-bedroom residence with a lawn the size of a soccer field, a sedan with tail fins, which I can drive around, a servant (make that two), a—" (p.197) confusing what she has seen in the first motion picture of the home video of the American missionaries (p.154-155) for a reality that can be lived in a tiny town near her village. She leaves her man because she could not get what she wanted, started prostituting for money and at last died of an abortion (p.197-206). The promises of the modern world, the prosperity and progress she was looking for were nowhere to be found. The modernity she placed her hope on at last killed her. It seems that through Beletu's experience the author is trying to reflect his skeptical attitude towards modernity.

The author has also temporally distorted the novel to question dominant narratives like the teachings of Christianity. Like Beletu Abebe the Bandit is observed challenging the community especially the priest with a world and religious view that can be regarded as ahead of its time. The question he raises against some texts of the Holy Bible for instance suggests alternative interpretations which strengthen the postmodern call for plurality. It also indirectly tells the shortcomings of writing history. He begins his argument with the priest saying that Moses has wrongly transcribed the Ten Commandments and there are evidences in the Old Testament that support his view. He claims that the Sixth Commandment 'Thou shall not kill' cannot be the word of God because there are also laws in the Bible that direct to kill. For instance, a child who cursed his parents, a man who sleeps with his daughter in law or to a boy who losses his virginity to a sheep. He claims such sins are committed by most of the villagers and capital punishment for such mistakes will not be given by today's judge let alone by God. He also argues that the Fifth Commandment is also wrongly transcribed because a Good Lord who does not know his father could not conceive the idea of honoring parents (p.74-75). The advanced religious view Abebe reflects in the novel forces readers to question dominant narratives of Christianity like the Commandments.

The case of the Agňwak tribe Abebe the Bandit brought into context is also a view used to shake the grand narrative of Christianity. He tells the Agňwak tribe builds their god forming a mound from the trinkets they have gathered and offer sacrifices and worship them. If the gods they built turn out to be insensitive to their needs they do not shy away from tearing them and will build

another from new materials. The priest responds that this is looking for a new Jehovah but Abebe argues the essence is not about changing gods but the way we communicate with them. He says one should be able to communicate with God without fear and wrathful retribution (p.75-76). It seems the author is trying to bring ideas and cultures that are pushed to the margins and mark the importance of local narratives (Agňwak religion). Like the Agňwak tribe people need alternative spiritual guidance that will match their personal needs. It especially seems that Nega wanted to communicate that Christianity needs a reform so that it can suite individual needs.

6.2. Fragmentation of the Selected Novels

Nega and Dinaw structured their narrative in a fragmentary manner that blocked readers attention and fragmented their reading. Through fragmentation they have tried to represent the chaotic and unstable postmodern world and the fragmented and fluid postmodern self. Through nonlinear and discontinuous narratives, the authors also tried to promote the basic foundation of postmodernism; plurality of realties.

Fragmentation in *The God Who Begat a Jackal* starts from its structuring. The novel is presented in five Books and twenty-five chapters. Each Book and chapter have its own title. The titles given for each chapter are unique and no visible logical bond is created between them. For example, Book One 'Star Dust' comprises four chapters. Chapter one 'Devil in the Wilderness' tells a story of the narrator and his father who set out to collect the Count's due from his estate and confronted a dust devil and a hunchback monk on their way. (p.3-11). This chapter introduces the unusual setting of the story and has no direct linkage with the following three chapters. Though the titles 'Strange Bundle of Joy', 'The stuff of Legend' and 'Unattended Daisy' chapter two, three and four introduces the protagonist 'Aster', her unusual birth, her supernatural deeds, her fame across, her rape and physical transformation (p.12-34). Readers who read closely will find out that except for blocking up their attention and fragment their reading presenting Aster's story under three chapters is not necessary.

The titles of the chapters do not hint what the stories are about. The novel also consists of a number of fragmented stories within a chapter. Book Two 'Moon Beam' has four chapters and the second chapter 'Patron Saint of Salt Miners' tells four stories. The story of how the rare Hermit unveiled the mystery behind the failure of Aster to attract her equals for marriage, how Beza is exposed and punished, the story of the *ergum* charmer and the nomads that found Gudu

(p.50-59). No strong logical connection is created between the stories and bringing them together does not stop the reader from sensing their divergence. The title of the chapter is also not capable of harmonizing the stories; it only describes a single act in the chapter. In the story the nomads found two virgin salt mines at the place Gudu was rescued. Due to this they gave the title 'Patron Saint of Salt Miners' to him (p.58) and the author gave this title to the chapter. This is a case for the upcoming chapter too. The chapter 'Lowly god' narrates three stories. The story of the expedition of Harrar, the visit of the hunchback monk and the Amma faith and the unworldly appetite of Areru the taller (p.60-68). Like our discussion above the three stories are not related and the title of the chapter only matches the story of the Amma faith (Lowly god). Similar fragments are observed all over the novel.

Moreover, digressive texts are abundant in the novel that delay the story, disturb readers and disrupts the plot. For example, Book Two chapter one opens with an extended anecdote narration (p.37-38) which has a beginning, middle and end. It is also presented as if it is part of the novel's story. We only find out it is not when the narrator tells us that Gudu is narrating. This anecdote does not create any gap omitted all along. The story of the fugitives and the historian is related with Aster's plan to elope (p.89-90). Similarly, it has nothing to do with the plot. It only delays the narrative and further fragments the main story. The story of Gudu's encounter with the merchant's servant (p.92-93) is an out of place narrative which is not appropriate to the plot. It will be better if it is narrated at the part where the narrator presented his story in the chapter 'Riddle and deception' where Gudu's personality is revealed. The broader descriptions given by the narrator like, the Hermit of Hermits (p.50-51), outing (p.85), the *ergum* charmer (p.55-56), the myth expressed as the Amma faith (p.64) etc. are digressive texts incorporated to fragment the novel.

How to Read the Air is also fragmented. It is non-chronological. Though the narrator is the same the novel has two story lines told in different time frames. Looking at it superficially it seems the first story line presents the life of the narrator's parents that took place thirty years ago and the second story line presents the narrator's life mainly his adulthood. The author has presented these story lines in alternating chapters. The novel opens with a chapter presenting the narrator's parents story followed by a chapter that devotes itself to the narrator. Then the third chapter goes back to his parents' story and the fourth continues to tell his story and the novel unfolds as such.

Furthermore, the narrative within each chapter is also fragmented. It goes back and forth in time and in what seems a fixed time frame the story hesitates between the present, the past and the future thus creating confusion on the reader. The first chapter for example is supposed to tell a story of the narrator's parent's vacation but it goes back and forth narrating the story of his parent's relationship and their background that stretch through years. From the time of the vacation it goes back to their early days in the US, to their three years apart while the narrator's mother was in Ethiopia, then to the morning of the first day of their vacation, followed by their fights while the narrator was a child, goes back to the morning of the vacation; then to events before a few weeks of the vacation. The story goes further back to the narrator's mother childhood also. Before closing his parent's morning of the vacation chapter two opens with the narrator's adulthood stories which are narrated with a similar irregularity. This chapter is supposed to tell the situation surrounding the narrator's father's death but it jumps from presenting the state of the narrator's marriage to his job at the immigration center three years back. Furthermore, his first jobs and way of life after his graduation are also described. Then the story goes back to his days at the immigration center and his relationship with his wife before their marriage. Then chapter three starts narrating how the idea of a vacation was incepted by his father ignoring the morning of the vacation that was being narrated in chapter one. The nonlinear narrative continues in chapter three and the following chapters too. Thus, throughout the novel readers are supposed to look for the dispersed events that are disseminated all over the text.

At different points in the novel the narrator tried to pinpoint this chaotic presentation and implicitly reveals his consciousness stating that his stories are laid all over the place. It seems that at the point where he tries to give definition of life (p.88-89) he is also indirectly guiding the readers on how to read the stories of his parents. He says:

> The entire sequence of events, as it turned out, had been a mistake. There was never supposed to be a husband she hardly knew, much less loved, or a child whose existence she had hidden for first one, and then two, and now three months. The facts of her life had crept up on her, had asserted themselves one at a time—first a plane ticket, then a middle-aged man, who had at once grown slightly heavier and more diminished than she remembered, standing in an airport with a cheap bouquet of flowers. That in turn had been followed by a few nights of rough, mediocre sex with that same man pushing away inside her with an urgency born more out of desperation than love or attraction. Taken together, those facts had accumulated enough mass and force to assert themselves, incontrovertibly

> and without doubt, as the sum total of her existence. It was no different from adding up cans of peas and cartons of milk in a grocery store. Take one town, one man, one apartment, and one unborn child and add them all up together and what do you have if not the definition of a life? (p.88-89).

Using the above passage, it seems the narrator is trying to view his parents' life wholly and creating a link between what seems an unrelated narrative included in the stories narrated at the preceding chapters in the novel. It seems that through this self-reflexive act the author is confessing the novel is fragmented.

Beyond the irregular sequence of events it seems Dinaw has also punched the story, plot and characters of his novel. Instead of presenting what can be regarded as a direct experience of the narrator the novel is characterized by fragmented texts of feelings and opinions. It is about a tragic life of an immigrant family. However, to build coherent stories readers are expected to bring together the pounded story and plot elements dispersed in the form of opinions and feelings. Though the readers are blocked by digressive texts it seems the narrator has highlighted the American politics and culture as causes of the tragedy of immigrant families. Readers need to reconstruct the reality using the fragments put away as opinions and feelings. One of the root causes of this problem is manipulating immigrants for political gain instead of giving real support. The immigration offices in America are poorly organized with limited human resources and budget as in the novel (p.21-23, 35-37). However, this idea is put aside as an opinion. Let us consider the following:

> Most of the victories that we could claim came easy; every month Bill chose a few cases whose outcomes could almost always be predicted in advance—the former doctor or lawyer from Cuba, the political dissident from China, or the recent victims of a particularly horrific African war that had briefly made its way into the headlines and had earned the attention of a senator or congressman. (p.20).

The texts that are composed before and after the above quotation do not link the immigrants' case with politics so it is likely that readers will read through the text without noticing the association. It is not also easy for readers to grasp the meaning because they need to put together the fragmented texts like the above excerpts and order them in a logical manner. Racial stigma is one of the issues raised in the novel. However, readers are expected to stitch together the fragments that are left as opinions, isolated events, and feelings of the characters to reach out the

meaning. The first text that touches upon the issue of racial stigma is stated by the narrator when he presents his opinion towards his friendship with Angela:

> Angela and I became close shortly after we began working at the immigration center together. She was one of the many volunteers, summer interns, and temporary employees who passed through the offices in any given year. Unlike all of the others who came and went without my ever knowing their last names, Angela and I had quickly found mutual points around which to bond. We were the only black people who worked at the center— (…). (p.17).

The texts that came before and after this quotation address a different issue so readers are expected to isolate the text from the rest and append it to another fragmented text like the one that describes how a young white boy tells the narrator's mother to get back to wherever she had come from (p.63). The narrator's belief that his students considered him a monkey who tries to teach their language back to them (p.167) also strengthens this theme along with various fragments in the novel.

Another meaning which readers will construct out of fragments is the idea of being an American. Though this issue is displayed in rubbles in the two-story lines, it seems that the author believes that an American identity is nothing but acting. His bold revelation stated related with Mariam as, ""The first step to being an American." A friend of her father's had told her shortly before she left Ethiopia, "is to act as if you know everything. The two most important words in the English language are 'of course.'" (p.181) awakens readers to look up for similar fragmented opinions and feelings they have come across in the novel. The narrator's father's actions are one of these. We see the narrator's father struggling to appear as a real American. Since he arrived in America, he tried to assimilate through studying football teams', actresses' names, music and musicians and tried to have conversation with others in American English as if he is one of them. Not satisfied he went further and took a road trip to possess the inroads into American history (p.86-87). On the contrary though the narrator is born and raised in America we observe people reflecting a skeptical attitude to his American identity. We listen to his boss trying to justify these saying, ""He's completely American, "he said, "but you wouldn't necessarily guess that from just looking at him. It's important for the clients to see that"" (p.21) conveying that the narrator had failed as an American because he does not act as one.

Character fragmentation is also noticeable in the novel. Characters in the novel are socially and linguistically fragmented. Yosef the narrator's father for instance is seen suffering from linguistic and social fragmentation. Since he had stayed in different countries as a refugee he is exposed to different languages and incidents. It seems that the narrator is symbolically presenting these separate experiences of his father as 'boxes', boxes that differ in size and shape and are not related (p.39-42). These boxes came in the narrator's father dreams frequently:

> My father had been dreaming of boxes since coming to America, and he hoped that this trip might end those dreams, which despite his best efforts had continued to haunt him. He saw the boxes folded and flat, stacked one on top of another in long, endless elegant rows. He saw them made of cardboard and cement, paper, plastic and wood. Boxes large enough to hold a man and small enough to fit under an arm, into the palm of a hand. His life had been made and unmade by boxes, and what he felt toward them could only be called a guilty obligation, one that hung hard and heavy around his neck like a debt that however much he tried could never be fully repaid. (p.39).

In the above passage, the narrator elucidates that his father confronted various boxes that emerge independently. In the novel these boxes symbolize the narrator's father past experiences. These boxes have affected his father's life though he was not attached with them willingly. These boxes which are stuck on his father pull him into different directions resulting in his fragmentation. Thus, he had planned a vacation of an inroad and its historical sites in America to complete his assimilation and become a real American (p.86). However, as stated in the above excerpt he was not successful. The boxes did not stop haunting him. The narrator expresses this:

> My father, Yosef Getachew Woldemariam, dreamed of boxes until the last days of his life. He dreamed of them in French, Spanish, Italian, Amharic, and English, of which only the last two he spoke fluently. His Italian had been reduced to *Ciao, bella*. His French to *Oui, ça va*. His Spanish to *Quiero tener*. At night, however, the missing words came back, and he continued to chatter away with the boxes in French, Spanish, Italian, and English—whatever they demanded—picking up the conversation that had begun thirty years earlier when he was a scrawny refugee working in a port in Sudan. (p.42).
>
> During the last eighteen months of his life he granted the boxes permission to step out of his dreams into his day-to-day life, giving them the presence they had always deserved. (p.42).

This shows that his father lacks a unified personality. Like the postmodern self he was fragmented and fluid. His personality changes along with the languages he uses. These languages carry different memories, interests and feelings. The narrator does not stop by associating fragmentation with his dad. He revealed the chaos of the novel's world relating it with the different colors of the city. He claims that there is no larger whole outside his office from which the office builds its microcosm environment. The outside world (New York) is chaotic and the society leads a fragmented life in 'thin, crooked, and fiercely territorial wedges' (p.22-23). His father's boxes are evident in the city. It appears that the author tries to match Yosef's fragmentation with Jonas the narrator. Jonas lived in a neighborhood with people from Bangladesh and Central America and walls covered with graffiti's that show traces of Bengali and Spanish (p.124), Jonas and Angela are observed drinking an Italian wine in a Chinese fish market which displays a bass-mouthed fish and Mandarin script (p.29), spending time in a French themed café.

The narrator also has a fragmented self. From the beginning he tries to inform readers about this issue. Though he tells that he is born and raised in America (p.76) the novel reveals his dispersed identities. In part of the narrative where he describes his friendship with Angela, he is heard calling himself 'black' and 'of color' (p.17-18). Then he states, "Jonas Woldemariam had a perfect degree of foreignness to it for the center's needs, almost as deeply vested in America from the sound of it as John or Jane, but with something reassuringly "other" at the end. I could be Jonas, or Jon, or J, and of course when Bill needed, Mr. Woldemariam, who despite distance and birth, remained at heart an African." (p.21) arguing that behind his skin color there is an African self. Additionally, he indirectly discloses that his African self is further fragmented because of his fondness for East Africa (p.18). Later readers learn about his further fragmentation through his bosses comment that reads, "Woldemariam? What is that? Eritrean. No, let me guess. Ethiopian. Probably an Amhara name, am I right?" (76). Hence the narrator does not have a unified identity. He is a personality who is strained by his American, African, East African, Ethiopian and Amhara selves. The author openly reveals the narrator's confused identity through Angela's conclusion; she declares that he lacks a clear sense of identity and does not know who he is (p.100).

Dinaw's has also presented the novel *All Our Names* in fragmented nature. The narrative fragmentation in the novel is observed at different layers. The first layer of fragmentation is the

dissection of the narrative into short disconnected chapters. The novel is 256pages long and has two unbalanced parts. The first part consists of 91pages and nine chapters. The second part has 165pages and twenty chapters. The stories in the twenty-nine chapters are not chronologically related and this made the novel too fragmented. The novel is presented from the first-person point of view by two voices in alternate chapters, the Kampala story by a narrator who at last adopts the name Isaac Mabira and the Laurel (America) story by Helen. These voices denied the novel the chronological order and made the reader wander between two unrelated events.

The second layer is the fragmentation of stories within the chapters. For example, in chapter two of Helen's narration we find 62 paragraphs with fragmented narrations filled with temporal distortions with flashbacks and premonitions. She starts the chapter saying, "When I met Isaac, I was almost what my mother would have called "a woman of a certain age."" (p.11). Then instead of expressing who she is at this age of hers she jumps to describing about her mother's behavior by flashbacking to her childhood memory of her home and her parents and her mother's influence on her. In the second paragraph she tells that she is going to pick up Isaac as a favor for her boss. In the third paragraph she embarks on her feelings on the job. The fourth and fifth paragraphs are all about introducing her company and the satiric realities that surround it. In the sixth paragraph she turns her attention to Isaac and informs the reader how Isaac came to America and reflects her premonition how he will be a relief for her from the toxic environment of her boring work. Then in chapter eight she comes back to the road and narrates their trip from the airport through the town. All the remaining fifty-five paragraphs are fashioned in this manner. None of the paragraphs tell the story linearly.

The third layer of fragmentation is found within a paragraph. For instance, in chapter one of Isaac's narration the author molded paragraph one with fragmented narratives of the present, the past and the future using flashbacks and premonitions. Let us consider the following passage:

> When Isaac and I first met at the university, we both pretended that the campus and the streets of the capital were as familiar to us as the dirt paths of the rural villages we had grown up and lived in until only a few months earlier, even though neither of us had ever been to a city before and had no idea what it meant to live in such close proximity to so many people whose faces, much less names, we would never know. The capital in those days was booming, with people, money, new cars, and newer buildings, most of which had been thrown up quickly after independence, in a rush fueled by ecstatic promises of a socialist, Pan-African dream that, almost

> ten years later, was still supposedly just around the corner, that, according to the president and the radio, was coming any day now. By the time Isaac and I arrived in the capital, many of the buildings had already begun to show signs of wear, having been neglected or completely forgotten, but there was still hope in the brighter future to come, and we were there like everyone else to claim our share. (p.1).

There are three paragraphs in this sentence and in each sentence two paradoxical thoughts are presented and fragmented stories are told. In the first sentence the narrator tells the reader about his present situation and that of Isaac but he paradoxically destabilizes the message which the reader was supposed to get from the sentence. In the first phrase he says that it was easy for him and Isaac to tame themselves with the city then he deconstructs it saying that both have never been to the city before and don not know how to act accordingly. This paradox continues in the second sentence too. The first phrase is a flashback of the rosy and happy times after independence and the spirit of Pan-Africanism at the time then he deconstructs the mood of the sentence and confuses the reader revealing his premonition of the future by mocking the president's speech. The third sentence is also built with the present and premonition of the future. He describes the current reality of the capital and reflects his optimism about the future.

The fourth level of fragmentation is observed at the level of the sentence. The novel is characterized by fragmented sentences. The author in some instances leaves sentences unfinished and in other cases he combined unrelated phrases within a sentence. For example, in the following sentence, "I spent an afternoon waiting with him for the telephone company to arrive, and when it came to furniture, I was the one who picked out the couch, coffee table, and dresser from the Goodwill store two towns away." (p.19). The two phrases are unrelated. In the first phrase Helen tells the reader about the telephone company and before finishing it she jumps to explaining how she picked the furniture. In the next paragraph we also find unconventionally ordered phrases and sentences, "From the beginning, It was harder for Isaac than for me to be in the capital. This had never been and, I understood later, would never be my home, regardless of what I imagined. It was different for Isaac, however. Uganda was his country, and Kampala was the heart of it." (p.5). These sentences and phrases contradict with each other and leave the reader confused to identify who is facing the difficulty to live in the capital; Isaac or the narrator?

The novel is also characterized by fragmentation which occurred through the gaps that are left in the narratives. The author prefers silences and leaves some of the things as secrets, mysteries. For example, while they were trying to celebrate their first paper revolution Isaac gets in to a fight in Café Flamingo and tells the narrator to leave but after the incident the narrator was unable to find him for two weeks. Then Isaac makes a dramatic return but his where about is not revealed, "So----you're finally back," I said. I couldn't decide if I should hold out my hand. "Yes," he said. "I knew this place would be empty without me." And we left it there." (p.46). Neither the narrator nor the reader unfolds this secret at the end of the novel. In Helen's narration also we find Isaac disappearing for days from his apartment. His whereabouts and the reason behind his disappearance are just left out. The novel ends without revealing it neither to Helen nor to the reader.

The characters in the novel are also given fragmented identities. Isaac is portrayed as a young Ethiopian immigrant who leads a fragmented life in the multiple worlds he is made to exist. When he first came to the capital, he had a plan to join the social circle of the famous writer whom he had met in the two weeks old magazine that reached his village. On his journey to the university the author announces that he is going to start a new chapter in his life closing the old one. He describes this situation, "On the bus ride to the capital, I gave up all the names my parents had given me. I was almost twenty-five but, by any measure, much younger. I shed those names just as our bus crossed the border into Uganda." (p.1). But entering the city nameless was not enough. He needed to adopt other personalities to survive. But when he reached there, he was unable to join the university, so he began to lead a make-believe life I the hyper real world he and Isaac created. The new environment further fragments him by imposing on him expectations that need pretending.

> When I saw him, I knew he was at the university not because he was supposed to be, but because, like me, he felt that was where he belonged, among the bright, future generation. Like me, he had told everyone he knew and met that he was a student, and at that time both of us were convinced that someday we would be. It was with this understanding—that we were both liars and frauds, poorly equipped to play the roles we had chosen—that Isaac approached me. (p.7).

The student life they adopted robs the narrator and Isaac of their freedom and further fragments them by involving them in new activities. The university in which they are leading the life of

make-believe gives them the opportunity to meet many revolutionaries. They were forced to assimilate into its culture and began acting like revolutionaries in their new world. The narrator at one-point expresses this saying, "I couldn't match them, so I let the few strands of hair on my chin grow long. I bought a used pair of green pants that I wore daily, even after the knees had split open." (p.4). The narrator leads this life split between the personality he had when he came, playing a student and acting as one of the revolutionary students. Then he adopts other personalities through the development of the story. After he was injured beaten by the men in glasses, he joins the liberation front through Isaac and tries to act like one of the revolutionaries, "And suddenly I was also desperate to impress and to be rewarded. "Are you joking?" I said. I slipped my arm out of the sling and did my best to raise it above my head. The pain was far greater than I expected. "I never needed it."" (p.117). Here the narrator is acting tough like a soldier. But he could not keep this up. He went back to his spectators' life struggling to be neutral and recorded an impartial account of what is happening.

He is also given other personalities in exile. Isaac is seen through his language leading split personalities in America. He hides his African reality (Personality) adopts a formal (artificial mode of being) in Laurel. Helen expresses this, (…) "but I remember thinking that afternoon that I felt like I was talking with someone out of an old English Novel." (p.17). He dropped his accent while the intimacy between him and Helen took a step forward. Then he brings back his formality later in the novel speaking to Helen's mother. Helen says, "he bent slightly forward when he introduced himself, and there was a hint of the accent I hadn't heard in months. ""My name is Isaac," he said. "It's a privilege to meet you." I kept from laughing for my mothers' sake and Isaacs'. They were both performing." (p.206) describing the changes she observed on Isaac and her mother.

Through the fragmentation of the narrative and characters the author reflects the postmodern notion that there is no one single reality; in postmodern multiple realities are expressed in nonlinear and discontinuous narratives. The characters in the novel are also not given a long-term consistent identity. The characters' identity is decentered which enabled them to function within multiple (mixed up) worlds they are confronted with.

In Nega's *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitadse* too a linear route is not laid for the reader to follow the story. The author has disturbed the chronological order of events. One way is

fragmentation through the breaking up of texts into smaller sections. Instead of the usual chapter divisions the novel is structured to comprise an authors' note, a prologue, five books, 23 chapters and an afterword. Each book and chapter have its own title. For instance, Book I entitled "Passing of the Neck-Cord" is narrated in fragments with four chapters entitled "A Rebellious Child", "A Doting Godmother", "Father in the Making" and "A binding communion". Each chapter is built with numerous paragraphs set off by phrases written in capital letters. Such sectioning is not common in traditional realistic narratives. Thus, it seems the author is resisting the mode of the traditional norm of novel writing.

Especially the authors' pounding of texts under each chapter into paragraph sets divided by phrases written in the upper case has no defined purpose except resisting the dominant mode of novel writing. For example, Book I chapter one of the novel 'A Rebellious Child' is divided in to seven sections of paragraph sets set apart using phrases written in capital letters. The chapter opens with a sentence that reads, "Werknesh had been […]" (p.4) and this section comprises nine paragraphs. Then what seems a new section begins with a phrase "LIKE ALL BABIES, Azeb was a bundle of joy." (p.5) and after five paragraphs another section starts as, "AZEB HAD FEW CLOSE FRIENDS before the age of nine." (p.6) and after eight paragraphs a new fragment starts, "AZEB'S GRASP of cooking was put to the test at the Easter banquet." (p.8). This style is evident in the remaining chapters as well as the Books. Since the author doesn't start any new story (narrative) that needs isolation the capitalized phrases have no purpose except destructing reader's attention every now and then. It seems the author is trying to tell that it is acceptable to compose novels with such structures thereby resisting the conventional mode of writing which is a case for postmodernists.

Apart from structural fragmentation narrative fragmentation is also apparent in the novel. The novel does not give any real beginning or ending but withholds many fragmented events that battered the plot in to pieces. The story is presented as a series of episodes from the past present and future which are not logically connected. The novel opens with a story that happened when Azeb the protagonist was aged nine (p.1-2). This part which the author presented as a prologue is not a real opening of a story. It seems a foreshadowing of the future fate of the protagonist and is not directly related with any preceding or following events in the novel. It is an isolated incident that happened when Azeb turned nine and an event she remembers at the end of the novel, "As she was brought to the district courthouse in handcuffs, past a motley crowd of strangers, Azeb

wondered, for what may have been the hundredth time since her arrest the week before, when her problems had really begun, and she concluded it was the day she ate a roasted sheep's testicle despite the grim warnings of her family." (p.276).

However, the reader finds that eating the sheep's testicle is a result than a cause if he/she succeeds to piece the fragmented events dispersed all over the novel. We read in chapter one of the novel that Azebs' birth was unusual. Her mother was unable to give birth spending days in labor. The midwife was sure it is a sign that the baby will be a boy and also predicts that since the baby took longer to emerge it is a sign of his future to eminence. Nevertheless, at the end the baby turned to be a girl (p.4-5). It seems a simple coincidence but if we attentively look at the following incidents, we understand that there is some purpose behind this event. Unlike the villages' tradition which sets for boys to be circumscribed on the seventh day and girls on the fifth Azeb is circumscribed after two weeks (p.5-6) and on her baptism her mother took her out through the north door that is meant for boys (p.6). Thus, the reader may believe that even if Azeb is a girl the universe has meant her to be a boy and couldn't help but look for supernatural justifications. Nevertheless, as Hutcheon (1989, p.41) explains such fragments deny the text a centralized structure. It it foregrounds the story of Azeb, the construction of the subject. These fragmented childhood stories of Azeb help to define her behavior. Unlike her sisters who have the same upbringing like her and her peers in the community she is 'rebellious', independent and a hero. At the end of the novel she kills her abusive husband, got imprisoned and became a revolutionary icon (p.271-286)).

The author also incorporated digressive texts within the main plot line to intentionally destabilize the novel and fragment it. The author uses digressive sentences within a paragraph or paragraphs within a chapter. Chapter one of the novel devotes itself to narrating the rebellious childhood of the protagonist Azeb but the author is seen incorporating every now and then digressive sentences within the plot. We read Azeb running away from home fearing her mothers' measure because she failed to bake a proper '*injera'*. The author is heard defining injera which is not a necessary addition for the development of the story except distracting the attention of the reader. It reads, "At first Azeb didn't fare any better at baking *injera*—pancake-like, coarsely textured bread made from sorghum or *teff* flour. A well-made injera is half a meter in diameter and has tiny pores—or "eyes"—evenly distributed over its surface. Azeb's, however, came out with its

eyes almost closed, or its edges burnt and curled up."(p.9-10). Similar cases are observed all over the novel.

Digressive paragraph insertions also cause fragmentation in the novel. For example, in the part where the narrator introduces Azebs' God Mother he inserts a text that has no purpose in the development of the story and is not a necessary addition in fictional works. He stops narrating Etiye Hiywets' (Azebs' God Mother) family history and gives a conceptual background of a soul father:

> A SOUL-FATHER is a confessor, family counsellor, confidant, and a will executor all rolled into one. Young couples chose their family soul-father long before they formalized their wedding. Considerable thought went into decision, as the individual they picked would remain a lifelong tagalong. The potential candidate must hold a rank of the holy orders, but the weighing factor was often integrity. (p.23)

In the next paragraph he continues listing tasks of soul-fathers. This explanation is not related with any of the characters. It will not be considered an unfamiliar piece by the reader if the author had made it part of the character description of Aba Yitades, the parish priest and a soul-father of some of the villagers. But it seems that the author has purposely deviated from the norm of the traditional novel by discontinuing the narrative. The story of the 'Legacy of the Ark' (p.162-163) is also another example of such an insertion but instead of inserting the paragraphs in the middle of the story the author opened a new chapter using them. Chapter 12 narrates how the Holy Tabot (Ark) of the Saint Gorge church of Mechara came into being (p.163-166). However, the author opened the chapter describing what a Holy Tabot (Ark) is and the story of Queen Makeda and King Solomon in nine paragraphs (162-163) which have nothing to do with the plot.

The non-chronological order of the story also denies the novel an overall theme. As Lewis (2001, p.126) explains it will be inaccurate for the reader to say the novel is about this and this. In the novel the theme is shred to pieces. For instance, following the stories concerning the changes observed in the village of Mechara and Gelemso town from the 1960s to the 90s one can say the issue is modernization and its side effects. The reader who focuses on the actions performed by the parish priest of the Saint Gorge Church of Mechara can conclude that the novel asks nothing but a religious reform. If one says the issue of the novel is corruption focusing on the deeds of the authorities in Gelemso and Harrar towns we cannot say it is wrong. The stories that revolve

around the traditions and customs of the village also gives the novel an impression of an ethnographic approach. Leaning on the historical narratives one can conclude that the issue is a political history of Ethiopia. However, unlike the traditional novel *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades* has no overall theme. It seems that the purpose of the authors' fragmentation as it is a case in the postmodern is denial of a coherent narrative structure.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Recommendation

7.1. Conclusion

This study has attempted to analyze elements of postmodernism in four Ethiopian Diaspora novels written in English. The study also analyzed postmodern issues that are explored in the selected works. For this purpose, the study used theories of postmodernism. The study adopted a pluralistic view to elicit an approach that enables to analyze postmodernism in the selected novels in its all complexity. Thus, the study used general conceptions of postmodernism out laid by various scholars in the analysis. However, especial emphasis is given to analyzing intertextuality, ontology, metafiction, temporal distortion and fragmentation in the four novels; Nega Mezlekia's *The God Who Begat a Jackal* and *The Unfortunate Marriage of Azeb Yitades* and Dinaw Mengistu's *How to Read the Air* and *All Our Names*.

Intertextuality is an aspect of postmodernism that strongly appears in the selected novels. The authors have exploited prior texts like literary works, non-literary texts, historical texts and popular cultures to compose their novels. For these the authors have given direct and indirect clues that guide readers into the world of the intertexts. The intertextual accounts have played a basic role in attributing to the issues raised in the novels plural views and realities prohibiting a dominance of one/single narrative which is a basic issue in postmodernism. The intertexts are also used to demystify the modern notion that views the author as a God by denouncing the role of the author to a compiler strengthening the postmodern concept that views authority as a myth. The intertexts are also used for parodic as well as pastiche ends. The authors parodied metanarratives such as religion, science and technology, history and politics reflecting on their subjective, textual, oppressive and illegitimate nature.

Pastiche is also a characteristic feature of the novels. For these authors pasted together languages used in different fields together. The novels are also homage of text fragments that are obtained from different sources. A variety of styles from different genres are also mixed up in the novels. These pastiches resist totality creating a chaotic atmosphere in the novels there by showing the chaotic state of postmodern society. Moreover, the pastiches confirm that the novels are not composed from the original ideas of the authors and do not reflect anything from the empirical world but already constructed texts.

Ontological concern is also a postmodern aspect that is addressed in the study. The authors have employed various techniques that raise questions of existence in the novels thereby creating indeterminacy and instability by providing various alternative realities. The authors have portrayed opalescent worlds in their novels. These are worlds that are brought together even if they have incompatible structure. Through mystification the assumed real-world figures are made to change their ontological status. Superimpositions are also applied to create ontological instability in the novels. The authors hesitation between fact and fiction, creating of description/creation paradoxes, mixing of actual historical events with imaginary ones, intrusions, and plural manifestation of their selves also have created ontological indeterminacy in the fictional novels. Readers are guided to develop a skeptical attitude towards the reality status of the fictional works as well as the reality of the supposed outside world.

Metafictional elements are also evident in the novels. The authors have used techniques of histographic metafiction and self-reflexivity to develop their novels. Through histographic metafiction the works have reflected skepticism towards history viewing it as a major grand narrative. History is viewed as partial, marginal and myth. Equally, it is criticized from its lack of empirical reality. In the four novels the authors are engaged equally in writing about their writing process as they are involved in composing their stories and these categorizes the works as self-reflexive novels. They frequently intrude in the novels to give comments, address readers and confess that they are imagining their stories and that what they are writing does not call upon any outside reality but free-flowing discourses.

Temporal distortion is also an element of postmodernism that is studied in the selected works. The authors used apocryphal history to distort the official histories they refer. They have also mingled the historical and the fantastic so that readers will get confused to locate the setting of the stories. The novels are also presented in layered fragments in overlapping simultaneous continuous time. The stories at some points fail to be relegated to the past, the future or the present thus confusing readers to tell where the story is at the time of the narrative.

Fragmentation is also an important aspect in the novels. The authors adopted non chronological presentation by going back and forth in time in their narration, by the dissection of the narratives into short disconnected chapters, by inserting digressive texts and leaving gaps in the narratives (silences, secrets and mysteries). These chaotic orders of the narratives force readers not to settle

on a single reality and denies the novel the convention of the novel genre which is viewed as totalitarian by postmodernists. Character fragmentation is also obvious in the novel. Characters in the novels are psychologically, socially and linguistically fragmented. Through the fragmentation of the narrative and characters the author reflects the postmodern notion that there is no one single reality; in the postmodern multiple realties are expressed with nonlinear and discontinuous narratives. The characters in the novel are also not given a long-term consistent identity. The characters' identity is decentered which enabled them to function within multiple (mixed up) worlds they are confronted with.

Based on the analysis the works can be labeled as postmodernist novels because the techniques and the issues manifested in the novels matches the parameters that are discussed under the theoretical framework. The novels reflected a skeptical attitude towards totality, authority, reality and exploited aspects like intertextuality; parody and pastiche, ontology, metafiction; histographic metafiction and self-reflexivity, temporal distortion and fragmentation. From the expansive incorporation of the aspects in the selected novels as well as the explicit hints given by the authors it can also be concluded that the authors are conscious of postmodernist literature.

Viewed from the postmodernist literary point of view generally the novels are similar. They have used prior texts to compose their works. Both authors exploited fictional and nonfictional texts. The intertextual links are used to deconstruct the essence of authority and originality, reality and truth which is a case in postmodernist literature. However, unlike Dinaw who has relied on fiction of the West, Nega has incorporated fiction written in local languages as well as Ethiopian popular cultures. Furthermore, the specific issues that are explored by parodying the prior texts, vary in the works. Nega has tried to emphasize on marginality. He questions history by bringing into context the marginalized accounts that are left at the periphery. He especially tries to give voice to the African oral tradition by ironically incorporating it in his novels so that the mainstream historical accounts fall under scrutiny. He also criticizes the patriarchal nature of history and religion that leave women at the margins. Nega's bringing of mainstream literatures and legends, myths, stories at the same plane also has the purpose of deconstructing dominant literary conventions. On the contrary in his novels Dinaw has focused on parodying texts to demystify grand narratives like the modernist promises of science and technology and the metanarratives of Pan-Africanism.

Heterotopia is a common technique used by the authors. We find it destabilizing the ontological status of Dinaw's *All Our Names* and Nega's *The Unfortunate Marriage* of Azeb Yitades. The mixing of real events and fiction is also commonly observed in the two novels of Dinaw and in *The God Who Begat a Jackal* of Nega Mezlekia. Nevertheless, Nega's exploitation of the fantastic genre to compose *The God Who Begat a Jackal* and Dinaw's manifestation of the analogy of fictionality and incorporation of multiple realities in *All Our Names* distinguish the two authors.

The four novels are almost similar in their self-reflexive nature. The authors have tried to draw the readers' attention to their writings. Authorial intrusion (comments, explanations, directly addressing readers) and confessions of their works as being constructed are common for all the novels. Mixing of theory with their writing process is also common for both the authors. The novels have also approached history as dominant narrative that is constructed and subjective. However, unlike Dinaw, Nega tries to emphasize its marginality from the perspective of gender and class. Beyond history the authors have questioned other metanarratives. Nega, in both the novels, attacks the metanarrative of religion while Dinaw restricts himself to questioning Eurocentric narratives of progress and development.

Structural fragmentation is a common feature of all the novels. However, unlike Nega Dinaw has emphasized on character fragmentation. Dinaw's protagonists in the two novels are socially and linguistically fragmented they lack a consistent identity.

The major difference between the authors lies in their stories. Nega's stories can be categorized as indigenous. The characters, the stories and the settings in both the novels are Ethiopian. His efforts of using local terminologies to describe different things and incorporate various cultural events and traditions give his stories more localized colors. Dinaw on the contrary has chosen to mix Ethiopian, African and American personalities. His stories are set mainly in America even if to some extent he tried to incorporate African settings.

7.2. Recommendations

The review of literature carried out in postmodernism suggests that postmodernity is influencing the contemporary world in many ways and cultural and aesthetic productions are the major ones. Universities around the world have considered postmodernism as one way of making sense of contemporary writing. Therefore, the researcher believes due emphasis must be given to this artistic movement in the Ethiopian context. Language and literature departments in the country need to incorporate it in their curriculum. Students of literature should be encouraged to undertake further research in the area of postmodernism.

Even if the study has emphasized on Ethiopian Diaspora novels the subject can also be extended to Ethiopian literatures written in local languages. Beyond the novel genre postmodernism can also be applied in areas like biography, memoir, poetry, play, short story, film etc.

The authors selected for the study as revealed in the analysis, have made references to Hispanic and Black marginalized literature in their writings, which can indirectly suggest to us that it is worth studying the literature of marginalized nationalities.

The researcher would also like to recommend that literature and language departments should incorporate multicultural literatures in their curriculum. Universities abroad have included this in their syllabus.

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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 and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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