

**INCOGNITOS OF CHRIST IN THE AMHARIC  
NOVEL:  
A CRITICAL STUDY OF ARCHETYPAL  
MIMESIS AND ITS LITERARY  
FUNCTIONS BASED ON  
TWO "NOVELS"**

**BY  
WONDWOSEN ADANE**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
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## ABSTRACT

The need to beseech researchers in the field of Amharic fictional literature to pay sufficient heed to its theological dimensions in general and the state of the Christ-figure in the Amharic novel in particular has initiated this research. Lack of a related study on this topic which has come out in whole has encouraged it further. With the hypothesis that Christ has his incognitos in the Amharic novel by way of which the Bible manifests its influence on secular literature, two sample "novels" have been selected for scrutiny; these are *Libb Wəlləd Tarik* and *Fiqir Iskə Məqabr*. To ascertain the hypothesis these novels have been examined eclectically. The outcome of the investigation has indicated that the Christ-figure has been utilized as a major symbol in these "novels". In the former the figure has been depicted as "quester of benefaction and harbinger of salvation" and in the latter as "social critic and rejected reformer." The general "tendency" seems to be the desire to unmask and shed light on the evil in society and the longing for an ideal world where "salvation" is attained and peace and freedom are restored. The result in the end has affirmed the proposition that studying the Holy Scriptures to fully and correctly appreciate the deeper realities of life and death ("the recurring themes" of imaginative literature) as depicted in the Amharic novel is of paramount importance. This humble study concludes its discussion by commending some other Amharic novels for their convenience to conduct research in this area.

## KEY TO TRANSLITERATION

To help the English reader the following symbols are used for the transliteration of Amharic sounds . In the main body of the thesis personal names are also transliterated for matters of convenience and consistency ; but in the "Bibliography " section these names are written in the conventional English Alphabet so that they can be found easily in the library catalogue .

### CONSONANT

### VOWEL

<u>SOUND</u>	<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>SOUND</u>	<u>SYMBOL</u>
ሸ	sh	ኸ	∅
ቀ	q	ኹ	u
ቸ	ç	ኺ	i
ኘ	ñ	ኻ	a
ጀ	j	ኼ	e
ጠ	t'	ኽ	l
ጨ	ç'	ኾ	o
ጸ	s'		
ጶ	p'		

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an inquiry into the state of the Amharic novel with regard to the portrayal of the Christ-figure. The principal research goal is by putting two sample Amharic novels under scrutiny to substantiate the depiction of this figure and to demonstrate the theological implication of Amharic secular literature. The achievement of this goal ineluctably necessitates a probe into the nature and functioning of two exclusively autonomous, and yet interrelated, types of discourse: secular literature and the Bible, or the aesthetic imagination and the theological imagination.

To be able to successfully undertake such an investigation as this it is essential to study literature and to look into the Biblical texts from a literary point of view. Approaching the Bible from a literary critical vantage point doesn't rob it of its religious value. Such an appreciation of the literary qualities of the Bible rather enables the reader, the researcher sincerely believes, to have a better grasp of the religious message conveyed and the relationship between this grand text and secular literature particularly pertaining to the treatment of the Christ-figure.

With this conviction the researcher has tried to examine two sample "novels" to explore the forms the Christ-symbol has taken and the literary functions such a depiction is made to serve. The two novels are selected for two basic reasons of utility. First, these narratives are "epoch-making" fictional works in

the history of Amharic literature. By this is meant that each has a "unique" place owing to its contribution to the emergence and development of this young fictional literature. There has never been much dispute, for instance, about *Libb Wəlləd Tarik*'s being the first fictional writing in Amharic. A "general consensus" seems to exist as well on the point that *Fiqir Kədd Məqabir* has made an unignorable thematic and technical contribution to the development of Amharic prose fiction, especially compared with those works produced before its appearance. This "contribution" has invited the attention of the researcher during the selection of befitting texts for his undertaking. Second, the researcher has found these two narratives more readily convenient for the kind of reading proposed and practiced by the present study than the other novels he has considered for selection. Moreover, since nearly sixty years have elapsed between the publication of these two "novels," when he selected them the researcher thought that examining the Christ-figure in these narratives would enable him to imply the recurrence of the figure in the Amharic novel and to show the way it has been handled in at least these two fictional works published during the opposite extremities of this time gap.

Nonetheless it should be noted that this thesis is not an attempt to generalize the state of the Amharic novel in its entirety in respect to the depiction of the Christ-figure, based only on two sample works. It should be understood rather as an outcome of a small research project aimed at proposing an alternative reading which can be directed to the Amharic novel, focusing on the affinity of some major characters with the Christ of Biblical literature. Thus, it is a study which tries to bring an awareness about the profitability of such a

reading. Its profitability in fact depends upon the reader's readiness and ability to read the texts in terms of symbolism. The understanding of some major characters in the Amharic novel as Christ-figures requires symbolic reading which puts primary faith in the imagination. Simple logic which allows the intellect to assume autonomous rights doesn't enable the reader to delve into intricacies of images and symbols interwoven in the narratives. Therefore, the kind of reading proposed and employed in this thesis demands the reader's nimble imagination, his perspicacity to look into the affinity the characters in the novels have with Christ. The overall analysis in this text and the general argument which gives it shape can be fully and rightly understood only if the reader's mind is tuned in line with the operation of symbolic reading. This doesn't mean, however, the proposed way of reading is the only and/or the best one which is always rewarding in a critical investigation of the Amharic novel. It is simply an alternative mode of interpretation, and the choice is the reader's.

The thesis has three chapters. The first chapter is a totality of some precursory observations and a survey which gives background to the other two chapters that follow. It consists of the literature review, the research problem, objectives of the study, methods of investigation, application of results, and definition of terms consecutively. In the literature review section, particularly in the portion which surveys general theory, emphasis is given to those works dealing with the nature of the Bible and its relevancy to world literature. Since the present study falls within the general research area which encompasses the overall source-influence relationship between two types of

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discourse (the Bible and secular literature), giving importance to the review of theoretical works whose subject is this relationship should not be seen as going astray from the right path of the present inquiry. The analysis of the major twin characters in *Libb Wəlləḍ Tarik* which interpretes their roles generally as "quester of benefaction and harbinger of salvation" comprises the second chapter. The third chapter gives a critical analysis of the character of Kasa Damt'e based on the interpretation of his function in the narrative as "social critic and rejected reformer."

Finally, following some conclusive remarks made on the basis of the overall discussion in the main body of the thesis, bibliography and appendices are given place. In both appendices citations taken from the source texts are appended as written in the original language (Amharic) so that the reader will be able to grasp their message which the English rendition may sometimes fail to fully and correctly convey. Because the researcher was afraid that putting the citations in their source language and the translations side by side would make the main body of the thesis a little bit repulsive and boring, he has opted for the preparation of appendices.

The sources of all citations except those taken from the scrutinized "novels" are indicated in brackets immediately after the citations. Quotations taken from the source-texts (selected "novels") are given consecutive reference numbers which enable the reader to identify the equivalent of each in its original language included in the appendices. Translations of these quotations are entirely those of the present researcher. Some words, sentences, or points

of argument which need explanation or special information are asterisked and given footnotes accordingly. All dates in this thesis are in the Gregorian calendar unless followed by "E.C." (which means Ethiopian Calendar ) to indicate some works written by Ethiopians.

# CHAPTER ONE

## BACKGROUND

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### 1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 1.1 GENERAL (THEORY)

Since the present study is basically an investigation into the relationship between the Bible and secular literature it will not be irrelevant to start the review of literature with what has been said ( written ) about the Bible.

The term "*Bible*" is a Greek word which means "*the little books*". It includes all the Judeo-Christian Scriptures (Shaw, 1971:14). There has never been any other universal discourse, it is argued, pertaining to nature in general and to both flesh and soul of mankind in particular which is of a ceaseless potential to generate a multiplicity of interpretations as the Bible is.

In addition to differences in interpretation among people who hold the religious view, there are attitudes of persons outside this circle which challenge the authenticity and religious significance of the Bible. For one group which can be termed as the "Creation School" the Bible is the Word of God in words of men - divine revelation (A.C Deane, 1953; Dominiq Barbé, 1989). For another group which one can call as the "Evolutionist Camp" the Bible is a mundane work of imagination about the "hereafter" (Nietzsche,

1901; Dan Jacobson, 1982; Mircea Eliade, 1954, 1961). A third group which is a forerunner of "Scientific Creationism" (Henry Morris, 1985) advocated the indispensability of using Biblical evidences in scientific investigation and tries to reconcile the two.

The different approaches concerning the origin and religious importance of the Bible invited the attention of scholars in the history and criticism of secular literature and gave impetus to the proliferation of various literary interpretations of the Biblical writings. Since a long time ago in the history of literary criticism, the Bible has received the regard of a number of literary critics who have scrutinized it according to their different perspectives. The relationship between the Bible and secular literature is the primary concern of many.

The question of whether the Bible is a divine revelation or a purely imaginative literary work doesn't that much bother one of the groups of these literary critics who concern themselves with the study of literature in relation to the Bible (Olshen and Feldman, 1989); they don't usually utter anything pertaining to the distinction to be made between the two. Even when they say something about it they simply mention that their approach has nothing to do with the religious importance of the Scriptures. Their primary concern is to apply some techniques of literary criticism to the interpretation of the various Biblical writings and to appreciate their literary qualities. Most of them categorize their approach under the phrase "the Bible as literature." "Reading the Bible as literature" write Gabel and others, "should not be uncomfortable for persons who hold the religious view (though it may seem a little strange at first)...."

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(1996:3). They further said, "Our position is that the Bible in some fundamental respects is not different from the works of, let us say, Shakespeare or Emily Dickinson or Henry Fielding or Ernest Hemingway---" (Ibid.: 4). T.R. Henn also argues that one can consider and criticize the Bible as any work of history, tragedy, social anthropology, etc.(1970:285). Here the reader should note that neither of them decidedly said the Bible is the Word of God in words of men or a purely creative work of art; they simply consider it for their purpose as *literature*. The motive and aim of their position in considering the Bible as literature is somehow summarized in what Nida and others write as follows:

**Jews and Christians have always hesitated to look upon their Holy Scriptures as being merely literature, and accordingly there is a tendency to avoid attempts to speak of the Bible as "great literature."--- Nevertheless, it is impossible to avoid completely the implications of literary analysis when speaking of the Bible ---In fact, an appreciation of the literary qualities of the biblical texts can only lead to a greater appreciation of their relevance. It is therefore important to see the study of the literary features of the Bible in terms of the various approaches to literature.---**

(1983:157)

Another group of literary critics approaches the Bible equipped with the conviction that it is a purely imaginative work of art. To advocates of this view the Bible is the greatest of all literary works which the human genius has ever produced. Thus these critics produce commentaries on the various pieces of this

"great literature". They don't feel comfortable with the other literary critics mentioned earlier who approach the Bible "as literature." In this regard it sounds legitimate to quote Meir Sternberg's assertion as a representative member of this group. His argument goes:

**To offer a poetics of biblical narrative is to claim that biblical narrative is a work of literature. Not just an artful work; ---not a work resorting to so-called literary devices; not a work that the interpreter may choose (or refuse) to consider from a literary viewpoint or, in that unlovely piece of jargon as literature; but a literary work. The difference is radical.**

(cited in Olshen and Feldman, 1989:23)

For critics who approach the Holy Scriptures with the conviction that they are literary works, the various Biblical texts which prophesy the coming to this world of the Messiah and which show the realization of his divine Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection are fantasies, literary works written about a vainly sought-after ideal. To them Christ is a figure from a series of myths which have served mankind since time immemorial. This kind of understanding is evident in what Dan Jacobson writes as follows:

**To many people the God who was revealed to the ancient Israelites remains what he has always been: the creator of the universe, the source of all life, the arbiter of the destinies of men and nations. To others the God of Israel is a fiction, a figure from a wholly discredited myth or series of myths,**

part of a primitive system of belief which has long outlived its purpose and which it is now impossible to take seriously. In this book I do intend to take the God of ancient Israel seriously in the only way I can: as a fiction, as a fantasy, as an imaginative creation---

(Jacobson , 1982:1)

The third group of literary critics who concern themselves with the study of the Bible and its relation to secular literature are dissatisfied with the other critics who without any hesitation categorize the Bible under purely imaginative literature. They argue that the Bible is not a literary work in the same sense that imaginative literature is; what they declare is the Bible's pervasive influence upon literature proper without being literature itself, without ceasing to serve its religious function. In this regard Northrop Frye succinctly writes this :

---In dealing with literature, we frequently speak of its self-contained unity as "imaginative," and distinguish as "imaginary" its relation to actual events. The Bible, however,---evades this antithesis: it is neither literary nor non-literary, or more positively, it is as literary as it can well be without actually being literature---

(1982:62)

For critics who tune their imagination to such an observation as Frye's the Bible is neither poetry alone nor divine history in isolation from the functioning of the imagination; it is even more than the coalescence of the two. In a way which

supports Frye's observation in this line, G.W. Knight argues that the Bible and particularly "---the New Testament is neither throughout poetry nor history but a blending of the two. Often it reads like a work of art and yet we are simultaneously aware that actuality is so stamped on it that there can be no fiction.---" (1963:57).

On the whole, when one surveys theoretical works by literary critics and theorists written on the study of the Bible in relation to literature one notices the frequent use of such phrases as these: Bible as literature, Bible and literature, Bible in literature, literary criticism of the Bible, literary-critical study of the Bible, the literature of the Bible, and so on. Literary theorists and critics who use these phrases for their respective purposes with all their distinctive implications have one important point in common, which is the principal concern of the present research: they unanimously agree that the Bible has exerted an incalculable influence upon world literature.

Almost all agree that "its influence on --- literature and the other arts is incalculable" (*Academic American Encyclopedia*, Vol.3:86). As Frye pointed out, the Bible "is a book that has had a continuously fertilizing influence on English literature from Anglo-Saxon writers to poets younger than" himself (1982:XVi). G.W Knight also stressed that the Bible, particularly the New Testament was "the most consummate vision of" poets like Shakespeare and his successors, and argued that a literary-critical approach to the Bible would be more profitable to the study of literature and the Bible than any other way. Apart from emphatically mentioning the Bible's eminence in its own right,

Harry Shaw, too, has earnestly recounted its unbreakable link to world literature from the time of Milton to the present (1972:14). Hugh Holman has as well made a similar observation concerning the effect of the Bible upon American literature and mentioned that "the style of any writer had been directly affected by the study of the Bible, as has Bunyan's, Lincoln's and Hemingway's" (1992:51).

This pervasive influence of the Bible on world literature is taken by many as a positive and worthwhile effect. Even the thematic and technical perfection, the aesthetic appeal of some works of literature is traced to their author's exposure to this influence. Nonetheless, there are also persons who consider modern literature's inheritance of the preoccupation with "heavenly transfiguration" and "the *Beyond* in art" in general from the teachings of the Biblical tradition as debilitating to the development and free functioning of the imagination. One among them is Nietzsche who wrote the following :

**It is not without profound sorrow that one admits to oneself that in their highest flights the artists of all ages have raised to heavenly transfiguration precisely those conceptions which we now recognize as false: they are the glorifiers of the religious and philosophical errors of mankind, and they could not have been so without believing in the absolute truth of these errors.---**

(1977:129)

Literary theorists and critics have also observed that one among the various ways whereby the influence of the Bible on world literature manifests itself is

the portrayal of the Chris-figure in imaginative pieces of literature. Thus Holman writes: "Novelists of twentieth century America are increasingly turning to the Bible for THEMES and PLOTS --- or for what Theodore Eiolkewski has called 'fictional transfigurations of Jesus'---" (1992:51). Giving more emphasis to this observation Andre Dabezies argues that "--- What must be seen as more important is the patient movement which has led, since the beginning of the twentieth century---- rediscovering a deeper symbolic understanding of the incarnation, and hence giving a new poetic presence to Jesus ----"(1992: 643-644 ). A.N. Wilder also wants us to note the reappearance of the redeemer archetype in works of modern literature through the ages, though he seems to be uneasy about the way this figure is handled. This dissatisfaction is evident in what he writes as follows:

**There is, indeed, a sense in which every significant portrayal of Christ must be a modernization. The "distance" between Nazareth and Detroit, between the first century and the twentieth, must be bridged. But re-portrayal should not be betrayal. Christ in modern dress is rarely convincing, though he has his incognitos in all times. ---The unhappy result of this perennial practice is that in every decade we instruct Christ as to what he was and is, instead of allowing ourselves to be instructed by him .**

(1958 : 93-94)

But Wilder's dissatisfaction seems to have emanated from the religious view he holds when he looks into the portrayal of the Christ-figure in modern fiction. The last sentence in the citation suggests that he has approached the

depiction of Christ's incognitos in modern literary works from the religious view point. That is why he is dissatisfied with the deviation in the portrayal of the Savior-figure. W.F. Lynch's study on Christ and Apollo (1960) has as well implied the preoccupation of the literary imagination with the symbolic significance of these "mythical figures." In his significant study of the Christ-figure in the modern novel E.M. Moseley has found out that "---Almost every important writer in our milieu has at one time or another utilized Christ as a *leit-motif* or as a major symbol.--- The correlative of Christ is the *something* through which the Western writer frequently gets at *everything*" (1962: 34-35). Many agree on the point that the literary mind's concern with the Savior-figure is due to the direct or indirect influence of the Biblical tradition, or, to put it in terms of myth criticism, the primordial existence of images of the transcendent horizons of life in the collective unconscious.

Taking into account the relationship between the Bible and imaginative literature, and recognizing the manifold and tremendous influence of the former on the latter, many literary theorists and critics propose approaching secular literature from a theological vantage point. They earnestly believe that religious interpretation is necessary to a full understanding of man's reaction to the desiderata of life as depicted in the great works of modern literature. It is to make this point that G.W. Knight wrote what follows in his study of "poetry" in relation to the Bible: "---Shakespeare and the other poets inspected in the following pages cannot henceforward be kept without the pale of our religious consciousness: they are the prophets of the modern world---" (1963:3). For some theorists, studying the theological dimensions of modern

literature is rewarding not only to secular literature but also to Christian theology itself. Among such theorists who conducted intensive research on the relationship between the Bible and literature with this conviction N.A. Scott wrote the following :

--- not only does the literature of our time most emphatically initiate theological inquiry, but my conviction also grows that the major poetry and fiction and drama of the modern period do indeed form a great literature and that Christian theology as a result of its dialogue with the literary imagination will find itself more richly repaid (in terms of deepened awareness both of itself and of the age) than by any similar transaction into which it may enter --- (1966:X)

This is all about the review of literature comprising theoretical arguments germane to the present inquiry. It should by no means be taken as exhaustive. It is a short survey to show the direction of argument in this endeavor. To whatsoever extent the theories with regard to the relationship between the Bible and literature or to the nature of each may vary, the present researcher will not deliberately and exclusively adhere to one or the other. Besides, his faith has nothing to do with the approach his inquiry sticks to. He believes that the Bible can be studied like any great work of literature without being robbed of its religious significance. Recognizing the unparalleled effect the Bible has had upon literature proper, he accepts the necessity of investigating the source-influence relationship between the two (the Bible and literature). He

also recognizes the point that the portrayal of the Christ-figure is one major way whereby the Bible's influence on imaginative literature is displayed. Thus he is of this conviction: to a full apprehension of the profound meaning of many secular literary works, investigating their theological implications and the influence of the Scriptures upon them is indisputably necessary. This premise is the basis of the present study which is picked up from the various propositions of related literature reviewed so far.

## **1.2 RESEARCH**

Literary research conducted so far as regards the relationship between the Holy Scriptures and secular Amharic literature is scanty. In fact, a number of B.A. theses have been written on either the thematic or technical aspect of the narratives selected here for scrutiny. Since most of them fall outside the purview of the present inquiry, they are not the concern of this review. However, thinking that it would be of much help for future researchers in this area the researcher has reviewed some works of both remote relation and proximate relevance to the present study.

J.M. Harden (1923) studied Ethiopic Christian literature. His is somehow a descriptive introduction aimed at bringing an awareness within the international reading community about the nature of the various texts of Ethiopic Christian literature. He pointed out nothing about the influence of these on the secular ones.

A.S. Gérard (1971) studied the emergence and development of Amharic literature and pointed out when and how the beginning of the different genres of this literature was signaled. According to him *Libb Wəlləḍ Tarik* is the first Amharic novel. Evaluating this narrative he wrote: "--- By writing this uninhibitedly edifying novel---Afḍwḍrq transferred the moralizing intent of the traditional folktale to the modern creative writing of Ethiopia" (284). But he hasn't tried to show where the "edification" and "the moralizing intent" lie, and hasn't fully recognized the theological implications of the narrative which the present study tries to demonstrate.

T.L.Kane (1975) similarly conducted a research on the origin and development of Amharic literature, and on its themes and genres. He has remarked that the influence of the Bible on some literary works is evident. In his study is included *Libb Wəlləḍ Tarik* being considered an imaginative piece which "--- marks the birth of fictional literature in Amahric---" (6). He hasn't, however, made out the theological dimensions of this narrative at least as a justification for his remark on the influence of the Bible.

R.K. Molvaer (1980) surveyed some creative works of Amharic literature (plays, poems, novels, and short stories) using them as an instrument for his general sociological investigation aimed at highlighting the state of "tradition and change in Ethiopian". Although his survey has focused on the customs and beliefs of the Christian community as depicted in the selected imaginative pieces, no point has been made on these works with respect to the concern of the present inquiry. Concerning *Libb Wəlləḍ Tarik* he simply mentions in

footnote that the narrative can be read allegorically and be "taken to be about Ethiopia." Thus he argues: "As the girl by that name [T'obbiya] becomes instrumental in converting a pagan country, so Ehtiopia is God's chosen country to bring light to the world " (1980 :165). He argues in this way because the name of the heroine "is a colloquial form of 'Ethiopia.'" T'obbiya for him is, therefore, a symbol of "God's chosen country" - Ethiopia. The present researcher's argument differs from this one in that he tries to substantiate the point that T'obbiya's becoming "instrumental in converting a pagan country" makes her a Christ-figure, a symbol that transcends the allegorical reading .

Stephen Wright (1963) has observed religious substance in some creative works of Amharic literature and attributed this not to the effect of the authors' exposure to the Holy Scriptures but to the influence of another imaginative piece of literature which is itself thought to have been influenced by the Holy Writ. Thus he wrote: "--- an Amharic translation of Bunayn's *Pilgrims Progress*, made by Gäbrä Giyorgis Terfe--- has probably had a profound influence, in respect to both form and content, on the formation of the new Amharic literature---" (15). Moreover what has come to Wrights attention is not the theological implication of *Libb Wəlləḍ Tarik* but Afḍwəṛq's "unnecessary originalities of spelling and usage "(Ibid.:16). These observations are, it is felt, rather unwarranted generalizations; unwarranted because he hasn't tried to ascertain his assertion by providing at least a single example. Moreover, as Yonas rightly points out, in *Libb Wəlləḍ Tarik* there is nothing that one "--- could categorically dismiss as unnecessary---" though

there may be the possibility of some weaknesses (1995:98). The words in the narrative are not words of Afፊውገግ's "invention"/coinage as such; in fact some words are dialectal. Wright's conclusion seems to have resulted from failure to see this difference. The use of these words specially the repetition of some words which Wright tends to consider "unnecessary" has its contribution to the strength of the narrative on which Yonas comments detailly ( 1996).

E.M. Moseley (1962) conducted a literary research whose subject matter is relevant to that of the present undertaking. Moseley examined some representative novels by prominent American and European writers and explored the phenomenon of the persistently recurring Christ-image placing it in the changing climate from generation to generation in the history of Western culture and literature. This erudite work has given the impetus to the inception of the idea to undertake a similar experimentation in the Amharic novel. However, the present research differs from Moseley's in that it obviously deals with the Ethiopian counterpart of the Christ-figure within the context of the peculiarly indigenous social, political, and economic conditions of a different society. Moreover, it must be known that this research never depends on the methods, procedures, approaches, subjects, etc of Moseley's study.

Of all the research works that have been read for the preparation of this thesis the only one which consciously and extensively discusses the issue with which the present inquiry is concerned is Yonas Admasu's article which appeared in Tadesse and Ahmed (1995). In this article Yonas argues that *Libb Wəlləd*

*Tarik* is a "foundational" narrative and presents a compact yet profound interpretation of the narrative's aesthetic, ethical, and political dimensions. He recognizes Wahid's role as a savior and writes: "---His sufferings, read almost like the sufferings of the "Son of Man!" (104). On the other hand, however, he restricts T'obbiya's part "--- as the agent for the realization of the political ideal" alone(105). The argument in the present study differs from this one in that it takes both Wahid and T'obbiya as Christ-images, as two human guises for the manifestation of the savior-function .

Fiqre Tolosa in his Ph.D dissertation (1983) studied Amharic literature based on the evaluative criteria of the literary trend "realism". Like and even more than some of the novels he has selected for his purpose he has found *Libb Wällöd Tarik* to be a non-realistic piece because it lacks "truthful details"(58). For him *Fiqir Iskə Məqabir* proves to be the opposite, perhaps owing to its many "truthful details". Since Fiqre is obsessed by the enthusiastic search of "truthful details" as the only parameter for realism, he doesn't seem to be aware of the theological aspects of these works.

In his doctoral dissertation entitled "*Form in the Amharic Novel*" (1986) Tayyəd Asəffa examined some Amharic "novels" demonstrating in detail their strengths and imperfections pertaining to character portrayal, narrative structure, the language of characters, and the nature of narrators. His dissertation includes the two narratives studied in the present thesis. But relevant points are made only in his discussion of *Libb Wällöd Tarik*. In this connection he argues that any attempt made to interpret the narrative in

isolation from its "religious ideology" will result in a fatuous generalization (25). However, he recognized T'obbiya's status to be only that of "a Christian Crusader" (89). The present researcher's argument differs from Tayyḍ's for one thing in that it heightens Tobbiya's status to that of a Christ-figure. Apart from this the theological implications of the narrative as understood by the present researcher are not raised in Tayyḍ's study.

Among those who prepared M.A. theses Asḍffa Arḍggahḍñ (1981) presented a historical and critical account of the origin and development of Amharic literature. In his thesis he stated that Amharic literature during its earlier stage was characterized by a religious preoccupation and moralistic tendencies. However, nowhere in his discussion did he make a point on the "tendency" of some modern creative writers towards handling the Christ-image as a major symbol in their imaginative writing .

Getachḍw Sahlḍmaryam in his M.A. thesis (1985) stated in passing that he witnessed some major characters in post-revolution Amharic novels who assume "the position of God," for instance Tilahun of Haddis Alḍmayyḍhu's *Wḍnjḍlḍñaw Daña*. But he doesn't feel comfortable with this tendency and considers the somewhat superhuman perfection of such characters as "a negative element that blurs [their] credibility---as a creative representation of a man of this world" (8). The present research is at the opposite end of this literary critical spectrum in that it approaches the situation not from this pejorative sense.

S'əggayə Haylu in his M.A. thesis (1987) considered Haddis Aləmayyəhu as a social critic and studied the social, political, religious and moral criticisms which were argued to be the major recurring themes of the author's fictional and non-fictional works. In his discussion of the author's criticisms as depicted particularly in his novels, S'əggayə hasn't given much importance to the role of the major characters in effecting these criticisms. Although his thesis provides a useful analysis of the points considered, everything is approached from the point of view of the author, and, perhaps for this reason, the characters' (Kasa Damte's for instance) part in the fictional world as a Christ-image has not been recognized.

Among those who wrote B.A. theses, Mose Fəntayə (1978 E.C.) studied the situation of religion and its role in society as reflected in two major Amharic novels. Inገdaw Mulu-ələm (1982 E.C.) examined one text of the Orthodox Christian literature - *Dirsanə Mika'el* (Book of Micheal) - employing the techniques of literary evaluation. Sərs'ə Gəbrə-Mədhin (1983 E.C.) inspected the narrative style of *Gədlə Giyorgis* (The Adventure of George) and appreciated its literary value. Səbahe Kasaw (1981 E.C.) made a similar investigation into the narrative mode of *Gədlə Təklə-Haymanot* (The adventure of *Təklə-Haymanot*) and tried to explore its literary qualities. Habte Nəgga (1984 E.C.) picked up some parables from the New Testament and considering them as imaginative literary pieces, employed some literary techniques in his analysis to decipher their meaning and to appreciate their artistic qualities. Dəjəne Yigzaw (1978 E.C.) studied churchmen characters in the Amharic novel.

Gəzahdñ GetaÇðw in his B.A. thesis (1984 E.C.) conducted a research on the state of Biblical and historical allusion in the poems of Dəbbəbə Səyfu. The findings of his study show that Biblical allusion in poetry, being one important way whereby the Holy Writ manifests its influence on secular literature, serves the function of elevating its literary qualities in relation to the effects of tone and depth of substance. Getaçðw Məngistu's thesis (1982 E.C.) is an undertaking aimed at providing a proof of whether the Holy Scriptures have had their influence on Amharic literature and if it is essential to study the former for a full understanding of the meaning of the earlier Amharic fictional writings. The fictional writing selected for this purpose is Wəldə-Giyorgis's *Aglazi*. The researcher's hypotheses have been affirmed by his findings. Elyas Ayyalnəh's thesis (1980 E.C.) analyses the functions of Biblical allusion in the novels of Bə'alu Gırma with particular reference to the making of characters and setting. In this analysis the researcher points out that Biblical allusion has been manipulated to liken some major characters to the Messiah. Nevertheless, for this researcher, it is not the nature of the overall mission of a character that makes up his Christ-like personality but the direct or indirect Biblical allusions inserted here and there into the narrative. This argument puts his thesis somehow at variance with the present inquiry. What makes it more relevant than the other theses reviewed here is simply its recognition of the "Messianic" appearance of some major characters (like Haddis and Hayləmaryam), though they are not directly the subject of the present research.

The subject matter of these B.A. theses is, broadly speaking, religion, and particularly the relationship between the Holy Scriptures and secular literature. The researcher sincerely believes that these theses have made an unignorable contribution to the gradual development of literary research in this endeavor. However, none of them except the last one has conspicuously remarked on the treatment of the Christ-figure in the Amharic novel. Even many of them seem to be unaware about this tendency.

As the foregoing review of related literature evidences no research work on the present topic has ever come out in whole. Hence the gap in the line of our critical practice pertaining to the theological dimensions of secular Amharic literature, particularly the case of the Christ-figure in the Amharic novel. This humble research is, therefore, the result of an attempt to contribute something to the general critical practice which may fill this gap.

## 2. THE PROBLEM

**The time is past when literary appreciation could slight the theological aspects of the work of art, as though all such elements were external --- It is important to note that the theological aspects of literature and art bear on the very substance of the work, on its literary form and style.**

( A.N. Wilder, 1958 : 29)

It will be a clever gambit to start the discussion of the research problem with a precautionary confession: there never exists an absolutely perfect approach to, and interpretation of, any form of literary discourse which can claim monopoly over the others. E.M. Moseley's forthcoming paragraph most succinctly attests to this view:

--- every critic of whatever school is using his techniques to meet as fully as he can the demands of the author. He is applying his particular metaphor to the author's book and hopping to arrive at some compatibility with the author's metaphor for experience. Full compatibility, is, alas, never possible though the devoted adherents of particular schools of criticism may insist that their way is the only way to an ideal marriage of critic and author.

(1962: 71- 72)

Never possible indeed! The "the-only-way" principle of the proponents of certain schools of criticism should be abandoned ad infinitum. For it may have paralyzing effects, one should think, on the freedom of the literary imagination. A text can ceaselessly generate, and be subject to, a multiplicity of interpretations. A certain critic's reading of a text at a given time and the interpretation that follows are merely one of the several possible ways in that endeavor; but not the only and the final. Even the author's interpretation of his own work can by no means be the final reference to any interpretation of that text. His is only one possible way. Thus every interpretation aimed at deciphering the meaning of a text is the reflection of the reader's understanding of that text which can be considered as a critical cognizance in

its own right because the reader with his own experience and perspective is an individual human entity in his own right as well. In this regard, adopting Buffon's quotable expression: "style is the man himself" (*Encyclopedia Britannica* Vol. XXI, 1971:332), the researcher dares to say that *criticism is the critic himself*. Therefore, no critic is a final authority on the discernment of the meaning of any literary text. This is what the literary critical tradition of our time earnestly entertains. The imperious approach to literary texts and to any form of discourse at large is now anachronistic and belittled. "Literary criticism," A.N. Wilder tells us, "has become a highly sophisticated activity. at no point has it reached more general agreement than in rejecting a dogmatic approach to works of the imagination " (1985: 70 ).

Although the recent atmosphere of literary opinion solemnly entreats the freedom of the critic's imaginative faculty and his say concerning any piece of literary work and invites the proliferation of interpretations, this doesn't either mean that an egregious distortion of a literary text's artistic representation which innocently addles the fruits of the aesthetic imagination is legitimate. In our indigenous tradition of critical practice one sometimes comes across unwarranted views with reference to some characters in the Amharic novel. The most commonly encountered complaint which is pursued by many to this day argues that some major characters in the Amharic novel are personalities created only in the authors' minds. This assertion is the result of that unlovely trend of literary criticism which judges the world of imagination by its strict consistency with the minutiae of the real world. (This, I have started to call "a mirror-image syndrome.") Although verisimilitude is a significant element in

any creative work of art, a certain creative work's perfection in this respect should not always be judged merely by a one-to-one correspondence of its details with those of the "real world." This tendency has considerable drawbacks, one being what Wilder warns of: "--- We lose our place in the story if we stop to ask what this feature means or refers to outside it " (1990: 143). Therefore, a creative work's credibility should also be judged on account of the sequence of its parts and the consistency of this with man's story-telling and myth-making tradition in general ( which includes Biblical literature ).

While advocating literature's indispensable kinship with the particulars of our mundane world, the upholders of this view have forgotten its possible relation to the otherworldly noumena and have misunderstood the functioning of the artistic process. Where else can an imaginative creation be conceived unless in the author's mind? Can't the author's mind envisage something of the world beyond? What then is wrong with a character's having extraterrestrial qualities? Surely all this must have eluded such readers of the Amharic novel. (Among those who are uneasy about some major characters' affinity with divine beings are Fiqre 1983, and Getaççəw, 1985.) They don't seem to recognize that the Amharic novels are works of imagination which can have theological implications. This is why they utter nothing about the redemption and prophecy embodied in the novels revolving around the lives and deeds of the characters drawn in them. Therefore, these readers of the Amharic novel are urged to look into Wilson Knight's axiomatic statement: "Imagination is always prophetic; it is prophetic because it is creative; and it is creative because one of its parents is love" (1963: 20). Accordingly, all the charismatic Amharic novelists who have

created the characters whose "plausibility" some "critical" readers doubt want us to understand that we are lost in an abyss of ignorance, superciliousness, malevolence and that we need some light, a redeemer who concerns himself first with the betterment of the here.

Generally speaking, the Bible's unparalleled influence upon Amharic literature, and particularly the Amharic novel's tendency to concern itself with the basic affairs of Christianity seem to be undiscovered or considered trivial by many a reader. Wilder has observed that "a great deal of the most significant art of this century has had striking theological implications, direct or indirect, and this has been abundantly recognized in modern criticism" (1958: 1). But this is not true in our indigenous enterprise of actual criticism. The problem in this respect is the difficulty if the reader not of the writer; for creative writing requires creative reading. And the reader is urged, as W.F. Lynch suggests, to give up his superstition of a dogmatic approach to literature which asserts that it is relevant to nothing except the external reality, or "that it stands on its own inward feet as a new reality over against every reality, that it is absolutely autonomous, that the imagination is a special and isolated faculty of man meant to put a relatively few in touch with a special and isolated field of reality" (1960 : Xi ).

Northrop Frye argues that "the Bible is more like a small library than a real book" (1982, Xii). By this is meant that the Bible is a book of unmatched importance to any relevant field of learning. In fact, many universities abroad, we learn from related literature, have recognized this purport and have

included Bible-oriented courses in their various programs. Unfortunately, our Institute of Language Studies hasn't paid sufficient heed to this universal work of erudition. To be more specific, no single course pertinent to the Bible has ever been introduced. Although there may be some curricular and off-curriculum problems to account for this, it is quite a loss. To the researcher's understanding an institute which is responsible for the development of literary discourse can't proceed unhurt without the consideration of man's greatest heritage through utterance - the Bible. Therefore it is of paramount importance to apprehend the inescapable influence of the Bible upon literature and to give it a significant share in literary scholarship.

As it has been shown in the literature review section, many prominent literary critics and scholars who concern themselves with undertaking interdisciplinary research activities have observed and called attention to the inescapable and profound influence of the Bible upon world literature. In like manner, the sway of the Holy Bible as well as the indigenous texts of Christian literature over the province of Amharic imaginative literature has been remarked upon both by foreign researchers and native scholars in a generalized manner. In addition to those mentioned in the review part, Amsalu Aklilu (1976 E.C.), among Ethiopians, commented that the earlier works of Amharic fictional literature were marked by a religious color even when they were dealing with purely secular issues. Dəbbəbə Səyfu (1974 E.C.) remarked that the earlier works of Amharic literature were largely religious and consequently their pedagogic and moralistic themes were ill-handled when judged by the yardsticks of artistic presentation.

But all these views, particularly those forwarded by Ethiopians, on Amharic literature's close contact with Christianity and the Holy Bible, in a way, seem to be pejorative. On top of that no significant research (except some B.A. theses which were reviewed earlier) has been conducted to substantiate the pervasive influence of the Bible on Amharic literature. The fundamental question is not whether sacred books of Christianity have had their influence upon Amharic literature; the crux of the matter is the need for practical criticism that can identify which specific features of the Bible have manifested themselves in which particular secular works, how and why. Even the identification of the effects of the Bible on purely religious fictional works (like those of Məkkonnin Zəwde, for instance), may not require much effort. But the said influence upon purely secular works of imagination is somewhat elusive and needs much labor; as such it has never been disclosed by a justifying critical practice. Consequently, some distorted views (at least to the present researcher) with regard to the question of so-called "plausibility" have hitherto remained unchallenged; the potential resourcefulness of the Holy Bible to the making of imaginative literature specifically with regard to the depiction of the Christ-figure, the relationship between divine Incarnation and incarnation in literature unappreciated.

Therefore, the need to bring an awareness among lovers of Amharic literature about the age-long relationship between the Bible and literature and the indispensability of studying both as permeable to each other to fully fathom the seemingly superficial meaning of several Amharic literary works has necessitated this study.

The present inquiry actuated by the awareness of the above-discussed problem is a quest of exploratory answers for the following research questions:

- a) Has the Christ-figure ever appeared in the Amharic novel ?
- b) If so, how has the figure been depicted ?
- c) What are the intended functions such a depiction is made to serve ?
- d) Is it necessary to study the Bible in order to fully fathom, and benefit much from, what is conveyed in the Amharic novel?

### 3. OBJECTIVES

**---the theological horizon is centrally important in the literary landscape of our period.**

( N.A. Scott , 1967 : X)

**The Incarnation is the perfect creation : but all human and natural birth, all artistic work, are lesser sorts in the same kind.**

(G.W Knight, 1963 : 64 )

#### 3.1 GENERAL

The general objective of this research is, by scrutinizing some selected Amharic novels, to discern and demonstrate whether the redeemer-archetype in the figure of Christ has appeared in the Amharic novel and to explore how the figure is handled by the novelist.

This objective presupposes the presence of the Christ-figure in the Amharic novel. In fact one can start from one's intuitive reading of the Amharic novels and put forward this hypothesis. To ascertain it, however, some major characters in the Amharic novel that usually provoke disparaging commentaries from some readers must be examined quite closely. One can begin the argument by first mentioning that these characters are generally men for others. In their endeavor to maintain or bring to light a world of true love, peace, eternal freedom and stability, they criticize the existing social order and propose an alternative social vision. In the broader sense of the term they are political. Society's utter indifference to their vision and its virulent misunderstanding of their concern make them involved in a perilous conflict with their surroundings. Whatever is society's reaction, however, they continue to indicate the only way to redemption, to a world free from evil, animus, craving for worldly wealth, and spiritual death. They teach and do good for others with too little regard to their own material desire. Their thought is sophisticated, and their expressions mostly figurative. Their message is a lesson from whose example others are supposed to learn. The role they are given to play resembles that of the savior-archetype - though theirs is largely concerned with the here. Even though their concern with the here and now makes them purely human, their unmatched saintly vision implies the God in them. The man and the God-in-man relationship and dualism is intricately prevalent. If the novels are seriously and carefully examined it can be disclosed that in such major characters a God-man harmony is realized. And consequently, due to the permeable concurrence of

divine Incarnation and poetic incarnation " the Christ - who must not be too rigidly limited to the historical Jesus - is born again."

The appreciation of all this requires the reader's acuity of mind and latitudinal imagination which enable him to search for patterns that may draw light upon literature's relevancy to theology. In other words, "any true bridge-building between religion and the arts will require a deeper grasp of what religion is and what art is : a better theology and a better aesthetic" (Wilder, 1958:22). A better theology and a better aesthetic, and more significantly a better understanding of their profound mutual relationship demands the reader's promptitude to "think in terms of symbolism rather than logic" ( Knight, 1963:74).

A better theology and a better aesthetic arises, in our case, from an insatiable examination and study of the Bible and literature and their intrinsic relationship as well. For any inquisitive mind ready to think symbolically it appears indisputable that the Bible , without ceasing to be "radically historical and eschatological" (Scott,1967:64), without ceasing to be a Word of God in words of men, can be considered as an art-form. Specially the New Testament's "subject is incarnation; its technique is also incarnation. The world of poetry blends with the world of history to create a whole greater than the work of any single poet" (Knight, 1963 : 49). The substance of imaginative literature is not any different. As Knight pointed out "creation is the theme and process of creative literature, life and death their recurring subjects of poetic life : such is the organic quality of poetry" (Ibid.: 48). The recognition

of the reciprocal nourishment of the Bible and imaginative literature, of celestial Incarnation's pertinency to poetic incarnation, emanates only from such a subtle penetration into the nature and functioning of both.

The subject of the New Testament is, as pointed out above, the Incarnation of the mysterious Logos. The whole story narrated indicates a perfect embodiment of spirit in the unfavorable order of our mundane world. From such a marriage of the spiritual world and the material world is born Jesus the Christ. A complete and sound understanding of the Bible is thus preposterous without a veracious knowledge of the life and mission of Christ. And this knowledge will also help, the researcher would like to argue, to grasp the symbolic life and mission of some major characters in the Amharic novel.

Criticizing the absurdity of the prevailing social structure, Christ endeavors to indicate both to his proponents and opponents the right path toward redemption, healthy secular life, and the eternal Kingdom as well. However, he is misunderstood and misjudged. As a result his life is entangled in a tragic conflict with his environment. In spite of society's deleterious reaction to his advocacy, he continues to fight its obstinate dissidence without using the weapons of his opposers. His only weapon is his teaching through action and utterance. In the Biblical story where the world of poetry and that of history coalesce, he confronts a society characterized by a formalized religion, hypocrisy, envy, and evil. Although he is crucified in this encounter, he brings life to this world of demise through his glorious Death. His message is a lesson after whose example others are urged to learn. He also assumes the role

of the poet. As Knight remarked, "He created in his imagination his own poetry and then acts it, making himself protagonists in his own drama" (1963 : 52 ). And as such his language is poetic .

All this enables the reader to see that Christ gives his life to save others. To use Bonhoeffer's words Christ is "the man for others". The moral of this dictum is clear : Jesus wants us mortals to learn first and foremost to do right by our fellow men. In other words access to the Kingdom of God, to eternal Life is possible only if obeisance to the Words of God which put us in close touch with the here is realized, for it is through the things and creatures of this world that God deals with us. "I take Him," W.F Lynch argues, "--- as the model and source of that energy and courage we again need to enter the finite as the only creative and generative source of beauty"(1960: XIV). This is to mean that Christ concerns himself first with the here, the temporal as the only way to keep in touch with the hereafter, the eternal.

What is the moral of this comparison between the being and existence of some major characters in the Amharic novel and that of Christ? It is obviously a commitment to call upon the attention of lovers of literature to the striking affinity between the life and mission of these characters and that of Christ. Is this parallelism simply accidental? or is there any serious reason to account for this resemblance which has never been brought to light ?

The assumption from the researcher's side goes along with the conviction which upholds the accountability of a certain rooted reason: the pervasive

influence of the Holy Bible upon the lives of men (even the non-believers), the existence of primordial images in the collective unconscious . Archetypal images and symbols, spiritual and material experiences of man, the various segments of past events are "discovered never really to have been lost at all, but to have been incorporated, to have been "incarnate," all along in the deepest part of the mind, indeed in the very body itself" (Proust's argument as paraphrased by Scott, 1967 :55). Thus the source of the Christ-figures in the Amharic novel whom this thesis is in quest of is believed to be the well of archetypal images and religious symbols , the involuntary influence of the Bible upon the minds of men. Be it conspicuously or unrecognizably "those works of literature which have special appeal in the modern situation draw much of their power from their use of profound religious-cultural symbols" (Wilder, 1958 : 31-32 ).

The researcher's argument is that, as is true in the literary works of the Western world, Christ has his incognitos in the Amharic novel throughout the different stages of its periodic stride. The researcher is of the conviction that the writers of such novels see Christ from the perspective of their preferred life-ideal and use the redeemer-archetype each in terms of the need of his time. In the final analysis it is observed that the novelist and the theologian are allies in the fight against the evils of materialism and the follies of social life .

In a nutshell, these are observations around the central problem which have not been handled seriously and which this study strives to explore.

### **3.2 SPECIFIC**

The detailed objectives of the study which emerge from the aforementioned one are the following :

- a) To substantiate the appearance of the Christ-figure in the Amharic novel ;
- b) To demonstrate the modes of portraying this figure in the Amharic novel based on samples;
- c) To show the literary functions of depicting the Christ-figure in the selected novels;
- d) To ascertain if studying the Holy Scriptures is gainful in understanding Amharic literature in general.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

As this thesis is a research work on literary texts it is obviously a library-based undertaking. The project starts with the selection of befitting texts and reference materials. After a critical reading on the opted-for materials has been accomplished attempt is made to be heedful during the course of the actual criticism lest the whole approach should stick to a single school of thought. And as such the texts are treated from different points of view employing the methods of various interrelated disciplines whenever the need arises.

Doubtless, an attempt to comprehend the novels and the Bible is an arduous task which requires the application of different techniques of treatment. To discern the functioning of archetypal images and religious symbols one has to

employ the methods of psychoanalytic, mythical, and religious criticism. To demonstrate how and for what contemporary urgency the Christ-figure is handled at different stages in the history of the novel, to be cognizant of the relationship between the Biblical story and the history of society during the time of Jesus, one has to delve into the substance equipped with the historical method. To identify details that may substantiate the resemblance between, and interrelationship of, the Bible and secular literature one can't escape using the comparative approach. And so on. Generally speaking, during the treatment of a piece of literary work, the incorporation of different methods is unavoidable. An obstinate propensity to stick only to one particular approach and turn a blind eye to the rest is simply an obvious self-deception. L. Fielder's observation in this respect is worth citing :

**The "pure" literary critic, who pretends, in the cant phrase, to stay "inside a work all of whose metaphors and meanings are pressing outward, is only half-aware. And half-aware he deceives: for he cannot help smuggling unexamined moral and metaphysical judgments into his "close analysis" any more than the "pure" literary historian can help bootlegging unconfessed aesthetic estimates into his chronicles. Literary criticism is always becoming "something else" for the simple reason that literature is always "something else."**

(cited in Scott 1967 : 119-120)

By this is meant that literature should no more be considered as an absolutely self contained reality irrelevant to other fields of human experience; instead it should be seen in relation to other disciplines with the help of various

approaches and methods of treatment, for the work of literature is involved in the total human experience. In view of this fact the researcher has found it helpful, and indispensable indeed, to work on his inquiry entertaining the coalescence of different research methods; as such he has employed the interdisciplinary approach.

This being the general methodology of his inquiry the researcher concerns himself with the Amharic novel's relation to the Holy Writ pertaining particularly to the portrayal of the Christ-image. Then he reads the Amharic novels focusing on the life and mission of the major characters whom he thinks are images of the Savior. A better understanding of their life and mission requires an inter-textual reading which juxtaposes these figures from the novels with the Christ of the Biblical world. For this reason textual juxtaposition which concentrates on ideal life characterized by exemplary suffering leading to a symbolically glorious end is made one important instrument of analysis. If some selected fragments from the Biblical story are found conspicuously interposed between the various pieces of the analysis, it is simply because the researcher intends to make the juxtaposition justified. They should be understood as citations necessitated by the overall approach, not as a superfluous evidence to impose an unwarranted theological implication on the various incidents in the scrutinized narratives.

## **5. APPLICATION OF RESULTS**

**And this will, I should hope, be an effort that will result in the development of a generation of**

**theological critics so skilled in negotiating the transaction between art and faith that they would be capable of convincing both the art-ist and the theologian that nothing could be more wrongheaded than the suspiciousness with which they habitually view each other .**

(N.A. Scott,1967: 196)

I.It is hoped and believed that the outcome of this study will be of considerable importance particularly to two fields of study - literature and theology.

As this thesis is primarily an appreciation of the literary imagination, admirers of art and especially literary critics may be able to discern that the Amharic novel has striking theological implications, that it has picked up some thematic and technical features from the pervasively influential tradition of the Holy Scriptures. And as such they may consequently learn that, for a better understanding of Amharic literature, the study of the Bible is indispensable. This sample study is likely to give them an insight into, or at least to make them aware of, the rewarding possibilities of such a mode of reading as what it has employed. Moreover, they will be cognizant of one obvious advantage gained from such an endeavor: by studying the Bible and secular creative works like the Amharic novels scrutinized in the thesis "we can raise our understanding," to explain it in Knight's words, "beyond the complexities of prophecy and literature, history and revelation, and all their varied intricate symbolisms, to life itself, or Immortality" ( 1963: 36) .

The theologians, too, will possibly benefit much from the results of this research project. From the demonstration to be brought to light by the present study the theologians will find out that the novelist has a lot to say about the primary concerns of the Church, and even in a more incisive manner. In other words, they will be aware of the fact that "the deeper moral and spiritual issues of man today are often more powerfully canvassed by such writers than by the theologians themselves" (Wilder, 1958: 25). Because of such a recognition of, and compliance with, the role of the novelist in enriching the affairs of the Church, the theologian will quit his indifference to secular imaginative literature. He will instead urge the Church to pay sufficient heed to the theological implications of secular literary works, to learn "to diagnose the age through their insights, and---[through] what they have to say about its own chief concerns" (Ibid.: 60). And in the final analysis both the artist and the theologian will establish a mutual understanding of the hitherto ignored fact "that nothing could be wrongheaded than the suspiciousness with which they habitually view each other."

At last, the researcher hopes that this modest study will serve as a scaffold for further serious research aimed at building a domicile of an indigenous literary evaluation using the bricks of the theological dimensions of Amharic literature.

## 6. DEFINITION OF TERMS

There are some words used in this study starting from the formulation of the title which need a sort of explanation if not definition in the fullest sense of the term. They are briefly clarified as follows .

### 6.1 *Incognito*

The word *incognito* is derived from the Latin "*incognitus*, unknown; in - priv., and *congnitus*, pp. of *congoscere*, to know" (*Webster's N.T.C.D*). The denotation it has in the English language refers to a disguised person or character. The word is used in this thesis to stand for the major characters interpreted as Christ-figures. Their being termed (or "nicknamed" if one likes) as *incongnitos* implies that they are human guises in whose lives and deeds those of Christ are shrouded, that they are figures in whose being and existence Christ is "disguised". In the final analysis, thus, the word should be understood as signifying the characters' affinity with Christ, though they may seem to have been drawn as purely human beings alone.

### 6.2 *Christ*

Langdon Gilkey pointed out that "The figure of Jesus the Christ is almost perversely enigmatic and many-sided---" (1987:193). As applied in this inquiry, however, the word, with all its "enigmaticism" and "many-sidedness," refers to the concept which the Judeo-Christian Scriptures are all about. Thus,

what is adapted in the present study is its broader meaning as denoted by the Hebrew equivalent *Messiah*. This one is broader in meaning because it includes the "Christ" of the Jews whom they believe is not yet born. Therefore, Christ in the present inquiry should not be understood as a figure whose meaning is necessarily bound up with that of the historical Jesus alone, though citations are sometimes taken from the New Testament.

### 6.3 Archetype

The most common dictionary meaning of the word is "the original model, form, or pattern from which something develops" (Shaw, 1972 :31). In the psychoanalytic theory of Jung the word is given a somehow similar yet profound meaning. It is applied to denote inherited modes of psychic functioning which are derived from the race's experience of fundamental importance and present in the "collective unconscious" of mankind. About this psychological concept Jung wrote the following :

**Archetypes are, by definition, factors and motifs that arrange the psychic elements into certain images, characterized as archetypal, but in such a way that *they can be recognized only from the effects they produce*. They exist pre-consciously, and presumably they form the structural dominants of the psyche in general.---**

(cited in Knapp,1986:Vi)

Archetype is usually associated with myth and imagery, and in literature it is often defined as a recurring symbol or image which can be recognized as a major component of a race's mythical past or a writer's literary experience in general. Blending these interrelated meanings the researcher has used the word in this thesis to signify that the exemplary lives, deeds, and the ideal missions of the major characters in the novels studied here are derived from those of the archetypal Christ. The reading which considers them as Christ-figures emanates from this notion.

#### *6.4 Mimesis*

*Mimesis* is a Greek equivalent for *imitation*. For Aristotle, *mimesis* is a kind of making, not mere mimicry but an invention achieved by the selection, arrangement, and presentation of "actions". For him the configuration which results from such a creative process resembles yet differs from what it represents. Paraphrasing in summary form Ricoeur's extension of "these insights from Aristotle into a dynamic three-fold hermeneutics," P.A. Dorsey writes the following :

---- **Mimesis<sub>1</sub> is the "pre-understanding" of symbolic structures and narrative temporality shared by writers and readers; mimesis<sub>2</sub> is the poetic reconfiguration of such structures in specific texts, which can range from "servile repetition" to "calculated deviance"---; and mimesis<sub>3</sub> is the transfiguration of the "pre-understanding that**

occurs as the act of reading restructures the preliminary readability of the world of action" ----  
( 1996 :436)

Ricoer's is indeed a probe into the functioning and types of the creative process meant by Aristotle in respect of the concept *Mimesis* that concerns the relation of art and life. The word is used in this inquiry to imply the scrutinized novels' relation to life, to man's mythical past, to the collective literary experience of the race, and particularly to the Biblical tradition. The word as used in this thesis incorporates the explanations given by Aristotle and those extended by Ricoer, but disincludes Ricoer's "servile repetition," because in the novels there is no element of "servile repetition" at all. The characters drawn in them are, of course, results of a "fictional transfiguration" effected through the selection, arrangement, and presentation of actions from life and from archetypal images in man's mythical past . The researcher's preference of *mimesis* to *imitation*, in addition to indicating his intention to preclude the pejorative connotations\* which the latter incorporates, serves one purpose: it suggests that the novelists considered in this investigation have looked back (or unconsciously taken back), in their fictional works, to the distant mythical past of the human race; this is so if one considers the point that *mimesis* is older than *imitation*.

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\**Imitation* is sometimes taken as mere copying which results in a representation that is the mirror-image of the represented; this is the conception which the researcher wants to avoid by using *mimesis* instead of *imitation*.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE CHRIST-FIGURE AS QUESTER OF BENEFACTION AND HARBINGER OF SALVATION:

*Afəwərq's Libb Wəlləd Tarik*

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Whenever a God-man harmony is realized, an Incarnation is accomplished and the Christ - who must not be too rigidly limited to the historical Jesus - is born again.

(G.W.Knight, 1963:60)

*Libb Wəlləd Tarik* ("fictional story") has been studied by different researchers and received different commentaries which focus on its nature and contribution as a piece of literary work. For A.S. Gérard, *Libb Wəlləd Tarik* is "... the first novel in Amharic, and indeed one of the first to have been written in any of the vernacular languages of Africa" (1971: 282). For T.L. Kane, "...the first work of fictional Amharic literature, the 'Libb Wəlləd Tarik' of Afəwərq Gäbrä - iyäsus ... introduced such a totally new kind of writing to the Ethiopian scene ..." (1975:16). For R.K. Molvaer, "... the first printed fictional work proper appeared in 1908, when Afəwərk Gäbrä Iyäsüs published his novel ..." (1980:8). For FIqre Tolosa, *Libb Wəlləd Tarik* "... is nothing but a folktale..." (1983:58). For Tayyəd Asəffa, "... Libb Wallad Tarik...signaled the beginning of novelistic writing in Amharic...." (1986:7).

*Libb Wəlləḍ Tarik* is, thus, these different things: a novel, simply a fictional writing which is not a novel, and a folktale.

There is one indisputable point as regards generic categorization in Amharic fictional literature: the practice of grouping the various fictional writings under finer classifications (genres) requires a thoroughgoing and original research which tries, in the process of careful scrutiny, to formulate indigenous yardsticks with which the assortment can be accomplished instead of heedlessly projecting the Western criteria into this literary heritage of a different society; this critical undertaking is what this young literature lacks today. Until this is done by some able critics in the future, however, incorporating Afḗwḗrq's controversy-provoking narrative in such a thesis as this which deals with the theological dimensions of the Amharic novel will not be erroneous and inconsistent with its objectives. The implication of the inclusion is that *Libb Wəlləḍ Tarik* in this thesis is tentatively (for matters of convenience) considered as a novel. In fact, based on the various designations given to it, one can name this narrative with a single chain of modifiers as a novelistic-fictional-folktalish-romance. This amounts to saying the narrative is a blending of all these; each modifier in the chain(including the last noun) displays at least one literary trait embodied in it\*. Isn't this, then, at least one characteristic feature of the genre of the novel? that of mixing the features of other forms in its form?

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\*But in a way somehow contrary to this view Yonas Admassu earnestly argues that *Libb Wəlləḍ Tarik* “defies classification. It reads at once as myth, legend, adventure, romance, fantasy, all put together rather hastily ...”(1995::94). This cautionary argument, and the lack of original and thoroughgoing research with regard to generic classification in Amharic fictional literature compel my incorporation of this narrative under the category of the novel to be only tentative.

No matter what one's answer to this question may be, a conscience which judges as right *Don Quixote's* being declared to be the fetal stage of the modern European novel or even, as G. Lukàcs said, "the first great novel of world literature" (cited in Reed, 1981:22) should never have any objection to *Libb Wəlləd Tarik's* being considered the first Amharic novel. It is the first creative work (with many features that enable it to be considered as a novel) which introduced fictional writing in Amharic, including the designation *Libb Wəlləd* (not unconsciously\*) hitherto unknown to the literature. One has to be reminded that the European novel got its designation from the literal meaning of the term «novel» which denotes newness (Cuddon, 1991:599); for the literary works given this name brought to the written literary scene a different style of story-telling. That is what Afəwərq's narrative did too. Presenting justifications further for this argument is not the aim of the present inquiry. What is important is the demonstration of the Christ-figure's portrayal in the narrative considered as a novel here; the question of generic categorization is secondary to this purpose. Whatever designation the narrative may be given it has little bearing on the present investigation which is theme-focused .

The researcher knows of no better literary work than *Libb Wəlləd Tarik* in the history of Amharic prose fiction which best suits the narrative structure of the

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\*Since Afəwərq wrote this narrative while he was in Rome (Gèrard, 1971: 280), his exposure to the various *belles- letters* of the Western world might have inspired the idea of deliberately coining this designation for the English equivalent "fiction."

folktale as outlined by V. Propp in his *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968). Although their attitudes towards, and valuation of, the author's tendency vary, A.S. Gérard (1971), Fiqre Tolosa (1983), and Tayyð Asðffa (1986) have commented on the narrative's conspicuous folktale-like framework. Discussing the various folktale-like features in detail here will be external to the thesis' concern. Anyone interested in this endeavor can sketch an outline which shows the structural juxtaposition between Propp's plot and character functions and Afðwðrq's narrative and do his job. The point intended to be made in mentioning this recognition in the present study is simply to hint to the reader that it is within this folktale-like frame the author of *Libb Wðllðd Tarik* weaves the theological implications of his narrative. But the theological implications revolving around the Christ-figure would not be fully deciphered through sketching the outline of structural features alone; they require a probe further into the substance of the text. "The very nature of literature, in other words, is felt," N.A. Scott writes, "to require the critic finally to move beyond the level of purely verbal and stylistic analysis to the level of metaphysical and theological valuation" (1967:120). The ensuing analysis tries to examine the text in this line.

The reader should note one cautionary point here. The ideological framework of *Libb Wðllðd Tarik* is basically religious, particularly that of Christianity. Some expressions used in the analysis which may sometimes sound value judgments should be understood as already founded on this ideological framework. The interpretation given in relation to the nature and missions of

the Christ-figure is an abstraction from the whole; and the whole is already there.

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The way any piece of creative writing begins its narration can set up the reader's frames of reference for interpretation so that they may be in line with its intention. This aim seems to be considerably present in the awareness of the narrator of the text under discussion. The text commences its telling with two maxims which serve as bricks for the foundation of its narrative structure. The maxims go:

**He who is benevolent to others lends; he  
who is malevolent unto others loses.  
When a charitable person gives, he is  
in fact lending, not giving.<sup>1</sup>**

This tendentious epigram prepares the reader from the outset to establish "a perspective" from which he will be able to construe the meaning of the whole story. It is purposely cited as a refrain, it seems, by way of insinuating to the reader that the moral of the chain of events coming forth is to be explicated accordingly. One would be in accord with this view if one realizes that the flow of events that come later, their complication and resolution, the fortunes of characters, and the laws of that fictional universe in general are attached to the ethics of benefaction and reward. Suffice it to say that this all-pervading concern of the text in making its texture from the ingredients of ethics and aesthetics proves to be a fertile ground to generate an interpretation which throws light on its theological dimensions.

Approached in view of this concern the first paragraph which follows the epigram can be understood as foregrounding the theological implications of the text. It makes the reader feel as though he were to read the Bible, being led into the world of the New Testament from the world of Torah. The first paragraph of the "novel" alludes to this:

**At the beginning of the Christian era, when the Torah was demoted and the Gospel was being preached, the number of the pagans was exceedingly greater than that of the Christians. Then, the heathens, boasting about their sheer weight of numbers and unrivaled might, were now and then breaking into the territory of the Christians and invading them, ransacking their villages, and devastating their possessions in conflagration. <sup>2</sup>**

Where does the imagined picture of the above-mentioned world take the reader to? Obviously, it takes him, by its making use of religious allusion, to the Biblical world. In other words, the reader's attention towards uncontrollable recollections of man's myth-making convention (not outside the purview of which the Biblical tradition falls) is awakened.

The world of the text in the beginning was, it is further described, a world of unending entanglement with the calamities of war between the Christians and the "infidels". Neither of them was ready to curb the vicissitudes of animosity and come to favorable conditions of rapprochement with the other. "...Neither side was ready," the narrator says, "to compromise and bring the conflict to an end. Instead, every time, every year, and every month they fought against

each other, vied for victory, and strained against each other, massacred each other, extirpated each other"<sup>3</sup>. Theopoetically\* speaking, then, the text's initial world which introduces the onset of devilish goings-on is a "godless world" where the God-man relation is out of joint. It is that old world (reminiscent of the world of the Old Testament) whose very existence engenders its disintegration and the creation of a new one where the harmony of the God-man relation is restored. The reader's appreciation is called forth to a scenario of events that lays bare the heinous and incessant follies and chaos of that world which necessitate the effectuation of its reintegration and the restoration of order at last .

The first important event which is used as a basis for the complication of the story is created in such a "death-world". In the course of unceasing bloodshed and vandalism brought about by the enmity between the two forces (which, in their broader sense, represent good and evil) a Christian *Dəjjazmaç* is captured and sold into slavery. Here the reader's mind has to be tuned into the practices of symbolic reading. The *Dəjjazmaç* is meant to perform the functions of *dramatis personae* whose role is of great metaphoric significance. In the first place, he is not only a Christian but also an ideal benefactor who was devoutly helping the needy during the peaceful days of his past. As he was a devout Christian, he, in Wahid's words, "...didn't have the proclivity towards amassing wealth while he was a man of high standing in his homeland, he only took

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\*Theopoetics is A.N. Wilder's term (1991) which he used to signify the study of theology and poetry in coalescence; it is borrowed and applied in this inquiry in a similar sense.

pleasure in rewarding the valorous, and giving alms to the needy."<sup>4</sup> These principles of his life seem to have emanated from his devotion to the precept laid down by Christ: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal" (Matthew 6:19). Since, on the other hand, his enslavers are the "impious", figuratively speaking his subjugation amounts to saying that he is lost in that ever dark world governed by Satan. Understood in its broader sense, thus, his enslavement is death-in-life. Any act to rescue him should likewise be understood as setting free a loyal creature of God out of the hands of Satan. Having this moral encapsulated in the whole gamut of the story world, the author prepares an incarnational design to ensue in this death world for the *Dəjjazmaç*'s deliverance to take place and salvation to be gained.

The figurative incarnational design is the coming to this world of the twins - Wahid and T'obbiya. They are the *Dəjjazamaç*'s offsprings who are intended to be agents of his deliverance and society's redemption at large. To begin with, each of them is a symbol of dualism. On the one hand they are perfectly human and real to us; they are described like any real human beings as this :

**... At that time his twin children were only sixteen years old. Both were very charming and beautiful. As they were twins, they were so identical that it was difficult to distinguish one from the other. Even the male one didn't grow a beard. The only thing they differed in was the way they dressed themselves. Otherwise, each was a mirror image of the other.** <sup>5</sup>

Figuratively speaking, however, they are delineated as symbolic entities, as larger-than-life ideals whose lives and deeds seem to be illustrations of some "mythic" and "mystic" power. The consideration of man's symbolic godliness here will be of good help in the understanding of their portrayal in this dimension. Man is "naturally" a symbol of two-way dualism: that of 1) body and soul, and 2) man and God-in-man; for God has created him in the beginning saying, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). But this symbolic godliness manifests itself only if the God-man harmony is realized. By this standard Wahid and T'obbiya are not only perfectly human but symbols of the God-in-man with whose precepts their unflinching missions accord. On top of their righteous quest, there are some seemingly insignificant signposts of their godliness, one of which is T'obbiya's physical description. After stirringly sketching the details of her unmatched looks in a highly elevated language, the narrator concludes his description with the following sentences:

**...T'obbiya's beauty in no way looked like that of an ordinary human creature; it was such a miracle that it looked as though God, on one of his merry days, finely designed and sculpted her with much care and expertise, and breathed into her the breath of life. It was in vain that T'obbiya wore flesh; apart from this her demeanor and beauty seemed to have had the nearest affinity with the *Cherubim*.<sup>6</sup>**

This description makes T'obbiya a bigger-than-ordinary creature, exalting her to the extent that the *Cherubim* are chosen as the only and befitting possibility

to liken her charm and beauty to. Most important of all, as can be deciphered from the implication of the last tendentious sentence, the narrator seems to confess that near-to-perfect beauty and the mystery behind it are beyond human capability to comprehend. What is suggested here by the moral of the whole description is T'obbiya's symbolizing a divine being whose impalpable characteristics manifest themselves through human guise. In other words, the infinitude of her grace which the law of symbolic creation and religious imagery bestows upon her in making her a sort of "female Christ" is recognizable in her physical description, recognizable, in fact, only if one is ready to think in terms of symbolism. And this is unlikely without the awareness of the narrator who wants us to understand that T'obbiya is a Christ-figure through whose agency he plans to revamp the whole system of the text's fictional society.

There is still another important point which helps much in the appreciation of the symbolic godliness of Wahid and T'obbiya. One key question arises: What does their being twins suggest? Speaking in terms of creative reading, it suggests that they are one and the same soul in two different yet identical guises. They are so identical that even their parents sometimes fail to easily distinguish between them. Two sentences which are about the frequently stated fact of their striking resemblance, now from the pagan king's viewpoint, are worth considering here: "...when the king saw Wahid for the first time he was very much pleased. Indeed, Wahid strikingly resembled T'obbiya as though he wore her flesh."<sup>7</sup> While their sexual difference is a simple creative

mechanism to naturalize their human identity, they, taken together as a single soul, are a symbol of the God-in-man, a manifestation of the Savior archetype.

To accomplish the mission of the archetypal Christ they get going in the text in perfect human guises one following the other. One has to be reminded here that there is no event in the text, except the beginning and the ending parts of it, in which Wahid and T'obbiya as perfect human beings happen to be together in their pursuit of religious-ethical salvation. This suggests that the "messianic" function is performed by one and the same Christ-figure that appears in the guise of Wahid at one time and in that of T'obbiya at the other.

In this course of a figurative quest Wahid paves the way in setting himself the task of rescuing his enslaved father. In the appreciation of such a symbolic mission blood tie, it must be born in mind, is no more significant. Wahid's commitment is to be understood as a pledge to extricate, metaphorically speaking, any human creature lost in the wilderness, in the dark woods of worldly life. To carry out this exemplary undertaking he chooses the one way by which he demonstrates his humbleness and piety. He decides to get some work of whatever kind which would enable him to generate at least some of the ransom money requested by the *Döjjazmaç*'s master. What comes to his mind as a last resort in this contemplation is the idea to search for a caravan merchant to whom he may become a servant. This he does in order to set free his enslaved father, leaving his mother and sister behind, task akin to that of the Son of Man who "is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:11). Viewed from the point of view of religious symbolism,

Wahid's commitment is reminiscent of the Biblical imagery in the shepherd parable where the owner leaves the whole flock behind to seek after the lost one (Matthew 18:12-14). His saintly task is in affinity with such an imagery and his decision to become a servant testifies to his being a man for others, for it shows his humility for the good of others. This is so if one takes into account Wahid's family background - that he is a respected *Dâjjazmaç*'s son who has himself experienced a life of luxury. The itinerant merchant whom Wahid meets and politely requests to appoint him as one of his servants is taken by astonishment when he hears Wahid's application and says: "...Why on earth should a good boy of noble birth like you wish to condescend to be a caravan servant? Your language is polished, your attire splendid, your deportment and manners those of a high-born person..."<sup>8</sup> This, apart from attesting to Wahid's determination to suffer for the welfare of others, suggests his supernal perfection, for his being a young boy of noble birth as recognized by the merchant could be understood as if it sounded 'divine birth.'

The merchant turns him down, but sympathizes and gives him some money. Later on he also secretly pays the exorbitant ransom money demanded by the slave owner. The merchant is, thus, Wahid's donor (helper), and this implies the former's devoutness which is implicitly promised to be requited later. The merchant's benefaction to whose requital the whole story is complicated is one manifestation of his devotion to God through Wahid the "messiah." If this is seen in line with the moral of the epigram at the beginning of the narrative, it would be understood as a virtuous deed whose anticipated reward has a plausible affinity with the way Christ's apostles were promised to enter the

Eternal City. Tradesmanship is simply the materialism of the world without recourse to which the merchant could never have had the means to pay for the release of the *Dəjjazmaç*. There is one moral lesson to be learned from this paradox in the merchant's situation: money is desirable as a means of benevolence provided that it is not allowed to dominate over the deeper realities of the true life. But the accrual of wealth contrary to this end will bar man from eternal Life (Matthew 19:16-22). To make this lesson the driving force for the further complication of the story the *Dəjjazmaç* is now liberated with the help of the merchant. The merchant is the physical (and at the same time the magical) means for Wahid to reach and bring to the make-believe design the invisible hands of his heavenly Father. And Wahid becomes the symbolic figure through the praiseworthy efforts of whom the figuratively devil-possessed *Dəjjazmaç* is freed.

After the *Dəjjazmaç*'s liberation and the family's reunion Wahid swears not to be back home until he finds the beneficent merchant and expresses his gratefulness. With this he resumes his quest for the lost benefactor, in the course of which his passions and figurative crucifixion are manifest. He leaves home deserting his parents. "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven," he seems to say inwardly, "the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matthew 12:50). With this conviction he continues his unending search for the caravan merchant in the wilderness. Here it should be noted that the caravan merchant did the will of God in what he had done for Wahid and his father, and that is why Wahid is searching for him leaving his parents behind. But the corollary of this is that he has to suffer. Salvation is to

be attained only through suffering. The description of young Wahid's fear and psychological conditions during his sojourn in the wilderness serves a figurative purpose in the narrative foregrounding its ethical implications. The description of his nocturnal journey during which he footslogs in the dark with a tumultuous cry to scare the dangerous beasts of the night which may prey on him is of particular interest. The various frightening and challenging incidents which menace Wahid call up recollections of Christ's temptations which Satan vainly tried to entice the Lord with. These pivotal events of dread-inspired endangerment are, interestingly enough (interesting because this state magnifies their affinity with the Lord's temptations ), three in number .

a) ...At one juncture in the darkness, he saw something like a bush. He thought that it was the real lion with its four legs, and his soul seemed to betray his body <sup>9</sup>

b) ...While he was trudging up and down in the darkness changing his direction every now and then, on the spur of the moment something like a small cave sprung up on his left side; thus his dread and shivers ever increased... <sup>10</sup>

c) ...In the mean time a small bird which had been sheltering in the cave as if it hid to witness the drama going on there suddenly rustled the leaves slapping them with its wings, and flew away, as though it suspected detection. With this, thinking that the same lion was jumping to snatch, and prey on, him, Wahid held his breath and lay flat on the ground motionlessly...<sup>11</sup>

These are, of course, incidents which plainly expose the hero's extreme fear and trepidation. If symbolically understood, however, they are pointers of snares (temptations of the Lord from another angle) which could have hindered his messianic missions. But his pursuit is not hampered by any of these because of his strong commitment. The very beast which is imaginatively made to scare Wahid in the darkness is the lion. The author's preference of this lion to other beasts which might have been equally dangerous has a symbolic significance according to Yonas. Any of the beasts of the jungle could have scared Wahid. "...In the logic of the story, however," Yonas argues, "which draws upon the cultural code of equating 'manhood' with 'courage' and 'bravery,' Wahid's fear, thus depicted, *underscores* the importance of the value upheld by the cultural community which gives birth to the story. ---" (1995:102). I fully agree with this point. But in addition to this imagery the lion, for me, symbolizes the world of evil, that dark world of heathenism represented by the centaur (which is itself a mythical figure that is half horse and half man). Wahid's passing this jungle without being hindered by the endangerment of the imaginary lion foreshadows the triumph of his symbolic mission over that world of heathenism later.

After all this symbolic endangerment Wahid enters the infidels' land on a mule's back which has come to a nearby stream to quench its thirst. To understand the text within the scope of its broader religious imagery, the figurative significance of this act should never be underestimated. This mule which is the property of the infidels who would cause his suffering takes him to the place where his figurative "crucifixion" starts to take place. It is also

possible to say that Wahid's figurative crucifixion is "expected," for the reader can anticipate that Wahid's quest for his benefactor following the track of the itinerant merchants may lead him to the hostile infidels' land and put him to jeopardy. Fortunately it is previously hinted by the maxims that, in spite of his travails and suffering, he (as any good doer) will end up in glory (in the way Christ's death was foretold to be glorious).

Till the turning up of the time at which this might be fulfilled, he continues to be amid a relatively dangerous tide of events. For one thing the mule attendants beat him mercilessly, mistaking him for a thief. This signifies his figurative passion which reaches its climax when he is shackled and scourged by the muleteers. He is misunderstood and misjudged. The narrator compares Wahid's suffering with that of the Martyrs and says: "--- His suffering and ordeal was similar to, and no less than, that of the Martyrs which is heard about when the *Gəḍil* (lit. Adventures of the Martyrs) is read.---"<sup>12</sup> This is not a pointless allusion; in addition to vivifying, through religious imagery, the severity of his torture, it helps to exalt Wahid's missions to a bigger-than-life status whereby the direction of the story's culmination which actualizes the ethically-g geared fortune of the hero is hinted at in advance.

The muleteers left him there as good as "dead". An old peasant woman who comes to collect *Kubəṭ* (sun-dried dung) for fuel catches sight of him from a distance. She reluctantly approaches and finds out that this lying body is a wounded young man. With the help of her husband she takes him home and nurses him tenderly till he fully recovers. This, apart from drawing the picture

of the polarity of secular life between good and evil represented by the deeds of this family and the muleteers respectively prepares the way for the message of benevolence and requital to be actualized. The message is discernible if one sees it in relation to the point that the hospitable peasant family is rewarded later through the appointment by Wahid of their lost-and-found son, something in line with the words: "whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42). This, then, falls inside the purview of the general flow of events that makes Wahid the Christ-figure of Afðwðrq's fictional universe.

Such pivotal encounters indicate the symbolic significance apparent in the steps of Wahid's onerous quest which recall the Stations of the Cross or steps in Christ's final journey to death. The most commonly known stations, as listed by E.M. Moseley, are fourteen, ranging between Christ's condemnation and the laying of his body in the tomb (1962:99). The various encounters of Wahid starting from his figurative condemnation by the caravan guards up to his figurative crucifixion, considered within a broader theopoetic context, are of the same mythopoetic derivation. The hero's figurative crucifixion is his enslavement. As the condition of his life dedicated to effecting the welfare of others gets worsened, he is captured by the infidel slave traders and is sold into slavery. Slavery is an important trope here. It is possible to say that he is "dead" when he is enslaved. Thus slavery in this context connotes death in life.

A look into the atrocious nature of Wahid's enslavers whose improbity subjected him to servitude illuminates the figurative meaning of slavery in the text. As it has already been pointed out in relation to the enslavement of the *Dəjjazmaç*, the infidels' world in which Wahid is enslaved symbolizes the world of spiritual death. It is the continuation of that same world where the God-man harmony is denied. To this world Wahid is sent as its redeemer; but for the time being to also suffer the tribulations resulting from its diabolical design. The intentionality in drawing this world as a sphere of figurative death can be inferred from the following description of the slave owner's compound where a guard is likened to the devil:

--- At the main gate was standing a *Shanqqilla* [(extremely black man)] as dark as Satan himself, whose broad chest looked as could be measured in cubits, whose height was as tall as a pillar, whose eyes were bloody red like *Insosilla* [(henna)], whose nose looked as if it had been flattened by a landslide. Having decorated his arms which were as thick as the feet of an elephant with his copper and tin armlets, belting up his four-aged sword swinging down his pumpkin-like naked belly, and holding his bludgeon tight in his right hand, he fixed himself upright at this entrance to drive off anyone who would try to pass into the compound with no approval ---<sup>13</sup>

Wahid is sold to a slave trader whose compound is patrolled by such a terrible guard. Until his triumphant liberation at last (which is his figurative "resurrection") Wahid henceforth has to sojourn in such a horrendous

compound which reads as a symbol of "the tomb." Up to this point Wahid has led an exemplary life demonstrating his humility, patience, and sacrifice which practically teaches mankind that these are the truest ways to deal with this transient world, that involvement in the suffering of the Savior is the only way to enter the eternal Kingdom. His enslavement is, thus, the acme of his mission which serves simply as a necessary step on the way to his liberation, to his glory, to the true Life.

As Wahid is a symbol of dualism, the human aspect of this dualism is trapped as slave for the time being, opening another door to the story for the continuation of its development. His "messianic" role is but to be taken over and pursued by T'obbiya in the guise of a boy from now on. What has to be reckoned with here for a better appreciation of this figurative succession is their being one and the same soul in two human guises as pointed out earlier.

Now Wahid is away from home for a long duration, then the need arises among the family for his search. Within the continuous flow of events motivated by the separation-and-reunion motif, Wahid now starts to play the role of the "lost sheep" leaving the function of the quester to his sister, T'obbiya. Here it will be profitable to think in terms of function, not of character. The function of the lost (enslaved) character which is equivalent to that of the lost sheep in the Shepherd parable is performed by three different human guises: the *Dəjjazmaç*, the caravan merchant, and Wahid himself. This is not strange in the long history of man's myth-making tradition; for there are narratives where "a single sphere of action is distributed among several

characters" (Propp, 1990:81). In quest of the lost Wahid, thus, T'obbiya's journey together with her father is agreed upon. Her symbolic mission as such starts here.

On the commencement of her glorious task T'obbiya puts herself in the guise of a boy on her own initiative. Brought to its highest pitch with the help of creative reading, this move suggests the design and process of T'obbiya's figurative incarnation; being the God-in-man on the one hand, she metaphorically takes on the flesh of man when she dresses herself like a boy. It also implies T'obbiya's taking over of Wahid's arduous yet righteous task whereby the one and the same soul of the savior-archetype gains the opportunity to appear in two forms of human guise - earlier in that of Wahid and now in that of T'obbiya. Most important of all, this operation suggests that the sexual difference between the twins is immaterial - that T'obbiya's being a female character doesn't hinder her undertaking as a savior. Without ceasing to be "--- the symbol of as well as the agent for the realization of the political ideal summarized by the coda at the end of the story ---" (Yonas, 1995:105), she is, in fact, a kind of "female Christ" to the pagan king and the society at large. It amounts to saying: 'you can imagine her in the guise of a boy, if you like, but that doesn't make any difference; whatever her sex is, she is still a Christ-figure.'

On their way to Wahid, T'obbiya and her father are informed by their panic-stricken wealthy host about the advance of the second invasion. This leads to the semi-causal and semi-fortuitous convergence of events - the quest for

Wahid and the second invasion of the infidels. This convergence of events in turn paves the way via which T'obbiya's undertaking is raised from a quest for the lost brother to a more elevated "messianic" mission of liberating the Christians out of the hands of the invaders, of Christianizing the whole world - the story world chosen as a microcosm of the universe.

The invaders whose news causes great consternation among the Christians make a sudden thrust to the latter's land. This heralds the onset of the second invasion which grants the world of "evil" the opportunity to become completely victorious for the time being. It is to save this world menaced by sudden havoc that T'obbiya is drawn here. Accompanied by her father, she climbs a desolate hill to keep herself out of sight and escape the calamitous invasion. She is surrounded by the forces of evil. T'obbiya's stay at the desolate hill, when seen in relation to her well-founded undertaking as a Christ-figure, indicates her preparedness to bear her own cross and that of others as a way to redemption, to fight against maleficence without using the weapon of the invaders - violence. Her prayers there also signify her strong devotion to her heavenly Father, and sanctify her hiding place (on whose symbolic significance some points will be reckoned later). Her invocation when she is in time of danger doesn't signal withdrawal from commitment, but suggests her pious acceptance of it and her humble determination - that she is only too aware of her humanity and God's role in the success of her mission. This is in affinity, though remote, with Christ's utterance which proves that he didn't accept his death calmly: "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

T'obbiya's appeal is not any different, for her conviction is that nothing short of God's will can free the world from evil, though it is through her agency. Her situation in this connection, in the final analysis, sheds light on the theological orientation of the whole story.

As T'obbiya is the "Christ-figure" of that fictional universe she is hostile to evil. This is rendered in her thoughtful remonstrance when she gazes at the extermination of the Christian people and the ruination of their property:

**--- What a charity! Such is true alms-giving! A barbarous heathen's benefaction! Burning down the crops while people, sons of Adam, are starving to death; snatching all the food from the hands of the hungry and supplying it to a blaze; driving the naked out of his shelter and giving all the hut and the villa to damaging fire; ah! all this is indeed a grand benevolence!<sup>14</sup>**

This is what the invaders actually do. The destructive force they constitute, in T'obbiya's view, is the epitome of the world of evil, the world of heathenism, the world of amorality. In addition to what the massacre exposes, the invading force's diabolical design is once again hinted by its banner which bears the picture of a centaur. The description of the pagan king's huge and decorated tent erected at the center of a myriad of escorting tents displays to the reader's imagination the contrast between this camp and the solitary hill where T'obbiya and her father hid. These contrasting images show the discrepancy between the interests and arms of the two hostile forces. They also lay a justifying foundation for the latter glorification and exaltation to the Savior's status of T'obbiya's mission in reversing the fortunes of these incompatible

forces. That is to say the discrepancy between the power of the two combating forces is now drawn by these contrasting images to justify in advance T'obbiya's assuming the role of the Christ-figure in becoming the agent for the restoration of peace later in a world of such forces. The conspicuous portrayal of the invading army as a force of evil is shown by the following sentences which magnify its ownership of transient material wealth and the heathenism it worships :

--- At the center of this multitude of tents was erected a huge tent whose size was between a big house and a hillock. It had golden draperies and a crown-like spire made of gold. On the top of this golden spire again was hung a banner onto which a centaur with its arrow was inscribed. This banner was adorned with alternate draperies of gold and silver rustling in the air. T'obbiya and her father now learnt that this was for sure the king's special tent. It was also discovered that the centaur was the heathens' idol.<sup>15</sup>

The last sentence of this account concludes that the invaders are fetishists whose idol is the figure of the centaur. But as is noticeable elsewhere in the text, for the Christians and equally for the authorial narrator there seems to exist no difference between "Muslim" and "pagan." Both denominate the invaders with these names interchangeably. The invaders also designate the Christians as "*kaffirs*" which means "infidels". This, indeed, emanates from the feeling of self-righteousness which any believer or fetishist has in

reverence to what he worships. Nonetheless, the narrator's (the author's if one likes) position is inexcusable for this apparent confusion, because he wants the reader to accept that the king of the invaders is Muslim while his emblem is a fetishist's centaur. What is important for the purpose of this inquiry is, in fact, not nomenclature but the images drawn, signifying good and evil. One of these forces is, whatever name it may be given, a belligerent force with "devilish" undertakings, and the other is the Christians with virtuous commitment. T'obbiya's role as a Christ-figure is, thus, to restore peace and order in the world of such combating forces, through her agency for the triumph of good over evil.

When the escorted infidel king climbs the top of the hill where T'obbiya and her father have hidden, everything starts to follow the right track towards salvation. Before anybody else the king himself spots them there. Saving them from falling prey to his killer soldiers, he makes them his captives. His justifying argument for doing so goes: "Killing unarmed and defenseless people instead of holding them captives is no proof of bravery at all"<sup>16</sup>. One can say that the king's argument amplifies T'obbiya's non-violent nature for which reason he starts to change his mind. She is unarmed and ready to shoulder whatever trouble the infidels may cause. As pointed out earlier no one accompanies her but the Holy Ghost; her weapon is not bullets but her appeal to the heavenly Father. This is typical of non-violence - Christ's motto.

Meanwhile, the king asks them why they happen to be there. The *Dəjjazmaç* responds this: "---We hid here because we thought that God would deliver us from the depredations of this war."<sup>17</sup> The *Dəjjazmaç*'s reverence-laden utterance impels the king's jester to improvise an instantaneous mockery which belittles the Christian faith in such a derisive speech as this:

**Oh, yes! *Kaffirs* say that their God lives in the heavens. Thus why they have come up to the peak of this hill is that they will be nearer to their God so that their invocations reach Him fast and He may deliver them from our hands. --**

- 18

The jester's contumely expressed in fetishist parlance is central in the present discussion of the narrative. Viewed in contrast with the *Dəjjazmaç*'s previous speech it once again draws a magnified image of the disparity between the two forces, the irreconcilable antagonism between Christian faith and idolatry, whereby T'obbiya's successful agency later in Christianizing such heathens is grounded. Moreover, the residues of metaphysical and theosophical reflections at the back of the authorial narrator's mind are hinted at. In other words, primordial images of the cosmic mountain which are present inchoate in the collective unconscious (perhaps due to the unnoticeable influences of the mythical past which includes the Biblical tradition) now seem to produce their effects in the making of the desolate hill. T'obbiya and her father are on the hill to get access to the mysterious and mystical hands of their Father Almighty; this is so only if their stay at this hill is understood in its figurative implication which transcends its straightforwardly stated purpose - hiding.

Ridiculed though it is by the impious jester, the hill, alongside the metaphysical purpose associated with it (that of being a holy place to reach the invisible hands of the Creator in Heaven), has a grain of relevance with the Biblical conception of the cosmic mountain - Golgotha. The most important part of the fictional historical event takes place on this hill and in its surroundings. Through the agency of T'obbiya salvation is attained first and foremost there. On account of this noble function indeed the hill in the story world proves to be the archetypal Golgotha, with the death-resurrection motif taking a different form. The jester's speech is, thus, wrought to suggest this under the banner of mockery.

The jester is portrayed as an extremely cadaverous and then repulsive creature. This portrayal has the purpose of disclosing his satanic intrusion. Figuratively speaking, he is a demon created to exacerbate and make noticeable the insidious effects of evil. What is still more important in discussing the theological dimensions of the text is the *DəjjazmaÇ*'s reverent response to this sacrilegious nonsense uttered by the faceless jester. He expresses, amid T'obbiya's state of taciturnity, his reaction against the heathen's blasphemy and declares the infinitude and pervasiveness of God's might over the created world. This is apparent in the following long speech of his :

**- - - To this God of the Christians, Whom you are  
ridiculing now, neither the proximity of the mountains  
nor the remoteness of the plains, neither the  
boundlessness of the expanse nor the abyss of the  
oceans, neither the clemency of the wind nor the**

fieriness of the sun, neither the fierceness of the volcano nor the frigidity of the snow, neither the murkiness of the night nor the powerfulness of the storm can be a hindrance which may obstruct His mercy or wrath. Everything is equally under his might. Everything that is made is made out of nothing and shall exist or cease to exist and perish upon His will. Be he vigorous or weak, courageous or cowardly, rich or poor, master or servitor, all these are equal in front of him. Everything is almost nothing in front of him, and there is no difference between the superior and the inferior as such. In this world both the believer and the heathen shall live equally: they are born, they grow, they become old and then perish. In the hereafter, however, all shall be rewarded or punished by Him according to their deeds and faiths.--- And now myself and this son of mine shall devoutly believe in our God until we die. Even if you kill us now, we know our death is caused only by our human weaknesses and misdeeds and not because Christ is incapable of attending our invocations and of delivering us from death. ---<sup>19</sup>

In this long speech is framed the religious ideology of the narrative - that of Christianity. The mission of the Christ-figures, particularly of T'obbiya, is creating a peaceful world where this ideology is accepted and practiced. The last sentence of this speech which shows the speakers sheer strength of faith recalls Christ's speech that assures the inevitability of his awaited death and its purpose :

**The Son of Man shall be betrayed  
into the hands of men: and they**

shall kill him, and the third day he  
shall be raised again .

(Matthew 17: 22-23)

As Tayyð rightly put it, though he doesn't fully declare T'obbiya's role as a Christ-figure, "Since the informing principle behind such a structural organization of the story appears to be this religious ideology, the verisimilitude of the frequent coincidences and other extra-ordinary events cannot be appreciated in isolation from this context " ( 1986:25).

Amidst the derisive laughter of his insolent courtiers the king intervenes and speaks this :

**Allah created the world by His own will. Allah rules all peoples of the world according to their various religions by His own will. Upon his will listens He to all peopels in their respective languages; judging them according to their deeds He sends them into everlasting punishment or eternal life. However, man has always believed that a religion other than his own is something worthless. Oh no, not again! You should no more deride the religion of others. It is only Allah who has the omniscience to know the true religion. It is only Allah who judges every thing. For that matter, who really knows if the religion of the *Kaffirs*[(Christianity)] is not the best one ? <sup>20</sup>**

One has to note that the pagan king who has come with flooding troops to conquer the Christian land and subjugate the people without giving due respect to their faith now utters this speech which announces religious

egalitarianism. From this moment onwards the king starts to change his mind. This aberration may appear to many to be implausible because it is unlikely that it happens so without the operations of a *deus ex machina*. But the reason for the king's immediate change of mind has been previously justified by the narrator when he conspicuously says: "At this point the king interrupted the laughter of his entourage and, as if he were inspired by the Holy spirit, spoke this . . ." <sup>21</sup> If the narrative is to be understood within the context of its theological orientation it must be noted that the motive and purpose of the king's speech are summed up by this report. It is argued that the king's unexpected change of mind is due to the operations of a "*deus ex machina*" (not of traditional theism but of the miraculous design of God) - through the Holy spirit. This is the most important point to be underlined. One might argue that there is no need to search for any other account for this change but the natural moral sense that exists in man; however, in this context, it is not the natural moral sense that has caused the king's unforeseen and thoroughgoing change of mind, but the Holy spirit. Consequently T'obbiya's role as a Christ-figure is heightened, for it is her presence there, her non-violent mien, her godliness, and the recognition of all this as inspired by the Holy Ghost that caused the king's alteration of stance. In other words T'obbiya is responsible for the mystical power which has exorcised the evil spirit from the king by way of which her "messianic" role is justified. For those whose conviction, as Scott put it, is that ". . . The Deus ex machina is . . . nothing more than a spooky phantasm of the pre-scientific imagination" (1967:171), all this may be misleading and nebulous. Nevertheless, the manipulation of the functions of the "*deus ex machina*" is, it must be known,

the vehicular device of imaginative writing concerned with the extraterrestrial aspects of human life and its relevance to the secular one, even in this age of science.

T'obbiya's accountability for the reversal of the pagan king's decisions and the diversion of the entire narrative's direction is further justified by an event in which T'obbiya's reaction inspires thoughtfulness in the king. This event is the occasion on which the impious warriors are on royal parade displaying their trophies in front of the king. At the sight of this display T'obbiya shudders and weeps, for what she has observed reminds her of the destruction wrought on the Christians. The king notices her weeping from a distance, and her feeling in turn disturbs him. Consequently, as he has been disillusioned about his past deeds by the virtuous inspirations of T'obbiya, the king, realizing that his festivity is the source of other people's grief, interrupts the display of trophies and goes to his tent. By implication T'obbiya's mission assumes a "messianic" goal here. The world which she encounters is full of severance manifest in predisposition towards homicidal and destructive exercise: man is disunited from God. It is because of the presence of this baneful divorce between man and God that T'obbiya comes to arrange the figurative reunion through her messianic agency. G.W. Knight has observed this pattern in the New Testament. He argues, concerning the purpose of Christ's Incarnation, that "...A divine being comes to visit man to reunite him with God; that would not be necessary had there been no severance. The new Testament both reminds us of this severance and points us to reintegration . . ." (1963: 62). What *Libb Wəlləd Tarik* points us to has some degree of

similarity with what Knight suggests. Above anything else the comparison made between the royal parade and the day of the Last Judgment - perhaps the most sarcastic juxtaposition in the narrative which has the purpose of magnifying the devilish nature of the festivity - unmasks the severance in the story world. The comparison goes : ". . . when T'obbiya and her father observed this grace, this stillness, it appeared to them to be nothing else but the Last Judgment itself. " <sup>22</sup>

T'obbiya's influence in effecting the pagan king's gradual self-realization reaches its apogee when one day, being touched by her thoughtful contemplation and sorrow, the king decides to issue a decree. Being faithful to his promise, he issues a decree declaring that there shall be no more religious war, no more invasion, and no more slavery. After this decree history takes a different course in the story world. Thus the narrator says: "After this proclamation, pillage and massacre were brought to an end. And the campaign was discontinued from this day onwards. At the camp was founded a great capital city. . . ." <sup>23</sup> The king had been a heartless invader; now he has changed. The story moves from initial darkness to final light to quell the plight of the Christians. All this is effected only through the agency of T'obbiya. Hence her "messianic" task. Thus, reading the narrative taking into account T'obbiya's affinity with the Messiah is plausible.

The pagan king has already started to love T'obbiya. The love which this king and his cousin have for T'obbiya must be appreciated as an affection of spiritual implication not as mere manifestation of carnal desire. In this

connection one important interpretation made by Biblical exegesis concerning spiritual love must be considered: God is Love, and Love is God; the source of this Love, this Life Force is His divine beauty, His Grace. In a theological scrutinization of an imaginative text like *Libb Wəlləd Tarik* one cannot escape but think carefully about the relevance of this to the story world. The spiritual nature of the king's love for T'obbiya can be deciphered if approached with such a textual juxtaposition. The king loves T'obbiya who is drawn as the apotheosis of beauty irrespective of her sex: he has loved her equally even before he discovers that she is female. This proves that her sex doesn't matter in the liking which the king has for T'obbiya. Figuratively speaking, thus, the king's love for T'obbiya could be read as a love for a mystical and ethereal beauty which he can't help but love. The inhumanity of man (as represented by the damaging deeds of the conflicting forces, specially by the invading force's abhorrent destruction) had emanated from the obstinate denial of this Love. The marriage between T'obbiya and the king should also be understood not in terms of earthly wedlock. Put on a higher thematic plane signalled by its symbolic significance, it is a metaphoric delineation of the marriage of heaven and earth, of Christ and the church in the secular world, for their (T'obbiya and the king's) marriage is instrumental to the triumph of Christianity over the maleficence of profane life.

In the course of T'obbiya's symbolic mission, something more interesting (interesting because it allows further theological juxtaposition) occurs: the king's courtiers conspire against T'obbiya. They become jealous of her because they suspect that the king may sack them in favor of her. This way

their misunderstanding of T'obbiya inspires the said intrigue in them. Thus, tactfully ensnaring her into their plotting, the courtiers who mistake T'obbiya for a boy (because she is in the guise of a boy) accuse "him" of adultery, as though "he" raped the king's cousin. The nub of the argument here is this: the courtiers' calumny against T'obbiya, different though it is on surface level, is reminiscent of the conspiracy which "Chief priests" and scribes devised against Christ. This one was similarly inspired by fear and jealousy which emanated from mistaking his mission for political rivalry.

The conspiracy in turn impels the *DəjjazmaÇ* to uncover the truth pertaining to T'obbiya's identity. This enables the king to learn the real identity of T'obbiya (which amounts to discovering the godliness in her dualism). He also learns the falsity of the accusation. If her father had not reported the truth, however, she would have kept the secret of her disguise unmasked lest the courtiers' intrigue be detected; the king wonders why she tolerates their malicious plan to this extent. This is, however, the signpost of her forgiveness and her hostility to revenge, which, in the final analysis, makes her a Christ-figure. Her tolerance could be understood as if she said: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:24). Her message is a lesson after whose example others are urged to learn.

In the meantime the pagan king announces to slave traders all over his kingdom to bring their slaves to see if Wahid happens to be among them. After a certain period of time slave owners together with a multitude of slaves start to flood in from all corners of his kingdom. The king commands that all

the slaves should pass in front of the tent where T'obbiya and her father reside so that they will be able to catch sight of Wahid. On the third day \* of such an arduous search Wahid, who was sold into slavery (and who was figuratively dead), is now found.

After his reunion with his family, Wahid refuses to accept the king's offer of appointment; Wahid's refusal is a mechanism devised to show his hostility to material wealth, to a commodious life style. Instead he decides to resume once again his quest for that caravan merchant whom he is indebted to. What is implied by this decision is his readiness and determination to save others through his suffering and self-sacrifice. But later he accepts the offer of adoration and appointment after the king promises him to do his best to reach the whereabouts of the caravan merchant. This should be understood not as betraying his own previous decision but as opting for another route towards its accomplishment whereby he attains his glorification. Thus Wahid, who has been a liege man, now becomes a liege lord too.

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\*Number "three" is of crucial importance in this connection. Wahid's being discovered alive on the very third day of the suspenseful quest has a figurative relevance with the resurrection of the Crucified Christ. Placed within the general theological framework of the narrative, this point cannot be considered as something accidental and, then, insignificant. It is an indication of Wahid's coming to glory after all that suffering, of his attaining the status of a Christ-figure. The "messianic" mission played by two human guises in succession now comes to unity and final success.

Through the agency of Wahid and T'obbiya, the itinerant merchant who secured the liberty of the *Dəjjazmaç* is now found and rewarded for his kindness. This is the actualization of the moral lesson embodied in the maxims at the beginning of the narrative, whose well-installed spinning machine supplies the necessary thread for the knitting of the story's texture. Likewise, the son of Wahid's benevolent peasant host and the *Dəjjazmaç* are rewarded. The moral of this requital, which is, in fact, the fulfillment of the maxims' anticipation, is restated in one significantly clinching sentence: ". . . Be it evil or good, man's deed shall be either retributed or rewarded accordingly not only in the world to come but also sometimes here on earth."<sup>24</sup> This is the kernel sentence in the narrative which sums up the central message of the story. It optimizes the message's effect which amounts to saying: one has to do good and participate in the suffering of the Savior on earth in order to take the right path towards the kingdom of Heaven, for it is in this created world that Christ practically taught us to do good. [This in turn signifies that the created world is not evil in itself simply on account of its finitude. Of course, God created the material world, one learns from the Holy Writ, as finite and transient but didn't create it evil. Genesis gives us an unmistakable proof for this: "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). Therefore, it is not its transiency and fragmentariness that makes it evil, but man's sin.] The informing principle which embodies this moral behind the fortunes of the characters urges mortal man in the story world to abandon sinful practices and to do good on earth in order to fling himself into the arms of immortality.

Later the pagan king proposes for the hands of T'obbiya. T'obbiya refuses to accept his proposal on account of their difference in faith: she is a devout Christian, whereas he is an idolater. For T'obbiya, willingness for engagement in such a condition is tantamount to betrayal of the heavenly Father. Thus she says: ". . . For me to get married to a king who is not baptized in the name of Christ just to enjoy the transient treasures and pleasures of this world is to betray Christ and to forfeit the eternal glory and the true Life that await me ready in the other world. . . ."25 In addition to making T'obbiya's unshakable faith visible, her quest for immortality, and her "messianic" commitment, this speech seems to serve the purpose of teaching the pagan king one very important lesson: ". . . any quest for life, for salvation, which omits God, faith, sacrifice is a mock-quest for further death under the illusion of life . . ." (Moseley, 1962:43). The pagan king's illusion is that his service rendered to T'obbiya in liberating Wahid and rewarding the benefactors would enable him to win her hands, but he forgets that he has omitted God. Now he has to choose between Christianity and idolatry, for "no man can serve two masters . . ." (Matthew 6:24). In order that the glorification of Christianity be accomplished, and T'obbiya's task be exalted to a messianic status, the pagan king chooses Christianity, and he is now baptized. His cousin is also baptized and married to Wahid (whose personal name - *Wahid* - means merger\*). Hence the spiritual nature of the marriage which symbolically points to the marriage of heaven and earth, to the restoration of the harmony in the God-man relation.

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\*His personal name *Wahid* is defined by the pagan (now baptized) king at the end of the story as: "---*Wahid* means the heathens and the Amharas [(Christians)] become one ---"26

In this course of new historical events the centaur on the invaders' banner is replaced by the crucifix. The announcement of Christianity's triumph over idolatry starts with this conspicuous substitution of symbols. Then follows the king's (now baptized) decree which proclaims that the only creator of the world is God Almighty. This is in fact an echo of the Biblical creed: "But to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1Corinthians 8:6). His decree also urges his people all over his kingdom to be converted to Christianity. In this same proclamation the king states the heinousness of his previous worship of idol and the righteousness of his conversion now through Christ. Then he says: ". . . Maintaining the practice of ignorance which is the legacy of my forebears, I have been worshipping idol. But now Christ has given me a clear conscience. He has withdrawn me out of ignorance; he has made me know the true Creator of the world . . ."27 What is important in this utterance is his recognition of Christ's role in his conversion to Christianity. Put in the context of the theological dimension of the narrative discussed so far, this confession has one implication: inasmuch as T'obbiya is the actual agent of his conversion to Christianity, she is the correlative of Christ whom the king is talking about. In other words, the king's speech implies that T'obbiya has played the role of Christ in Christianizing that pagan society and effecting the salvation of the community. Consequently, his proclamation (which is well-nigh a compendious summary of what is embodied in Holy Scriptures), his effort to persuade his people into Christianity make us conclude that the king ultimately becomes to be T'obbiya's disciple reminding us of Jesus' apostles who preached his Gospel after his Ascension.

Acceding to their king's proclamation the infidels become converted to Christianity. True, but this should never mislead one to taking the king's task as the principal responsibility for the actualization of their conversion. He is, simply actualizing what T'obbiya has already effected, preaching and sowing those words of essential Life inspired by her influence (words which are, in fact, reminders of the Gospel: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). The glorification of Christianity effected in converting the infidels and liberating subjugated Christians from affliction is ultimately attained through the agency of T'obbiya. This makes her the symbolic Christ of Afḁwḁrq's imaginative world, though for Tayyḁ Asḁffa her status is that of a "Christian crusader" (1986:36). Apart from her symbolic dualism explicated so far, her mission towers above that of a Christian crusader in that she is made to be the epitome of non-violence and self-sacrifice, and, unlike a crusader, she settles not upon war but upon exemplary humility and suffering. Through this she does succeed in accomplishing her "messianic" mission. The narrator means to heighten her role to the savior's status when he nearly concludes his narration with these words: "Because of a merchant all were saved. Due to a woman all became believers of Christianity. Owing to the word of a king Ethiopia was established."<sup>28</sup>

The narration of the text under discussion is wound up with two meaningful panegyrics in verse, one on T'obbiya and the other on the king. According to the usual Christian interpretation, the lover and his beloved in the seemingly tender love poems of the Song of Songs represent Christ and the Church

respectively. In like manner, symbolic reading accompanied by theological interpretation makes T'obbiya and the king (who extemporize the two poems on the day of their symbolic wedding, each in praise of the other) represent Christ and the Church respectively. It is not difficult to anticipate how much the critical reader's recollections of the church Creed about Christ will be awakened when he reads the following lines of the king's improvisation:

**Where has such a flower bloomed,  
She must be an angel who descended from heaven,**

- - -  
**She discarded her silken attire and put on an *agoza* (sheepskin);  
She forsook the luxurious carpet and walked on prickles;  
She abjured her throne and condescended to clamber uphill.  
While she was impeccable enough to escape death, leave alone  
condescension,**

**While the whole world make obeisance to her, she was accused by a  
dwarf;**

**She was dismissed from court service due to the defamatory  
concoction of covetous courtiers.**

**She disguised herself as a boy for the sake of her brother;  
She didn't remain a boy unmasked though,  
For when discovered she has united the governments of two  
kingdoms.**

- - -  
**However much I have studied the Gospel,  
And have understood what religion is all about,  
I can never believe if 'am told,  
There is the like of you [T'obbiya ] on earth.<sup>29</sup>**

This piece makes T'obbiya a saintly being who has descended from Heaven. It vivifies her humility and suffering for the welfare of others. The word "brother" in the poem should not be taken for its narrow meaning; it could be

understood as though it sounded "mankind" in general. Lastly this panegyric draws T'obbiya as a superhuman creature the like of whom can never be found on earth.

The other piece improvised by T'obbiya first draws the picture of the king's seemingly unshakable might on earth, then suggests its feebleness showing its culmination in utter defeat by the absolute will and power of the heavenly Father, impliedly through her agency. Christianity triumphed over the previous might of the king's kingdom (which symbolizes evil), the poem means to imply further, and established the Church in its stead. Thus the poem goes:

**He made millions of *Amharas* bolt;  
He overthrew the *Rases* and *Dōjjazmaçes*;  
He dethroned the most great kings;  
He was never afraid of the cannon,  
    leave alone the spear and sword;  
His news sent tremors even from afar;  
His voice filled many with horror across the cliff;  
He crumbled the buffalow;  
The strongest chain of manacles and shackles couldn't hold him back;  
But now the lion is tamed and fettered by *Matðb* (neck-cord).<sup>30</sup>**

In the final analysis, these extemporized eulogistic pieces which draw the contrastive images of the two combating forces and the denouement of their conflict with the marvelous triumph of the one (good) over the other (evil)

bear the central concern of the text: religious and ethical salvation\* is attained, harmony of the God-man relation, freedom and peaceful life are restored through the "messianic" efforts and sacrifices of T'obbiya as well as Wahid. Through T'obbiya and Wahid (the figurative "Messiah" in unison) things are once again made right and valid, and hereinafter what is expected from a fellow Christian in the story world is preparation for entrance into the kingdom of Heaven. T'obbiya and Wahid are, therefore, figures of Christ - His INCOGNITOS!

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\*Lastly one important point must be noted in this connection. Using religious symbolism through the operations of archetypal mimesis as discussed so far, *Afdwdrq* hasn't made his *Libb Wdliid Tarik* fall victim to a complete subservience to religion or a movement like "Art for Religion's Sake." To change the metaphor, he hasn't made it a "whore." For he seems to be aware of the fact that "the province of aesthetics is properly controlled by its own inner necessities; and, when painting or poetry answers to the beckoning of this commissar or that divine with prompt obedience, she has simply become a whore" (Scott, 1967:66). More readily, his narrative is a beautiful imaginative piece finely made from aesthetics, ethics, and politics. Yes, a magnificent innovative legacy of young Amharic literature!

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CHRIST-FIGURE AS SOCIAL CRITIC AND REJECTED REFORMER :

#### Haddis Aləmayyāhu's *Fiqir Iskə Məqabir*

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--- Without ceasing to be artists, such writers are often also lay prophets, uncanonical witnesses, who in the default of the church are constrained to explore the enigmas of life and conduct as best they can.

( A.N. Wilder , 1958 :25)

*Fiqir Iskə Məqabir* ("Love Unto the Grave") is Haddis's first-born novel published in 1958 E.C. It would not be a vacuous praise to mention that this novel has maintained a rare literary quality in the history of Amharic prose fiction which has enabled it to capture the attention of numerous readers, commentators, thesis writers, and literary researchers in general. Its theme, literary style, and various characters are studied from somewhat different perspectives except the theological one. As Tayyā Asəffa rightly pointed out, *Fiqir Iskə Məqabir* "has a densely populated social world" (1986:150). Among the diverse *dramatis personae* that have thronged the fictional world, the most appropriate (and perhaps the only) one for the purpose of the present

inquiry is Kasa Damt'e (nicknamed *gudu* Kasa - which the researcher translates as the anomalous Kasa). The following discussion in this chapter is, thus, a theo-poetical valuation of the narrative which revolves around the life and deeds of this Kasa .

As has been stressed in the previous chapter symbolic reading which rivets on the dualism of the "mythical figure" is of primary importance in discussing the theological dimensions of Amharic fictional literature. As such it will be gainful to begin the analysis of *Fiqir Iskə Məqabir* in this respect by first pointing up the symbolic significance of Kasa Damt'e's dualism. Kasa is a symbol of dualism - that of man and the God-in-man. Like men of this world he walks, talks, eats, etc., and with this he establishes consistency with the particulars of human activity. Nevertheless his life and deeds demand symbolic reading because if their meaning and function are worked out by ingenuous interpretations the prophetic implications of his visions may be blurred. He is thus a human being who manifests some significant "messianic" features in the course of his worldly undertaking .

By blood kinship Kasa is from that part of society which claims itself as God's chosen to be noble at birth and admittedly superior to the commons. As he is described in the narrative he is "a hefty aristocratic progeny who cannot be lifted up with two hands."<sup>1</sup> One has to note here that this exaltation of his lineage from the outset has a bearing on the supernal dimension (symbolic godliness) of his dualism. Inter-textual reading which juxtaposes this narrative and the Biblical story makes it possible to infer the theological

implication of his portrayal from his being drawn as a man of noble birth (which sounds "divine birth"). This man of noble birth was brought up, one immediately learns from the narration, outside his paternal parent's house under the vigilance of his mother. The relative emphasis upon his family's background is given to the mother. Viewed from a theological vantage point the statement "---distancing himself from the royal court he grew up with his mother---"<sup>2</sup> by implication reminds the reader of Christ's condescension to earth distancing himself from the kingdom of heaven. In other words, Kasa's birth and upbringing makes it plausible to see him in affinity, though remote, with Christ's divine Incarnation and Nativity on earth without a father, and his being brought up with his Virgin mother .

Such an implication of his depiction which recalls the being and existence of the Biblical figure makes Kasa Damt'e an almost God-sent figure ("symbolic messiah") resulting from an incarnational design sketched by the author's use of language and effective manipulation of "religious imagery". By "religious imagery" is meant the rendition of Kasa's life which begins with noble birth and followed by purposeful alienation from the "noble" family, for it recalls Christ's life which starts with heavenly existence followed by the purpose-built condescension to earth. This is perhaps due to the unconscious prevalence at the back of the author's mind of some mythic sense which prepared him to see Christ as a symbol of the death-resurrection juxtaposition from which a visionary can be modeled to "redeem" a moribund society. To change the metaphor one can say that Haddis Alፊmayyፊhu, playing the role of the Creator, sends his word to the world of his novel, and his word takes on

the flesh of man to pull out mankind of the fictional universe from the abyss through his visions and deeds culminating in "self-sacrifice". What we observe in the novel under discussion like the one we do in the New Testament is first and foremost incarnation. The whole story narrated in the New Testament is about Christ's perfect Incarnation resulting from the marriage of heaven and earth; it "---shows," as Knight put it, "a perfect incarnation of spirit in the world-order.---" (1963:48). Likewise the subject of *Fiqir Iskā Māqabir* specifically the one which concerns the life of Kasa Damt'e is also incarnation, a new birth resulting from the marriage of two elements: "indefinable spiritual realities" (Ibid.:27) and the author's words; these in coalescence become incarnate in the world-order given a body, and result in a new symbolic birth: the purposeful appearance of Kasa Damt'e. Therefore, Kasa can be considered as a figure of a Christ-like commitment and endurance symbolizing man's trap and freedom. This the ensuing discussion will elucidate in detail .

Being a figure of such symbolic dualism with some ideal features,\* Kasa assumes the role of the Messiah in that fictional feudal society he has been a member of. He accomplishes this mission in various ways which demand a theopoetic probe to be fully fathomed .

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\* Above all, we do not find Kasa at "fault," a feature which allows a plausible juxtaposition with Christ - a figure of righteousness and perfection in every respect. It is not to deny Kasa's tactlessness (which may be considered as one human weakness); it is mentioned here to suggest that Kasa is not on the side of evil .

In the first place Kasa is a teacher who has got his own disciples \* such as Səbləwəngel, Bəzzabbih, Habtish. The teachings which he addresses to these and other members of that local aristocracy are mostly full of noble and complicated ideas which even appear to some to be riddles. The language in which these ideas are conveyed is also figurative. In this regard one is tempted to say that Kasa whose speeches serve a metaphoric purpose, has a plausible affinity with Christ whose speeches function on the level of symbolism, whose sermons (particularly his parables) are poetry first and then teaching. For this reason the symbolic message constituted by the use of figurative language eluded most listeners specially those who are not ready for understanding. Like Christ, Kasa shares the secrets of his teaching with, and interprets his philosophy to, his disciples alone; he leaves his poetic speeches uninterpreted to the rest. The motive for this bias seems to be in parallel with what Christ speaks to his disciples: "--- Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables---" (Mark 4:11). Indeed Kasa's disciples always tune their understanding to his message and thus fathom the symbolic meaning of his figurative speeches. But the rest take his teachings for their literal meaning and distort their message. One among such speeches of Kasa is the following most quoted paragraph :

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\* The word "disciple" is applied here not in its narrower sense as can be found in the Bible; it is simply used to mean Kasa's devotees or followers who at least understand, and react positively to, what he says.

**The pattern, customs, tradition and laws which constitute the structure of our social system are not like those of a living social system. The system is rather structured like a lifeless pile of stones whose pieces are placed one upon the other each at the top weighing down the one underneath, and each at the base bearing the one placed upon it. In the course of time the ones at the bottom will inevitably slip out of place; and lest the whole structure fragment when this happens it is indispensable that a well-improved social system of living human beings which makes men appear better than stones be formed again.---** <sup>3</sup>

For the unimaginative members of that society this is nothing more than a vapid reverberation of words in which nothing significant is said. If properly understood, however, it is a succinct summary of the narrative's message with whose prophecy Kasa sets forth his purposeful undertaking. In this contemplation and other speeches Kasa incisively criticizes the existing social order condemning the vices and materialism of society. Then he proposes an alternative social vision which indicates the right way to the establishment of an ideal community, to "redemption". By this standard he is political in the broader sense of the term. He is political like Christ himself not in that he seeks individual political position, but in that he strives to effect societal reform for the welfare of mankind. Although many are not ready and willing to listen he continues his teaching in order that society makes sense of his alternative social vision. His motto seems to be in line with this : " He that hath ears to hear , let him hear " ( Matthew 11:15).

This premonitory speech of Kasa which makes it almost "prophetic" in that it foresees the drastic change that has to come in that aristocratic society recalls Christ's speech of similar revelatory and symbolic significance :

**---Verily I say unto you, There shall  
not be left here one stone upon  
another, that shall not be thrown  
down. ( Matthew 24:2)**

Here prophetic rhetoric is skilfully wrought. If symbolically understood, these words prove that Christ is the master of metaphoric speech. He preaches his symbolic life in figurative language. To abstract a superficial ethic from his words based on a straightforward and intuitive understanding is to do wrong like the unimaginative people of his time. Kasa's speeches like Christ's cited above defy literal reading. In metaphor, like what Christ does in symbol, Kasa prophesies the disintegration of the old, moribund system or belief and the inevitability of its reintegration through the birth of a new one. This change which is believed to rescue community from the labyrinth of social evil and spiritual death is to be effected, the speeches of both Kasa and Christ further imply, through the teachings, exemplary life, and sacrifices of a redeemer. But all this message rendered in figurative utterance is inaccessible to many listeners for they are not ready or willing to understand. They rather take his speeches for their plain meaning and miss their messages. From such a heedless perception of his teachings result the misunderstanding, misjudgment, and mistreatment of Kasa.

Kasa's teaching and noble ideas, his criticism of the existing social order, and his alternative social visions he insists on proposing only profit him the nickname *gudu*. The community except his devotees unanimously consider him mad. But since Kasa comes as the archetypal Christ in such a world where some members of society presumably consider themselves far better than others, and where the inhumanity of man emanating from such a prejudice is the insidious cause of social malady the depiction of his seeming lunacy assumes a subversive\* role. Understanding this subversive rendition amounts to moving one step forward in the apprehension of Kasa as a Christ-figure. For one thing it serves as one plausible way whereby Kasa's life and mission would be interpreted in relation to that of Christ who was similarly considered as "mad" during his ministry on earth: "And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?" (John 10:20). It is for this purpose that subversion as regards the depiction of his character as mad is discussed here. In the understanding of this character's portrayal to this effect what matters is not his being considered mad, but the question: 'who decides that?' Thus we can fathom the subversive function of this rendition if we clearly comprehend the state of the society that decides his madness. It is that unimaginative society which Kasa himself describes as follows that declares Kasa's madness :

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\*The researcher is grateful to Yonas Admasu for making him cognizant of the meaning and purpose of this concept and its applicability to the study of Amharic literature. The course titled "Introduction to Modern Narrative Theories" which the researcher took under him was of paramount importance in this respect .

**It is a society of people who can't tell between the grain and the chaff while they have the eyes, who can't make sense out of the difference between the worthwhile and the harmful while they possess the power of reason. It is simply a queer society of people who surge following what is moving on in front like a flock of sheep, who are drawn like a mule carrying whatever weight they have been loaded up with .<sup>4</sup>**

According to Kasa Damt'e that feudal society which makes him a good-for-nothing outcast is simply a mass of non-inquisitive and jaundiced men likened to a flock of sheep. For him members of this society are like those on whom Christ "was moved with compassion" because he saw them scattered "as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). Acting the role which is akin to that of the shepherd among these scattered "sheep" he indicates the right way lest they go astray to the world of "death"; but they keep on seeing him as a mentally deranged person who puts his oar in the affairs of a normal social system. Kasa's above-quoted valuation of that society is, thus, reminiscent of Christ's trenchant answer to the question of the Pharisees: "--- If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth" (John 9:41). The purpose of Kasa's portrayal as mad is, thus, to unveil such blindness not of eye but of mind, such insanity characterizing the society of his time. This subverts that society's presumptuous self-righteousness and seeming sanity, and lays bare its madness manifest in its preposterous practices .

The subversive function of portraying Kasa as mad in this text is further justified by a narrative event in the course of the story's development. *Fitawrari* Mashasha, representative of the local aristocracy, is among the first who wrongly consider Kasa as insane. But one day Səbləwəngel, the "disciple" of Kasa, resentfully denounces her noble father's declaration of Kasa's madness. Her unusually bold denunciation gives meaning to the author's intent in depicting Kasa as mad. She acrimoniously says: "He is himself out of his mind, mentally deranged who says *Ayya* Kasa is mentally disordered."<sup>5</sup> Her incisive speech appears to her vainglorious father a virulent abuse and dumbfounds him. There is no wonder in that since he is unusually and straightforwardly told about his lunacy by his own daughter in front of other men. It is Kasa's teachings that have brought about the disparity between the world views of the father and the daughter. This is also a plausible point which amplifies his mission by reminding the reader of Christ's speech about the metaphoric purpose of his ministry: "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law" (Matthew 10:35). In fact the teachings of the messiah result in such a conflict between his followers and opponents which will be resolved later when the harmony of the God-man relation is restored through his exemplary sacrifice. Apart from all this the most important purpose Səblə's speech is made to serve is to reinforce the intended and subversive meaning of Kasa's portrayal as mad throughout the narrative; the person reputed to be mad in that story world is to be understood in the same way she perceives him.

Kasa Damt'e is well-aware of his being considered mad and the grounds of this misunderstanding. In addition to many other things one strong reason is his forthright criticism of churchmen. Kasa discloses the ploys and the masked vicious deeds of the priests and criticizes them denouncing the evil without using the weapons of his opposers - lying and violence. Since the priests are "representatives" of the formalized church his criticism in this connection could be interpreted as this: condemning the follies of institutional Christianity he tries to throw off the pretense of faith by words of mouth and substitute it with the true faith in the Lord which can be actualized into deeds through sacrifice and love. His criticism of these masked churchmen is like what Christ addressed to the Pharisees and scribes: "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:28). Figuratively speaking, this is almost a denudation which takes off most churchmen's veneer of false piety. In doing so he also seems to be warning his followers: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

It is not through utterance alone that Kasa displays his hostility to the vicious practices of churchmen. He distances himself from this circle of formalized Christianity and leads an exemplary life of "solitude" while he is among men. His distanciation in itself is a lesson which seems to assert that a church devoid of true love and true faith is not the Church under the Cross. Since the true church stands under the Cross it should also stand with the world in which it is founded, not against it. Churchmen should be men of faith and love which can be put into action, of faith and love which do not mean to be one thing in

the temple and another outside. They should be men of virtuous deeds compatible with their words in the pulpit rather than "ravening wolves" veiled in the rituals of formalized religion. One representative of the formalized church in this regard, whom Kasa considers as a hypocrite is *Qes Mogðse*. He is a real opportunist who, in Kasa's words, "---has dedicated his practices to satisfying his belly.---"<sup>6</sup> In other words, through his alienation from corrupt churchmen Kasa means to show that true Christian faith starts from one's love for his neighbor whoever, from one's deeds by his fellow men free from any bias and hypocrisy, from one's commitment to hurt oneself for the betterment of other men's life conditions. To such a commitment he makes himself an example; however, what it profits him is simply his being rated as an outlandish creature not only by the priests but by the whole community. What infuriates and saddens Kasa is his existence among such people who can't even make sense of the motives and merits of his eccentricity, or in his own words "living among people who can't appraise if the eccentricity of the one that is considered as queer on account of its deviation from the customary is for good or for bad."<sup>7</sup>

Kasa Damt'e is a man who is drawn to live in such a world which has no place of safety or security. He is depicted as a man who is in conflict with his environment; the cause of this conflict is the purpose and direction of his life which give no sense to the people of his time. His cultivated intellect, fine imagination, and the prophetic visions which result from the blending of these two (intellect and imagination) are far ahead of the time he lives in. For his contemporaries who are unprepared to inquire why, his being too far beyond

his time appears as bizarre and immoral. Nevertheless, what is important here is that his life and visions could be understood as pointing forwards, their influence to be effected in the unlimited future. His relation to the world of men in his time should never be seen in isolation from the prophetic significance it may have in the future world of men. His life in the world of his time seems to prophesy this :peace, freedom, and redemption will be attained only if people's responses are in harmony with his instincts, and this is in the hands of the future. Pointing forwards the significance of his life, he keeps on condemning the follies of society without violence. He doesn't have the slightest intention to take revenge even on those who deny his place in society. In this regard it would be plausible to argue that Kasa is of the conviction that it is virtuous to love not only one's proponent but also one's opponent. This tenet could be inferred from his utterance to his devotee, Bðzzabbih: "Those who do a favor expecting gratuity for their deeds are profiteers not true friends. He who counts the favors he dispenses or receives is not a true friend ." <sup>8</sup>

Apart from his alienation from the pharisaical churchmen and their insincere practices, Kasa's repugnance of the existing social order manifests itself in his criticism of *Fitawrari* Mðshðsha's personality. It seems indisputable that Kasa and Mðshðsha are at the opposite extremes of the political and ethical spectrum. Mðshðsha is the agent of the force to which Kasa is confronted (or of the world whose social order Kasa strives to reform). Like Christ whose Messianic mission is manifested in his practical involvement in a tragic conflict with the forces of evil, the meaning and purpose of Kasa's life as a

Christ-figure could be clearly understood if he is seen in contrast with Məshəsha. Thus, understanding Məshəsha's personality in Kasa's terms is of particular importance in the apprehension of Kasa's portrayal as a Christ-image. Kasa disapproves the *Fitawrar's* vainglorious world view and irascible temper. He even considers this noble man as a retarded child who is too far behind his own time. Thus he describes him: "*Fitawrari*, as you well know him, is a man whose mind had still been in its infancy while his body has grown and become old, thus who needs a guide, a tutor, a baby sitter to the end."<sup>9</sup> *Fitawrari* Məshəsha is indeed the agent of the aristocratic class. The foremost purpose of his being and existence in this material world, the task of his being a noble man he sets for himself is completely dedicated to ensuring the revival and perpetuation of his Solomonic lineage which he believes he had descended from. For this reason he is always nostalgic for the dead past without whose reminiscence he finds himself purposeless in the present.

For Kasa Damt'e this Məshəsha appears as a typical personification of devilish spirit; then he describes him: "Being incarnate in a new human guise *Fitawrari* Məshəsha is but the spirit of one of those evil men who died four or five hundred years ago."<sup>10</sup> Taking on the flesh of Məshəsha, Kasa believes, the evil spirit of the dead past has been orchestrating that terrestrial aristocratic campaign which would lead society to its destruction. Refusal to accept the operations of this satanic plotting, and struggle to lead society to the right destination characterize Kasa's mission.

To Kasa's surprise, however, Məshəsha claims that his deeds are righteous and compares himself with Christ. Whenever his family and relatives infuriate him he boasts about what he claims they owe him for the protection of their pride and royal lineage against mortification and discontinuity. Then he cries :

**--- Who sacrifices his life for the sake of his people except Christ? While everybody else was simply forgoing and weeping here it was only I who sacrificed my life for my people like Christ! Is this the payment then which I deserve for all that I have done? That doesn't matter anyway, I will get my reward right up there. <sup>11</sup>**

This is irony at its best, for Məshəsha's seeming martyrdom is not in harmony with the symbolic death of the Savior. His supposedly virtuous sacrifice is a rather shrouded commitment to the perpetuation of injustice. For one thing Məshəsha is extremely obsessed by the dreams of the aristocratic tenet which takes for granted the inequality of men even at birth and the "God-given" dominance of the "high-born" over the ordinary. Even though he is a Christian who believes in God he becomes unable to notice that he has omitted the true faith when he has started to execute such dehumanizing precepts of his class which are indeed against the verities of the true Church .

The irony which Məshəsha's above-cited speech is intended to serve is once again given weight at another point in the narrative. *Qes Mogəse* is the father-confessor of Məshəsha's family. He is, as pointed out previously, among those churchmen whose mendacious priesthood Kasa Damt'e condemns; he is a priest "---whom," according to Kasa, "anyone that provides him with enough

food can direct him as one wishes ---."12 One day in the middle of a conversation between Mḁshḁsha and his noble men companions, the former says to this Mogḁse: "Ah, you! While you can't behold your own defect as huge as an elephant you are quick to see the nonexistent defect in others."13 There is a modicum of truth in his denunciation against Mogḁse, but the author's intent in making Mḁshḁsha utter this allusive objection has something to do with *Fitawrari's* situation itself. This intention is criticism through irony in that Mḁshḁsha is a person who considers himself as a righteous creature who doesn't err at all while his practices are apparently full of errors even more than those of *qes* Mogḁse or anyone else. Furthermore, his speech is meant to amplify the absurdity of his attempt to equate himself with Christ since the speech is purposely enunciated to be the like of Christ's: "And why beholdst thou the mote that is in they brother's eye, but considerst not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Matthew 7:3). In the final analysis, what results from the rendition of Mḁshḁsha's captiousness is such an ironic contrast, not a literal comparison; and this makes the metaphor effective. Mḁshḁsha's vainglorious understanding of himself contrasts to Kasa's humility and this contrast heightens the latter one's role as a Christ-figure.

As Mḁshḁsha is the symbol of evil spirit in the universe of Haddis's imaginative making, he does never feel comfortable unless he lays onerous burdens on the shoulders of the oppressed minority whom he calls *balagḁr* (simple peasant). His disparaging attitude towards the peasantry and his commitment to tyrannize their conditions are apparent in his speech which follows :

--- A peasant doesn't submit to the weak. A peasant likes the mighty. All you have to do is toughen your brawn against him. If your arm is hardened, a peasant doesn't stop milking; you can milk him till your pot fills! A peasant wails, grumbles and even threatens if he chances upon the timorous. But if he is faced with the determined and undaunted, he in the end hands over. Eventually he pays what he is charged for. --- <sup>14</sup>

Kasa's resolute and unfailing effort is to liberate the peasantry from such grievous subjection exerted by the hard-hearted ruling power represented by M̄sh̄sha whose mission in society is, as demonstrated in the foregoing discussion, basically the opposite of Kasa's. He is committed to delivering them from the agonies of dehumanization even by holding up the "yoke" himself. He boldly objects the brutish confiscation of the tenants' meager produce in front of M̄sh̄sha, the agent of the local aristocracy. When M̄sh̄sha demands bullocks instead of rams as a present from those peasants who have come from one of his distant fiefs to congratulate him on the occasion of his victory over *Fitawrari Ass̄gge*, Kasa defends the peasants and says: "---making a full day's journey, they have come here just to congratulate you. Is it because all this fails to be adequate that they are now charged to pay bullocks for the simple reason that you are pleased? Wouldn't God send his wrath when he beholds this atrocity?"<sup>15</sup> In fact, Kasa is well aware that M̄sh̄sha and the community at large would remain obdurate in spite of his teachings and struggle. He even knows that his candid disapproval of the system would cost him "his life;" and at this stage of his undertaking the

inception of this fate is symbolized by the denial of his place in society. It is not difficult to understand how he is aware of the consequences of his refusal from the coming speech which he addresses to his devotee, Bəzzabih :

**--- You wonder! You witness such a worthless custom, such a vile custom. When you suggest that such a system should not and cannot exist and that it is better to make it change gradually lest its downfall be worse, you are taken as a traitor and the rope you may be hung with is prepared ! ---<sup>16</sup>**

Nonetheless, this doesn't threaten his unshakable determination at all. He keeps on struggling against evil represented by the injustice which the ruling class inflicts upon the ruled. In this line of his purposeful endeavor he openly preaches the equality of all human creatures in front of their heavenly Father. His rhetorical questions which refer to Səblə's parents who obstinately downgrade human beings of no "noble-birth" are an evidence of this :

**--- What is the ground for your bone and blood to be different from those of others? Wouldn't your blood stop circulating when you die? Wouldn't it dry up? Wouldn't it cease? Wouldn't your flesh disintegrate? Wouldn't it rot? Wouldn't it stink? Wouldn't your bone corrode? Wouldn't it shatter? Wouldn't it turn into dust? ---<sup>17</sup>**

This implies that Kasa is deeply aware of his createdness in the fullest sense of the term: God created man in His own image, and as such all men are equal at birth; they indiscriminately exist and cease to exist upon His will. Being well aware of the origin and meaning of human life as governed by such a

supernatural design, he tries to awaken Mōshōsha to realize his createdness in turn. Like the master's son in the parable of the lord of the vineyard, Kasa comes at last to warn Mōshōsha to recognize the Lord's commandments. Unfortunately *Fitawrari* Mōshōsha lives an audaciously "anti-Christic" life exalting himself and debasing the peasants; and ultimately, as a result of the cumulative effect of his vainglorious deeds, he is thrown into the gorge which is a reminder of the fire of Gehenna. He died\* of an accident falling from a horse galloping heedlessly while he was in quest for his daughter, Sōblōwōngel, who ran away on the eve of her wedding day refusing to get married to an aged man whom she didn't know at all.

In contrast to this Mōshōsha, Kasa Damt'e is truly a man for others. His life is wholly dedicated to effecting the well-being of others. He doesn't care for his personal comfort in his mundane life. He doesn't even have a defined material desire for worldly wealth beyond the minimum requisites of subsistence. If properly and figuratively understood, the meaning and purpose of Kasa's life in that feudal society make him a plausible Christ-figure. Being such a figure who wants nothing for himself, Kasa strives to effect the liberation of others from "slavery" - which is an important trope here .

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\* Mōshōsha's death is indeed a tragic one: his obstinate commitment to a truth that he thinks is right becomes his hubris and ultimately causes his deserved death; his subjection to that retributive justice purges the community's and the reader's spirit of vainglory if not Mōshōsha's. Two irreconcilable forces have always been in opposition, and both have their own claims of truth . In this denouement neither the right of Mōshōsha nor that of Sōbla (indirectly that of Kasa) is denied. What is denied is, to use Bradley's words, "--- the absoluteness of the claim of each" (1962 : 371). In other words, by reason of being human and finite, Mōshōsha's limited perspective couldn't enable him to view his total situation (the absolute truth) and its error and paid for his life.

A look into the meaning of "slavery" as applied in this oceanic text throws light on the "messianic" dimension of Kasa's mission. First, Sə bləwəngel, according to what the narrative renders and according to Səblə herself, is a slave. To be a person of noble birth devoid of the freedom and rights which are gained simply by being born human is meant to be a slave. This, Sə bləwəngel herself articulated to Bəzzabbih :

**---Ah, a daughter of noble birth! If being of noble birth is being imprisoned and inhibited from doing what one wishes to do except dreaming it like me, then being of noble birth is the worst of all sorts of punishment, and the worst of all forms of slavery!**

Besides, one morning in the Church compound Səblə herself witnesses two gossips discussing her unusual spinsterhood. At one point in their backbiting one of these young ladies says this: "What a wonder! Being of noble birth, viewed from the other side, is indeed slavery of honor!---"<sup>19</sup> In fact, Səblə, the daughter of an "estimable" and wealthy aristocrat, and not a "slave" in its literal meaning, is subject to a severe cultural enslavement more sickening and humiliating than that to which the "actual" slaves (say Habtish and Gəbre) are destined. She is forced to sacrifice her youth, her beauty, her freedom and rights for the affirmation of her parent's ostentatious pride and honor; as such she is enslaved. Second, according to tradition persons like Gəbre, Habtish, Izra, and Inqop'p'aziyon are "naturally" slaves who are considered as human beings born simply to serve others. Third, according to Kasa Dam'te,

*Fitawrari* M̄sh̄sha and other members of the nobility who are his devotees are slaves, for Kasa usually mentions them as "slaves of social custom."

Put into its broader sense, thus, the meaning of this elusive and seemingly recondite term - *slavery* - is nothing but "*death in life*." It is a trope used to subvert the meaning it has ever served to denote: that "nobleness" too is the other side of "thralldom" in the fictional world. [In this connection, hierarchical pairings like *master/servitor*, *noble/ignoble*, *superior/inferior*, *sane/insane*, *liberation/slavery*, *honor/dishonor* should be understood as part of the general artistic pun employed in the narrative to subvert the supposedly hierarchical difference between the components of each pairing. It is from such a purposeful artistic pun (ironic contrast) that the engaging message of the novel as a discourse of vanity emanates.] To come back to the previous point, the theme of death in life which almost encompasses the different contexts of slavery examined in the foregoing discussion is summed up in the following lines from B̄zzabih's long letter to S̄bl̄w̄ngel :

**Oh, God! Alas! Alas! To whom shall I appeal?  
Since they have severed my soul and only my carcass  
has been left,  
Only my relatives haven't buried me wailing and  
mourned yet,  
For my severed body is still moving alive;  
Upon whom has such a verdict ever been wrought?  
Punishment for no guilt and Damnation before death?** <sup>20</sup>

These lines display that Bǝzzabbih, as he conceives himself, is figuratively dead. His life in that cruel world is rather "death in life" because he is denied his founded dreams of love and peaceful life with his beloved Sǝblǝ. This is the result of the pompous and stubborn customs of the existing social order. He and his lover are both victims of cultural enslavement. By way of remorsefully hinting at the opportunities lost due to the unhappy decisions of the past, his verse shows his longing for freedom. What is lacking in his insufficient world is an authority (a mystical power) that can respond to his beckoning and appeal. Kasa is created, therefore, to "remedy this insufficiency," to "cure the wound." In other words, it seems to be plausible to say that Kasa's mission is aimed at "saving" all these victims of an aristocratic system from this "death in life."

To accomplish his undertaking in this regard Kasa sets forth with the most important precepts of the Messiah - faith and love. Being faithful to his Creator and his own conscience, Kasa loves all his devotees (in fact all human creatures irrespective of their attitude towards him) and particularly the love between Sǝblǝ and Bǝzzabbih\*. Kasa's unflinching determination to sacrifice

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\*The love that Bǝzzabbih has for Sǝblǝ or vice versa, like the one that the king had for T'obbiya in the previous chapter, transcends sensual love. The necessary suffering each underwent for the other's sake, if appreciated for its symbolic significance, can be a justification for the spiritual nature of their love affair. Bǝzzabbih is suffering not (as it may seem superficially) for the sake of his sexual love for Sǝblǝ. In fact, he succumbs himself to the love of the freedom-starved Sǝblǝ; but when the harrowing life condition to which she is subjected together with its figurative instrumentality is taken into account, his effort is designed under the banner of love, it is felt, to assume a remarkable function of rescuing any innocent person from the adversities of cultural enslavement. Furthermore, since Sǝblǝ loves beneath her station, this love affair serves a subversive purpose. It is expressly used to unveil the ludicrous and pompous nature of that fictional social custom which forbids the marriage of a couple between whom a rift of economic and social status exists. This contributes much to the theme of class-relationship in the novel.

even his life for the actualization of his disciples' liberation emanates from his love for them. He particularly swears to protect Səblə and says: "Səblə is myself! If possible I will never back away from sacrificing my lifelong pleasure for the sake of her pleasure of a day's duration---."<sup>21</sup> In his effort to be faithful to his words and determination he advises Bəzzabbih to elope with Səblə. He also arranges everything so that their escape would be accomplished before Məshəsha's return from a campaign. Unfortunately Məshəsha returns before their plan is put into action. Realizing that Məshəsha has heard of the unfounded gossip about Səblə's pregnancy, the heavy hearted Bəzzabbih runs away to Addis Abəba to avert the dangerous consequences that may follow. After a lapse of some months, Səbləwəngel follows his lead and escapes on the eve of her wedding day, the hope still flickering within her that she may meet him. Actually everything ends up contrary to their dreams and plans; but what is important here is that their attempt assumes an escape from the "death in life" wrought upon them by the wilful decisions of an unjust social system. Figuratively speaking, they have escaped from the dangerous monster symbolized by Məshəsha who is representative of that dehumanizing aristocratic culture. Therefore, Kasa's true importance would be apparent if we recognize not only the figurative quality of his own life but also the reflection of his visions in such actions of his "disciples."

In this connection it will not be a fatuous assertion to argue that Kasa is a "healer" in the most figurative and broadest sense of the term. He performs an act of amelioration which could be taken for its symbolic importance pointing

to a healing move he is cast to accomplish as a Christ-figure. Textual juxtaposition enables one to observe a "healing act" in relation to Kasa's mission which could be shown to have a remote yet plausible affinity with Christ's healing miracles - which are indeed super-human. This point of argument raised here can be understood only if one is ready to think in terms of symbolism. If one tunes one's imagination to the province of symbolic reading it will not be difficult to infer that Kasa tried to heal Sǫblǫwǫngel (and partly Bǫzzǫbbih) of a psychological and physiological wound caused by the decisions of an aristocratic custom with his forewarning and arrangement which paved the way whereby they could escape from the "death in life" "awaiting" them. He himself seems to be aware of his own "healing" performance when he says this :

---You see, her being so-called "of noble birth" has inflicted an immeasurable physical and mental torment upon her. For this reason if she went to a distant land where she is unknown and lived there freely as an ordinary woman, she would consider all this just as being cured of leprosy! <sup>22</sup>

Inasmuch as Sǫblǫ's escape from the imprisonment of that society's unbearable culture is likened to the state of being miraculously cured of leprosy, Kasa is by implication considered as a "healer," for it was he who directed her to the right way towards "freedom."

The symbolic importance of Kasa's life and mission is also evident in his relationship with slavery sufferers other than Səblə and Bəzzabbih. Among the slaves whose destiny and social status that traditional society has prejudged and decided, Kasa is married to Inqop'p'aziyon. This marriage is central to the discussion of Kasa's undertaking as a Christ-figure. Needless to say Kasa is himself a descendant of an "unblemished" aristocratic lineage. But now he has humiliated himself to the extent that he willingly marries, to community's surprise, a slave who is considered less human than Tiru-aynat, Kasa's aunt, for instance. By virtuously condescending to that level he has sacrificed his honor and reputation in society for the actualization of her "liberation." Figuratively speaking, through his humility Kasa bears Inqop'p'a's "yoke" himself and makes it possible for her to be raised at least to the status of being considered human. His message is, therefore, an example which demands imitation. His marriage beneath his station is intended to make the point that all God's creatures whom He has created in his own image are equally human and should be treated indiscriminately. This is possible, he wants us to learn further, only if there is true love among men. To the practicability of this high-principled lesson he makes himself an example. The moral of his undertaking in this line could be understood as though he articulated "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13 :15). Humility, love, and sacrifice are the most noteworthy ethical traits which the narrative subtly designs to be imitated from Kasa's task as a Christ-image

The purpose of this portrayal in the novel is to facilitate the effectuation of societal reform expected to come about in the story world. The reform is

necessitated by the preponderance of prejudice, disobedience, vainglory, obstinacy, love for excessive wealth, injustice, misery and every gesture of evil in that world. Since the narrative concerns itself with the dire effects of these practices in society and the means towards "redemption," the novel is obviously a social novel. Being the character of such a novel Kasa for the most part concerns himself with the here rather than the hereafter. As a Christ-figure in such a social novel he is evincing the only way to reformation, to freedom, and to "redemption" as well. But that society which has rejected him is not willing to follow his lead except his "disciples." Whatever is society's reaction, Kasa, revealing and contesting its vices, has foretold the inevitability of the disintegration and reintegration of the existing social order which is leading to its own destruction. This makes him a visionary, a feature which to some extent relates the novel to the apocalyptic tradition in the grand text ( the Bible ).

Only his " disciples " have cleaved to his teachings and visions up to the end of the story. Following Bəzzabbih's trails Səblə resumes her journey to Abba in order to live with him so that Kasa's wish and plan would also be fulfilled. Being unfortunate to meet Bəzzabbih there, for he has disappeared some days before her arrival, she goes back to the Blue Nile. On her way back she passes a night at Gohas'iyon in a road-side hut where a young man cruelly beaten by highwaymen in the valley is being nursed by the owner of the hut. Then she learns that the sick man in bed is Bəzzabbih. While he is still in his death-bed Bəzzabbih recognizes her, and they become married before he dies a celibate on the next day. Səblə puts his dead body into a grave at the nearby

church and then becomes a nun to tend it the rest of her life. Twelve years later Kasa comes and finds her there. She dies two weeks later and Kasa buries her in the grave beside Bəzzabbih's which she has prepared for herself. Both Səblə and Bəzzabbih turn into dust with their promises unbroken. Three years later, Kasa, too, passes away and is buried beside them. Like all earthly men who "are but the merest reeds in nature, feeble at best, and soon withering away," (Scott 1967 :25 ), he couldn't escape death .

Gohas'Iyon, the place where the whole fictional story skilfully woven from the lives and deeds of the trio (Səblə, Bəzzabbih, Kasa) is brought to a meaningful denouement, bears an unignorable symbolic significance. If everything happening there is read symbolically looking deep into the story beneath its plain eventuation, Gohas'Iyon indeed echoes Golgotha. Mircea Eliade once wrote the following as regards Golgotha :

**---For Christians, Golgotha was situated at the center of the world, since it was the summit of the cosmic mountain and at the same time the place where Adam had been created and buried. Thus the blood of the Savior falls upon Adam's skull, buried precisely at the foot of the Cross, and redeems him. The belief that Golgotha is situated at the center of the world is preserved in the folklore of the Eastern Christians.**

(1954:14)

The folkloric account of the Christian meaning given to, and the one metaphysical significance associated with, it being what Eliade has pointed out above, Golgotha basically means "the place of a skull" (John 19:17). What one witnesses during the somewhat poignant culmination of the fictional story at Gohas'Iyon is also skulls. Textual juxtaposition which takes into account the "intended" theological implication of the entire drama going on there makes Gohas'Iyon the summit of Haddis's fictional universe, the center of the story world where the most significant event takes place. The central event is Kasa's death and burial there, after Bðzanbbih and Sðblð. Figuratively speaking Kasa Damt'e is crucified, and his being buried there is a fulfillment of this figurative crucifixion. This is one plausible reading in which Kasa could be seen as the correlative of Christ (who gave his life as a ransom at Golgotha ).

"To the serious writer," writes Moseley, "man in and of the world is fallible, whether the fallibility is to be laughed at ---, lamented---, or recognized as a necessary step on the road to redemption---" (1962:38). The imperfection which causes his catastrophe is to be attributed either "to society" or "to his own physiological-psychological-emotional nature" (Ibid.:39). Kasa's death is attributable not to his own imperfection as such but to the imbecilities of society, and his suffering could be recognised "as a necessary step on the road to redemption." By this standard Kasa can be partly considered as a scapegoat who is sacrificing himself for the society which has denied his function as reformer and visionary, so that it would be cleansed of its sins. His physical death serves as an exemplary final step of the death in life people have lived

and as the only way to true birth. In other words, as Christ has brought a death-vanquishing life to men through his Death, Kasa Damte's symbolic life culminates in death as the gate to immortality; the ending of the narration brought about in the story world is schemed to be understood as the beginning. What warrants one to say this apart from the signification resulting from the figurative correspondence which tries to make Gohas'Iyon the correlative of archetypal Golgotha, is the prophetic importance of his visions which call up the messages in Christ's Resurrection .

When one approaches Kasa's life as well as his death with the help of textual juxtaposition in this respect it is very likely that one can gather its affinity with that of Christ. Actually, the marvelous life of Christ is given form within the framework of a divine birth and a bodily resurrection. His resurrection is both of body and soul. But what is most important here is that through his wondrous bodily resurrection his teachings, deeds, and visions which have been obstinately rejected by the people of his time are meant to be born anew and revitalized with a prophetic significance in the future world of men. Since Kasa's dualism is not (and cannot be) as perfect and absolute as that of Christ , bodily resurrection is, in fact, beyond his capability; it is not possible within the finite nature of humanity at all. Nevertheless, his affinity with Christ regarding resurrection can be seen in terms of the revitalization of his visions in the world beyond that of his own time. His sacrifice, deeds, and teachings transcend the limit of time. Even though they have been thwarted by the unimaginative people of that world from fructification in his own time, the "seeds" of his visions have been sown to signal a prophetic actualization

pointing towards the future world of men. He seems to be well aware about the prophetic significance of his own visions when he says this :

**--- Even though they wouldn't reform the customary destructive ideas and practices now, noble ideas and deeds would serve and be useful when the right time arrives if they are properly preserved from loss and handed down to the next generation ---** <sup>23</sup>

Generally speaking, if the novel is approached from a theological vantage point having in mind the possibilities of "fictional transfiguration" of the "mythical figure," it can be understood that the life of the Messiah framed by Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection has figurative manifestations of relevance in the drama in which Kasa is involved; this plausible textual juxtaposition which substantiates the affinity of Kasa's life and deeds makes him a Christ-symbol. As a Christ-figure in society he is loving, hostile to materialism, determined, and articulate. He has an almost complete vision of existence which instructs the art of living with men and with God without bias and perfidy. Nonetheless his life is marked by conflict and suffering due to community's obstinacy. He is the author's life-ideal who faces the problem of evil: misunderstanding, slander, rejection, injustice, mistreatment, persecution, and, ultimately, death. But his seeming failure signifies that love, suffering, and sacrifice can conquer death and have the meaning of immortality in mortality. His death symbolically engenders the meaning and significance of true life that would manifest itself within the thought and actions of generations to come, for his noble ideas and deeds have been pointing to the future beyond the world-order of his day. Not only Kasa's life but the novel as

a whole is, to use Knight's words with which he explains what he calls "great literature," "prophetic, and exists not in the past from which it arises but in the future to which it points and which it helps to create" (19636). If one understands the novel within the context of its theological dimension as examined so far taking into account the imaginative and prophetic richness of creative writing in general, one can say that Haddis Alḍmayyḍhu is indeed one among the "prophets" of the modern world. D.H. Lawrence once said "Being a novelist I consider myself superior to the saint, the scientist, the philosopher and the poet. The novel is the one bright book of life" (cited in Scott, 1967:216). With its delicate and sagacious treatment of its subject in its vast world *Fiqir Iskḍ Mḍqabir* appropriately attests to the validity of this declaration.

Kasa Damt'e in this "bright book of life" is, thus, a personality who, like Christ, criticizes the existing social order of his day, proposes an alternative vision of peaceful life, and tries to teach how to reform that "obsolescent" social system. He is a *Cryist* in that fictional universe who cries out the agony, the defenselessness, and the supplication of others, and a Christ-figure who indicates the right way towards freedom and peaceful life. He is indeed an accomplished social critic and a rejected reformer.

## CONCLUSION

This research has examined the case of two "novels" in relation to the depiction of the Christ-figure. Results indicate that the authors of these "novels" have utilized the Christ-figure as a major symbol in their literary creation. They have considered the figure as an image through whose agency their preferred life-ideal is realized. In the quest for an ideal society in which peaceful life free from perfidy, malevolence, inhumanity, and spiritual death is made concrete, in which the harmony in the God-man relation is restored, the Christ-figure is used as an ideal means to revamp the moribund social system and is made responsible for the creation of the sought-after world .

In *Libb wəlləd Tarik* the Christ-figure takes the form of quester of benefaction and harbinger of salvation. The world of this narrative where the twins (WahId and T'obiyya) are drawn as Christ-symbols has been threatened by bloodshed and vandalism caused by the unending confrontation between the two opposite forces (which in effect symbolize good and evil). This world has been characterized by severance: man and God have been disunited. To effectuate a reunion in this world of spiritual death WahId and T'obbiya have been assigned the role of the Savior. They have led a life marked by a quest of benefaction and suffering for the sake of others. Through their agency all benefactors are rewarded and Christianity is glorified triumphing over idolatry. An ideal society where man is reunited with God is established; thus salvation is attained.

In *Fiqr Iskā Māqabir* the Christ-figure is depicted as social critic and rejected reformer. Kasa Damt'e, assuming the role of Christ is cast in a world which offers no place of safety and security. The world he lives in is a world full of vainglory, prejudice, evil, hypocrisy and "slavery." He criticizes the existing social order of this world where the local aristocracy represented by Māshāsha inflicts physical and psychological pain upon the commons. He also proposes an alternative social vision via which the "decadent" social system would be improved and saved from complete disintegration. He indicates the right path towards freedom, peaceful life, economic and political stability, and tries to effect societal reform. But no one gives sufficient heed to the worthwhile message of his teaching and vision. He is rather misunderstood and considered as mad. For this reason his life is entangled in a perilous conflict with his surroundings. In fact Kasa is denied his proper place in society. Thus he is figuratively crucified. He dies while he is still striving to effectuate the freedom and well-being of others with too little regard to his own material desire. His teaching and visions could be understood as pointing forward beyond the world order of his day to the future world of men where they would be revitalized and actualized. Viewed in line with this timeless significance of his vision, his death could be understood as a gate to immortality - the end is just the beginning .

The characters in these novels whose lives and deeds have already been examined in the previous two chapters are people with Christ-like commitment and endurance. Their commitment to maintain a world of freedom, peace and true love, their criticism of the existing social order of

their day and their suggestion of an alternative social vision, the misunderstanding and mistreatment they encounter in society, the conflict they are involved with their environment for this reason, their insistence on indicating the right path towards "redemption" in spite of society's obstinacy, their hostility to animus, prejudice, vainglory, excessive wealth, perfidiousness, hypocrisy, and every gesture of evil, their humility and suffering for the welfare of others, all these manifest their plausible affinity with the Savior. Although they are purely human in that they concern themselves with the here and the now, their "larger-than-usual" deeds and visions imply the God in them. Their message is basically an example which demands imitation. They are depicted as Christ-symbols so that men in the world order of their day and even beyond would follow their lead and be "saved". Other functions which their portrayal is made to serve emerge from this one.

Through such an attempt (conscious or otherwise) in drawing the Christ-like characters the authors of these novels have accomplished their task of unveiling the virtuous and vicious aspects of human nature and indicating the right way to the creation of an ideal society, to "redemption" (even more convincingly, one would argue, than the preachers in the pulpit). These fictional works seem to result from the authors' shock at man's being lost in the abyss of social crisis. They want people of the fictional universe to understand that they are following the wrong and dangerous track which leads through the dark woods of ignorance, malevolence and sin to death in life, and that they need a "redeemer," a visionary who indicates the right path towards

final light, a world of true love and freedom. As alleviators of life they seem to be concerned with making order out of the social chaos through the agency of the Savior-figure. There exists in them a longing for the restoration of harmony in the disordered worlds of their fictional works. The general drive seems to be that human desire to unmask and illuminate the evil in society through making use of religious and mythic imagery.

The utilization of religious and mythic imagery indicates to the direct or indirect influence of the Biblical tradition upon the author, to his conditioning to the various rituals of belief, to his conscious or unconscious awareness of man's myth-making tradition. Since human nature "---has a special zest in evoking antecedents, in contemporizing earlier vicissitudes and their configuration by story and myth" (Wilder, 1991:138), primordial images and/or archetypes which remain in the collective unconscious as a result of his habituation to the rituals of belief or the myth-making convention will manifest themselves in his creative writing. This is to say that the "novels" studied in this thesis are results of archetypal mimesis, i.e., products of a literary creative process which employs the fictional transfiguration of Christ (who broadly speaking is a mythical figure as well).

Generally speaking, results of this research conducted on the basis of two sample novels have demonstrated that the Amharic novel has theological implications. Some Amharic novelists like Afጅwጅገገ and Haddis have utilized the Christ-figure as a major symbol in their fictional writings. Results have also indicated that studying the Holy Scriptures in order to fully and rightly

understand the seemingly superficial meaning of Amharic literary works is indispensable.

In the course of his undertaking the researcher has also observed that some major characters in Amharic novels such as *And Lənnatu*, *Wənjəldañaw Daña*, *Yəhillina Dəwəli*, and *Haddis* do manifest plausible affinity with Christ. Thus the researcher would like to suggest to future researchers who are interested in this kind of reading that these novels are rich literary works which would be convenient sources for a literary critical investigation aimed at exploring the theological dimensions of Amharic literature regarding the depiction of the Christ-figure. The researcher would like to modestly propose that such Amharic novels be approached from the perspective which this thesis has made use of. But this doesn't mean that the best mode of reading is only the one proposed here. It is simply an attempt to show that the present researcher has started to read the Amharic novel this way. It is an alternative mode of reading, and the choice is the reader's. The present researcher doesn't know to what extent his thesis would succeed in convincing the reader to follow the proposed way of reading and in provoking discussion. He knows only one thing: this study is at least some thing in the critical appreciation of our indigenous literature which may lead to a serious something else in this line. And this serious something else will come out in the future, he hopes, through the efforts of some other students of literature.

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APPENDIX A  
CITATIONS TAKEN FROM *LIbb*  
*Waddad Tarik* IN THE SOURCE LANGUAGE

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1. ደግ አድራጊ አበደረ ክፉ አድራጊ ተገደረ።  
ለጋስ ቢለግስ አበደረ እንጂ አልሰጠም።  
(ገጽ 3)
2. አሪት ተሽራ ወንጌል መሰበክ በተጀመረ ዘመን አረመኒው ከፍ ብሎ ክርስቲያኑ ዝቅ ይል ነበር። በዚሁ ዘመን አረማዊያን በብዛታቸውና በጉልበታቸው እየተመኩ ክርስቲያኑን እያደጋደጉ ከደንበር እየተሻገሩ አገሩን ያጠቁት ይዘርፉት ያቃጥሉት ይመደምዱት ነበር።  
(ገጽ 3)
3. ... ከነዚህም ወገን ከነዚያም ወገን ከቶ እርቅ የሚፈልግ አንድም ሰው አልነበረ ብቻ በየጊዜውና በየወሩ በያመቱ ሲዋጉ፤ ሲፋተጉ፤ ሲተራረዱ ሲተላለቁ ይኖሩ ነበር።  
(ገጽ 3)
4. ... ታገሩ በጌትነቱ ሳለ ለጀግና መስጠት ለደሀ መርጠብ ለተራብ ማብላት ለታረዘ ማልበስ እንጂ ገንዘቡን ወደጎሳ ማረግ ለነገ ማለት አያውቅም ነበር...  
(ገጽ 6)
5. ... እነዚሁ ልጆች የዚያን ጊዜ አሥራ ስድስት ዓመት ሁኖአቸው ነበር። ሁለቱም ልጆች እጅግ ያማሩ እጅግ የተዋቡ ነበሩ። መንታ ስለሆኑ ሁለቱም መልካቸው አንድ አካል አንድ አምሳል ሁኖ ላይን ያሳስቱ ነበር። ታለባበሳቸው በቀር ወንዱም ገና ጢም አላቀነቀነም ነበርና ሌላ ምንም የሚለያዩበት ነገር አልነበረም።  
(ገጽ 6)
6. ... እንዲሁም እግዚአብር ደስ ያለው ለት ተጭሞታ ተጠንቅቆ ሰርቶ ነብስ የዘራባት ትመስላለች እንጂ ጦቢያ እንደሰው የተፈጠረች አትመስልም ነበር። በከንቱ ነው ጦቢያ ስጋ ተመልበሱአ በቀር አመሏና መልኳ ከነኪሩቤል የቅርብ ዝምድና የሚቆጣጠር ይመስል ነበር።  
(ገጽ 64)
7. ... ንጉሡ ዋህድን ባየ ጊዜ ደስታ ፈነቀለው። እውነትም የጦቢያን ቆርበት ገፎ የለበሰው እንጂ ሌላም አይመስል ነበር።...  
(ገጽ 80)
8. ምነው እንዳንት ያለ የደሀና ሰው ልጅ ተማርጉ ወጥቶ ጫኝነት ይመኛል ንግግርህ ያማረ አለባበስህ የተዋበ ስራህ የጌታ ወቃቢህም ሁለንተናህም የጌታ...  
(ገጽ 10)

9. ... አንድ ጊዜ ግን በጨለማው አሻግሮ አንድ ቁጥቋጦ መሳይ አየና አራት እግር ያለው የውነተኛው አንበሳ መሰለውና ነፍስና ሥጋው ተለያየበት፡፡...  
(ገጽ 29)

10. ...ከፍና ዝቅ እያለ በዳባቱ እያየ መንገድ እየለወጠ ሲሄድ ሲሄድ በግራው በኩል አንድ ትንሽ ዋሻ መሳይ ላይኑ ደርሶ ገች አለበትና ዋህድ መብረክረኩ ባለ፡፡...  
(ገጽ 20)

11. ዋህድ ላደረገው ሁሉ ነገር ምስክር ሁና ተሸሽጋ ስታይ ነበረች አንድ ድርጭት ተተሸሸግሁበት ተገለጥሁ ብላም እንደሆነ አይታወቅ እሳር ቅጠሉን በክንፉ አስጅብራ ተነሥታ በረረች፡፡ ዋህድም ያው አውሬ ደርሶ አነቀኝ መስሎት ትንፋሹን አቋርጦ እንደሞተ ታለበት ተዘረጋና መንቀሳቀሱም ቀረ፡፡...  
(ገጽ 20)

12 ...መከራው፤ ሥቃዩ ተገድሎ ሲነበብ እንደሚሰማው እንደሰማዕታት ስቃይ ሆነ እንጂ ተዚያም አያንስ፡፡  
(ገጽ 25)

13 ... ከዚያው ካውራው በር አንድ ጥብልያኮሰን የመሰለ ሻንቅላ ደረቱ በክንድ የሚሰፈር የመሰለ ቁመቱ አምድ የመሰለ ዓይኑ እንሰስላ የሞቀ የመሰለ አፍንጫው መርግ የተንከባለለበት የመሰለ የመዳብና የቆርቆሮ አንባሩን የዘሆን መዳፍ በመሰለ ክንዱ ደርድሮ ባራት ማዕዘን የተሳለ ጉዳውን የመስከረም ዘተር ዱባ በመሰለ በራቁት ሆዱ ላይ አሸንጦ በቀኝ እጁ ጎመዱን አጠንሮ ይዞ ያልተፈቀደለትን ሰው ለመከልከል ተገትሮ ቁሞ ነበር፡፡...  
(ገጽ 31)

14 አየ ለጋስነት! እንዲህ ነው መለገስ! የጨካኝ አረመኒ ልገሳ ሰው ያዳሙ ልጅ ሁሉ በራብ ሲአልቅ እህሉን ለሳት ማብላት ከተራበው ሰው ታፋ እየነጠቀ ላልተራበው እሳት ማጉረስ የተራዘውን ደሀ እያስወጣ ወደውርጭ እየገፉ ብርድ ለማይሰማው እሳት ቤቱን አዳራሹን የሞቀውን እልፍኝ መስጠት እጅግ የተዋበ ልግስና ነው!...  
(ገጽ 46)

15 ... ከነዚህ ድንኳኖች መሀል አንድ ተኮረብታ ዝቅ ታዳራሽ ከፍ ያለ ግምጃ ድንኳን ተተከለ፡፡ ያው ድንኳን ባለወርቅ ሻሁራ ባለወርቅ ጉልላት ነበር፡፡ ከዚያ ጉልላት ላይ ደግሞ ከነፋስ ጋር የሚታገል የወርቅና የብር ሻጉራ እየተጣለቀ የሆነበትና አንድ ትልቅ ሰበድአት በላይ እስተቀስቱ የተጠለፈበት ሰንደቅ ዓላማ ፊጥ ብሎበታል፡፡ የንጉሡ ድንኳን መሆኑን ጠቢያና አባቷ አወቁ፡፡ ያም ሰበድአት ያረመኒው ማምለኪአ ምልክት መሆኑ ታወቀ፡፡  
(ገጽ 48)

16 ... መሳሪያ የሌለውን ሰው መማረክ ትቶ ቢገድሉት ተግዳይም አይቆጠር፡፡...  
(ገጽ 50)

17 እግዚአብሔር ከዚህ ጦር መአት ቢአድነን ብለን መሸሻችን ነበር።  
(ገጽ 51)

18 ካፊሮች አምላካቸውን ከሰማይ ነው ያለ ይላሉና ተኮረብታ መውጣታቸው ለሰማዩ እንዲቀርቡና ቶሎ አምላካቸው ልመናቸውን ሰምቶ ከኛ አንዲያድናቸው ብለው ይሆናል።  
(ገጽ 51)

19 እንዲህ አንተ የምትሳለቅበት የክርስቲያን አምላክ መአቱንና ምህረቱን ለማውረድ የተራራው ቅርበት የሜዳው እርቀት ያየሩ ምጥቀት የውቅያኖሱ ጥልቀት ያብራጀው ደግነት የፀሐዩ ግረት የገሞራው ብርታት የበረዶው ቅዝቅዘት የጨለማው ጥቁረት የወጀበው ግነት አያሰናክለውም። ሁሉም ለሱ አንድ ነው። ይህ ሁሉ ባንድ ቃሉ ይቆማል ይሰራል ይፈርሳል እንዳልነበረ ይሆናል ከእምካልቦ ይመጣል። በሱ ፊት ሁሉም አንድ ነው። ለሱ ኃይለኛው ደካማው ደፋሩ ፈሪው ደህው ሀብታሙ ገዢው ተገዢው ሁሉም አንድ ነው። ሁሉም በሱ ፊት ኢምንት ነው። በሱ ፊት ትንሽና ትልቅ የለም። በዚህ ዓለም ያመነውም ያላመነውም ትክክል ይኖራል ይወለዳል ያድጋል ያረጃል ይሞታል። በወዲያኛው ዓለም ግን ሁሉም እንደምግባሩ እንደሃይማኖቱ ወይ ካላውን ወይ ፍዳውን ከሱ ይቀበላል።... አሁን እኔና ይህ ልጄ እስትንሞት ድረስ አምላካችንን ከልብ እናምነዋለን። ብንሞት ብትገሉንም አሁን ባበሳችን በኃጢአታችን መሞት ነው እንጂ ለክርስቶስ ማዳን አቅቶት መስማት ተስኖት እንዳልሆነ እናውቃለን።  
(ገጽ 52)

20 አላህ እንዳወቀ ፍጥረቱን በሃይማኖቱ ያሳድረዋል። አላህ እንዳወቀ ሁሉንም እየቋንቋው ይሰማዋል እየምግባሩ ያጸድቀዋል ይኮንነዋል። ሰው ግን ከሱ ተገዛ ሃይማኖቱ በቀር የሌላው ሰው ሃይማኖት ምንም ረብ ያለው አይመስለውም። አሁንም የሰው ሃይማኖት አታበጥልሉ። አላህ ብቻ ነው ሁሉን የሚገመገም። ደግሞስ የካፊር ሃይማኖት ይበልጥ እንደሆነ ማን ያውቃል።  
(ገጽ 53)

21 ... ንጉሡ በዚህ ጊዜ የሰውን ሳቅ አቋረጠና መንፈስ ቅዱስ እንደመራው ሁሉ እንዲህ አለ።...  
(ገጽ 53)

22 ...ጠቢያና አባቷ እሄን ግርማ እሄን ዝምታ ባዩ ጊዜ አመ ይመጽእን መሰላቸው እንጂ ሌላም አልመሰላቸው።...  
(ገጽ 58- 59)

23 ተዚህ አዋጅ ወዲያ አገር መዝረፍ ሰው መግደል ቀረ። ጉዙውም የዚያን ዕለት ጀምሮ ቀረ። ተዚያው ከተስፈረበት ላይ ዋና ትልቅ ከተማ ተቆረቆረ።  
(ገጽ 63)

24 የሰው ውለታ እንዲህ ክፉም ቢሆን በጎ በወዲያኛው ዓለም ብቻም አይደል እንዳንድ ጊዜ በዚህም ዓለም ወይ ፍጹም ወይም ካላው ላድራጊው ይደርሳል።

(ገጽ 84)

25 ...እኔም የዚህን አላፊ ክብር የዚህን ዓለም አላፊ ደስታ ሳይ ክርስቶስን ያላወቀ ያልጠየቀ ንጉሥ ማግባት ክርስቶስን መክዳት የዘላለሙን ክብረቴን ህይወቴን መናቅ ይሆንብኛል።

(ገጽ 87)

26 ዋህድ ማለት አረመኒና አማራ አንድ ሆነ ማለት ነው...

(ገጽ 93)

27 ...እኔም ታያት ተቅማቴ በቆየኝ ድንቁርና ለጣዖት ስሰግድ ኖርሁ። አሁን ግን ክርስቶስ ልብ ሰጠኝ ከድንቁርና አወጣኝ የውነተኛውን ፈጣሪ እንዳውቅ አደረገኝ።...

(ገጽ 91)

28 ባንድ ነጋዴ ሰበብ ሁሉ ዳነ። ባንድ እሴት ምክንያት ሁሉ አመነ። ባንድ ንጉሥ ቃል ኢትዮጵያ ቆመ።

(ገጽ 91)

29 እንዲች ያለ አበባ ከወዴት በቀለች፤  
እንዲያው መላክ ኑራ ከላይን ወረደች፤

- - -

ጠልሰሟን አውልቃ አጎዛ ደረበች፤  
ስጋጃውን ንቃ አቃቅማ ረገጠች።  
ከዙፋኗ ወርዳ ተኮረብታ ወጣች።  
እንኳን ለመዋረድ ለሞት ያልተገባች፤  
ዓለም ሲሰግድላት በድንክ ተከሰሰች።  
በምቀኛ ተንኮል ተልፍኝ ተሰደደች።  
ለወንድሟ ስትል በወንድ ተመሰለች።  
ዳሩ ግና ቢሆን ወንድ ሁናም አልቀረች።  
የሁለት አገር መንግስት አንድነት ገጠመች።

- - -

ምንም ወንጌል ብማር  
ሃይማኖት ቢገባኝ  
ምን ቢሆን አላምንም  
እንዳንች ያለ ሊገኝ።

(ገጽ 93-94)

30 እልፍ አእላፍ አማራ ያስሸሸ የነበረ፤  
ራስ ደጃዝማቹን ይመታው ነበረ፤

ባለ ትልቁን ዘውድ ይሸር የነበረ፤  
እንኳን ጦርና ሰይፍ መድፍ አይፈር ነበረ፤  
ወሬው ገና በሩቅ ያሰረብድ ነበረ፤  
ድምጡ ገደል ዙሮ ያሰረግድ ነበረ፤  
የገዳሙን በሬ ይሰብር ነበረ፤  
ጅቦና ሰንሰለት አይገታው ነበረ፤  
አንበሳው ገርሞ በማተብ ታሰረ።  
(ገጽ 95)

APPENDIX B  
CITATIONS TAKEN FROM *FiqIr Iskḍ Mḍqabir*  
IN THE SOURCE LANGUAGE

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- 1 ... በሁለት እጅ የማይነሳ ከባድ የጌታ ዘር...  
(ገጽ 121)
- 2 ... ከቤተ መንግስት ርቆ ከናቱ ዘንድ አደገ፡፡...  
(ገጽ 121)
- 3 «የማህበራችን አቋም የተሰራበት ሥራት ልማዱ ወጉ ህጉ እንደህይወታዊ ስራተ ማህበር ሳይሆን ህይወት እንደሌለው የድንጋይ ካብ አንዱ ባንዱ ላይ ተደራርቦ የላይኛው የታችኛውን ተጭኖ የታችኛው የላይኛውን ተሸክሞ እንዲኖር ሆኖ የተሰራ በመሆኑ ከጊዜ ብዛት የታችኛው ማፈንገጡ ስለማይቀርና ይህ ሲሆን ህንፃው በሙሉ እንዳይፈርስ እንደገና ተሻሽሎ ሰውን ከድንጋይ በተሻለ መልክ የሚያሳይ የህያዋን አቁዋመ ማህበር እንዲሰራ ያስፈልጋል፡፡...»  
(ገጽ 122)
- 4 አይን እያለው ፍሬውን ከገለባ ለይቶ ማየት የማይችል አእምሮ እያለው የሚጠቅመውን ከሚጎዳው ለይቶ ማስተዋል የማይችል እንደበግ መንጋ በፊቱ የሚሄደውን ተከትሎ የሚንጋጋ እንደጭነት ከብት የሚጭኑትን ተሸክሞ የሚጎተት የጉድ ማህበር...  
(ገጽ 123)
- 5 «አእምሮው የተቃወሰ አእምሮው ትክክል ያልሆነ ሰው ነው አያ ካሳን አእምሮው ያልተካከለ የሚለው!»  
(ገጽ 127)
- 6 «...ተግባራቸውን ለሆዳቸው የሸጡ የለወጡ...»  
(ገጽ 220)
- 7 «...ያ ከተለመደው ልዩ በመሆኑ ጉድ የተባለው ልዩነቱ በመልካም ወይስ በክፉ መንገድ መሆኑን ማመዛዘን በማይችል ሕዝብ መሀከል መኖሩ...»  
(ገጽ 369)
- 8 «... ውለታ እንዲዋልላቸው ውለታ የሚውሉ ነጋዴዎች እንጂ የልብ ወዳጆች አይደሉም! ውለታውን ቆጥሮ ሰጥቶ ቆጥሮ የሚቀበል የልብ ወዳጅ አይደለም!...»  
(ገጽ 382)

- 9 «... ፊታውራሪ እንደምታውቁቸው አካላቸው አድጎ ሲያረጅ አእምሮቸው ህፃን እንደሆነ የቀረ እስከመጨረሻው ድረስ መሪ መካሪ አስተማሪ ሞግዚት የሚያስፈልጋቸው ናቸው::...»  
(ገጽ 220)
- 10 «...ፊታውራሪ መሸሻ አዲስ ሥጋ ለብሰው እንደገና ተወልደው ነው እንጂ ድሮ ድሮ ካራት ወይም ካምስት መቶ ዘመን በፊት ከሞቱት ክፉ ሰዎች ያንዱ መንፈስ ናቸው::...»  
(ገጽ 275)
- 11 «...ህይወቱን ለወገኑ የሚያሳልፍ ከክርስቶስ በቀር ማነው? ሁሉም እዚህ ተሰብስቦ ሲያለቅስ እኔ መሸሻ ነኝ እንደክርስቶስ ህይወቴን ለወገኔ መስዋዕት አድርጌ ያቀረብኩ! ታዲያ ላደረግሁት ሁሉ የሚመለስልኝ ዋጋዬ ይህ ነው! ግዴላም እዚያ ላይ አገኘዋለሁ!»  
(ገጽ 175)
- 12 «...ሆዳቸውን የሞላ በፈለገው መንገድ የሚመራቸው...»  
(ገጽ 220)
- 13 «እርስዎ ደግሞ ዝሆን ዝሆን የሚያካክለው የራስዎ ጉድለት ሳይታይዎ በሌሎች ላይ የሌለው ጉድለት ይታይዎታል!...»  
(ገጽ 126)
- 14 «...ባላገር ደካማ አይወድም ባላገር ብርቱ ይወዳል:: በባላገር ላይ እጅህን ማጠንከር ብቻ ነው ያለብህ:: እጅህ ከጠነከረ ባላገር ታልቦ አያፈጅም ጋንህ እስኪሞላ ልታልበው ትችላለህ! ባላገር ያለቅሳል ያማርራል ፈሪ ካገኘም ያስፈራራል:: ነገር ግን ቆራጥና ደፋር ካጋጠመው በመጨረሻ ይሸነፋል:: በመጨረሻ የተጠየቀውን ይከፍላል::...»  
(ገጽ 217-218)
- 15 «... ያንድ ቀን መንገድ ተገዘው እርስዎን እንኳን ደስ ያለዎ ለማለት እዚህ ድረስ መጡ አሁን ይህ ሁሉ አልበቃ ብሎ ነው እርስዎን ደስ ስላለዎ ሰንጋ የሚከፍሉ? እግዚአብሔር ይህን ግፍ ሲያይ መከት አያወርድም?»  
(ገጽ 176-177)
- 16 «... ይገርምሃል! ይህን የማይረባ ልማድ ይህን በግፍ ላይ ተየመስረተ ክፉ ልማድ ተመልክተህ እንዲህ ያለ ሥራት ሊኖር የሚገባውም የሚችልም አይደለምና ይልቅ አወዳደቁ እንዳይከፋ ቀስ ብሎ እንዲለወጥ ማድረግ ይሻላል ብለህ የተናገርህ እንደሆነ እንደከሃዲ ተቆጥረህ የምትሰቀልበት ገመድ ይሰናዳልሃል!...»  
(ገጽ 334)

17 «... የናንተ አጥንትና ደም ከሌሎቹ ልዩ የሆነበት በምን ነው? የናንተ ደም ስትሞቱ አይቆምም? አያልቅም? አይቀርም? የናንተ ሥጋ አይፈርስም? አይበሰብስም? አይተላም? አይገማም? የናንተ አጥንት አይነቅዝም? አይሰበርም አፈር አይሆንም?...»

(ገጽ 119)

18 «...ሀኔ የጌታ ልጅ! የጌታ ልጅ መሆን እንዲህ እንደኔ ታስሮ መኖር የሚወዱትን ነገር ሁሉ መመኘት እንጂ ማድረግ አለመቻል ከሆነ ከቅጣት ሁሉ የከፋ ቅጣት ከባርነት ሁሉ የከፋ ባርነት ነው!»

(ገጽ 244)

19 «ግሩም ነው! ለካ ከጌታ መወለድ ካንድ ወገን ሲመለከቱት የክብር ባርነት ነው! ...»

(ገጽ 89)

20 እግዚአ አቤት አቤት ለማን ልጩህ እኔ?  
ነፍሴን ወስደውብኝ ሲቀር ብቻ በድኔ፤  
አልቅሶ እንዳይቀብረኝ እንዳያዝን ወገኔ፤  
ቆሞ ሲንቀሳቀስ ይታያል ግብኔ፤  
በማን ደርሶ ያውቃል እንዲህ ያል ብያኔ?  
ሳያጠፉ ቅጣት ሳይሞቱ ኩነኔ?

(ገጽ 473)

21 «...ሰብሰ ራሴ ናት! የሚሆን ከሆነ የድሜ ሙሉ ደስታየን ላንድ ቀን ደስታዎ ለመለወጥ አልመለስም::...»

(ገጽ 340)

22 «... አየህ? ይህ የጌታ ልጅ መባሉ ብዙ ያካልና ያእምሮ ስቃይ ስላደረሰባት በማትታወቅበት አገር ሄዳ አንደ ተራ ሴት ነፃ ሆኖ መኖርን ልክ ከቁምጥና በሽታ እንደመዳን ነው የምትቆጥረው!»

(ገጽ 339)


23 «... መልካም አሳብና መልካም ሥራ ምንም እንኩዋ የተለመደውን ጎጂ አሳብና ስራ ሊለውጥ ባይችልም እንዳይጠፋ ተቀብሎ አቆይቶ ለተከታዩ ትውልድ የሚያስተላልፈው ከተገኘ ጊዜው ሲደርስ ያገለግላል ጊዜው ሲደርስ ይጠቅማል::...»

(ገጽ 370)

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: WONDWENSEN ADANE

Signature: 

Place: ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

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