

Intertextuality as a postmodern feature in Ethiopian cinema

Yalew Aklog ^{1*}, Tesfaye Dagneu ¹, Ayenew Guadu ²

1* PhD Candidate, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia

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

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

Corresponding Author: **Yalew Aklog**

Abstract

The overarching aim of this research is to examine intertextuality as reflected in Ethiopian cinema: the case of two Amharic films namely, Ethél (2013) written and directed by Zelalem Neged and Wuhaina Werq (Water and Gold) (2011) written and directed by Mohammed Ali since magic realism in Ethiopian Amharic cinema is a subject that has not been up for investigation that much and postmodernism as a lens is also neglected in Ethiopian Amharic cinema. These feature films were selected purposively based on their content consisting of postmodernist themes and involving intertextuality as a feature of postmodernist writing. The study employed a descriptive qualitative method since it emphasized describing intertextuality as one feature of postmodernist writing in the selected films. The selected films were critically analyzed using intertextuality as a theoretical framework. The critical approach of the study draws on Kristeva's (1980), Barthe's (1987) and Genette's (1982) theories of intertextuality. The findings of the study indicate that intertextuality is used in the selected films to create a universal cinematic language and communicate themes and ideas that filmmakers implicitly or explicitly convey. More importantly, the two selected films rely on referencing other texts and borrowing from other texts. The finding also shows that there is adaptation, reuse, reinterpretation and reimagining of poetry, history, mythology, and Bible implicitly or explicitly as chief manifestations of intertextuality in the selected films. Thus it helps for other researchers as a stepping stone to conduct a study on other postmodern features like intertextuality, parody, pastiche, paranoia, historiographical meta-fiction etc. and postmodern themes as well can be interesting research topics in Ethiopian Amharic cinema

Keywords: 1. Intertextuality, 2. postmodernism, 3. Amharic films, 4. Feature films, 5. Ethiopian cinema

1. Introduction

For many postmodern authors, playwrights, and poets, using intertextuality in postmodern writing became the hallmark of their style. As far as postmodernists' belief in particular and hermeneutics, in general, is concerned, it is unlikely to come up with final and binding certainty in analyzing and interpreting texts. In other words, it is impossible to bring an everlasting accredited interpretation and meaning due to various factors related to readers. It is also common to listen to arguments whether a film can equivalently be used as a narrative medium with the novel or not. Supporting the role of film as a narrative medium, McFarlane (1996, 12, as cited in Bezabih, 2020) pointed out that whatever the cinema's sources as an invention, as a leisure pursuit, or as a means of expression and whatever uncertainties about its development attend its earliest years, its huge and durable popularity is owed to what it most obviously shares with novels. Researchers of

this study also believe that since films have a plot structure(beginning, middle and end)and since they consist of an aesthetic products such as sculptures and pictures, they have features of narrative.

In intertextuality, issues like parody and pastiche are considered (Bennett and Royle, 2004;Jameson, 1992 cited in Liknaw2020:50).Liknaw (2020) reported that both parody and pastiche, according to these scholars, relying on imitation of earlier texts or objects. Liknaw (2020) also claimed that intertextuality in postmodernism is intentionally made to show some departures between the interwoven texts. The above statement works especially in parody where there is an impulse to ridicule by exaggerating the distance of the original text from 'normal' discourse. This is what the postmodern notion of intertextuality emphasizes. In the case of parody, intertextuality in postmodernism is designed to create a distance between the interwoven texts, whereas in the case of pastiche, narratives are made in an interwoven nature where the original and imitated are not clearly identified.

Aboneh (2016) reported that in each year, over a hundred films are produced on annual bases in Ethiopia. Nevertheless, articles, books, and encyclopedias written on African and world cinema do not as such include the Ethiopian account, hence adversely affecting the wholeness of universal knowledge. Tigist (2006) also argued that Ethiopian cinema is one of the pioneers in Sub-Saharan Africa, but it has yet to receive sustained academic attention. Ethiopia's film industry has to be situated in the broader Sub-Saharan context with which it shares a few similarities but more importantly, reveals critical divergences. **Michael W.Thomas(2011)** also pointed out that it is indeed striking to note that despite the dynamism of the Ethiopian film sector during the twentieth century, in most if not all the key reference books on African cinema published in English over the past three decades, Ethiopian cinema is almost absent.

To understand Ethiopian cinema, researchers highly believe that it is imperative to have an understanding of the Ethiopian values, tradition, mythology, history, and the larger cultural contexts. As far as the researchers' reading is concerned, although Ethiopian cinema in the recent times has made conscious efforts to weave **in an** intertextual milieu around its films, intertextuality in Ethiopian Amharic cinema is a subject that has not been up for investigation that much. As a result, professional academic sources on the topic under investigation are scarce in Ethiopian Amharic cinema history. In this inquiry, an attempt has been made to critically analyze intertextuality in two Ethiopian Amharic films from a postmodernist theoretical and analytical perspective.

2. Theoretical Framework of the Study

2.1. Intertextuality

This study adapts a pluralistic view bringing forth an approach that lets to analyze intertextuality as one postmodernist feature in the selected Amharic films in their all complexity. As a result, the study makes use of the general conceptions of postmodernism postulated/out laid by various scholars in the analysis. However, the analytical parameter that is used for the subsequent analysis of the selected films/works is adapted from Kristeva's(1980), Barthes's(1987),and Genette's (1982) theories of intertextuality.

Regarding how film adapts its implicit and explicit intertexts, Hutcheon(1989:115) reported that postmodern cinema engages with "the politics of representation, specifically the representation of the original and the originating subject as an artist: its dangers, its victims and its consequences". Kristeva also pointed out that any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double.(Kristeva,1980,66)

Dialogue and ambivalence lead her to conclude that, within the interior space of the text as well as within the space of texts, poetic language is a "double".(1980,69).From the idea of Kristeva, we can deduce that no text is self-born.

Like Kristeva, Barthes(1987) holds that the limitations of the linguistic-structuralist approach have to be overcome by means of a meeting of different epistemes, namely dialectical

materialism and psychoanalysis. In line with intertextuality, the idea of transtextuality plays a paramount role to **indicate** a text as not a finished product. In *Palimpsests*, Genette(1982,1-5) insists on the globality of the notion of transtextuality and offers five subcategories: namely intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, arch-textuality and hypertextuality.

3. Methodology

Methodologically speaking, the study employed a descriptive qualitative method since it emphasized describing intertextuality as one feature of postmodernist writing in the selected films. It employed content analysis and textual analysis. The selected films are taken as texts. Extracted scenes that are appropriate for intertextuality are taken from the films and are examined following the plotline of each film which has a paramount role for the better understanding of how postmodernist intertextuality is portrayed.

A purposive sampling technique is used to select films that depict intertextuality in Ethiopian Amharic Cinema. The criteria used to select films were their content which appeals to postmodern films and whether there are postmodernist features or techniques like intertextuality in them or not. The selected films are classified under the feature film category. Based on Kernvak CKV Online Glossary of Film terms definition cited in Bezabih(2020,20)feature films are "full-length" motion pictures, one greater than 60 minutes in length -but usually about 90-120 minutes on one particular topic. The selected films are *Ethél*(2013) written and directed by Zelalem Neged and *WuhainaWerq (Water and Gold)* (2011) written and directed by Mohammed Ali.

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

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Intertextuality in *Ethél*

It is hard fact that authors, poets, and playwrights consciously re-write the work of predecessors, imitate, quote, or plagiarize the works of others for several reasons. Today, it seems to be more appropriate to speak of film as one medium among others which interacts as multimedia, or is connected to one another intermedially. Intertextuality plays an imperative role for readers, audiences and authors as well. While reading or watching a hypertext which is the text that the reader or the audience is reading or watching, readers or audiences can remember back to the hypertext which is the text that is being referenced. By the same token, authors, poets and playwrights incorporate intertexts in their works mainly to create critical or additional meaning, make a point, create humor, or even to reinterpret an original work. It is the researchers' belief that the selected films are rich in intertextuality as a chief postmodernist feature. Playwrights of the selected films **tried to** show their allegiance to the already existing intertexts either explicitly or implicitly. In the selected films, playwrights show allegiance to other literary works, the Holy Bible, mythology, history, and folk literature so as to unfold the story of their films.

When/incorporating a variety of intertexts in their films, playwrights are proving the assumption that texts are more of constructions than creations. There is a poem referenced in the film *Ethél* which states about identity crisis revealed by characters in the film. The poem shows hybridity and dilemma whether somebody is in Ethiopia or in another universe:

I'm here, I'm there, it confuses me
This is how I feel
I say I'm here, I'm physically sitting and I'm thinking
I fill one two three four divvy lottery
I also email the scholarship.
This is how I feel
I think of DC when I sit on my island
My mind calls for me the State of Mary, Maryland.
I can see the axis sitting down
The image of The words disappeared from my eyes
I wish to be shooed by Tupac's pistol.
Trump's speech gives a joy to me
I live in dew and the snow makes me cold
I guess it smells like a burger
I'm here, I'm there, it confuses me
I baptized the black hater
I like white slime
Don't neglect the country of art
Ethiopia is a country, Ethiopia is a world
God's abode made by art
Hey, I'm here, I'm there. It confuses me.

(Zelalem,2013:08:40-10:07)

This intertextual tie with other literary productions like poetry brings an additional view for the interpretation of the story of the film. While watching the film, the audience will remember lines and stanzas of the Amharic poem which is composed by Bedilu Wakijira before the release of the film *Ethél*. This poem shows the distance between the reality and the central idea of the poem. The speaker of the poem wants to convince readers that Ethiopia is a country of art, country of wisdom and the gift of God. By contrast, characters yearn for America and they do not want to live in Ethiopia and they do not want to be called an Ethiopian. Characters in the film reveal a feeling of double consciousness. They are in between the sea and the devil since they physically reside in their homeland (Ethiopia) and are drained mentally to America and Europe.

The tie between postmodernism and religion is one of the oppositions. That is, postmodernism undermines biological, cognitive, and moral certainties, while religions rest on them. The most notable type of intertextuality in the film *Ethél* can be said to be the use of biblical texts and mythology. The dialogue between characters like Dagim and the Godfather about the literary and figurative meaning of Ethiopia can reveal both mythology and Bible as intertexts:

Godfather: Do you know what Ethiopia means?

Dagim: Burnt face

Godfather: No, Ethiopia was founded at the Gihon River basin on the banks of Lake Tana. Its founder was Ethél, the son of the priest Melchizedek. God appeared to Ethél on a mountain and changed his name from Ethél to Ethiosia and suggested that he would establish a foundation in the Gihon basin of Lake Tana. Ethél founded a country called Ethiopia given by God at Lake Tana. Ethiopia means a gift of gold to God. Therefore, the ancestor of all Ethiopians is Ethél or Ethiopia. Ethél and his sons were very wise, so they organized the whole of Africa and named it Ethiopia after their fathers. They named it and established a powerful country called Ethiopia, just as it is now. The children of the old Ethiopians of the present Africa were powerful and wise, just like the Europeans who colonized the Africans, so your ancestors also colonized the Europeans. But they did not use force, but wisdom.

Surprisingly, my child, before the Europeans colonized Africa, this map of Africa was called Ethiopia.

(Zelalem, 2013:1:28:23-1:30:06)

Playwrights' strategy of intertextuality creates a narrative that is both intellectual and effective; it preserves history and feeling, thus allowing spectators to feel connected to the past and recognize themselves as historical beings. From the above conversation held between Dagim and the Godfather, we can say that the film *Ethél* draws intertextually from Ethiopian mythology to give critical magnitude to the character of the protagonist in the film. Mythologically speaking, the meaning of "Ethiopia" is "burnt face." This meaning is the literal meaning which has strong tie to the skin color of most Ethiopians. The above extract also indicates the figurative meaning of "Ethiopia". This figurative meaning, according to the Godfather in the film, is derived from the divine thought. According to the Holy Bible, *Ethiopia* implies a gift of gold to God.

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

Son, this book is a history book that your ancestors wrote on parchment and hid for us three thousand years ago. It is one of the wisdom books that the Europeans stole from us once in war and once by missionaries. The reason why they stole from us is because your ancestors were very wise. Because most of them had written and stored in this and other books even with the technology seen in the world. Therefore, if they wanted to be a powerful country like us, they had to hold these books of our ancestors in their hands. (Zelalem, 2013:1:27:31-1:28:20).

The above extract clearly indicates that extrinsic intertextuality is used by the scriptwriter of the film. Direct quotation mark is indicated in the conversation held between Dagim and the Godfather. The historical book which is written by our ancestors on parchment is acknowledged when the storyline of the film is developed. The Godfather insists that Dagim should read the book so as to accomplish the mythological as well as biblical prophecy. The content of the book is also explicitly indicated. According to the narration by the God Father, this book consists of secrets of indigenous wisdom, paths to modern technology, mathematics, physics and Astronomy.

The dialogue between the characters Dagim and Ashebir also shows how the playwright alludes to ideas from history. In order to show the supremacy of Ethiopia, Ashebir brings historical evidence for Dagim who hates to be called an Ethiopian:

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

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

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

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

Ashebir: Of course, she was being starved. "They are so busy with our things that they forget their own pains"(Zelalem, 2013, 32:10-33:20).

From the above dialogue, it is easy to understand the fact that the scriptwriter tried to show the distance between texts. The history of the two countries (USA and Ethiopia) at present and in the past involves a paradox. The photograph by Ashebir is evidence that America was starved. Dagim can't trust his eyes and he does not want to listen to Ashebir's narration about the supremacy of Ethiopia. Thus, we can deduce that there is departure between the present text and what is being referred to which is the main emphasis of intertextuality in postmodern writing.

The dialogue between Dagim and the Godfather consists of myth as a textual reference. The secret of the so called Nishan yields cosmological reference:

Dagim: What is the secret of the Nishan?

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

The other intertext in the film *Ethél* is folklore. The classic Amharic folk literature serves the **palate** of the audience in the history of Amharic cinema. In the film *Ethél* the playwright alludes the idea from war chant which is part of Ethiopian orature:

Zeraf! Akakizeraf!

Zeraf! Akakizeraf!

An invincible female lion

The shadow of the killer roars

I am the woman who gave birth to a man

When a coward boasts, he won't deny me

Zeraf! Akakizeraf!

Zeraf! Akakizeraf!

If you haven't heard about it, you will find this

I threw it away like a storehouse.

I am the son of a king

Pride runs through my blood

I dare not like my country

I will fight for my glory

I am an Ethiopian, the remnant of heroes

Honey for my friend, aloe for my enemy

Zeraf! Akakizeraf!

Zeraf! Akakizeraf!

(Zelalem, 2013:1:38:42-1:39:03)

In a postmodern literary text, the idea of originality and authenticity is undermined and parodied. Postmodern literary work does not pretend to be new and original, but uses the old literary forms, genres, and kinds of literature and art, kitsch, quotation, allusion and other means to recontextualize their meaning in a different linguistic and cultural contexts to show a difference between the past and present as well as between the past and present forms of representation .

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

4.2. Intertextuality in *Wuhaina Werq* ("Water and Gold")

Intertextuality is an important element of postmodernism with its acknowledgment of earlier or prior literary works. For many postmodern artists, using intertextuality in their writings became the hallmark of their style. What is important to bear in mind while talking about intertextuality in postmodern writing is the role of other literary works to complete the story of a present text. The playwright in the film *Wuhaina Werq* ("Water and Gold") tried to show the text itself is not an autonomous entity as he tried to support his idea by acknowledging previous texts to unfold the plot of the film.

You the dream of Cush, the son of Nimrod
Yesterday you were an African Rome
When the water goes away
Why you remain as thin as a river rock
(Mohammed, 2011, 13: 26-13:41)

The above intertextually used poem alludes to the Biblical origin of the black African race, thereby clearly indicating the supremacy of Ethiopia as she is referred as an African Rome and pioneer of civilization in the continent. The scriptwriter uses this poetic intertext to show the distance between Ethiopia in the past and Ethiopia in the present. Intertextuality in postmodern writing aims at creating challenges in the previously used discourses

Postmodern authors intentionally build the meaning on the use not only of the old forms and genres, but also by a deliberate use of plagiarism, kitsch, false or pretended quotations from well-known literary and other texts (by false or pretended I mean the authors' close imitation of the ideas or style of famous authors, works or philosophers without giving a bibliographical note (https://www.academia.edu/7167077/Postmodern_Literature_and_its_background 28-29). The director in the film *Wuhaina Werq* ("Water and Gold") has built his narration with intertextual references to Laureate Tsegaye Gebremedihnn's anthology of poetry entitled *Fire or Flower* (1966 E. C.).

Please Saint Mary, you the symbol of love
Give me patience to share the pain of my Motherland Ethiopia
From the furnace that burned her to taste the poison from her bites
Let me die her own death
Yes, I'm alone, I'm afraid
I lost my heart
I lost a corner to hide
(Mohammed, 2011: 1:20:41-1:21:10).

In the film *Wuhaina Werq* ("Water and Gold"), the major character Dr. Dejene is an advocate of Ethiopian traditional values, norms, customs and the economic system as well. His antagonists like Miss Rihana are against what he advocates. He was fired from a company as he was arguing with the owner of the firm about the rights of the working class. He shows a cost benefit analysis for the owner of the firm, but he does not give him an ear. In a classroom, Dr. Dejene teaches principles of economics by exemplifying what gult workers apply but not what Adam Smith (the father of modern economics) pinpoints. He reads the aforementioned poem while he observes people lacking moral and running for personal benefits rather than dying for truth and their country.

Another important intertext for the selected films is history. The playwright of the film *Wuhaina Werq* (“*Water and Gold*”) tried to disprove the Derridean poststructuralist motto that “there is nothing outside of a text” by alluding to the analysis of Ethiopian history:

“Our history has a close relationship with stone. Axum is stone. Lalibela is a stone. Even a modern cobblestone is a stone. Even if we say that we have three thousand years of history, we are unique people who do not feel that we are the only ones who are retarded/backward, who have been farming with oxen for three thousand years but good at saying we are always number one.”

(Mohammed, 2011:02:43-03:07)

The above extract is an interesting example of intertextuality in postmodern writing. The postmodern artist **tries to** show the distance between the original text and what is being alluded to. We Ethiopians always say we have three thousand years of history; we are the cradle of humanity, pioneer of civilization in Africa, etc. The Ethiopian popular motto that “we are always number one” is being challenged in this film which is the main emphasis of intertextuality in postmodern writing. The exemplification in the extract is that though we always say we are the first in many aspects, we are still farming with an ox which was started before three thousand years.

The conversation between Dr. Dejene and his neighbors at the funeral ceremony also shows the way the playwright depends on history so as to unfold the story of his film:

Dr. Dejene: It is very sad when a person is buried, but it is very happy when such poisonous ideas are buried. I am so glad that you neighbors were present at this wonderful funeral.

Female Neighbor: How could a funeral be nice?

Dr. Dejene: My mother, the author of this book is called Max Webner. He says that the poor have no rights. Politicians like Winston Churchill who follow his ideas say that it is fair to oppress poor countries. The author of this book is called Kant. And he says that we Europeans are light and the rest of the world is dark. What is a toxic thought? We bury these poisonous ideas under this banner.

(Mohammed, 2011:50:40-51:36).

The above quote clearly shows how an original text is being challenged when it is used as an intertext. Postmodernists are always against meta-narratives like history and religion. The playwright objects Max Webner's idea that the poor are voiceless and Europeans are light and the rest of the world is dark.

The way female character Rihana in the film refutes the role of story for social development is also supported via history. The following monologue can exemplify how she deconstructs who built Axsum and Lalibella:

There is no example of civilization like the Europeans in the world. We need to improve in science, economy, social, politics and individuals. Therefore, we need to learn to be like the Europeans like Turkey and South Korea. We do not know who built Axum and Lalibella or who brought them to us. We wouldn't be surprised by them all our lives. But our faith of yesterday is our poison of tomorrow. (Mohammed, 2011:01:35-02:25)

Dr. Dejene who is the protagonist of the film *Wuhaina Werq* (“*Water and Gold*”) also alludes to ideas from the analysis of Ethiopian and world history with the intention to persuade that the theory of Ethiopians is better than Darwin's theory of evolution:

Bogale: In the era of globalization, modern education should survive.

Dr. Dejene: Bogale, we should be like the society in which we were created. Charles Darwin's theory, which you mentioned, does not work for this society.

Bogale: How?

Dr. Dejene: That's a good question. Charles Darwin's theory is about individualism. He is talking about bullying. Some scholars accepted his idea, just like Max Webner, the so-called

father of sociology. What do you think he means? They accepted the idea of Social Darwinism. On the other hand, look at our society's proverbs. For example, If the web shines, it binds the lion; two heads are better than one; he who eats alone dies alone. So what theory is there better than that of ours (Mohammed, 2011:38:24-39:30).

From the aforementioned two intertextual quotations, we can easily understand that is the characters Rihana and Dr.Dejene are voicing their objection of meta-narratives such as social Darwinism and racial superiority of Europeans. According to Ethiopian history, the rock-hewn churches of Lalibella and obelisk of Axum were built by our forefathers. Lalibella, for instance, was built by Saint Lalibella from one rock before **a century**. By the contrast, Rihana the antagonist of Dr. Dejene in the film *WuhainaWerq* ("Water and Gold") deconstructs what Ethiopian historians proudly advertise. She strongly believes that we do not know who built Axum and Lalibella and who gave them to Ethiopians. More importantly, she states for her students that this is merely a story which they should not believe. On the contrary, Dr.Dejene (the protagonist of the film) deconstructs Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest. Dr.Dejene strongly argues that this theory does not work for Ethiopians since the main focus of the theory is individualism. In contrast to Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest, the Ethiopian society is governed by collectivism. He intertextually draws on Amharic proverbs in his dialogue so as to inculcate why he is against individualism or social Darwinism.

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

When I look at it simply, Ethiopia looks like a gentle farmer. Any civilization in the world is centered on the workers. The sad thing is that there is not enough pay to support the lives of the workers. Our right hand works but our left hand decorates. Both the farmers and the skilled workers are oppressed in all ages. This is why. So, the distribution of resources is unfair. One quintal of my soybeans consumes more than 25 liters of oil.

(Mohammed,2011:01:35-02:25)

A literary text, a film, or any work of art, then, is not simply the product of a single author, but of its relationship to other texts and to the structures of language itself. "[A]ny text," she [Kristeva] argues, "is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (Kristeva,1980: 66).In order to inculcate the **downside** of tradition for students, Rihana told a story for students in classroom as follows:

When a person walks on the road, he sees elephants tied with thin thread-like ropes. He is very surprised and approaches the owner and asks him how elephants as big as these can be tied with these threads and keep quiet. This is what it means: it consumes the energy of civilization, it darkens the world of tomorrow, it is a backward race.

(Mohammed,2011:1:10:51-1:11:30)

The role play made among students and Dr. Dejene in classroom about the principle of Adam Smith and sellers nearby a road also shows how the scriptwriter intertextually draws on ideas from history:

Dr.Dejene: Who can tell us the difference between the principle of economics via Adam Smith and the gult worker

Female Student: It is not clear to me what the great woman has to do with economics. Adam Smith is so genius and the father of modern economics.

(Mohammed,2011:34:51-35:14:)

Towards the end of the story, Dr.Dejenie told a story for children .The moral of the story is instead of building a fence people should build bridge for the betterment of nation survival.

Once upon a time, there were two brothers who loved each other very much. One day, these brothers had a fight. Then they both started to cultivate a large field between them. Then a big cliff was formed between them. Both of them asked a carpenter to build an eight meter long fence for them. The carpenter agreed to their idea and spent the night building a bridge for them.

(Mohammed,2011:1:27:40-1:29:30)

Recognizing and analyzing intertextuality, which refers to anything in a particular text which can be fully understood only by reference to one or more other (written or spoken) texts|| (Parkinson and Thomas, 2000: 49 cited in Ayenew,2015) is applied by the playwright in the film “Water and Gold. The director of the film *Wuhaina Werq* (“*Water and Gold*”) has mastered the art of adaption to create his film texts. The playwright of the film under analysis also mimics ideas from another movie. The voice-over narrator in the alluded movie shows the action and reaction of love between or among lovers.

Male Actor: Are you looking it? Love has the power to be stretched like rubber. What if I leave this rubber?

Female Actor: It burns me.

Male Actor: What if you let this go?

Female Actor: You will be burned.

Male Actor: Love is living in harmony, so is marriage.

(Mohammed, 2011:1:05:21-1:05:57)

The above quote indicates that borrowing from other film text is also another example of postmodern intertextuality. The scene in the other film is used to advocate the reactionary nature of love. Lovers should be governed by the law of the universe. The give and take calculation of the material world has to be remembered so as to have an interesting relationships.

5. Conclusions

All in all, the plotlines of the selected films are arranged having a dialogue with other texts. The success of these filmmakers lies in their ability to subvert a prevalent system of thought and belief. Mythology, folklore, history, and other literary pieces give them the basis of their stories. All the above referencing to the selected films indicates that no text is self-born and there is no originality when one develops a literary masterpiece. In order to control the emotions of the audience and to let them participate in films, bringing ideas from preceding works in an actual text is indispensable. The selected films had intertextual relations with other literary pieces, history, the Holy Bible, culture and tradition and mythology. Playwrights used these texts to enrich their works with plural views. In some extent, we also understand that an attempt is made to show departure between the present text and what has been alluded to the actual texts.

6. Recommendations.

When we evaluate literary studies in Ethiopian the context, cinematic studies are very scarce. Researchers mainly rely on the novel genre via different literary theories. Postmodernism as a lens is also neglected in Ethiopian Amharic cinema. Since postmodernists prefer the mini -narrative to the meta- narrative, researchers conduct a study on Ethiopian Amharic cinema which is a marginalized literary study area. Researchers recommended that other researchers had better write against the Aristotelian plot structure. In addition to intertextuality, other postmodern features like magical realism, parody, pastiche, paranoia, historiographical meta-fiction etc. and postmodern themes as well can be interesting research topics in Ethiopian Amharic cinema.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no competing interest while writing the paper and processing for publication.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors Dr.Tesfaye Dagew and Dr.Ayenew Guadu for their priceless and insightful support. They are friendly supervisors who guided me in conducting my dissertation and preparing this manuscript. My gratitude also goes to Dawit Dibekulu for his timeless effort in showing me the way to prepare this manuscript and reading the first draft of this article.

References

1. Aboneh Ashagrie(2016). *Ethiopian Cinema: The Socio-economic and Political Impacts of Imperial Era on the Development of Screen Media*. Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2. Ayenew Guadu.(2015).*Thematic Intertextuality in Selected Ethiopian Novels in English (ca. 1964–1973)*. Addis Ababa University. Addis Ababa.
3. Barthes, R. (1981) *Theory of the Text*, in R. Young (ed.). *Untying the Text*, 31-47, London: Routledge.
4. Bezabih Tesfahunegn.(2020).*Adapting Feature Films from Amharic Prose Narratives: Narrative Strategies in Focus*. Addis Ababa university .Addis Ababa
5. Culler,J. (1976). *Presupposition and intertextuality*. *comparative literature*, vol. 91, no. 6, pp. 1380-1396. Brasenose college, oxford.
6. Genette, G.(1982).*Palimpsests literature in the second degree*.Translated by Channa Newman \$ Claude Doubinsky.Forewarded by Gerald Prince.University of Nebraska press.Lincoln and London.
7. Karen, S.(1990).*Intrinsic intertextuality: A methodology for analyzing the seamless intertext*.The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col.
8. Kristeva, J.(1980).*Desire in language: a semiotic approach to literature and art*.Columbia University Press New York.
9. Liknaw Yirsaw.(2020). *A Postmodernist Reading of Selected Ethiopian Novels in English*. PhD dissertation. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
10. Michael W.Thomas .(2011). "The Local Film Sensation in Ethiopia: Aesthetic Comparisons with African Cinema and Alternative Experiences". SOAS Research
11. Tigist Defaru. (2006). "The Image of Female Characters in Films: A case Study of Two Male. Authored Amharic films–'Kezkaza Wolafen' and 'Semayawi Feres.'"A.A.U. M.A. Thesis.