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METAFICTIONALITY AND IRRATIONALITY: A POSTMODERNIST APPRAISAL OF
YESISAYE LIJOCH/KEKROSNA KENTROS

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ABSTRACT

This was a critical analysis of the novel Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentro from the perspective of postmodernism. The motive behind this study was the fact that O'Tam Pulto's current novel has not been studied from the perspective of postmodernism as it is pertinent to this vantage point, and the tradition of studying Ethiopian literary productions from the vantage of postmodernism has been a rare experience. The primary source of data for this study was the novel 'Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna 'Kentros' Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros' is an Amharic name which means 'Sisaye's Children/Longitude and Latitude' and the critical theory that has been applied was postmodernism. Purposive sampling technique was used for selecting the novel whilst descriptive qualitative method was used for analyzing the data. The study affirmed that the chief feature of postmodernism used in Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna is metafictionality and irrationality. Hence, this article briefly presents the metafictional and irrational features as utilized in the novel.

Keywords: Postmodernism, Metafictionality, Irrationality, Novel

1. Introduction

Postmodernism is a broad movement that developed in the mid- to late-20th century across philosophy, the arts, architecture, and criticism and that marked a departure from modernism. It is widely agreed that the term has also more generally been applied to the historical era following modernity, and the tendencies of this era. While encompassing a disparate variety of approaches, postmodernism is typically defined by an attitude of skepticism, irony, or rejection toward the meta-narratives and ideologies of modernism, and often calls into question various assumptions of Enlightenment rationality. Common targets of postmodern critique include universalist notions of objective reality, morality, truth, human nature, reason, language, and social progress. Postmodern thinkers frequently call attention to the contingent or socially-conditioned nature of knowledge claims and value systems, situating them as products of particular political, historical, or cultural discourses and hierarchies. Accordingly, postmodern thought is broadly characterized by tendencies to self-referentiality, epistemological and moral relativism, pluralism, subjectivism, and irreverence.

Postmodern critical approaches gained wider acceptance in the 1980s and 1990s, and have been adopted in a variety of academic and theoretical disciplines, including cultural studies, philosophy of science, economics, linguistics, architecture, feminist theory, and literary criticism, as well as art movements in fields such as literature and music. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postmodernism>)

Postmodernism is one of the contemporary trends in the critical study of literature. According to Jameson (1991) postmodernism as a literary movement is mainly a post-1950s event in the west. That was a time marked by the cold war and the excesses of consumption. It differs from modernism by blurring the conventional boundary between "high" and "low" culture, by a completely loosened structure in both time and space, and by multiple openings rather than a closure. It rejects to conform to popular taste and combines heterogeneous elements, making it cater to a more sophisticated readership. But these days postmodern literature spatially is not specific to writers from any particular region or culture. There are thousands of writers and literary works from all over the world which are considered 'postmodern' by critics.

When it comes to Ethiopia, the history of postmodern literature appears very recent. There are few contemporary writers like Adam Reta and O'Tam Pulto whose works are postmodern in their nature due to the fragmented narratives, playful language, self-reflective narratives etc. Concerning a systematic investigation on such literary productions which are yet scarce, almost there is no recognizable published works in the libraries in our country though there have except Zewde (2016), which mainly tried to find out the fabulation in O'Tam Pulto's novel *Elan Filega/Ye'azo Collej*. According to the information we have got from Bahir Dar and Addis Ababa Universities, there have been attempts by some postgraduate students to study postmodern fictions in Ethiopia though we do not have them recorded due to either their qualities or publicity issues. For that matter the present study is expected to help us fill that gap by bringing into the literary prospect the novel entitled *Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros* by O'Tam Pulto.

O'Tam Pulto is one of the popular Amharic writers of contemporary Ethiopia. As far as the researchers' observation is concerned, three things among others make O'Tam Pulto's fictions peculiar. The first one is the fact that the subject matters under exploration in his novels are mostly alluded to the previously unexplored cultures, and traditions of Konso, Gamo, Wolaita, Gambella..etc. peoples. In the second place, the writer applies the stylistic features of postmodernism, which is a new trend to almost all writers of our country except to Adam Reta who in his recent novels like Kesemay Yewerede Firfir, Menged Yiwesdal Menged Yimelsal, Alengana Misir etc. inclines to apply some of the stylistic features of postmodernism. In the third place, his language is quite complex. The complexity and richness of his language is somewhat comparable with Mengistu Lemma's novel *Adefris*. But the very rationale behind selecting O'Tam Pulto's *Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros* for this study was the fact that the subject matters in the novel are unmapped and at the same time the literary style, postmodernism is also an unexplored one in the context of critical studies in Ethiopia.

The core objective of the study was to identify the employment the key attributes of postmodernism in the selected novel.

The primary source of data for this particular study was the novel *Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros* and the critical theory that was applied is postmodernism. Purposive sampling technique was used for selecting the novel. That means, *Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros* has been one of the few existing unstudied literary pieces that could be approached from the view point of postmodernism. Postmodernism as a view point was selected because the novel is more fitting to this approach.

2. Metafictionality and Irrationality in *Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros*

Postmodern literatures mostly the matize issues like ecological crisis, criticism of consumerism, self preferentiality, appreciation of freedom and spontaneity, irrationality, oriental vision of the world etc. and the changing nature and understanding of art and its form. Thus art started to be seen not as separated, but a part of reality and experience, art became closer to the public and was often presented in the form of show, happening or performance. There is no specific guideline that helps critics or writers to follow certain

procedures of postmodernism in literature. But we do have overall theoretical awareness that informs us while identifying the different literary features of postmodernism. Postmodernist readings of a fiction by two or more persons may bring about two or more different meanings. That’s one of the lessons we learn from postmodernism as a perspective. Keeping that in mind, we will be having a look at what my readings of O’Tam Pulto’s novel *Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros* yield about the common features of postmodernism in literature. We will begin my presentation with metafictionality, which we have found as one of the prevailing features of postmodernism in the novel.

2.1 Metafiction

Metafiction is generally defined as self-conscious fiction, where the narrative works “simultaneously creates a fiction and make a statement about the creation of that fiction” Patricia Waugh identifies this tendency, suggesting metafiction “explores a theory of fiction through the practice of writing fiction. Many scholars agree that metafiction is writing about writing, often used to undermine the authority of the author and to advance stories in unique ways. So here it will be our turn to look for points that fictionalizes fiction than reality in the current novel.

አሰብ እንደገና፣ በዚያች የስምንተኛ ክፍል ቅርጽ ነፍሱ። እዚያች አምባጪ ላይ ዘመን እንዳነተበዉ ጥንታዊ ብራና ጥቅልል ብሎ። የቡድሃንም የሀገራት ምስል መስሎ። አረመመ።

እና፣

ወሰነ።

በተፃፈዉ ነገር ዉስጥ ትንሽም ቢሆን ደግነት አለ፤አለ።

...መፅሃፍ-ቅዱሳን በፅሁፍ የመገለፃቸዉ ሎጂክ ያ መሆን አለበት፤አለ።

ሰዉ የፍጥረቱን ቅድስና ጠብቆ መኖር ቢችል ኖሮ ብራና ያስፈልገዉ ነበር? ጠየቀም፤መለሰም።

ሀግ ከሆነ ፅፌልሽ ነበር፤ማሰኘቱን፣ ትዕዛዝ ከሆነ፤ ነግረሽ ነበር፤ ማስባሉን፣ንስሀም ከሆነ ተናዝገፊልሽ ነበር፤...እነሆ ምስክሩ ሞኝና ወረቀት የያዙትን አይለቁ! ማሰኘቱን።

ቅድስና በጠፋበት በዚህ ዘመን ህገ-ተፈጥሮም፣ ህገ-ልቦናም አፈር በለበሱበት በዚህ ዘመን፣የዱካ ላይ መንፈስን እሚያነብ ዓይንን መጠበቅ ደግነት አይደለም። መፃፍ ነዉ ደግነት።

ለመፃፍ ወሰነ።

ያ የጥፋቱም የድህነቱም መጀመሪያ ይሆን ይሆናል።

ልቡን በዉጤቱ ላይ አላረገም። ብቻ፣

ለመፃፍ ወሰነ። (9)

“He thought once again by that his eighth grade’s reminisce soul. Being crooked on that mount like birana (ancient book of Ethiopics made of goat-skin) that lasted a century. Looking like the image of Buddhists’ statue. He was immersed. And he decided. There at least exists a little kindness in the written stuff, he thought. The secret behind the Biblicist revelation via writing could be that, he said. If human could have sustained the holiness of nature, would there be a need for birana? He asked and answered. As the saying goes, we could say I wrote it to you, if the stuff is a law; I told you if the stuff was a request; I confessed to you if the stuff was forgiving; as it is witnessed in the saying, a paper and a fool will not relinquish what they have held.

Within this century where sanity is lost, law of nature and law of instinct are interred; it is not good to wait for the eye that reads what comes to its prospect. To write is good.

He decided to write.

That might be the beginning of his demise and poverty.

He did not set his heart upon the outcome. He decided to write nevertheless. (9)

The above excerpt tells us that the fiction is explicitly about fiction than about imitation of life which was the case in the realist fictions. In this particular extract the fiction tries to be aware of the reason behind writing, where it philosophizes that something written is more acceptable, winning, sustainable, etc. also the piece tells us the challenges the writer may face or the benefit or loss he may suffer because s/he writes. This fits with what Currie accepts that metafiction specifically engages with questions of theory within fiction and the Waugh (2000) concern that representations do not depict the extra-textual world in postmodern literature. All in all, it explores a theory of fiction through the practice of writing fiction which is a typical example of metafiction in literature. The very fact that metafictionality is one of the dominant features of postmodern literature in Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosan Kentros implies that we have many more examples in the novel where the fiction appears to fictionalize fiction than reflecting the reality outside to it. For instance, in the extract that follows, we come across Asire, the central character in the story, struggling to write a story entitled *Ande birabirona hulet birabirowoch* because he was unable to express himself in verbal communication.

ፈሪ ስለሆነ ነጩ መፃፍ እንዳለበት የወሰነው። ሰው ጠላቱን ይፈራል። የእርሱ ልብ ግን እምታፈቅረውን የመፍራትን ሰቆቃን አወቀች። በፅሁፍ እንኳ ለማለት የሚፈልገውን በቀጥታ አይልም። ልቦለድ ያስመስለዋል። ሊያደርግ ያሰበውን እንዲገምቱ እንጂ በርግጠኛነት እንዳያወቁ። (እልቡ አንድ ጥግ የተደበቀች ለላ ምኞት ሳትገፋፋው አልቀረ “አንተኮ ብትፀፍ ደረሲ ይወጣህ ነበር” ለሚተለው ሚስቱ አድናቆቷ የፍቅር ብቻ እንዳልሆነ የማሳየት ምኞት።) ፅፎ እንደ ጨረሰ ጥሎላቸው፣ጥሏቸው ይሄዳል።(ያች የመለያየት ማዕልት ለልቡ እምታስገነጨውን የአርነት ፅዋ አስቦ የጉጉቱን ምራቅ ገርገጭ አድርጎ ዋጠ።..) ፅሁፉን ሚስቱ ቀድሞ እንድታገኘው ነጩ ምኞቱ።....ሚስቱን ያምናታል። (27)

“He decided to write because he is timid. People fear their enemy. His heart on the other hand knew the sufferings of coyness that it loves. Even in writing, he cannot say what he wanted to sat openly. He makes it a novel in order that they will guess what he intended but to not let them know explicitly. (It seems that there is something at the corner of his heart that might have forced him. To show to his wife who used to say “If you write, you can be an author” that her appreciation was not only because of love.) When he finished writing, he would leave it for them; he would depart them. (He thought the joy he will get from the day of departure and appeared inquiring.)

He wished if his wife would be the first one to get his novel. (27)

That tells us that the difficulties the writer has faced, his motives behind writing, his objectives of writing fiction etc. where it is another evident that metafictionality or self-consciousness narrative is employed in the novel. This is a typical example where rejection of mimetic claims is put in place. With this regard Patricia Waugh suggests metafiction “explores a theory of fiction through the practice of writing fiction”. This indicates that literature and theory have always responded to each other, but, whereas previously the fictional devices hide the theories and ideologies that influence the narrative, in metafiction they self-consciously reveal this relationship. On the same claim Pulto’s Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentors gives us more illustration. In the next extract we realize that the main character composing a novel with the same tile which is Yesisaye Lijoch! in which he questions psychoanalysis’s failure to label dream.

አሁንለታ አባቷ አንድ መፅሀፍ አበደራት።... ይህ የተዉሰ መፃፏ፣ሰው ፍርሃቱን እንጂ አያልምም፤ ይላል። ድብቅ ምኞቱን እንጂ፣ አያልምም፤ ይላል።...የነፃነት እሾቱን እንጂ አያልምም፤ ይላል። ግን ባስራ ስምንተኛ ዓመት የልደት በዓሏ ላይ፣ ስደተኛ ጥቁር ድመት የልደት ኬኳ ላይ በድንገት ጉብ ብላ፣ ሻማዎቿን እንደምታጠፋ ልጅ ሆና ለምን እንዳለመች አይነግራትም።(እርግጥ ሲፈፀም ድመቷ ጥቁር አይደለችም፤ ነጭ ናት። የዱርም አይደለችም፤ የእማማ አስካለ ነጣቂ ድመት ናት። ቢሆንም ሆኗል። ያ

ለምን ታልሞ እንደ ተፈፀመ አይነግራትም ያ መፃፍ።) አባቷ ለምን በእዉንም ህልም መስሎ እንደሚታዩት አይነግራትም። እንዴት የሰዉን ህልም ፈንቅሎ ባካለ-ስጋ ማራመድ እንደቻለ... (275)

Recently, her father lent her a book...This borrowed book says human doesn't dream but his fear. It says he doesn't dream but his hidden lust. It says he doesn't dream but his lust for freedom. It fails to tell why in her childhood dream a black wildcat on her eighteenth birthday suddenly fell upon her anniversary cake and put out her candlelight. (In fact, when the dream happened, the cat was not black; it was white. It was not wild as well; it was Mrs. Askale's snatcher cat. Even so, it has happened. That book doesn't tell her why she dreamed and it has happened.) It fails to tell her why her real father appears to her like a dream. (275)

In this we witness the fiction theorizing or criticizing the traditional psychoanalysts' claims that stated dream is nothing but the appearances of an unconscious desire, a yearning for free will etc. It tries to tell us that psychoanalysis is incapable of defining what dream really is as it is evident in the Asire's daughter dreams where she had dream in her early days that there would be a black wild cat that disturbed her eighteenth birth day ceremony by suddenly jumping upon the anniversary cake. This claim of the narrator in the fiction can in other words be said that dream is something we foresee actually as opposed the psychoanalysts' proposition that it is a distorted expressions of our hidden desires and fears. But the ultimate point that is important here for the concept of metafictionality here is the fact that literature is found to be not reflecting the reality outside but philosophizing how it has to be understood and written, or in the words of Currie, an engagement with questions of theory within fiction . In the next extract we also come across the main character trying to compose a novel entitled *Yesisaye Lijoch* which is a novel similar with the novel in which the character himself is created.

በእንጅሎፕ ሆድ ላይ ርዕሱ አለ፡-
የሲሳይ ልጆች
ከሁለት ቀን በፊት ከሚስቱ ጋር የተነጋገሩት ትዝ አለው።
“ጨረስከዉ ልቦለድህን?”
“ጨረስኩት።”
.....ርዕሱ እምቢ አለኝ።ለምን እንደሁ እንጃ ይህን ርዕስ ሰባት ጊዜ ብሰርዝም ራሱዉ እየዘለለ ይመጣል።
“እስቲ?”
አሳያት- ተሰርዝ የተፃፈ፤ አሁንም ተሰርዝ የተፃፈ፤ እንደገናም ተደልዘ የተፃፈ።
የሲሳይ ልጆች ሲሳይ የሲሳይ ልጆች የሲሳይ ልጆች (325)

*"Its title appears on the envelope.
Yesisaye Lijoch
He remembered what he had talked with his wife two days earlier.
"Have you finished your novel?"
"I have finished."
"What did you call its title?"
"The title refused to be set. I do not know why that so; even if I have deleted this title seven times it comes itself over again."
"May I see it?"
He showed her, something that is cancelled and rewritten, cancelled and rewritten once more, deleted and rewritten yet again.
Yesisaye-Lijoch Sisaye Yesisaye-Lijoch Yesisaye Lijoch (325)*

Asire's attempt of writing the novel entitled *Yesisaye Lijoch* is another typical example of fiction within a fiction, a usual example of postmodern literature. It is anti-realism, as a literary mode, where always self-reflexive

artwork appears aware of its own limitations. Waugh emphasizes two essential components of metafiction: concerns that representations do not depict the extratextual world as it is but rather invent a new one in its place and a consciousness that the process of literary creation is necessarily the latter form of genesis. With this, she highlights metafiction's role in fictional exploration of social constructions of concepts of reality by introducing explicit applications of theoretical approaches into the text. Metafiction in this context could be a celebration of the power of the creative imagination together with an uncertainty about the validity of its representations which results in writing which consistently lays bare its condition of artifice. Similarly, in considering this tendency in relation to general aspects of reading culture, Currie differentiates between what he classifies as metafiction—a novel that “dramatizes the boundary between fiction and criticism” (*Metafiction*) and marginal cases, such as the dramatization of a narrator or self-consciousness through intertextuality. For Currie, the problem with treating these marginal cases as metafiction is that this would lead us “to interpret a substantial portion of fiction as metafiction” Another essential feature of postmodernism that is common in the novel and the one I will present hereafter is the problematizations of rational mind which is manifested through various features of postmodernism like hallucination, paranoia, fabulation etc.

2.2 Irrationalization

Whereas the Enlightenment and its literature marks a paradigm change from a religious, pre-modern to a secular modern society, romanticism and its storytelling has blossomed into a postmodern repudiation of modernist categories of truth and reality. Even though the pre-modern and modern stages of history could be considered hostile to one another, they still shared one commonality between them that is not shared with the postmodern paradigm of our current age: the belief in an objective reality. The pre-modern and the modern may have disagreed about the nature of objective reality, but they both believed that there was an objective reality and that it was incumbent upon people to discover that reality and align themselves with it. But with the coming of romanticism came the elevation of subjective human experience over objective reality. And that elevation would ultimately give birth to the postmodern disavowal of all objective reality whatsoever (Brian 1994).

Postmodernism questions the very notion of reality itself. It considers all worldviews to be grand fictions (metanarratives) constructed by social groups in order to exercise control over others (masks of power). By deconstructing such beliefs and worldviews into their constituent subjective prejudices and preferences, the postmodern hopes to dismantle the power and control of the modern worldview. After all, whoever defines reality rules and whoever rules the language wins. It would make sense then that the effect of such postmodern thinking on the arts, such as literatures, would result in storytelling that also questions our notions of reality with this hermeneutic of suspicion. And that is exactly what we are seeing in current literatures (ibid).

A postmodern literary notion that has transformed into philosophical relativism is the idea that there is no text, no underlying meaning or reality apart from what we humans create in our own minds. Through language we assign meaning to what is otherwise without meaning. Such a claim has been manifested in postmodern fictions through techniques like fabulation (the intermingling of reality with dreams), paranoia (unreasonable suspicion of the characters about other people or things around them), and hallucination (the characters' perception of something or somebody when there is no one around in point of fact) etc. Henceforth, we will take a look at how such points are presented in the novel under study.

Fabulation in postmodern literature is understood mostly as the combinations of real life events or situations with dreams, fantasies, and magical elements. But when it comes to O'Tam Pulto's *Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros* the issue of fabulation seems to be taken a little bit further equipped to the point that dream can be reality and what we call real life is could be a dream. The book questions that we what if our life experience so far is a dream and we might be awakened sometimes in our future. In the extract that follows, for example, we come across the major character Asire living his dreams really. The dreams he had had sometimes before in his life turned out to be his plans, and ideas.

በልጅነቱ ያልም የነበረውን ማንነት አሁን መሆን እንደሚችል ሲያምን ነው መሰለኝ ያኝ አማላይ ህልሞቹ ጥለውት ሄዱ። ህልም መሆናቸውን አቆሙ? ሀሳብ ሆኑ? እቅድ ሆኑ?

.....ወይስ እውኔ ያ ነበር? አለ።
ምናልባት አሁን ተንቼ ይሆን? እለመ? የሆነ አሰልጅ እማያልቅ ህልም እያለመ?
መንቃት ተመኘ።
እናቱና ማሜስ ህልም ናቸው እውን?
እነሱ ግን በሁለቱም ውስጥ አሉ። ቅዠት በሆነበት እውነትም፣ እውን መስሎ በሚታየው ህልሙም ውስጥ አሉ። እና ነብሱን እየገዘገዘ እሚያሰቃየውን ይህን የስልጅ ሰንሰለት፣ ይህን ትንፋሽ የነሳውን ከፈን በጣጥሶ፣ ቀዳዳ ቢጥል እነሱን አያጣቸውም።
በንቃቱም በህልሙም ውስጥ አሉ እነሱ። አያጣቸውም። እሚያስፈራው ምን አለ ታዲያ?
መንቃት ፈለገ። (57-8)

“It seemed to me that it is because he believed now that he can be the dreams he had had during his childhood that the pleasant dreams left him alone. Did they cease to be dreams? Did they turn into idea? Did they become plan?”

Or

*He said, ‘was that what I was really’?
May he be sleeping now? Dreaming? May be having an awful inexorable dream?
He wished to be awakened.
Are his mother and Mamme are dreams or real?
They exist both in his dreams and consciousness.
What is there then to frets him?
He wanted to be awaked? (57-8)*

Asire’s questioning of his wife and daughter as imaginary beings and on the other hand his state of living with them during his dreams indicates the usage of fabulation in the scenario above. He also questions where the life he is living is a dream or not. Therefore to be fully awakened, he decided to go to battle field where he thought he would be fully conscious of the imaginary like life he was leading. He decided to go to battle field without consulting his mom. But later he had realized the outcome of doing that without the knowledge of his mom and came talk to her over the new decision he made. After the discussion with his mom, he realized that the decision was a failure as his mother appeared to be shocked by. “ጦር መዳ መሄድ እፈልጋለሁ።...ያንቃኛል ብሎ ያሰበው መላ እናቱን አስፈሪ ቅዠት ውስጥ አስጥሟት አዩ። (58-9) “I want to go to the battle field....He saw his mother fallen in a horrifying nightmare. Due to the agony his mother went through, he changed his mind over going to the battle field where he was expecting an awakening and got another gateway to reality.

In other situation, which Asire found as an alternative to going to the battle field, he became a *Kolkole* (already used old plastic products) seller where he appears to be awakened somehow. He, as a matter of happening, became a *kolkole* seller where he had thought he would become a source of shame for his wife and children though he found it normal due to the person’s existence there which he had never imagined.

ከወደ ሞያላ የሚጎርፈውን የኬንያ የፕላስቲክ ኩባያና ሰሀን ይዞ ጉልት ወጣ። ያን አሳጭ ቁመቱን እንደ-
ዕውር በትር እጥፍጥፍ አድርጎ ከልኮሌ ቆጥ ላይ ከልኮሌ መስሎ ተሰቀለ።
መጀመርያ እሚያፍር መስሎት ነበር።
ሚስቱም እምትሸማቅበት፤ልጆቹም እሚያዝኑበት መስሎት ነበር።
ዘር ሲል፤የምድር ጦሩ ከሎኔል ጣልኦርጋቸው ያንኑ የፕላስቲክ ኩባያ ሲያንከባልሉ አዩ። ዘር ሲል መሬት ለመርገጥ ይጠየቁ የነበሩት ወደ ኬንያ የተሰደዱት የአውራጃ አስተዳዳሪ ኩሩ እመቤት፤እግባሶ ላይ ተገብሰው፣ገዢ የማይጠይቀው ሽሮና በርበሬ ሲቸበችሉ አዩ። “እህ”? ሲል በበስተሁዋላው የሰልባጅ

መደብ የዘረጋው የባህር ኃይሉ ባሌጀብድ ካፒቴን እንደሆነ ተሰማ። ቀና ሲል፣ተማሪ እያለ በትምህርት ቤቱ ከሩቅ ያዉቀው የነበረ የጦር መኮንን፣ ምርኩዙን ተደግፎ፣በደንብ ያልደረቀ ግማሽ እግሩን አንጠልጥሎ፣ ለልመና እጁን ሲዘረጋ አየ። ... ሲቆዝም...ለልመና የተዘረጋ ዱሽ እጅ፣ ዘመንም ራሱንም እሚረግም ዱሽ አንደበት፣ አቅሉንም ክብሩንም የሳተ፣ ዱሽ ስብዕና ተስፋ የቆረጠና ይሄድበት አቅጣጫ የጠፋበት ዱሽ ትውልድ ሆኖ ታየው።

ብንን ሲል፣

ሰው ከዚያ ህይወት ተላምዶ አየ። (103)

“He went out to market with plastic goblet and plate that erode from Kenya. Having twirled that extraordinary height of himself like stick of a blind, he hanged upon the tilt of kolkolle looking like kolkolle. Initially, he thought that he would be mortified. It seemed to him that his wife would be ashamed of him and his children, as well, would be upset by him. When he looked around, he saw the ground force General Talargachew rolling that kolkolle. When he looked another direction, he saw the district’s revered Mrs., who had left for Kenya and who used to hesitate to boot the ground, purchasing that shuro(ground pea) and berbere (ground pepper)which no else buyer were checking. When he said “ah?” he realized that the one who drawn the stage for salvage (left out clothes for re-sell) was the marine force adventurous Captain. When he looked up, he saw the war general that he had known distantly, stretching his hands, being supported by his stick. When he thought over, that appeared to him a cut-hand stretched for begging, a cut-body that has lost its personality and credit; hopeless, confused generation.

When he woke up suddenly...

He saw man adapted to that way of life. (103)

Asire’s search for awakening seemed partly achieved when he came across those unexpected situations like the ground force General Talargachew rolling that *kolkolle*, the district’s revered Mrs., purchasing that *shuro* (ground pea) and *berbere* (ground pepper) which no else buyer were checking, when he realized that the one who drawn the stage for salvage was the marine force, adventurous Captain. When he further realized that the war general stretching his hands for begging and all those bodies having lost their personality and credit; hopeless, confused generation altogether, he became awakened perhaps because he had not expected that to happen to those even if Asire came to realize that. Asire himself was initially timid by his fateful attempt to appear at the market with that *kolkolle*. But when he came to realize that those all formerly respected personalities fallen down to such very ordinary way of life, he became conscious of himself and it was no more a material of shame for him-that is what Asire in this context considers to be awakened. Hence, the fact that Asire had been unconscious about himself until he came to terms with those sufferers and the fact that he became conscious or awakened then after can be a typical example of fabulation in the novel. And we can consider the employment of such feature is used to challenge the realistic, rational account of reading and understating literary story.

Another scenario where rationality is undermined in the novel is through the use of another feature of postmodern fiction known as hallucination. Hallucination in postmodern literature could be understood as a false perception or imagination by the characters when the person or the thing perceived is not there actually. Something or someone is therefore considered as an important element of the story which leads to another area where reality or rationality is challenge. There are several episodes in the current where we can unearth the employment of hallucination out of which the following one is excerpted. In this particular extract we see the character named Asire seeing and talking to the dead people coming towards him when that becomes a true mystery to the rest people around him.

የሞቱ ሰዎችን እየተጣራ ሲመጡ ያያቸው ጀመር። በመደነቅና በድል ስመትም ይለፈልፋል። “እኔው መጡ ...ምን ያመኛል ሞተው አልነበር? እየአቸው! ምን ፈለጋችሁ ከዚህ በላይ?...አመመው? ህህ!...?”

አለማመናቸውን ሊያምን አልቻለም። ደሞ ሊይዙት ይመጣሉ፤ ደግሞ ሊያስቆሙት ይጥራሉ፤ ደግሞ ከንፈር ይመጣሉ፤ እምባ ያፈሰሱ ለሱ። ... በዚህ አይናቸው አያዩበትም? አይስቁበትም? ለራሳቸው አይመጡበትም ከንፈራቸውን ከፈለጉ ... ልቀቁኝ ባካችሁ! ልቀቁኝ እንጂ! ... አትያዘኝ ብያለሁ አትያኝ! ... አመመዱ!? ... የታመማችሁት ሳ እናንተ! ልቀቁኝ በቃ! ልቀቁኝ! (202)

He started to call and see deceased people coming. He chatters by surprise and triumph. "Here they come ...what do you mean I am sick, did not they die? Look them! What do you want more than this? He is sick? Hhh!...?"

He could not believe that they failed to believe him. Besides they come to clutch him, also they try to stop him, also they feel sorry for him, they drop tears for him. "Why do not they see with these eyes of them? Why do not they laugh with? Why do not they feel sorry for themselves if they want to? Leave me alone, please! Leave me! I have said do not clasp me do not clasp me! ..."

He is sick!? ...you are sick instead! Leave me alone then! Leave me!

Here Asire’s perception of the dead should be considered as hallucination as opposed to the related feature of postmodernism known as paranoia. Paranoia and hallucination are similar except the fact that the earlier is considered as a threat to the perceiver.

Before we shift to another feature of postmodernism here appears the last scenario in relation to the problematization of the enlightenment’s rational mind in literature. Here we come across a character named AQ who, after being awakened by his own cry, found himself dead. AQ was a youngster from China. In his country, youngsters were expected to have a sort of pigtail at their back head but they used to cut it off when they became revolutionaries than traditionalists. AQ one day came to an unwise decision where he cut off his pigtail assuming that people would consider him a revolutionist and would fear him. But unfortunately, due to his act of cutting his pigtail, he was arrested and killed where he was awakened and realized that he was dead as briefly illustrated in the next extract.

‘ለማስመሰል እንዲሁ ለቀልድ ያህል ፀጉራን ቆረጥኩ እንጂ እኔ አብዮተኛ አይደለሁም’ ብሎ ጮሀ። ጮሀ ለሰባት ሺህ ዘመናት በቢጫ ወንዝ ደለል የተቀበሩ መናፍከትም ሳይቀሩ እስኪነቁ።

በራሱው ጮሀት ተደናግጦ እንደገና ሲባንን ለካ እሱ ሞቷል። ለካ አልቆለታል አQ! መቀበል አቃተው ያንን። እና ወሰነ ያኔ ቆርጦ የጣላትን ያሰማ ጅራት ሹሩቤውን ፈልጎ እንደገና እንታዎ ሊተክላት። ያኔ እርሱ በርግጥ አብዮተኛ እንዳልሆነ ያውቃል። ደረዳላ በስተት እንደፈረዱበት። እና ፍለጋ ያዘ። ...አሁንም መሞቱን ረስቶ አይደለም አQ። ግን ያችን ፀጉሩን ቢያገኛችና ባለችበት ልክ ያልተቆረጠች አስመስሎ ቢተክላት ወዳቋረጠው ኑሮው እሚመለስ መስሎታል። (287)

'I cut my hair for mock; I am not a revolutionist' he cried. He cried up to the degree he alarmed the spirits that had been buried for years in the Orange River sand.

When he woke up again being frightened by his own noise, he was just dead. For sure AQ is gone! He couldn't believe that. He decided to find out and replace the pigtail he cut out. By then for sure they would understand that he is not a revolutionist. They would understand that they sentenced upon him by mistake. Therefore he kept on searching. Yet AQ has not forgotten that he is died. But it seemed to him that he would return to the life he stopped if he could find that hair and would re-fix it making it look like it was not cut. (287)

Points to make in relation to the postmodernists challenge of modern thought from the above could be AQ’s being scared of his death and his awareness about his death as it is implied in the above failed to believe it. In addition to that, his attempt of searching for his pigtail that brought about his death is a typical example where realistic account or the notion of the rational mind is confronted as it is unlikely to perceive rationally that



anything is out there to be performed by a dead body or any dead man is capable of thinking about himself or the thing he lost. Further, we even see that AQ knew that he has died.

One more feature employed in *Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros* in relation to the confrontation of rationality is the concept of omnipresence. Omnipresence, as used in *Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros*, is an assumption that life is not time and place limited. Accordingly, it is assumed that one can know exactly what s/he will be tomorrow while being on today. Even the current novel asserts that due to the omnipresence nature of life death itself is part of life as the following extract briefly shows.

ለካስ ህይወት እንዲህ ውብ ናት! አለ።

ሁሉም ነገር ግልፅ የሆነ ስለመሰለው ነው እንዲህ ያለው።

ነፍስ ሁሉባታዊት፣ አንድገጽ ታዊትም ናት። ለሷ ስጋዊ ሞትና ህይወት፣ ስጋዊ ነገና ዛሬ፣ ስጋዊ እዚህና እዚያ ልዩነት የላቸው። የማንም ሰው ነፍስ ወደፊት መሆን የሚችለውን ነገር የማወቅ እምቅ ብቃት አላት ማለት ነው። የማሜ ወንድሞች የምድር ላይ ህይወታቸውን ኖረው ሳይጨርሱ ሞት ነጠቃቸው። ከመታየት አለም ወደ አለመታየት አወታረክ ተሻገሩ እንጂ በርግጥ አልሞቱም። አሉ- በነፍሳቸው፣ በጥላካላቸው። የየራሳቸውም ሆኑ የሌሎች ሰዎች ነፍሶች እነሱ ባካል መኖራቸውን ቢቀጥሉ ሊያሳልፉባቸው ከሚችሉባቸው የመሆን እድሎች አንዱን ወይንም ሁሉንም፣ (ቢያድጉና ቢያረጁ) ሊኖራቸው ከሚችሉ መልኮቻቸው አንዱን ወይ ሁሉንም ሊያወቁ ይቻላቸዋል። (257)

'Ah, life is like that' he said.

He said so because it seemed to him that everything is clear to him.

Life is omnipresent. ..For her, bodily death and life, physical tomorrow and today and physical here and there have no difference. Anyone's soul has a deep capacity of knowing what it will become in the future. Mamme's brothers were snatched by death before they finished their life on earth. They crossed from the world of appearance to the dimension of disappearance but they did not die in verity. They are alive in their shadow-life... That enables them to know the state they could have been if they had grown or got old.

The omnipresence of life is what the novel seems to underscore here. This notion, as the extract above clearly illustrates, states that there is no such thing as stoppage of life. We may argue logically that life perishes and then nothing more. But this is not the case according to the current novel. Death is simply a state of existence something just like being a child, young, youth, old and so on. It is simply a shift from the state of being looked at or observed to a dimension of being unobserved. Also the concept of omnipresence is not only to stand for the pre-death and post-death of life or human existence. It is rather a combination of the continuation of life before and after death, full awareness about ones future being on today and even being capable of reading what is going on in the mind of others. Hence, it is obvious that these assumptions, if checked against reason, are senseless though they are part and parcel of the postmodern man's existence as we have been learning from O'Tam's *Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros*.

The part that comes after the slash in the very title of the novel-*Yesissaye Lijoch/ 'Kekrosna Kentros'* is meant to reflect or stand for the novel's stand that human beings are able to understand and feel different circumstances without actually seeing, hearing, or touching. The writers stand in the current novel, as the extract that comes next illustrates partly, seems to be that there exists a connecting sub-conscious within human beings as the imaginary *lines Kekrosna kentros* (latitude and longitude resp.) that join points and places on the earth.

እማይታይ፣ ተትንፋሽም የረቀቁ፣ በምድር ላይ እንደ ሽረርት ድር ባግድመትም በቁልቁለትም የተሰመሩ ብዙ፣ በጣም ብዙ የሀሳብ መስመሮች አሉ። የኬክሮስና ኬንትሮስ መስመሮች ይባላሉ። ... በታን ከበታ፣ ሰውን ከሰው ያነካካሉ። አንድ ሰው በማሊ አገር በትንቡክቱ ውስጥ ሆኖ ሲያልም፣ ሲያስብም ወይንም የሆነ ነገር ሲያደርግ፣ ...አንተ ኢትዮጵ ውስጥ ሆነህ የትንቡክቱውን ሰውዬ ህልም ልታልም፣ ሐሳቡንም

ልታስብ፣ እሚያደርገውንም ሳታወቅ ልታደርግ ትችላለህ። በኬንትሮስና ኬክሮስ መስመሮች ምክንያት
... 196-7

ወዳጅ ሩቅ ሀገር ሆኖ ስምህን ሲያነሳ ስቅ ይልህ የለ? ሩቅ አገር ባለ ዘመድህ ላይ ክፉ ሲደርስ ቀልብህ
ይነግርህ የለ? ... የቅርብህ ሰው ተሩቅ ሀገር ነገ ሊጠይቅህ ሲመጣ አንተ ወሬውንም ሳትሰማ ዛሬ ያይንህ
ልባስ ይርገባቸው የለ? ሰው የትም ሆኖ ቀልብ ለቀልብ መገናኘቱ አዲስ ነው? 197

There are many more invisible, horizontally and vertically drawn imaginary lines on the earth. They are called the lines of latitude and longitude. They connect places to places and persons to persons. When someone being in Mali Timbuktu dreams, thinks or does something; you, being in Ethiopia, can dream the dreams of the person in Mali, think his thoughts and can unknowingly do what he does. That is because of latitudinal and longitudinal lines.

The Baha's Faith affirms the prospect of life after death extensively while not defining everything about it. According to his faith the soul on death is said to recognize the value of its deeds and begin a new phase of a conscious relationship with God though negative experiences are possible. The soul is not considered to be subject to natural law like bodily death - rather it is subject to spiritual law as a covenant between man and God and it takes identity at the conception of the embryo, but not in the body, rather, associated with it like light to a mirror. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah_Faith_on_life_after_death). So, it is the assumption or belief by Baha that the physically dead soul recognizes the cost of its actions and continues a new phase of a conscious state of life with God that the character AhQ's traits are found to be alluded to. Particularly, the point that AhQ, after he was hanged, was very sad about the fatal mistake he had committed and his attempt of searching for his lost pigtail foreseeing that he would start the life he lost if he found and reinstate the man's pigtail is what has got an apparent reference to Baha's faith, and in literature such means of creating a character by an author is known the technique of intertextuality. This means that the author had had some knowledge about the faith and that knowledge helped him to create such a character.

3. Conclusion

The novel Yesisaye Lijoch/Kekrosna Kentros discovered to be a postmodernist novel which predominately employed metafictional and irrational elements. It is identified to be metafictional because the novel overwhelmingly is about the struggle of the main character, Asire, who tries to create a fictional text titled Yesisaye Lijoch. This circumstance creates fiction writing just about an attempt to write the same fiction. The novel is also noted for its employment of irrationality especially when the main character questioned that the life he is living is a dream and he has to take several actions, like going to the battle field, just to be awakened from the state of life that he thinks might be a dream.

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