

**About Biographical Novels**

I have received messages that state about the biographical content and tone of my fiction (A). And many others say that, I have written their experiences(B). I Planned to respond to the gambit early but could not, due to too much day dreaming.....

Why some people assume think this (A) way?

**SOME PROPOSITIONS:**

**1/The national canon/Qenona**

The Ethiopian literary canon is basically made up of biographical fictions. They are bealu (all his novels), Sebhat (most of his novels) and in some sense and fact (if I am not wrong) Fiqer iskemeqaber. It may sound strange that the best fictions are written in this subgenre. One of bealu's novels deals with a writer, a close friend of his and even integrates materials of his friend (Sebhat) into his novels. It was biofiction with in a biofiction. Although not stated clearly and critically endorsed, it is biographical fiction and not fiction perse that has taken the vested place of the Ethiopian literary canon.

This has created in the world of the reader the vague or unconscious impression that some where in the text the writer is presiding. With out even a statistically significant data there is automatically of relating the text to the author. In some ways the canons have out of habit or critical omissions have undermined alternative potential interpretations. Most commentaries I observed enjoy talking about the authorial in fiction, there by inventing/producing/perpetuating a consensus that in fiction, there is always the life of the writer.

### **2/Conventional wisdom**

In Amharic the word lib-weled literally means...Some thing /a fiction/ that was delivered from the heart. I sometimes find it strange why the painting of a painter is not called lib-weled. This designation has a strong connection to our traditional idea of the separation between the heart and the mind. The heart is the place of emotions/memory/libam, libe-bis/) and the brain for thinking abstract ideas (maseb, hisab/in Amharic the term denotes mathematics)....

Fiction by this definition belongs to the heart....memory and emotion. In real life the mind and the heart are not separately functioning<sup>1</sup> Art in our assumptions is expected to be expressive. The text of writing is by cultural fiat expressionist, more psychological. A writing that lacks an emotive tone or a dominance of it is philosophy or hasab.

### **Arbitrariness**

Linguist/structuralist Saussure states that signs are arbitrary. The reason we call a tree a tree is not because the word 'tree' has any resemblance to the object tree. The word 'boy' in English for example is a small channel in Amharic. The similarity of sound says nothing about the objects.

The same goes to proper names. Alemu/Adamu/adam

I have this special problem of getting new proper names impromptu while writing. I do not have the patience to look or search for new names. If I do, I suddenly become disinterested and feel too involved in an otherwise boring Endeavour. There is also this personal negative reaction to look for names and use them as metaphors. Actually in practice I have manipulated this shortcoming to my advantage, using it as one of the techniques in constructing connected stories.

### **The 'I' of a text.**

In our 'literary world' it is rarely seen fiction written in the first person singular. The consistent use of this pronoun may be taken by some readers (being taken over by the illusion) as the presence of a biography. (See below on empathy and negative capability)

### **A Binary argument**

The very notion of comprehending a text as biographical or non-biographical assumes a clean cut world. This is what some call BINARY THINKING. In binary thinking a situation or a thing can be either A or not A. a choice. It does not allow something being an A and at the same time being NOT A.

The source of such reasoning is Aristotelian. It has survived to this day where positivist science, thinks in binary terms. Even the current predominantly digital age works in a binary system. The notion of probability theory challenging the Aristotelian dogma is by-and-large facile. The probability of something happening or not happening adds up always to 1. (i.e., the two sides of happening and not happening add up to a unit). Take for example the simple exercise of tossing a coin. It is either a head or a tail.

Let me elaborate this with a couple of classical anecdotes:

1/Zeno picked a grain of sand from a sand heap and asked whether the heap was still a heap. Zeno could have to find that sand grain that changed the heap from a non-heap, that took it from A to NOT A

2/One day in his academy, Plato defined a man as a featherless bird. The next day

a sophist student walked into the class and held out to Plato a plucked chicken.....

### **Pattern analysis**

There is the tendency for readers to try to find iterative principles and categorize a writer according to those discovered patterns. (a simple example is the consistent presence of the "I") But what if a pattern is already set, as a cultural code? If our most respected authors are biographical, consciously or unconsciously the reader reads a bio where there is none. If a reader is free of a societal coda, and attempts to work on a new stance in questioning the fictionality of a text, then the process or heuristics of looking for a pattern and finding one could be a complicated effort. If it is a single work things will be easier. If the work of the writer is large and varied, then Pattern analysis will be fraught with difficulty. If the work of the author is supported by an authenticated biography, things will be easier but not resolved because (see below on the problem of interpreting biographies). In a situation where biography is not available, and we follow pattern analysis the logical method will be inference or inductive reasoning.

### **Inference**

Inference is the act or process of deriving logical conclusions from premises known or assumed to be true. The process of deriving a conclusion from such effort is called inductive reasoning. The conclusion may be correct or incorrect. The validity depends on the form of inference. It has nothing to do with truth. Let us take the instance (or data) anteneh brought forward. What anteneh did was valid. He took two different domains one interview (A) the other fiction (B) and tried to connect the two. He noted the shared properties of the two domains and inferred that the novella

## Adam's words on facebook

---

may be /probably/ is in some ways Adam's biography.

A= is the domain of fiction

B= is the domain of the interview.

D= is the conclusion.

Since we are comparing properties of each domain....we will see whether there is a ground to start or apply induction.

A has properties a1, a2, a3, a4.....an

B has no list of properties but is a general qualitative statement

So, there is no possible ground to compare the two domains. Because B domain may have certain of its elements as members of A. but they are not clearly stated.

The whole effort is then a fallacy. The conclusion that the novella is my biography will not be legitimate. There is an inductive leap from the premises to the conclusion. For sure, some leaps maybe safer than others. Inductive reasoning is probabilistic. In order to challenge it, what we commonly do is to apply skepticism of varying intensity.

There are methodologies to analyze narratives like DISCOURSE ANALYSIS, NARRATIVE ANALYSIS....etc. since narratives are replete with qualitative data we can borrow methodologies from sociology called Grounded Theory. These still may not assure us with finality.

====How the stories happened/conjectures=====

Two concepts in the process of literary creation (authorship)===.

1/The first brings us to the English romantic poet John Keats and the concept of Negative Capability. NC as Keats explains is that the 'poetical character... has no self- it is everything and nothing- it has no character and enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated...A Poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no identity, he is continually filling some other body'

2/The second brings us to the concept of empathy. It is also called care. Through empathy you try to live the life of the others...it is beyond theoretical identification. It is trying, through imagination, the writer immersing himself in other ideologies, and delves into the experiences of the object. It is not partisanship. The process even impossible, brings a very interesting encounter and understanding between the subject/writer and the object/characters, situations, motifs, etc...(animals, plants) in ones fiction.

In acting theory (drama/theatre) there is what is called the as-if principle

Tentative conclusion==

What brought this specific novella (yiwesdal mended) into existence is the empathy I felt for each person and the fraction of truth. It is irrelevant whether Adam/ Adamu/ alemu/ are the same or even different. The text is. It is because a lot has been interfered with, manipulated and sheared. One of the goals of a monomyth/dominant myth is to simplify complex issues and flagrantly constrain understanding. Through fiction history is written from a new location. This is a radical perspective, different from histories sculpted by groups and myth makers. There are a number of reasons why I can not work biographical fiction.

As one says:

"This is not to say that a knowledge of an author's life cannot illumine a text, but at the very same time that illumination forecloses the text, cuts off possible meanings which lie inherent in (or, implicit in) the structure of language, images, ideas in the text, and critics have been quite free to decide when an author's life 'matters' and when it doesn't. One of the strikes against autobiographies and biographies as guides to an author's thought and meanings is that they themselves are writing, conforming to certain conventions, and constructing a

plot-line from the intricate and intermingled complexities of an inner and outer life."

(Let's postpone the other reasons for now)

In mahlet (2nd edition) ye deldeyu lij tizita is mentioned as biography.....because it has strong bio content.

Simply stated, if I say a certain fiction of mine is fiction, then it is fiction.

NB. This message may not be well organized. The idea is just to get points forward and show my position (however vague) a propos this issue. Take a point separately or sequence the whole text....

### **About Injera**

***Q- For you 'injera' is not only food, but a model for a literary style in your works and a source of inspiration to philosophize about Ethiopia and its people. Can you share me a glimpse of your philosophy?***

It is more than a model. It is a metaphor. Injera is round. It is three dimensional yet flat. It has holes and yet consistent. It is between solid and non-solid. At first the injera holes/precisely eyes/ seem to be monads, and yet they are all interconnected through a maze of miniature tunnels. It has a contrasting structure signified by opposites and yet all contributing to its whole physical 'survival'.

We are used to hearing about traditional fiction as linear or circular. I find the linear story not as realistic as is usually perceived. If one is not sure of the representational honesty of linear stories, one has to look for a different geometric metaphor.

## Adam's words on facebook

---

The 1974 Ethiopian revolution initiated the beginning of the death of the linear story. The fragmenting elements unleashed then are still working their way through all aspects of life. A society in chaos/disharmony can not give you individuals that are comfortable in linearity. I have to look ways to represent such realities and processes.

The conceptual image or geometric metaphor we acquire from such disorder is a labyrinth or a maze. What is more pertinent than injera in representing this?

\*

Injera has an interesting form. We can mark its' genesis from pagan times when the sun was worshipped.

In antiquity, the sun was represented by a circle. Our alphabet tse ( ገ ) is a representation of the sun. or the aynu A ( ለ ), as the sun was the eye in the sky. I do not think it is an accident we call the 'holes' in injera 'eyes'.

The circle was and is an ancient and universal symbol of unity, wholeness and infinity. There is also what is called a circumpunct circle with a dot/hole at the middle. It represents the sun and the sun god (Called "Ra" in Egypt), (what if the "ra" in "inje-ra" has to do with this?) and the creative spark of divine consciousness within people linking everyone to the creative mind (also to everyone) of a universal "god" thus making each persona "co-creator". The circle and the dot symbolize the spiritual merging of male and female forces. (Ref)  
This is a universal/cosmic sensibility.

The meaning of the injera form becomes more complex and it's meaning certain when the eyes are numerous and the concept and geometry of connectivity is reinforced and radicalized.

This model is an ideology about connectivity (visible and invisible) I assume of the ancients who had the habit of planting mistir, (mystery) in every lived action, including what we eat and the manner we eat.

When the ancients discovered/invented this form they not only bequeathed to us the injera as a font of sustenance, but also a transporter of the deep and necessary understanding of the concept of connectivity in the universe, the nation and the self.

If we take a closer look at the injera the geometric shape of the eyes are hexagonal. We know that this type of shape is duplicated by human skin cells, bloods cells, wood, metals, soils etc...

This and such universality of form gives injera a serious symbolic power and a sense of planned purpose.

The realization of the ancients about the interconnection of the universe as coded in the injera can be an instrument in designing a fictional form.

Taking injera as a model/metaphor also brings us to chaos theory, fractals (for instance the short- short story keremeloch in the collection kesemy ye wrede firfir was a fractal story), percolation theory (hydrology and hydraulics) and topology. There can even be an opportunity to systematize or mathematize such fiction.

I mentioned earlier about the injera as having a labyrinthine internal structure.

Actually the labyrinth imagery is represented in two forms

The first is the unicursal labyrinth, which is the classical form. This represents traditional linear stories with a determinate end or closure. We find the unicursal labyrinth in Ethiopian traditional fiction and kitabs (fig.3). Its generic label is called telsem/Talisman. It may have a specific name.

Below are three telsems/talismans from different times and geographical areas representing similar intentions.

(a) from ancient Egypt

(b) from pylos Greek /Cretan labyrinth

(c) from an Ethiopian kitab

The second type is multicursal. This is the injera form. It is a story with multiple entrances and multiple exits. (Itemete lomishita) multicursals are usually called mazes; while the classical ones are labyrinths.

Wendy Faris in her book "symbolic landscape and narrative design in modern fiction" states that:

*"The labyrinth pattern suggests play and terror; it expresses both our control over our environment and our bewilderment within it; it represents orderly disorder; the systematic creation of a mystery more powerful than the creator, who may subsequently become lost in it. Labyrinth encompasses those opposing forces—order and confusion, reason and passion, playfulness and fear"*

Plot movements/rhythms/patterns of diction/concepts as memes/ etc... for me are similar to the flow of the watt/sauce inside the injera, like water percolating through sponge or the earth's top soil.

You can draw a two or three dimensional graph showing the movement of one of the stories in itemete lomishita. I did not try it, but can be an interesting exercise. We can also create a telsem from a story. Take "zelan", for instance, the revised story in alengana misir. It started as one story and split into four 'sub-stories'. Figure 1 as a three dimensional cube model of the injera can be reduced to the second figure which is the telsem of the story.

Figure 2

Figure 1

There are of course stochastic processes involved in this. Outcomes are not a priori designed. The story represents one famous principle of chaos called bifurcation. We also find this concept in river systems studies and hydrology. In the future we could be able to draw three dimensional models and telsems of complicated novels and stories using digital technology and compare (and enjoy) them not only as fictions but visual art products.

I take injera not as a simple metaphor limited to write my fiction. I consider it to be a root metaphor.

It will be appropriate to define this concept. Originator of the term, American philosopher Stephen Pepper defines root metaphor as "an area of empirical observation which is the point of origin for a world hypothesis" (1967). A root metaphor is one which is so embedded within a language or culture that it is

often not realized as being a metaphor. Others define root metaphor as the metaphor from which other metaphors spring.

I believe we can explain our social, political, economic and historical intricacies using this injera metaphor. One area is writing fiction. This type of writing which I currently exercise I call "Hisinawinet."

One may ask how "hisinawinet" and this metaphor are related. "Histin" is a Geez word which designates spaces between two alphabets (h in the figure). Texts can be read because an 'empty space' is set between the letters. The spaces within the alphabet are called mahesten (which means womb) (l in the figure). Both terminologies have a certain similarity of meaning. These spaces I took as homologous to the eyes or holes of the injera. The intention of hisinawinet is filling this space. What is read is the filling, which is the new text. I translated this as intertextuality in my interview with addisneger. This is done actually for a lack of suitable term to accommodate the hisinawinet.

There is also the question of the possibility of whether a monolithic short story is a better representation of reality than a hisined one. I find my earlier short stories written before "Itemete lomishita" as incomplete. "Hisinawinet" in this case becomes a critique of my earlier self.

this text is a portion of an interview i did a couple of months ago...  
it has actually images attached to it, which currently is impossible to attach here...please check the photo/image section to get them...i hope i can load those things...

### **About the HAWK**

some facilitation here.

It is about the bird..../the crow.../the eagle/...the raven..../the flying whatever...  
I never thought that this thing will unleash a controversy/a discussion...  
The crow for me is an open metaphor..... By open metaphor (stress this) which is

susceptible to manifold interpretations according to the psycho ideological positions of a character (in the book) or a reader (outside the book/text).  
A/It could be an emergent hallucination, an extension of the characters mental state, but not real vis a vis a materialist/physicalist understanding,  
B/of the absolute idea (God),  
C/a real bird incidental to the situation so that characters can interpret its presence within the realm of their consciousness as omen,  
D/It could be intuition related to the bird /rather a co-presence of a character's intuition and an arbitrary bird...in other words, we assume the bird has to do with something but it is just there....a described void..  
E/ or a supernatural being akin to the gods.(manyazewal endeshaw had an interesting take on this/see early posts)  
F/as a structural figment that holds together among other features the unity of the text,  
G/etc....

### **About Intertextuality, Injera**

Some understand intertextuality as taking (in the sense of making it one's own) the resources of early writers.

Two features of quotations.

1/the writer quotes from outside his text....pointing to other writers/existing or non existing (fictitious) (That is intertextual)

2/the writer quoting or pointing to his own original text /intratextual

In educated/well read societies intertextuality, referring to existing real texts is usually done with out showing reference. Because people know that a certain text is quoted and the current writer is using it as a patch or parody or whatever.

In our case we have to footnote it to avoid misunderstanding. Two types of misunderstandings; one is some readers think/believe (out of innocence or mischief) that it is plagiarized. Second the reader will not comprehend the very purpose of the quote. If they do not access it, one goal of intertextuality, to bring

fiction as experience, is subverted.

In both books of mine... "Itemete lomishita" and "yiwesdal mended", there is strong intratextuality than inter.../ most of the references/quotes in itemete are fictional except few poems. In yiwesdal mended in just one of the stories it is quotes...(the quotes take us from the 'beginning' of civilization until the middle of this century.)

Inter/intra textuality does not mean somebody other than me wrote the material... when i use "injera" as an inspiring form, it does not mean that the injera wrote it.

Due to such misunderstandings I am using the name "hisinawinet".

But in order to invent a word and use it, I should prepare a long maybe a pamphlet-thick argument...and then adopt it. But sometimes such preemptive criticisms frustrate that agenda (not me).

Hisinawinet is interconnection....there are persons and people who assume that they are islands. The surface looks unique, separate but intelligent analysis shows that people are related...genetically, linguistically and share a plethora of cultural content.

The footnoting is to compound these ideas. When I quoted kebede mikael in itemete, this does not mean I support his political position, or am as conservative as he is in my cultural view, or I am as handsome as he is or that he knows lomishita or fikreselassie's son tadesse, etc....but showing how cultural network can percolate and present itself to that minute depth.(to the existential experience of an alienated man) For that matter I do not even know whether ato kebede translated his tales/anecdotes to our language from some where.

Yet, I can edit out that fable, and my fiction can move smoothly with no turbulence in plot or content.

## Adam's words on facebook

---

My quotations are gestures set to instill emphasis.

It may have a philosophical tone (all crap comes back again...cyclicity)

This Crap happened else where too (the omnipresence of evil)

It could also be about pattern/iteration.(if you are interested in geometry or social physics)

Thanks for the reactions

I will try to respond to your questions and deal with the arguments, which will also help me see what there is in this hisinawinet. I also believe that (as anteneh raised it in the earlier post) the whole thesis needs clarification/ expounding.

Actually I was working on it last year for few months, and suddenly postponed it due to priority issues. Should I write my fiction or work on this?

But still the issue is always in my mind.

To help me for some level of explication, I like to show some exhibits related to hisinawinet. One is from real life (as presented in an interview) and the second is from a creative work.

### **Exhibit 1**

This is an interview I heard on youtube given by an official who used to work in some type of position at the court of emperor haile selassie. This interviewee recounting the prison life of haile selassie gave an interesting tidbit of hard histinawi fact.

He said the following>

while the emperor was in prison, there was a soldier guarding him. One day the emperor asked the officer some personal questions.

What is your name?

(the officer told him his name)

What school did you attend?

(he told him he graduated from the Harer military academy)

Where is your country? (where were you born?)

(the officer answered Harerghe (then a province)

Where in Harerghe?

## Adam's words on facebook

---

(the officer answered ijersa goro)

Who is your father?

(The officer told his father's name)

Haileselassie said is not your grand father.....? (Mentioned the name)

(The officer said yes)

Haile selassie was born in ijersa goro and he knows the officer's grand father personally.

(After the officer exchanged this information with the emperor, he became depressed)

Now, let's assume that haile selassie was not in prison and the officer was in a bar drinking beer. You were at the bar. Can you imagine these two individuals potentially connected through the memory of his grandfather?

That is what hisinawinet does in a fictional world.

We can from this story invent unexpected connections and build telsems.

### **Exhibit 2**

While recently reading of an anthology of poems called LIB SIBERDEW by the novelist and short story writer Endalegeta, I found a poem entitled le asera ande that can be categorized in the rank of hisinawinet. It is a collage. It selects eleven poets from different times, takes mentos (two lines) from each (most probably taken from longer poems) and organizes them into a unit with a single intention. The histinawi interpretation will be thus: There are 11 entrances and one exit (the title). The entrances are the authors, and their quoted creative work, the poem or their anthologies or even their lives. While reading the poem, one zigzags through a variety of data/emotional spaces and yet reaches a targeted end. What Endalegeta did was 1/remember 2/ select 3/design a form 4/coraal them into a single title 4/joined assumingly disparate flows of the creative lines into a single stream

This was totally done on reference. The intention of Endale seems largely bringing writers of different generations and style into a communion where the sigana dem/flesh and blood is the poem we see and read.

### Exhibit-3

(Please check the picture of the two birds somewhere in this post)

### **Is hisinawinet unique?**

There are few books that study this form. Those that exist are mostly directed to classification and the problem of genre. Some call it composite fiction. Some call it short story cycle.

Based on deleuze and guattari some may call it rhizomatic writing. Rhizomatic writing is anti hierarchical, with out centre and continuously subversive.

Rhizomatics is tainted with incoherence. For a good explanation of rhizomes consult this site: <http://danm.ucsc.edu/~dustin/library/deleuzeguattarirhizome.pdf>

The genesis of hisinawinet is tef injera as memory. I assumed and believed that memory is stored in the injera. What hisinawinet does is retrieve it. What is stored is in a spatial form. What we particularly retrieve is connectivity at the centre of existence. In this also we are connected in a way to our. We are teasing our pagan past in search of fruitful meaning. Hisinawinet is a robust technology of writing fiction (at least in my current case). Definitely it is a technology of connectivity, of empathy and positive liaison. Its nature may lie in certain philosophical schools, which I did not bother to locate.

Hisinawinet started by analyzing the edible book, injera. The similarity to Rhizomatic writing is the dedication to connectivity, fiction as a multilayered and multifaceted construct. Yet, Hisinawinet is for coherence....

Rather these concepts (composite, rhizome) are partial vindication of the concept of hisinawinet.

### **Note-1**

Injera is predominantly feminine. The sauce has a male feature. The sauce enters the hole. The act of eating is communing with this unity. The very idea of

inventing the word 'histin' applauds this conceptual integrity.

The spaces inside an alphabet (circumscribed micro spaces) are called mahesten (womb), according to geez grammarians. Womb is a feminine feature. The spaces between the alphabets are called histin; a word which obviously is related to mahesten (womb).

The holes represent the feminine...and the edges around the eyes are the masculine features. It is elegant engineering that keeps the injera from falling apart. Yet it maintains a form resembling the feminine...

### **Note-2**

In the dark cloudless night, this naked eye watches a firmament filled with stars. The firmament looks like an injera.

### **An explanatory mythology for injera**

Pre monotheistic societies have explanations for the appearance of every type of creature and behavior through stories. Before they put all responsibility on one superior god, all creation and acts of that were given account through myths and legends. I remember in my interview with addis Neger, I said that there may be an origin mythology for tef. (But I could not find it then) Luckily, few months ago, I was able to find one, which tells us how teff emerged as the seminal staple of Ethiopians. I am not here to question the level of facticity in the story. When we read myths we do not really worry about this, but work for a subterranean reading of the stories. We know different societies answer seemingly nonsense problems with stories. Few examples: how come the fox has bushy tail? How come the dog became domesticated? Why the moon reappears every month? How was man/woman created?

The interesting thing about the teff myth is that it has a certain rational taste. Something credible.

This happened around 1500 BC. Its appearance is connected to a real existent person. He was an Ethiopian king whose name was **Esiael, Agabos** (kingship name) also ATSE (the first king to call himself ATSE). His other name was SENDEQ

## Adam's words on facebook

---

ALAMA. (Too many names)

He was a serpent king. (The serpent myth is a world wide myth) From his life story we find that he was not just a king, but also a 'scientist'. It is said that he created the zememit, the mule, the wild donkey by interbreeding them with a related species. He has such interest in nature that he had his own arboretum and zoo. He was also capable of discovering a technology of longevity. He was able to live for more than 425 years not by the blessing of God but by his discoveries. It is said that what he ate and drank was different from other people. His water was from a spring that emerged from rocks. It was called the water of life. He was sleeping on a stone that has the power to keep him perpetually young.

After living 425 years, he was tired of life.....and wanted to die. He allowed a young lady kill him. The lady who murdered him later became queen **makeda**, Saba. Her original name was iteya, itye, Itege..... She was the first to be called Itege.

The story of SENDEQALMA does not stop. After he died, Saba became queen. During her reign there was wide spread famine in the country. Since Saba was not able to feed the hungry, she went to the grave of SENDEQ ALMA and cried and prayed.

God in her dream told her to use the seeds in the grass growing at the king's grave and feed that to her people. Saba did as she was advised. That was the teff plant. The word 'Teff' means 'Sweet and abundant'. It was a famous seed, hearing about it King David wrote a poem in praise.

Given SENDEQALMA being a 'biologist', the teff seems to be a conscious discovery.....maybe the king himself discovered it but makeda's mythologists added about God, her prayer and her feeding of the people. Even if that is not the case, growing on that specific grave, is like teff borrowing longevity from the dying body of the king.

I hope someone can expose this to a serious myth analysis, unlike my perfunctory one. (Anyways I gave it a shot)

The issue here is teff having a unique mythology. (Do you know any explanatory myth attached to other type of grains?) And in its appearance has to be transformed into injera and become a cultural object.

### Note-3

Injera is a panel of memory/a three dimensional sculpture.

What is usually lost either in human culture or nature is usually found or discovered. A fish called coelacanth that flourished in the Devonian and cetacean periods was long assumed to be extinct. It was caught off the coast of South Africa in 1938.

Interpreting the past texts/materials to understand the roots of human nature (in our case our country and society) is done routinely. Freud did it with Oedipus. What he analyzed was a drama. Jung did it by analyzing dreams, fairytales and mandalas.

Freud compared his work to paleography, archetypal excavation, translation, the decipherment of ancient languages.

Many people quote books to justify contemporary events. Yet, books are or may be tainted or be victims of competitive interpretations.

What the ancient Ethiopians/sendeq alama did was create a shared iconic for both sides of the competitors, a bread like injera, that subverts partiality and ideologies. It is quoted everyday and Competed for. Why not we find the hidden meaning, the mistir of this innovation?

The place of injera in the general process of cultural evolution is important. The memories of the old were embedded in the injera, an element which both the powerful and the weak shared. In other words, History was embedded into the need and necessities of everyone. When visible direct representations (petroglyphs, thick parchments, language) expired through violence and prejudice, the subtle modest injera was carried to today on the backs of simple farmers, potters, ladies, mabukias, metad etc...

What hisinawinet does is retrieve these memories by abstracting them into 'simple forms' of circles, labryrinths and hexagons.

Injera is the most complete form of representation.

It is visual(like painting)

It is tactile(like sculpture)

It is tasted

Etc....

Injera is a survivor document, an edible brana.

What histinawi fiction tells us is to go deeper into the authentic memories of the writer, the characters, and nation and connect them. The meaning lies in the connectivity, @ the locus where  $x, x_1, x_2, x_n, \dots$  converge, merge, grow, move or expire.

### **Note-4**

Metaphorizing the metaphor

We know the idioms and 'metaphors' that use injera:

- injerawin gagere,
- injera felagi,
- yeinjera gemedu tebetese,
- injera berew.
- Injerawin yabeselal etc...

Here, Injera is associated with existence/life. Existence is both chaotic and ordered; or ordered chaos. Interconnected.....injera is used as a metaphor for describing or illustrating existence. And it is not far from the truth if I stretch this metaphor into a writing technique.

Injera is the memory of an idea; the idea of discovering or inventing a harmonious connectivity. Interbreeding of animals by ATSE Sendeq alama is the act of connecting genes heretofore unconnected and there by create a new quality.

In other words, Meditate on the injera. Carry an injera telsem around your neck.....in your mouth. This means look for connections, arbitrarily lost or purposely subdued.

### **monadology?**

I am using the word 'monad' to say a unit...an atom.....a totally independent absolute. (More a dictionary definition) In hisinawinet, units and frozen identities do not exist. To be more radical, even a single short story can not exist as one story. The minimum stories are two, with a single shared title. A single monolithic

story boasts of completeness, which is not right. The single story well crafted, with its own nice title must be put together with another story as a gesture, a tendency of showing connectivity. A single story from a hisinawinet vantage, is rather a monad.

### **Exhaustible holes?**

#### **About Yiwesdal Menged**

##### Yiwesdal menged yametal....

This has to do with the genesis of the novella. I tried to write a story that will have a certain iconic status, that can bring the recent past in a relatively complete/compact perspective. But to compress 40 or 50 years of history in a novella is hard. That is unattainable ambition. Yet, I have to try it. Because of this, this story was done separate from the other stories.

Yet, The story establishes an inside labyrinth. This is attained by sort of splitting time and space. There are seven roads which in real life behave as a continuum. First, they were 'chopped' in chapters...and then connected in events, memories...characters and most important the age of the protagonist, Alemu. On a single 'imaginary space' happen things that he did while he was born, a toddler, a teen etc...

These action and memory pieces emerge here and there giving the novella a 'curved continuity' and also signaling or registering ruptures. Within the schema of the roads there is time as histin.

In other words, the story vis a vis the other stories in the anthology, sort of establishes an inside labyrinth. This is attained by using space as an organizing factor.

Novels are organized around time and space. The stories that we call linear are

linear by the very fact that they are casually connected. This is nearly nonexistent in this novella.

This does not mean that linearity is totally abolished. The issue here is predominance. Linearity is a vital component of human experience. We can not deny that. The events that can be connected are in some ways sometimes absurd. The problem usually is the irrelevance of separating time and space.

This brings us to what is called the Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. An author can delineate with precision either the velocity (time) or position (space) of a subject, but not both. The accuracy of the measurement is inversely proportional, since any given in one dimension is matched by a loss in the other. What hisinawinet tries to do is take all the space-time factors and possibly sacrifice nothing. This means, it is feasible to work on both the external world and the subjective mind at the same time. Sure this maybe a tendency, that will never be achieved. Hisinawinet leaning on the injera metaphor drives event in space, in the tunnels of injera, purposely creating connections, there by fulfilling by default the spatial component. (The metaphor as a cartographic toolkit)

With regard to this novella, the reader gets the complete message of the story not while reading it but after finishing it and also after some repose.

This is one indication that chronology (linearity) is substantially subdued here. Metaphorically, injera is a space.....the act of filling it is inserting time.

This novella is not significantly connected to the outside (other) stories. Debebe the child poet, in yiwesdal mended is the guy who loved Martha in the story Qedada. This sounds/feels accidental and not systemic.

About filling the holes.....

I believe that the moment we change the 'eyes' into a geometric form called 'holes', we make it abstract, and in a sense inexhaustible. Injera has become not injera but a circle with holes and attendant subsurface tunnels. We have abandoned now the real and moved to the metaphorical.

I like to avoid dualisms here: The injera holes and the rest. Injera is a porous material. You can get a hundred percent percolation rate. It is full of holes. It is full of tunnels. This means we take the notion of infinite possibility of

connectivity....

The injera once made is a sort of space...when we write the story we sort of insert time and make it alive. That is why when I say once we take the idea of connectivity as a mysterious message embedded in injera and establishing it as a supreme text.... defining our existence, we then abandon it.

### **For a manual**

The form is in some ways liberating.

First, it agitates us to look into unexpected connections. Which is a sin qua non of creativity. Second, It helps one understand the necessity of cooperation, which in the last centuries was undermined by the Darwinian thesis of the survival of the fittest.

And not less important, it liberates the writer from pure subjectivity and pure mimesis. 'The final product of the creative act is a fusion in which both elements, the subjective and the objective merge' that is from Existential phenomenology.

Since this is a methodology, anyone can fill the holes with any type of thing. The philosophical assumptions of hisinawinet are connectivity as positive. The assumption that this or that is totally different/apart from this or that is wrong. We can not think in binary terms. We take fuzziness as a reality. This is a testimony to connectivity.

The negative position will be to deny connectivity and impart uniqueness as central, definitive and uncontestable. There are no unique things. We live in a world of cultural hybrids and bastards. The moment you start working with hisinawinet you work towards the positive or you are pulled towards the positive. Existence is a complex, multiform totality in which any given element is tangential to countless others.

How are connections established?

They can be established/or are already there/ through chronology, casual structures, theme, biology, related motifs, etc...with spatiality as a necessary element.

This may demand constructing a manual of writing. (not necessary but desirable)

1/connection between texts

(between books, magazine articles, poems, newspaper reports, song lyrics, etc..)

2/connection between the producers of the text

(among writers/poets/)

3/connection between different spaces/geographical

### **Note 4**

Imagine a photo montage of two towns (hosanna and Bahir dar) side by side. You see a street on Hosanna map that runs from the left to the right. The second picture is of Bahir dar. There we have a street that runs in the same direction but is a different street. You feel like you are in the same town...by this act you destroy their parochial identities and create a unified imaginary space. Remember the photos are taken by different people with a different intention. I hope and very sure....people who does not know the towns well can never identify them as unique and yet they can read a generic Ethiopian town easily. Imagine now these towns are imaginary....

4/connection between themes/manners/people

Connectivity unveils.

The other problem is that I should be able to create terminologies for hisinawinet to make it exist as a system of techniques. This is not done.

I like very much if you guys throw in some instances of hisinawinet, in the manner I set in the notes. I welcome your comments, questions and criticisms, all the nudging and in some ways also helping me find my way.

I am now busy with something different than this/theory/ ...I hope I will return and work more on the hisinawinet thing.....to abandon it or maintain it.

Thank

***About the Gray Color***

## Adam's words on facebook

---

someone asked about the use of the grey color (grey for things and teyim for people) in my fictions.....  
here is a general idea.....

\*\*\*\*\*

The 'color' has nothing to do with symbolic meaning. It came out spontaneously in the story. The meaning I have to guess or justify Post writing. Why the ubiquity of this 'color'? I was maybe resisting the dualistic classification of experience as black and white. Or most probably a color born of nostalgia. The interesting thing is that grey, teyim appear repeatedly in the stories.

Traditional scholars believe that living matter is made up of two seminal elements called SAFRA and SAWDA; which are of black and white colors. (This reminds us of red and white cells). To go further and mention grey (a sort of 'third color') ad nauseum is an existential statement. These two colors do not exist side by side but in a dynamic spacetime. A representation that shows us these as autonomous will some how distance us from reality.

I do not regret in perpetuating teyim/grey color even though there was no conscious design.

I think if you write with a certain control, elements in a way boldly or vaguely point to a centre. They may be Freudian slips too.

The interesting thing is which grey/teyim is consciously or unconsciously put?

I remember someone asked me why I chose nefas mewchia/mezgebu dubale..... It all happened in the process. I just liked it...and yet later realized that it had another meaning. What I did was just laugh. This only shows the book was in some ways consistent. Even if I entertain the anti-structural position of the postmodernists, I see in practice that some type of art work, despite the author's nonchalance struggles towards self organization and order.

So, gentleman/lady....some details are there....for you to interpret the way you handle a context....(chapter, the whole book, other external data...etc...)

## Adam's words on facebook

---

cheers