

ORIGINAL ARTICLE**Regression as a Psychological Process in the Novel *Hawwii***

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and Humanities, Jimma University, Ethiopia*Corresponding Author: asegere@yahoo.com**ABSTRACT**

Scholars in the area of psychology and criticism contend that psychoanalysis can help us better understand human behavior. Literary texts reflect issues related to human behavior. Hence, psychoanalysis helps us understand literary texts which are about human behavior in giving profound clues towards solving a work's thematic and symbolic mysteries and serving as a best tool for reading literary texts beneath the line. The aim of this article was to analyze a female character in a novel *Hawwii*, from psychoanalytic lens. Psychoanalytic approach is employed to analyze the female character in the novel focusing on regression as a psychological process. Textual analysis was used as a tool to obtain information from the text and to examine the psychodynamics of the character. After a close reading of and analysis of the characters, it is found out that the protagonist *Hawwii* is depicted to be a depressed person like "an orphan" in the symbolic realm. She found to oscillate between the past and the present for she is engulfed by abjection. Regression, rather than helping the character as therapeutic element to forget the current situation in which she was, it rather forced her enter to abject state which in turn pushed her to attempt suicide. Therefore, as regression is helpful in enabling one forget unpleasant situations someone is at present, it is also damaging if it takes one to unpleasant moments of the past.

Keywords: Abject; Analysis; *Hawwii*; Psychoanalysis; Regression**INTRODUCTION**

Experiences we have gone through as early as our childhood is stored in our mind. Different phenomena of experiences such as cultural, social, economic, political, and others, as Eagleton (1996) contends have their own "implications for the psychological life". It is this "psychological life" which has got an emphasis for most

psychoanalytic critics (Freud, 1900; Lacan, 1977).

During the twentieth century, psychoanalytic criticism, which is one types of psychological criticism, originated in the work of the Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who developed the theory of human psychology. Some of the contributions of Freud include

the three basic premises developed. The first major premise is his emphasis on the unconscious. He writes that most of the individual's mental processes are stored in the unconscious. His second emphasis is sexuality which is the force that motivates ultimately all human behavior. The third major premise focuses on repression where many of our desires are repressed by the forces that are emanated from society that is social taboos attached to certain sexual impulse (Humm, 1994; Guerin *et al.*, 1999; Gounelas, 2001; Murfin and Ray, 2003; Tyson, 2006).

It is pertinent to discuss further about the concept of repression which is the third major focus for Freud. Other than Freud, Lacan (1977) also discusses about the concept of repression. He contends that "From the moment he speaks, from that precise moment and not before, I understand that there is repression". This shows that the moment desire is replaced by language it is at that point that repression begins. From this it is possible to imply that language, more specifically literary texts are sites where desire and wishes are displaced which in turn is repression.

Moreover, in her famous essay "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" Showalter (1994), writes that repression is the focus of psychoanalytic literary critics. From a psychoanalytic dimension of a text, one can examine how the oppressions of repression are structured. For example, the unconscious consists of repressed wounds, fears, unresolved conflicts and guilty desires. Feminist psychoanalysis uses a model of repression in analyzing a given literary text.

Another important concept which helps us understand the concept of repression is the notion of defense mechanism. There are ways in which repression works through defense mechanism. What necessitates the

structure of repression works through different defense mechanisms is the active and dynamic work of the contents of the unconscious. The ways they operate is for example, we hang onto them in disguised, and distorted ways. So, in order not to know them we build different defense mechanisms. This takes place until we find a way to know and acknowledge ourselves the true cause(s) of our repressed wounds, fear and anger (the constants of the unconscious). For example, displacement or transference is one of the defense mechanisms literary critics like (Humm, 1994; Tyson, 1999; Guerin *et al.* (1999) drew from Freud to show how one "takes out" on someone or something less threatening than the person who caused our fear, hurt, frustration or anger. In most cases, a patriarchally internalized mother can displace her fear and anger on her unmarried daughter. This may happen when the daughter refuses to marry a man of her father's choice. The mother displaces her anger, fear or frustration for which the father is responsible, on her daughter just for fear of him. The other defense mechanism is avoidance where a mother, a wife or a daughter stays away from people or situations that are liable to make them anxious by stirring in them some repressed experience or emotion. For example, some mothers may avoid incidents like acts of rape that their daughter encounters for fear of the fact that it carries in them some unconscious experience which they do not want to come out. Under some situations they prefer silence. That silence, indeed, is not "silence" in its true sense rather it shows certain gap that should be voiced.

Other than defense mechanism, influential psychoanalytic critics such as (Freud, 1900; Lacan, 1977) focus on language. The analysis of the case studies of men and women in psychoanalytic reading is based

on the analyst's (a person psychoanalyzed by a psychoanalyst) either spoken or written language. This type of activity in modern sense of a language is a discourse or a text. In such cases it is the subject in the text that is interpreted. Similarly, where literary texts are discourses or texts, the subjects (metaphors) in the text are women and men narrators and characters. Hence, as Humm (1994) writes, lives, fantasies and early experiences of characters are read as languages. Consequently, one of the focus areas of the language of a literary work in psychoanalysis is symbols and metaphors. Felman (1985), Humm (1994), Gounelas (2001), Murfin and Ray (2003) deploy "symbolic order" based on Freud (1900) and Lacan (1977) theoretical framework. The symbolic is the point of organization, the point of creation, and the point of construction.

The question what literary research from the perspective of psychoanalytic literary critical perspective contributes to science and education is worth questioning. For one thing, literary research is a scientific research where rigorous data is generated from texts such as novels, short stories and plays following qualitative research design. Based on information and evidences obtained from literary works, analysis, inference and interpretation are made out of which findings and conclusions are drawn. Secondly, psychoanalytic approach helps in giving insights related to human behavior where the details of affective domains of a character is examined which in turn contributes for education at large.

To sum up, issues that are addressed in psychoanalysis which the researcher proposes to use for his study include regression which refers to a psychological process where one goes back to his/her earlier experience motivated by the current situation which will be discussed hereafter.

What is more, the construction of identity (which may be gender, professional, self) through language (that is how men or women are constructed by metaphors, symbols, similes and other figurative expressions), the absences, how certain desires are repressed, displacement or transference, the psychic relationship of mothers, fathers and children are also issues worth focusing.

As discussed so far, regression is one of the notions that operate in our mental process. Guilty desire, wish and wound are repressed in the unconscious of the subject for their reliving to the conscious level is threatening. To repress these contents of unconscious defense mechanisms are used. One of the defense mechanisms is regression which will be discussed as follows.

Regression refers to retreating to an earlier form of behavior to avoid pain or threat. It can involve a return either to a painful or pleasant condition. It is a defense in the sense that it carries our thought away from some present difficulty. In order to repress his present unhappy condition, one may return to his golden ages of his past time. Freud made this comparison to "a stream of water which meets with an obstacle in the river bed is dammed up and flows back into old channels which had formerly seemed fated to run dry." Because it is a return to a former psychological state which is not imagined but relived, it is the most complex defense mechanism as compared to the rest (Mills, 2004). Moreover, it is different from other defenses in that: "...it carries with it the opportunity for *active reversal*, the acknowledgment and working through of repressed experiences and emotions, because we can alter the effects of the wound only when we are re-living the wounding experience." In such cases, regression can serve as a "useful

therapeutic tool". To this end, the main objective of this study is to analyze if regression helps in active reversal of repressed wounds such as guilty and low self-esteem or if it further complicates the wound and leads to abject state.

METHODOLOGY

Psychoanalytic literary critical approach is used to analyze the text. As psychoanalytic critical perspective involves analysis of a text that focuses on an author, a text and/or a reader, a text has been chosen as focus of analysis. To this end, textual analysis has been employed as it best fits to the main objective of this study. Unless deep textual analysis is employed the contents of the unconscious are not so explicit to be easily found on the plain surface of the text. Therefore, analysis focuses on behaviors, interactions, feelings and symbols to uncover the meaning embedded in them. Moreover, as textual analysis is to organize texts into a meaningful format, continuous conflicts, episodes, figurative aspects and contradictions from the selected texts have been selected and organized to a meaningful set of patterns, categories, and/or themes. Words, phrases and the context of comments (for example, the narrator's comment), among other aspects of text, have been areas of focus in this study. Using textual analysis, evidences such as words, images and events from the text has been closely examined, as they are pertinent to notions such as the psychodynamics of a character.

The novel *Hawwii*, written by Hordofa (2003) has been selected for this analysis based on the long experience of the author. To mention some, the author has served for a long time in different Ethiopian broadcast media, as a journalist for Ethiopian radio, Afan Oromo programme. His exposure to journalism in the language enabled him to produce significant creative writings with significant literary quality. He authored

several other related novels including *Yeroon Siif Haadhiiftuu* in 2008, *Yoomi Laata* in 2010 and *Tsigireda* in 2013.

Analysis and interpretation have been used as analytical procedures in this research. The texts (extracts) are patterned for analysis and interpreted according to the recurrent psychodynamic evidences more specifically, regression. Therefore, extracts from the selected novel have been referred and/or quoted. After that the texts are translated into English by the researcher. The quoted texts have been organized based on the themes identified, regression as a defense mechanism, under the major theoretical approach, namely, psychoanalytic. Texts are believed to be properly organized and these have enabled the researcher to critically analyze the selected text. That is, the dominant textual/thematic aspects have been identified in relation to the major objectives of the research. In particular, the analytical tool developed for textual analysis by McKee (2008), has been adopted as a guiding tool for the literary analyses and interpretation in this study. Then, interpretations of various dimensions have been applied. In each stage, interpretative activities, re-writings and paraphrasing of original passages in the researcher's language have been undertaken in such a way that the new version accounts for details included under it. Based on the analysis and interpretation of the texts, how female characters are depicted as objects of gaze, how regression helps in active reversal of repressed wounds such as guilty and low self-esteem or if it further complicates the wound and leads to abject state are attempted to be analyzed.

Regression as a Psychological Process in the Novel *Hawwii*

It seems possible to begin the analysis of the novel *Hawwii* with a famous Oromo proverb which signifies the unconscious as

a store house of repressed wounds. “ ‘Haataa’u.’ jedhe jaldeessi dhagaa galagalchee jalatti waa argee iddootti deebisuun” [“A monkey, lifting a stone, seeing a snake under it and keeping the stone back right in its former place said ‘Let it be there as it is.’”] This context in which this proverb is said is when one prefers not to regress back to threatening experience. In most cases this is said when the current situation leads a speaker goes back to his/her past experience.

The purpose of this section is to analyze the psychodynamic state of the protagonist Hawwii as she is depicted in the novel *Hawwii*. To this end, the text is closely examined from the perspective of psychoanalytic notions such as regression. How the repressed wounds, unresolved conflicts and fears which are repressed in the unconscious sometimes disrupt the defenses and resurfaces themselves has also been used in the analysis and interpretation of evidence from the text.

When a world is seen from a psychoanalytic perspective, it consists of individual human beings, as Tyson(1999) writes: “each with a psychological history that begins in childhood experiences in the family and each with patterns of adolescent and adult behaviors that are the direct results of the early experience”. In view of this, family is very important in psychoanalytic theory and practice because each of us are a product of the roles we are given in the family-complex. Tyson also contends that the ‘birth’ of the unconscious lies in the way we perceive our place in the family and how we react to this self-definition.: “...for example, “I’m the failure”: “I’m the perfect child”; “I must always come in ‘second’ to my brother”; “I’m unlovable”, or “I’m responsible for my parent’s problems” (1999). She calls these perceptions “core issues”. It is around these core issues that we develop defense

mechanisms such as regression, projection, denial, repression, transference (displacement), and the likes.

When it comes to the application of psychoanalysis to literary criticism, there is a debate among critics as to which psychoanalytic concepts can best be applied to the study of literature. However, Tyson (1999)suggests the need “to see as to which concepts are operating in such a way as to enrich our understanding of the work” and the need to focus on the “works representation of family dynamics”. In the ensuing section, we shall explore the ways through which unresolved conflicts about our role within the family are re-lived in the rest of our life and even passed down to our children. We shall also see how the repressed wounds, unresolved conflicts and fears which are repressed in the unconscious sometimes disrupt the defenses and resurfaces themselves. More specifically, how the women characters in the novel *Hawwii* used the defense mechanisms such as regression, projection, denial, transference (displacement) to repress the “core issues” like sense of abandonment and negative self-esteem and others are closely examined.

One of the recurring defense mechanisms in the novel *Hawwii* is regression. Regression, as Freud contends, is a situation in which the subject reverts to previous phases of development. *Hawwii*, the protagonist, is put in touch with her repressed desire for the lost objects in many instances.

Among defenses one of the complex defenses is regression. It is the temporary return to a former psychological state, which is just imagined but re-lived. Regression can involve a return either to a painful or to a pleasant experience. It is a defense because it carries our thoughts away from some present difficulty and

flashes back in order to avoid the unpleasant realities of our present life. To analyze this defense mechanism as it is portrayed in the novel we have to focus on the protagonist, Hawwii. In some situations, long time after she left her birth place, she goes back to her past experience at home and always betrays herself saying that she is the cause for her parents' "shame" (Hordofa, 2003). She always feels that she is a failure.

One of the instances in which she temporarily returns to her past experience is when she is traveling to Addis Ababa, in the act of escaping from a marriage by force. The scene is that, Hawwii, starting from Nakemte up to Bako (80 km) is weeping. On noticing this, an elderly man who is sitting beside her asks why she is weeping and he begins to tell her a story. It is in the middle of the story that she regresses to her lived experience as: "Hawwiin haala ishee fi Latii yaa dattee utuu hin yaadiin gidduutti "Dhugaadha!" jettee hafuura dheeraa baafatte...Hordofa (2003). [Hawwii, remembering the intimate attachment she had with Lati in the middle of the story replied: 'Yes it is true!' and took a long breath". It is in the middle of the historical allusion that she is taken to her past experience. What the elderly person tells her is about the Oromo leaders in the middle of the twentieth century. How strong they were, how they transferred power, and eventually lost their power. Because the historical allusion is so moving, she struggles to pay attention to it. Meanwhile, her energy from within, her desire and the fear and frustration due to separation from her lover and family, interrupts the dialogue she makes with the elder. It is depicted that she gets sandwiched between the two powerful forces-history and the force of lived experience as a girl and shown as the subject being the product of multiple

conditions. Moreover, an individual may not only respond to the present message, rather, past experience or destiny in the future may disrupt the message and make the person a subject torn in between networks of messages in a given discourse.

Moreover, there are instances when Hawwii temporarily turns to her past experience in order to re-live that experience in the middle of her sense of abjection. This is portrayed in the following extract:

Guyyaan isaa Masqala ture.
Hawwiin yoggaa biyya turte
guyyaa akka kanaa warra ishee fi
Latiifaa wajjin bakka tokkotti
damaranii: "...Hiyyoolee
daree..." jechuudhaan ganaman
ka'anii abidda Masqalaatti
naanna'anii, hincotee,
qocqocaatti cuubbatanii
cuffachaa farsoodhaan qoma
irraa gadi buufachaa,
gammachuudhaan kan
ayyaaneffatan sun fuula ishee
dura dhufe. Hordofa (2003).

[It was the date of *Maskal* ceremony. It forces Hawwii to go back in thought and remember those happy days when she had been at her hometown together with her family including Lati's family that they had built the *damara*, sang a song saying "... 'Hiyoleddie'... woke up in the morning, circled the *damara*, ate *hanchote* with a grind green pepper, and drank *farso*].

In Oromo, traditionally, there has been a ceremony called *garanfasa* in which a religious festival takes place some weeks before the Ethiopian New Year and *Masqala* ceremony. This practice these days is dominated by *Masqala*, the date on

which the cross is celebrated in Ethiopia. In Oromo, *Masqala* is one of the major ceremonies celebrated. On that day, among the Oromo people, as described in the extract, special food and drinks are ready. Groups of the families enjoy the food and drink. Of course, it is while she is in that small bedroom that Hawwii goes back in memory to her lived experience. It seems appealing to compare the space and time she is in (the present) and the context of the cultural celebration (the past). It is when she is in a small bedroom she rents that she goes back to her joyful childhood experience by regression. The spatial situation of the present is abject. For example, the bedroom she rents is very dirty “Qulqullinni sirichaa akkuma qarshii isaati. Ijaan arguuf kan nama sodaachisu” Hordofa (2003). [The filthiness of the bedrooms is proportional to its cost. One could not even dare see it for a while]. The bed is filled with bedbugs, fleas, and lice. The room is dusty. It is parted from the next room by chip wood. Every night, next to her bedroom, men with bar ladies are busy, at times fighting, screaming, with violent sexual intercourse until she feels in terror for fear that the chip wood may fall on her. This makes her sleepless the whole night (Hordofa, 2003).

It is from such abject condition that she goes back to her past experience. On that day, her past joyful experience that she spent at her parent’s home, eating delicious cultural food, drinking local drinks, singing cultural songs, above all the food that her mother prepared comes to her mind. She temporarily returns to a former psychological state, which is not just imagined but re-lived. Here, she returns to her pleasant past experience. Her thoughts are carried away from the abject present difficulty and hence, flashback in order to avoid the unpleasant realities of her present life. Here, regression as a defense

mechanism helps her to get a temporary healing.

It is temporary because the power of “now” exerts its force on her so that the present state immediately engulfs her. This is depicted in the scene when she goes to the *Maskal* square (where an Orthodox religious festival is celebrated) to forget the unpleasant situation she currently is in. Though she is in the middle of the congregation singing and dancing, she wonders what she is doing in the middle of the people whose lives are filled with joy. This is portrayed as: “Hawwiin yoggaa kana ilaaltu, ‘Isaanhoo guyyaa ayyaana guddaa kana gammachuu isaanii mul’dhisachuuf akkas utaalani sirbu animmoo rakkattun gaddaaf uumamte gammachuu namaa gidduu maal naaf haagodhuuf jedheen dhufe?’ jettee akka nama otoo hin affeeramiin mana cidhaa kajeellaa dhaqeetti of jajjabeessitee ...” Hordofa (2003). [When Hawwii observes the spectacle, she wonders, ‘They dance, bump and dang like this to express their joy but, me, a destitute created for disgrace, what for am I standing in the middle of these people?’]. She feels that she is the ‘Other’ in the middle of those who are joyful.

The source of this sense of “Otherness” goes back to her childhood period when her mother restricts her for she always plays an initiative role when playing with Lati. For example, Hawwii is severely battered by her mother because she asks Lati to sleep with her. Observing the actions by the kids, Mrs. Dinsiri could not control herself but severely battered Hawwii. The two women (Mrs. Bashatu and Mrs. Dinsiri) wonder whether the two kids learn such an act in their mother’s womb or not. After that Mrs. Dinsiri warns Hawwii not to repeat the act any more, otherwise she will call Abba Digga so that he will castrate both. Another important point is the fear of castration that

the women make explicit. The children are induced to develop sense of frustration by fear of castration. Here, they are made to associate sexual practice with castration. So, one of her wounds is the autonomy she is denied in her childhood. Here, one can see interconnectivity between regression and negative self- concept (low self-esteem). She says that they are happy because they deserve it and she can never be happy because she is not created for happiness. She is in a state in which she does not feel any self-worth. This is how the two (regression and low self- esteem) are interconnected.

Hawwii regresses not only to the joyful past but also to the most unpleasant situations. This is depicted in a scene where Hailu capture her and takes her to a bedroom where he attempts to rape her. She, as a girl brought up in a patriarchal norm that lives a high value for virginity. However, she is going to lose her virginity through the person whom she never knew. It is while she is on the verge of this state that she goes to the other unpleasant past by regression.

Yoona Hawwiin abdi kutatte. Ni dunuunfatte. Ulfina durbummaa ishee eeggattee jaalalleen ishee Latiin yoo deebi'u, ulfinaan galfata guddaa kana itti kennitee jaalala dhugaa isaaf qabdu mirkaneessuuf kan yaadde abjuu ta'ee itti mulate. Jaalallee ishee hawwii guddaadhaan eegduuf kahuuf jecha haadhaa fi abbaa ishee kan rakkatanii ishee guddisan cidha qopheessan gufachiiftee, qaanessitee, gadda guddaa irratti gattee, jalaa milixxee, Finfinnee dhufuun ishee faayidaa dhabuu isaa hubatte. Kun yakka dhiifama hin qabne ta'uun isaa itti dhagahame. Warra ishee irratti

yakka kana hundaa raawwattee, kara deemaa nama hinbeekne harkatti ulfina durbummaa ishee gatuusheef gaddite Hordofa, (2003).

This time Hawwii lost her hope. She closed her eyes. Her source of respect which she plans to give as a gift to Lati as a special offering when he comes has become only a dream. She took as though the attempts she had made to keep her virginity by escaping from her family and that she had left aside the marriage ceremony they prepared were crime. She thought that she brought shame on them; by changing their happiness to sorrow, a family who brought her up, paying many sacrifices. She realized that all attempts she made became futile. She thought it to be a crime that has no excuse. Thinking that she did all this crimes on her family, the fact that she loses her virginity through the person whom she did not know made her disgraced.

As shown in the extract, the present unpleasant incident forced Hawwii to regress to the past experience. Regression, in turn, forces her to bring out what is repressed. The narrator comments that: "She closed her eyes". When psychoanalytically seen, this shows that she regressively is transported to the unconscious state due to which several repressed core issues come out. The primary wound of Hawwii is that she is abandoned, that her attachment with her parents is incomplete. So, the person with whom she attaches herself to since her early childhood is Lati. He is more than what a lover is. Her difficulty to

differentiate whether he is her lover or brother arises from this wound. In addition to this wound (abandonment), she also develops another wound which is low self-esteem. She recurrently says that she does not deserve worth living, she even does not fulfill the criteria to be Lati's wife Hordofa (2003). In the extract above, regression as a defense mechanism is a cause for the core issues (sense of abandonment, and low self-esteem) which are repressed. Tyson writes that regression is different from other defenses in that it "...carries with it the opportunity of active reversal, the acknowledgement and working through of repressed experiences and emotions, because we can alter the effect of a wound only when we re-live the wounding experience. This is why regression is such a useful therapeutic tool" (2007). However, the point is that Hawwii could not use it to reverse it and to come back to what is psychologically called "normal state". Rather, it stays with her and contributes a lot in leading her to a suicide attempt which is depicted in the denouement of the plot of the novel.

The third core issue is guilt consciousness. She feels guilty because she thinks she betrayed her family for the fact that she does not abide to the social expectation. That is, she refused a marriage proposal by her family. The act of refusing her family created in her a sense of "criminality". This has been repressed in her unconscious till regression brings it out to the surface. This indeed is a repressed wound that comes out due to regression. Here, regression, rather than serving as a therapeutic for the healing of the wound it rather makes it complicated. Here, the wound that is guilt consciousness which has been buried deep down into the unconscious is identified as a result of regression. It is apparent that her family goes against her interest. The narrator is depicted to sympathize with her for the choice she makes. But, one wonders

why she recurrently suffers from guilt consciousness. She is indulged in guilt consciousness when she regressively goes to her past experience. From this one can infer that guilt consciousness, is stored through repression in the character's psyche is coming out through regression. When she is transported from one wound to the other the defenses built around each make her life complicated to the extent that she does not know why she reacts that way. The structure of regression does not hold static.

The fourth core issue that has come out due to regression is insecure or unstable sense of self. When she closes her eyes, Hawwii also gets accessed to the "love ethos", chastity that she tries to abide to. This way of character portrayal indulges a female character to several trials and makes her pay any cost to keep her virginity to her lover and eventually say: 'There it is! It is gift for you!' This, too, is the desire that has been inculcated in Hawwii's mind. Chastity is an ethos or a cultural construction that is inculcated in women as early as their childhood. It is considered to be the sole responsibility of a girl to be chaste until her date of marriage. The argument is not to 'discredit' the notion of chastity. But, it is to argue against its attachment with female identity. In patriarchal society, when it is attached to female identity, by the time violent male violates it and deflower a female, its effect, more often victimizes the female. For fear of the trauma of the social blame and lack of respect and dignity from her would be partner, she accepts this cultural representation and accepts it as part of her identity which at times is disrupted. The same situation happens to Hawwii. By the time Hailu attempts to rape her, she thought as if she is robbed of her identity and self-worth. As Butler (1993) contends, it is basically as a result of a normative construction when occurrence that affects it

comes ones the constructed identity is fractured. That is why, Hawwii betrays herself and narcissistically question, about herself worth as lexical evidences from the extract: “lost her hope”, “criminal” and “disgraced” show.

Another scene in which what is repressed comes out through regression is the final letter that Hawwii writes to Lati. A letter is the only mechanism through which both lovers communicate. The repressed core issues come out through letters. This makes Hawwii to re-live for she shifts the senses of ‘abandonment’, ‘isolation’ and ‘low self-esteem’ into her lover through letter.

Latii kun anaaf boona! Siif garuu qaaniidha. Bara dargaggummaa koo, bara hiriyaa koo wajjin kolfee xabadhee itti gammadu rakinaan, dhiphinaan fi gaddan dabarsen jira. Anis eege akka ijoollee dubra jaalallee isaanii wajjin gamadan si wajjin gammaduuf kan ani hawwiin si eegaa ture hawwiinkoo dhugaa ta’uu hin dandeenye. Haadhaafi abbaakoo biyya dhalatani guddatanii dullooman keessatti isaan qaanessaa uffata gaddaa isa anuffachiisee kan isaan anaann ama gara biraaf nakennuuf qophaa’an didee seenaa magaalaa Naqamtee keessatti mul’atees dhagahamees hinbeekne guyyaa gaafa cidha koo otoo sirba muugammachuu haadhaa fi abbaakoo jaalalakeef jedheen gaddatti jijjiire. Yakka dhiifama hin qabne hojjedheen jira. Cubbuu isaaniitu na qabe. Aba arsaisaanii malee eebbiisaanii ana bira hin turre. Magaalaa Finfinnee keessatti shamma xalayaa kansiif barreessetti rakkiinaaf qorumsa narra gahe jabeenyaan qabsoodhaan keessa

bahuuf tattaafi inanigodhe na boonsa Hordofa (2003).

Lati, this is a pride for me! But it is an embarrassment for you. I spent my young age in pain, tension, destitution, rather than with joy, happiness and laughter. My dream that I waited for you to enjoy love with, like the girls of my age, could never be realized. I was a cause for the embarrassment of my parents in the place where they were born, grew and became old. I was a cause for them to wear an awesome clothing. Because of your love, I refused their act of giving me for somebody; I escaped on the date of my marriage and changed the joyful day of my parents to sorrow- a history never heard and happened before in Nakamte town. I committed an unforgivable crime. I suffered from the sin I committed. What stayed with me was not their blessing rather it was their curse. Till I wrote this paper to you, I was proud of the challenges I went through, in the city of Addis Ababa.

This extract is the plot summary of the novel. As depicted in the extract, the desire of joy, happiness, erotic love, and the desire for togetherness are issues repressed in her. Instead, issues like ‘loneliness’, ‘pain’, ‘tension’ and ‘destitution’ are recurrently depicted in the narrative. Other than what she receives from ‘outside’, the ‘inside’ at times disrupts the border between both. Anxiety arises when the border between the inside and the outside disrupts. The fact that she writes back the last message regressively is because she is overwhelmed by anxiety of the breakdown

of the defenses. In fact, in the letter she writes for Lati before this last message, she promises that she could welcome both him and his wife. But one wonders why she changes her mind so abruptly and decides to commit suicide. The reason seems to be that she could not tolerate the breakdown of the defense mechanisms she built so far. The paradox is though regression is used as a defense mechanism, the fact that it appears to her that she lost the only person whom she thought would enable her forget her wounds such as abandonment and low self-esteem has married someone. All she is left with is nothingness. The only thing that she does not try is 'death'. That is why she recurrently uses expressions that are abject:

“Ani amma bakka dhugaan
deeme malee dhirsatti hin
heerumne.... Waaqayyo biyyoo
irraa nu uume waan ta'eef
biyyootti debi'een jira...Dhagaa
boraafadheen biyyoo
haammadhee ciiseen jira...
Lubbuukoo tursuu fi ijibbaata
guddaa godhaan ture...Amma
garuu ani iddoo dhugaa deemeen
jira” (Hordofa, 2003).

The only place I am going to is not to get married to a husband, but to join the truth (death)... Because God created us from dust, I am now returning to dust... I am here, to rest on a stone and embrace a dust... All the attempts I made to live were only attempts... But, now, I am going to join the truth.

Here, she is nothing but an abject in between the subject Hawwii and the object death. She finally accepts that death is her eventual husband: “Hingeesse yeroon Hawwiin dhirsa dhugaa isa barabaraan waliin jirattutti kennamtu”. [Time has come

when Hawwii is given to a true husband that lasts forever]. By holding a poison in one hand, she narcissistically rehearses:

“Yaa addunyaa nan sitaajjabe.
Si abdadheen abdii siirraa dhabe
Kanfan si jibbe sin jibbe
Meeqaaf fayyaa laatee meeqa
dhukkubsite?
Meeqaaf hirriba laatte
meeqammoo dhowwate?
Yaa addunyaa nan sitaajjabe.
Si abdadheen abdii siirraadhabe
Kanaafan sijibbe sin jibbe”
(Hordofa, 2003).

Alas, the world shame unto you,
I never ever got hope from you,
Hence, I hated and hated you.
For how many did you give health
and how many were denied?
How many slept and so were how
many are sleepless?
Alas, the world, shame unto you
I never ever got hope from you,
Hence, I hated and hated you.

Here she is just on the border line between the semiotic and the symbolic. Kristeva writes that for such a person, no object could replace the irreplaceable perception or severing the bonds of desire” (Makafe, 2004). Lacking an interest in any objects, Hawwii lacks motivation to engage in the symbolic realm. The world seems worthless, for the objects in the world are not connected to the subject's affects, desires. The depressed person is like an orphan in the symbolic realm.

Hawwii is depicted to be a depressed person like “an orphan” in the symbolic realm. While her colleagues are singing and dancing (a marriage ceremony that takes place two weeks or more before the date of marriage), she limited herself to her bedroom and indulged to depression on the date when she escapes marriage by force. When they frequently come to her bedroom

to see if she feels happy and when they show her the dowry and bride clothes, she shows no interest for no object can satisfy the depressed Hawwii in the symbolic realm. Towards the end of the narrative, memory of this past comes in her mind. All attempts she makes to guard her wound are futile. She oscillates between the past and the present for she is engulfed by abjection. She ultimately is determined to marry the “true husband”, death. Therefore, as regression is helpful in enabling us forget unpleasant situations we are in at present, it is also damaging if it takes us to unpleasant moments of the past.

CONCLUSION

An attempt is made to analyze the novel Hawwii from psychoanalytic perspective more specifically regression. A Psychoanalytic approach is used to analyze the text to unravel the psychodynamics of the protagonist Hawwii. Moreover, textual analysis has been used to critically examine the protagonist. Based on the critical analysis, it is found out that the protagonist Hawwii is depicted to be a depressed person like “an orphan” in the symbolic realm. She found to oscillate between the past and the present for she is engulfed by abjection. Regression, rather than helping as therapeutic element to forget the current situation in which she was, it rather forced her enter to abject psychological state which in turn pushed her to attempt homicide. Therefore, as regression is helpful in enabling us forget unpleasant situations at present, it is also damaging if it takes us to unpleasant moments of the past.

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