

**Intertextuality and Narrative Transformation in *Dhaabaa Wayyeessaa's* *Godaannisa*: A Poststructuralist Analysis of Literary Revision**

Ashenafi Belay Adugna<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract**

*This study explores how Dhaabaa Wayyeessaa's novel Godaannisa employs intertextuality and literary revision to deepen its thematic resonance and narrative complexity. Addressing a critical gap in Oromoo literary studies—where intertextuality and revision have received limited scholarly attention—the study employs a qualitative, poststructuralist, text-based methodology to analyze the 2020 revised edition of the novel. The analysis reveals that Dhaabaa extensively utilizes intertextual references to reimagine the original narrative, transforming it into a more sophisticated and multi-layered work. The revised edition integrates diverse forms of intertextuality—musical, literary, historical, and philosophical—bringing the novel's central themes of identity, resistance, and redemption to the forefront. By weaving personal and collective experiences within broader cultural and political contexts, the revision expands the novel's narrative scope and thematic depth. Stylistically, the intertextual elements enrich the emotional and intellectual dimensions of the story. Notably, the integration of music and literature intensifies the emotional impact of the narrative, creating a dynamic interplay between moments of introspection and action. These intertextual dialogues also illuminate the protagonist's internal conflicts, enhancing the narrative's reflective and politically resonant qualities. Ultimately, the 2020 edition of Godaannisa redefines the boundaries of Oromoo storytelling, offering a compelling case for the transformative potential of literary revision and intertextual engagement. This study underscores the significance of literary revision as a critical practice in Oromoo literature, providing insights into how narrative reimagining can enrich both thematic exploration and artistic resonance.*

**Keywords:** Intertextuality, literary revision, Oromoo literature, narrative transformation, *Godaannisa*

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<sup>1</sup> Department of English Language and Literature, Jimma University. E-mail: [ashenafi.belay@ju.edu.et](mailto:ashenafi.belay@ju.edu.et)/ [hireebirraa@gmail.com](mailto:hireebirraa@gmail.com)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of literary revision has long intrigued scholars for its capacity to alter not only the technical aspects of a text but also its thematic and structural dimensions. More than just linguistic refinement or the correction of errors, revision—especially post-publication—represents an integral part of the creative process, capable of profoundly reshaping a narrative's core (Sullivan, 2016). Prominent writers, including William Wordsworth, T.S. Eliot, and Sylvia Plath, have revised their works in ways that reflect evolving cultural, political, or personal insights. Wordsworth's repeated revisions of *The Prelude*, for example, mirror his engagement with major historical events like the French Revolution, layering the text with new meanings that recontextualize it within its contemporary milieu (Ulin, 2007). Similarly, Eliot's revisions to *The Waste Land* deepen its thematic complexity, adapting it to shifting cultural landscapes (Sullivan, 2016).

One of the most compelling aspects of literary revision is its frequent engagement with intertextuality, a concept introduced by Julia Kristeva. Intertextuality posits that no text exists in isolation but is part of a larger web of references, influences, and dialogues with other texts (Kristeva, 1980). Scholars such as Plett (1999) and Ott & Walter (2000) have explored this phenomenon, defining intertextuality as the presence of one text within another through references, borrowings, and rewritings that generate new meanings. Genette (1997) further refined this notion, focusing on the explicit co-presence of two or more texts, while Holquist (2002) emphasized the dialogic interaction of texts across time and space. Bakhtin (1981), in his theory of dialogism, argued that all utterances are inherently dialogic, engaging in a dynamic conversation with prior expressions. Building on this, Kristeva (1993) described texts as "crossroads" where cultural, historical, and literary dialogues converge, illustrating how each text transforms and is transformed by others.

While intertextuality has been extensively studied in Western literary traditions, its application in African literature is equally significant. African writers often engage with oral traditions, colonial legacies, and global literary forms to construct narratives that are both locally rooted and globally resonant. Ogede (2011) highlights how African authors participate in intra-continental dialogues by revising and referencing one another's works, thus expressing cultural identity and resistance. This intertextual practice enables authors to

integrate indigenous knowledge, oral traditions, and historical narratives into their texts (Akpome, 2017; Nwagbara, 2011), while simultaneously critiquing colonialism and postcolonial disillusionment (Kehinde, 2003).

In Ethiopia, Oromoo literature has only recently begun to receive formal recognition, reflecting the broader historical marginalization of Oromoo culture (Asafa, 2009; Tafa, 2015). Over the past three decades, the field has grown (Ashenafi et.al, 2022), yet scholarly engagement with concepts like literary revision and intertextuality remains limited. Against this backdrop, Dhaabaa Wayyeessaa, a pioneering Oromoo writer, has made significant contributions to the development of Oromoo literature. His works—including *Gurraacha Abbayyaa* and widely acclaimed plays such as *Dukkanaan Duuba*, *Jennaan*, and *Imimmaan*—capture the Oromoo identity and experience amidst Ethiopia's shifting political and social landscape.

This study focuses on Dhaabaa's novel *Godaannisa*, originally published in 1992 and significantly revised in 2020. The revised edition, more than three times the length of the original, introduces new characters, issues, stylistic techniques, and intertextual references. As such, *Godaannisa* provides an ideal case for exploring how literary revision can expand a narrative's scope and complexity. The study situates Dhaabaa's revision within the broader scholarly discourse on literary revision and intertextuality, particularly in the context of African literature.

The original *Godaannisa* was published during a pivotal moment in Oromoo literary history, following Ethiopia's political transition with the fall of the *Dergue* regime in 1991. This period ushered in an era of renewed cultural expression, aided by policy reforms that granted greater freedom for the use of Afaan Oromoo and the representation of Oromoo culture (Tafa, 2015). The expanded 2020 edition of *Godaannisa* invites critical questions: What motivates an author to revisit and radically transform an earlier work? How do such revisions impact the narrative structure and reception of the original? Can these revisions fundamentally alter the identity of the text? To address these questions, this study draws on existing theories of literary revision and intertextuality. Mendelson (1996), in his study of W.H. Auden, argued that revision serves as both an artistic and ethical act, allowing authors to reassess and refine their initial creative impulses. Similarly, Sullivan (2016) noted that revision represents a dynamic engagement between the author and their text, facilitating a continuous reshaping of meaning. In the context of Dhaabaa's

*Godaannisa*, the act of revision gains added significance through its intertextual elements, which contribute to the narrative's complexity and thematic depth.

Within the Ethiopian literary landscape, intertextuality remains an underexplored area of scholarship. Recent studies by Ayenew (2024) and Yalew, Tesfaye, and Ayenew (2023) provide initial insights into how Ethiopian literature and cinema incorporate intertextual references. These works highlight the integration of historical, biblical, and mythological allusions to create dialogues between past and present texts. Similarly, in Oromoo literature, authors like Dhaabaa engage in intertextual dialogue with local and global traditions, contributing to a distinctly Oromoo literary voice. The revised edition of *Godaannisa* is an important contribution to this emerging field. By weaving together intertextual references and introducing new narrative dimensions, Dhaabaa transforms the novel into a multilayered work that resonates with both local and global audiences. This study bridges the gap in existing scholarship by examining how intertextuality operates within the revised *Godaannisa*, enhancing its narrative structure and thematic richness.

Through this analysis, the study addresses key questions: What types of intertextual references does Dhaabaa employ in *Godaannisa*? What technical, stylistic, and narrative functions do these references serve? How do different levels of intertextuality contribute to the overall meaning of the text? By situating the revised *Godaannisa* within the frameworks of literary revision and intertextuality, this study illuminates the fluid nature of texts and the ways in which authors use revision to deepen their narratives' stylistic and thematic complexities.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design centered on text analysis to investigate the intertextual elements in the revised 2020 edition of Dhaabaa Wayyeessaa's novel *Godaannisa*. Drawing on a poststructuralist theoretical framework, particularly the concepts of intertextuality and dialogism, the methodology examines how these elements function as narrative strategies to expand thematic scope, enhance character development, and deepen the novel's overall narrative complexity.

The choice of a poststructuralist framework is grounded in its capacity to conceptualize texts as dynamic entities whose meanings are shaped through interactions with other texts and readers. Kristeva's (1980) notion of intertextuality, which frames texts as "mosaics of quotations," provides a critical lens for exploring how *Godaannisa* integrates and transforms references from diverse sources. Similarly, Bakhtin's (1981) concept of dialogism supports this analysis by situating the text within an ongoing dialogue with cultural, historical, and literary traditions. This dual theoretical perspective is particularly relevant for uncovering how Dhaabaa's revisions reflect changing cultural and political contexts while expressing the author's evolving artistic vision.

The primary data for this study consist of the 1992 and 2020 editions of *Godaannisa*. These editions were purposively selected due to the extensive revisions in the 2020 edition, which is over three times the length of the original. The expanded edition introduces new characters, thematic elements, and intertextual references, offering fertile ground for examining the interplay between literary revision and intertextuality. Specific passages were chosen through purposive sampling, focusing on sections that demonstrate substantial narrative and structural changes or explicit intertextual references. This targeted approach ensures that the analysis highlights the most representative examples of how revision and intertextuality operate within the novel.

The data collection process involved close readings and detailed textual comparisons of the two editions of *Godaannisa*. Key areas of focus included passages that were expanded, omitted, or restructured, as well as sections containing intertextual elements, such as direct quotations, allusions, and implicit references to other texts (Allen, 2000). Secondary sources were consulted to contextualize these references, including historical records, literary texts, and cultural artifacts mentioned or echoed in the novel. Since *Godaannisa* was originally written in Afaan Oromoo, selected passages were translated into English for analysis. The translation process was conducted with meticulous care to preserve the cultural nuances and semantic integrity of the original text.

The data analysis was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, instances of intertextuality were systematically identified and categorized based on their sources and narrative functions. This categorization facilitated a thematic understanding of how intertextual elements contributed to the novel's broader

narrative and thematic dimensions. In the second phase, a comparative analysis was conducted to assess how these intertextual elements evolved between the 1992 and 2020 editions. Particular attention was given to sections where intertextual references were newly introduced or significantly recontextualized in the revised edition. This analysis aimed to explore how these revisions deepened thematic resonance, enriched character arcs, and enhanced the novel's structural coherence.

The findings of this study are organized around emergent themes, including the role of literary revision in enriching narrative complexity, the integration of intertextual references to engage with socio-political and cultural realities, and the transformation of thematic and narrative elements between the original and revised editions. This methodological approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how *Godaannisa* employs intertextuality and literary revision to evolve into a multilayered narrative that resonates with both local and global audiences.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Literary Revision in *Godaannisa*

The 2020 edition of *Godaannisa* represents a profound transformation of Dhaabaa Wayyeessaa's original 1992 novel, expanding its length from 158 to 539 pages. This revision involves significant enhancements to the narrative structure, thematic focus, and character development. In this section, I analyze how intertextuality and literary revision function as narrative strategies to enrich the novel's complexity and thematic depth.

In the preface to the revised edition, Dhaabaa explicitly states his intent to expand the novel's subplots and refine its narrative without altering the core storyline. He writes, "*utuu toor-seenessa (storyline) isaa hin geddariin, damee itti baasuudhaan yookaan damee xiqqoo ture guddisuu fi miidhagsuudhaan akka haaraatti barreesse*" which translates to: "*without changing the storyline, I rewrote the novel by extending its smaller branches and expanding on those subplots to make them substantial and aesthetically attractive*" (Dhaabaa, 2020). This signals a deliberate effort to maintain the novel's essential structure while broadening its narrative and thematic depth. This expansion, however, raises critical questions about how such revisions reshape the narrative and influence the reader's experience.

One major revision is the expanded characterization of Abdiisaa. In the 1992 edition, key events—such as Abdiisaa’s experiences at university and his time at home—are briefly summarized, offering limited psychological depth or emotional resonance. For instance, Abdiisaa’s two-month visit to his hometown is condensed into a single paragraph (Dhaabaa, 1992, p. 30), providing only a superficial glimpse into his disillusionment with university life. The original narrative glosses over this key event with the line, "*Dhuma Waxabajjiitti yeroon Biilaatti deebi’u hagana hin milkoofne*" (p. 30), meaning "*When I returned to Biilaa at the end of June, I was not very successful.*" This brevity offers little insight into Abdiisaa’s emotional state or his personal reflections on his homecoming. In the revised edition, however, this episode becomes a detailed 48-pages narrative (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 72–120), delving into Abdiisaa’s interactions with his family, his struggles with socio-political realities, and the cultural tension between modernity and tradition. This expansion not only enriches Abdiisaa’s character but also situates his internal conflict within the broader socio-political landscape. As a result, Abdiisaa’s return to Biilaa becomes a more complex exploration of his identity and the cultural and political forces shaping his life, rather than just a transitional moment in the plot.

Similarly, the character of Solan, Abdiisaa’s father, undergoes a significant transformation in the revised edition. In the 1992 version, Solan’s death is presented as a passive event: "*na dhiisee du’e*" (Dhaabaa, 1992, p. 15), meaning "*he passed away, leaving me behind*". This lack of detail minimizes the emotional weight of Solan’s death and its impact on Abdiisaa’s psychological state. The 2020 edition, however, reframes this moment as an act of defiance against systemic oppression, portraying Solan’s suicide as a symbolic protest against the dispossession of Oromo land. The revised version describes Solan’s death with the expression "*murtoo mataa isaatiin du’e*" (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 18), meaning "*he took his life on his own resolve.*" This reframing connects Solan’s personal tragedy to the larger historical and political struggles of the Oromo people, adding greater emotional and thematic weight to the narrative. The revised edition’s exploration of Solan’s death emphasizes the socio-political impact of land dispossession and its ripple effects on Abdiisaa’s personal journey.

The expanded narrative around Solan’s death also deepens the novel’s exploration of land dispossession and political resistance. Solan’s struggle to reclaim his ancestral land, unjustly seized by corrupt officials like Birasaw



Molla, becomes a central theme in the revised edition. The line "*Lafti isaa nafxanyaa ciqaa-shuumii, Birasaw Mollaaf raggaasifame*" (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 18), meaning "*His land was unjustly registered to Birasaw Molla, a nafxanya official,*" emphasizes the socio-political forces that drive Solan to suicide. This expansion provides greater historical and political depth to the narrative, situating Abdiisaa's personal experiences within the larger struggle of the Oromoo people against feudal oppression. Solan's ultimate death symbolizes the broader Oromoo resistance, adding a layer of historical significance to the novel.

The lingering treatment of Solan's death also deepens Abdiisaa's sense of grief and loss. Rather than being a distant, unexplained event, Solan's death now reverberates throughout the novel, shaping Abdiisaa's worldview and fueling his disillusionment with the political system. In a poignant passage, Abdiisaa reflects on his father's death: "*Abbaan koo mana haaraa ofii ijaare keessatti of rarraasee argame*" (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 19), meaning "*My father was found hanging in the house he built himself*". This emotional account of Solan's suicide adds a personal and political dimension to the narrative, making Abdiisaa's struggle with the feudal system more deeply felt and understood.

Another noteworthy literary revision in the 2020 edition of *Godaannisa* is the symbolic use of water. Dhaabaa uses the metaphor of water to explore the complexities of Abdiisaa's creative process, symbolizing both the flow of inspiration and the inevitable challenges of capturing that inspiration in written form. Water serves as a recurring motif throughout the novel, symbolizing the fluidity of thoughts and emotions, as well as the turbulence that accompanies the act of writing (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 9, pp. 14-17, p. 249). Abdiisaa's frequent encounters with water, particularly while standing under the shower, mirror the unpredictable nature of creativity, where moments of clarity and inspiration emerge unexpectedly, only to slip away when he tries to pin them down on paper. Abdiisaa remarks:

*Halkan gaaf tokko mana dhiqataatti utuun shaaworii jala dhaabbadhuu walaloon akkuma bishaanichaa gad natti roobe – bishaaniin makamee na xoollesse. Utuu bishaan na irraa coccobuu, dafee ba'een waraqaa irratti qabadhe. Yeroon waraqaa irratti ilaalu immoo, akka yeroo yaadaa-qalbii kootti gadi roobe sanaa naaf ta'uu dide. Akka yeroo sanaa, akka danbalii galaanaa qilleensi oofuu qalbii koo ol kaasee gadi buusuu dadhabe. Waraqaa irratti gogee, fuula gurraachessee na ilaale*" (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 9).



*One night, as I stood under the shower, poetry streamed into my mind like water, drenching me completely. Still soaked, I rushed out and captured the words on a piece of paper. But when I looked at the poem, the power I had felt in the shower was gone. It no longer moved me, like the waves of the sea moving the waters. On the page, it lay lifeless, leaving me dry and staring back at me with a blank, dark face.*

This excerpt highlights the tension between the initial rush of inspiration and the subsequent failure to capture its essence in writing. Abdiisaa describes how "poetry streamed into my mind like water, drenching me completely"—a vivid image that suggests the overwhelming power of creative ideas, flooding his consciousness with a sense of urgency and emotional intensity. The act of rushing out to write down his thoughts reflects the impulsive, almost instinctive response to inspiration, as Abdiisaa attempts to grasp and preserve the fleeting moment of creative brilliance. However, as soon as he transfers the words onto paper, he realizes that the energy and vitality of the original idea have dissipated.

The metaphor of water drying up when Abdiisaa tries to capture his thoughts on paper speaks to the inherent difficulty of translating abstract, ephemeral ideas into concrete written form. The creative process, as illustrated through this metaphor, is not a straightforward or linear journey. Instead, it is characterized by moments of inspiration that seem vivid and powerful in the mind but often lose their force when committed to the page. Abdiisaa compares this experience to the waves of the sea: while the waves in his mind move with great energy, like the sea stirred by the wind, the written words on the page lie still, lifeless, and devoid of the original impact. The image of the poem "staring back with a dark face" conveys the deep frustration of confronting one's own creative limitations, as Abdiisaa feels alienated from his own work, unable to reconnect with the original inspiration that had once moved him so profoundly.

Furthermore, the use of water as a symbol for Abdiisaa's creative process also points to the unpredictability of inspiration itself. The shower scene suggests that creativity often emerges in spontaneous, uncontrolled environments, far removed from the disciplined context of writing at a desk. Abdiisaa's epiphanies occur not in moments of deliberate reflection but in unexpected, unguarded moments—mirroring the way water flows naturally and uncontrollably. However, this very unpredictability also underscores the precarious nature of creativity, as Abdiisaa's struggle to retain the inspiration

once he steps out of the shower highlights the transitory, intangible quality of artistic ideas. In sum, Dhaabaa's use of water as a recurring symbol in *Godaannisa* emphasizes the fluid, fleeting nature of inspiration and the challenges of translating thought into writing.

The introduction of new characters and the further development of existing ones are pivotal elements of the literary revision in the 2020 edition of *Godaannisa*. A notable addition is the character Cuuttaä, a dynamic figure absent from the original version. Cuuttaä's inclusion not only broadens the cast but also serves as a narrative link, connecting Abdiisaa to the cultural traditions of his rural hometown. As a shoe-shiner and a friend of Abdiisaa's brother, Tariku, Cuuttaä plays a key role in guiding Abdiisaa through traditional courtship rituals during wedding festivities (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 100–114). His presence adds a new layer to Abdiisaa's character, underscoring the cultural tensions Abdiisaa experiences as he navigates the dual worlds of his university education and his deeply ingrained heritage.

Cuuttaä's character serves not only as a cultural guide but also as a subtle embodiment of political resistance. Through his humorous yet sharp commentary on societal and political issues, he adds depth to the novel's exploration of oppression and defiance. Cuuttaä's quiet resistance to the oppressive system, expressed through his critical reflections on the socio-political landscape, enriches the narrative's portrayal of resilience and defiance (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 436–439, p. 483). His form of resistance is subtly woven into everyday interactions and observations, highlighting the power of persistence in daily life. Through Cuuttaä, Dhaabaa amplifies the novel's socio-political themes while adding complexity to Abdiisaa's internal conflicts. Cuuttaä not only bridges Abdiisaa's dual worlds but also broadens the novel's depiction of resistance, illustrating that defiance can take various forms, from overt rebellion to quiet acts of everyday resilience. This addition in the revised edition underscores how literary revision can enhance both the narrative's depth and its thematic richness.

The 2020 edition of *Godaannisa* introduces new characters like Shaafii, Kaayitaamoo, Messelee, Bediluu, and Misganaw, enriching the narrative by reflecting the diversity within the university setting (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 158–159). However, the introduction of Mogese and Tamirat (pp. 47–58) underscores the marginalization and discrimination faced by Oromoo students such as Abdiisaa and Henok. These characters add depth to the narrative,

portraying the university as a microcosm of Ethiopia's broader socio-political discourse. Henok's character takes on a more prominent role in the revised edition, symbolizing armed resistance against systemic oppression. His decision to leave the university and join the insurgency marks a pivotal shift in the novel, emphasizing the broader theme of political resistance.

Henok's moment of departure in the novel marks a transition from personal disillusionment to a broader political resistance. Before leaving, Henok imparts crucial advice to Abdiisaa, urging him not to misdirect his anger toward individuals but to recognize the true source of oppression—the system itself. He states:

*Namatti hin aariin, nama hin jibbiin. Kan nama wal-caalchise, wal-jibbisiise sirna isaati. Sirni nama wal-nyaachisu kun, sirni ofittummaa, sirni oftuummaa, sirni inaaffaa, sirni hammeenyaa, sirni dhugaa awwaalee soba dhugaa fakkeessee saba keenya afaanfaajesse, sirni jaalala ajjeesee jibba shaakalchiise, sirni nama nagaa, eenyummaa isaa awwaalee, mirga isaa ugguree lafa irraa fixaa jiru kun hundee isaa irraa buqqa 'uu qaba"* (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 136).

*Do not hold grudges against people. Do not hate them. It is the system that turns people against one another—a system built on selfishness, greed, envy, cruelty, and deceit. It is a system that buries the truth, disguises lies as truth, and throws our people into confusion. It kills love and breeds hatred, erases the identity of peaceful individuals, denies them their rights, and destroys lives. This system must be uprooted entirely, torn out from its very core.*

This reflection on systemic oppression highlights the novel's shift in focus. As the narrative moves from Abdiisaa's personal struggles to the larger political and social conflicts faced by the Oromoo people, Henok's decision to join the armed resistance against systemic injustice becomes emblematic of a broader fight for justice. His departure not only represents individual resistance but symbolizes the larger socio-political struggle against oppression, a central theme in the 2020 edition. Henok's choice underscores the growing urgency for systemic change, positioning the novel within a larger narrative of political defiance.

In conclusion, the 2020 edition of *Godaannisa* represents a significant revision of Dhaabaa's original novel, elevating it to new heights of literary and thematic complexity.

### 3.2. Intertextuality in *Godaannisaa*

Intertextuality is a prominent narrative strategy in the revised edition which the novel used to deepen the emotional, psychological, and thematic dimensions of the text. Through music, literature, cultural and historical references, Dhaabaa weaves a multi-layered narrative that situates the protagonist Abdiisaa's inner turmoil within broader socio-political and existential frameworks. This section examines how intertextuality enhances the narrative, broadens its thematic reach, and invites readers to engage in a complex, multi-layered reading experience.

#### 3.2.1. Forms of Intertextuality in *Godaannisa*

##### 3.2.1.1. Intertextual References to Music

Music plays a pivotal role in *Godaannisa*, serving as a lens through which Abdiisaa's internal conflicts and socio-political realities are reflected. The revised edition incorporates lyrics from over ten artists, including Stevie Wonder (p. 247), Michael Jackson (p. 248), Ali Birra (p. 291), Mohammed Ahmed (p. 168), Alemayehu Eshete (p. 293), Bob Marley (p. 293), Tilahun Gessese (p. 306), Neway Debebe (p. 311), Aster Aweke (p. 337), Efrem Tamiru (p. 345), and Madonna (pp. 508, 512). These intertextual references carry significant narrative weight, often mirroring Abdiisaa's emotional turmoil while providing moments of temporary escape from harsh realities. Yet, these same references inevitably pull him back into self-reflection through their embedded messages.

A notable example is Stevie Wonder's *Higher Ground*, which plays during one of Abdiisaa's bar visits following a failed relationship. Dhaabaa quotes the following lines:

*People keep on learnin',  
Soldiers keep on warrin',  
world keep on turnin',  
Cause it won't be too long, Powers keep on lyin',  
While your people keep on dyin',  
World keep on turnin'  
Cause it won't be too long...* (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 247).

These lyrics resonate with the ongoing political struggles and societal unrest surrounding Abdiisaa. Although Abdiisaa initially seeks solace in the bar's lively atmosphere, the song compels him to confront the broader socio-political issues and personal conflicts he tries to evade. Reflecting on this moment, he admits:

*Ani warra weeddisanis warra lafa dhiitanis, warra wacanishin ilaalle. Hiika walaloo wallee Istiiv Wonderis hin yaadne. Waan hunda dhiiseen dibbisa muuziqichaa keessa cala'e... yeroo inni xumura irra ga'ee dhaabbatu nan iyye* (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 248).

This internal conflict, where Abdiisaa simultaneously attempts to ignore the song's deeper meaning while being drawn into reflection, illustrates the evocative power of music in the novel. *Higher Ground* underscores Abdiisaa's oscillation between avoidance and self-reflection, as the song's message of resilience and inevitability challenges him to confront his world's socio-political injustices. Dhaabaa's decision to include *Higher Ground* in the novel highlights the way music serves as both a mirror and a disruptor for Abdiisaa.

Following this encounter, Michael Jackson's *Billie Jean* plays, offering a stark contrast. A song about deception and personal entanglement, *Billie Jean* becomes a symbol of Abdiisaa's growing detachment and desire for escapism. Abdiisaa observes:

*Warri walaloo isaa beekus warri hinbeeknes wal-qixxee jeekkan. Akkuma koo lafa deelleqan. Lafti nuti gad-dhiitnuyyuu waan muuziqichaaf dibbee taatee akkuma keenya maraatte fakkaata. Maraachaa sana keessan culluxii bade. Achii booda wanna ta'e hin yaadadhu* (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 248).

Here, Abdiisaa immerses himself in the song's rhythm and upbeat tempo, momentarily escaping from his personal and political struggles. While *Higher Ground* forces introspection, *Billie Jean* enables Abdiisaa to retreat into the music, avoiding painful memories and unresolved conflicts from his personal relationships and the broader socio-political context. This juxtaposition of two songs—one with a political message and the other focusing on personal betrayal—highlights the dual role of music in the narrative, acting as both a catalyst for self-awareness and a vehicle for escapism.

Dhaabaa's incorporation of songs from Ethiopian artists further deepens the emotional resonance of Abdiisaa's journey, grounding his experiences within a

specific cultural context. For instance, Ali Birra's song following Abdiisaa's breakup with Taliilee amplifies his feelings of abandonment. The lyrics, "*Qophaa koo na dhiistee, na dhiistee, ati deemuuf kaanaan / Dubbachuun dadhabee ati naan dubbannaan*" ("When you went away leaving me alone, / I was not able to utter a word") (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 291), poignantly mirror Abdiisaa's sense of loss and rejection. Through this intertextual reference, Dhaabaa not only explores Abdiisaa's emotional state but also connects his experiences to the collective emotional landscape of the Oromoo people, for whom themes of separation and dispossession resonate deeply. Similarly, Alemayehu Eshete's *Anchi Melelo* (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 293) evokes longing and despair, pulling Abdiisaa deeper into reflections on his failed relationships and unresolved emotions. The repetition of these musical interludes serves to trap Abdiisaa in a cycle of reflection and regret, where music becomes a reminder of the emotional and psychological struggles he cannot escape.

Dhaabaa also uses Bob Marley's *Three Little Birds* to offer a momentary glimmer of hope amidst Abdiisaa's emotional turmoil. The lyrics, "*Baby don't worry about nothing / Everything's gonna be alright*" (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 293), provide fleeting reassurance. Yet, this optimism is tragically undercut by the narrative, as Abdiisaa is fatally beaten in the bar during the song's play. This stark juxtaposition between Marley's hopeful message and the violence of Abdiisaa's reality underscores the inescapable tension between his aspirations for peace and the harshness of his world. The use of Marley's optimistic song contrasts with the darker, more introspective musical references earlier in the novel, highlighting the tension between Abdiisaa's desire for peace and the inescapable reality of his struggles.

In general, music emerges as a powerful narrative device in *Godaannisa*. Dhaabaa's adept interweaving of intertextual references not only reflects Abdiisaa's emotional trajectory but also situates his personal struggles within broader socio-political and cultural landscapes. These musical intertexts, while offering moments of solace, ultimately highlight Abdiisaa's ongoing battle with the realities he cannot escape, serving as both a mirror to his inner world and a disruptor of his attempts to evade it.

### 3.2.1.2. Intertextual References to Literature

In addition to music, *Godaannisa* incorporates significant literary intertextuality, which Dhaabaa employs to delve into the existential and

political dimensions of Abdiisaa's journey. Through references to literary works from both Ethiopian and global traditions, Dhaabaa constructs a rich, multi-layered narrative that engages with local and universal literary discourses. These intertextual references expand the philosophical scope of the novel and contextualize Abdiisaa's struggles within a broader intellectual and cultural framework.

### ***Intertextual References to Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial****

Franz Kafka's influence on *Godaannisa* is one of the most striking aspects of Dhaabaa's intertextual approach, as it is used to explore themes of alienation, existential crises, and the nature of identity. By referencing Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial*, Dhaabaa deepens the philosophical and psychological dimensions of Abdiisaa's character. Kafka's examination of alienation, the absurdity of life, and existential crises aligns with Abdiisaa's internal struggles, allowing Dhaabaa to connect Abdiisaa's personal journey to broader, universal themes of identity, failure, isolation and existential uncertainty.

*The Metamorphosis* plays a central role in Abdiisaa's reflections on his feelings of isolation, inadequacy, and fear of failure. Kafka's novella depicts Gregor Samsa awakening to find himself transformed into an insect, a grotesque manifestation of his estrangement from family and society (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 11). This transformation symbolizes Gregor's alienation and his perceived burden to those around him—a theme that resonates with Abdiisaa's experiences. In *Godaannisa*, Abdiisaa grapples with a similar fear of alienation and estrangement, particularly in his personal relationships, as he reflects on his perceived failures. *The Metamorphosis* thus provides a framework for Abdiisaa to articulate his anxieties and confront his estrangement and sense of inadequacy.

Kafka's *The Trial* is another significant intertextual reference in *Godaannisa*, used to examine Abdiisaa's existential dilemmas and struggles with judgment and guilt. In *The Trial*, Josef K. is arrested and prosecuted without being informed of his alleged crime, symbolizing the absurdity and arbitrariness of bureaucratic systems (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 11). Abdiisaa identifies with Josef K.'s experience of being judged by forces he cannot understand or control. This mirrors Abdiisaa's internal conflict, as he feels trapped in a cycle of guilt



and self-doubt, exacerbated by external societal pressures and his own harsh self-criticism.

Kafka's exploration of absurdity and powerlessness resonates deeply with Abdiisaa, particularly as he navigates the socio-political landscape, which is depicted as marked by injustice and systemic oppression. Like Kafka's protagonists, Abdiisaa feels trapped by oppressive forces beyond his control. The parallels between Kafkaesque absurdity (Strelka, 1984) and Abdiisaa's life experiences are particularly evident in his reflections on the socio-political climate. The opaque and unjust bureaucratic systems in *The Trial* echo Abdiisaa's experiences with Ethiopia's political regime, where oppression and dispossession are normalized. For example, Abdiisaa's contemplation of his father's suicide after the "land to the tiller" decree— "*I wished he had not died by then. But now...*" (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 19)—underscores his despair and frustration with the absurdity of the system. Kafka's portrayal of existential uncertainty provides Abdiisaa with a philosophical lens to process the irrationality and uncontrollability of his circumstances.

Kafka's reflections on the nature of writing also serve as a motif for Abdiisaa's creative aspirations and frustrations. Dhaabaa quotes Kafka's famous statement: "*Writing is utter solitude, the descent into the cold abyss of oneself*" (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 10). This quote resonates deeply with Abdiisaa, who, as an aspiring writer, grapples with the loneliness and introspection inherent in the creative process. Kafka's description of writing as an isolating yet transformative endeavor encapsulates Abdiisaa's struggle to balance his desire for self-expression with his fear of inadequacy. The tension between Abdiisaa's creative ambition and self-doubt becomes a recurring theme, reflecting the broader existential questions posed by Kafka's works.

In addition to Kafka, Dhaabaa incorporates references to George Orwell, Leo Tolstoy, and Rainer Maria Rilke to further explore Abdiisaa's intellectual struggles and creative journey. Orwell's reflection on writing— "*Writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a long bout with some painful illness*" (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 9)—directly addresses Abdiisaa's frustrations as a writer. Similarly, Tolstoy's assertion that "*One ought only to write when one leaves a piece of one's own flesh in the inkpot, each time one dips one's pen*" (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 9) emphasizes the deeply personal and sacrificial nature of the creative process, heightening Abdiisaa's internal conflict as he strives for authenticity in his writing. Rainer Maria Rilke's exhortation to "*go into*

*yourself*” and explore the compulsion to write (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 9) resonates with Abdiisaa’s intellectual journey, adding a philosophical layer to his reflections on identity and creativity. Rilke’s insight compels Abdiisaa to confront his motivations and the existential weight of self-expression, underscoring the broader tension in *Godaannisa* between introspection and external pressures.

Dhaabaa’s use of literary intertextuality enriches the philosophical and psychological depth of *Godaannisa*, situating Abdiisaa’s personal struggles within a global literary tradition. By weaving references to Kafka, Orwell, Tolstoy, and Rilke into the narrative, Dhaabaa not only contextualizes Abdiisaa’s existential dilemmas but also emphasizes the universality of themes such as alienation, self-expression, and the search for meaning. These intertextual elements serve as a bridge between Abdiisaa’s individual journey and the broader human condition, reinforcing the novel’s multi-dimensional narrative and its engagement with both local and global intellectual discourses.

### ***Intertextual References to Bealu Girma’s Oromay and Hadis***

One of the most significant intertextual strategies employed by Dhaabaa in *Godaannisa* is the incorporation of Bealu Girma’s seminal works, particularly *Oromay* and *Hadis*. These references serve multiple narrative functions: they enrich Abdiisaa’s personal reflections, draw parallels between the characters’ struggles and Ethiopia’s socio-political landscape, and deepen the novel’s existential and philosophical dimensions.

*Oromay* emerges as a central intertextual reference in *Godaannisa*, particularly as Abdiisaa grapples with the existential and political dilemmas that define his life. As a university student, Abdiisaa finds solace in reading *Oromay*, a novel that resonates profoundly with his personal frustrations and the oppressive political systems surrounding him. Bealu Girma’s *Oromay* explores themes of love, loss, and the devastating consequences of war, while also delivering a fierce critique of the *Dergue*’s oppressive rule. Dhaabaa uses this novel to mirror Abdiisaa’s experiences of marginalization. The narrator emphasizes this connection by stating, “*Oromay is Bealu Girma’s novel which people read in secret*” (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 371). By embedding *Oromay* into Abdiisaa’s personal journey, Dhaabaa situates his protagonist within a broader literary and political tradition of resistance, where literature functions as a tool for self-reflection and socio-political critique.

A pivotal moment occurs when Abdiisaa reads a passage from *Oromay* that reflects on the endurance of life amidst individual struggles:

*Ni yaadattaa? Yoo hin yaadannes dhimma hin qabu. Jalqabatti jecha tu ture. Tseggaayeen rafee jira. Seenaan isaa garuu, itti fufa. Jireenyi iddoo tokko irra hin dhaabbattu... itti fufti. Jireenya isa tokkoo kan isa kaanii wajjiin fo'aa sarariitii gochaa...* (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 371–372).

*Do you remember? Even if you don't, it doesn't matter. In the beginning, the word was there. The word was a writer. Tsegaye has fallen asleep. But his story continues. Life doesn't stay still in one place—it moves on. Weaving one's life like the spider's web with another....*

This passage highlights the inevitable progression of life and the interconnectedness of personal and collective experiences, symbolized by the imagery of a spider's web. This metaphor captures the complex relationships between individual struggles, societal conditions, and historical forces. The excerpt illuminates several key themes within both *Oromay* and *Godaannisa*. First, it reinforces the idea that personal narratives are not isolated but are deeply intertwined with larger socio-political contexts. In the case of Abdiisaa, his personal journey, fraught with disillusionment and frustration, mirrors the broader struggles of the Oromoo people under systemic oppression. The spider's web imagery further suggests that personal narratives are inextricably intertwined with larger socio-political contexts. This interconnection suggests that one's personal story is never just one's own; it is always part of a larger, collective narrative that transcends the individual.

Moreover, the passage speaks to the endurance of life in the face of loss or defeat. Tsegaye's "falling asleep" symbolizes death or withdrawal from active resistance, yet the continuation of his story illustrates how individual struggles are part of a broader thread of collective survival and resilience. For Abdiisaa, this realization is transformative: his personal challenges, though overwhelming, are framed as integral to the ongoing resistance and survival of his community. The endurance of life in the face of adversity is a recurring theme in both *Oromay* and *Godaannisa*, reflecting the resilience of marginalized groups in the face of political oppression.

Another profound intertextual reference in *Godaannisa* is Bealu Girma's *Hadis*, which plays a critical role in Abdiisaa's political awakening. *Hadis*

critiques the Ethiopian government's hypocrisy and ethnic divisions, themes that align with Abdiisaa's growing awareness of systemic oppression and marginalization. In one passage, Abdiisaa is particularly struck by the novel's condemnation of power monopolization by a single clan group. The text reads:

"...yoomi laata miirri gosummaa kan si gad dhiisu?"  
"Gaafa Mootummaan Mooticha Moototaa monopolii gosa tokkoo ta'uu isaa hafu"  
"Arraba kee kana diinni kee!"  
"Eenyutu dhimma qaba? Bosona koo gurguradhee jiraachuu hin dadhabu. Deemnee dhugna koottu" jedhee, Hadisiin qabatee gara dhugaatiin jirutti deeman..." (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 101).

*'When is it that you do away with your clan favoritism?'*

*'The day the government of the King of Kings ceases to be a monopoly of one ethnic group'*

*'This tongue of yours is your enemy!'*

*'Who cares? I can survive by selling firewood. Let's go and have a drink,' he said and went to the bar with Hadis...*

This exchange between Taffese and a man at a party critiques the regime's hypocrisy in denouncing clan divisions while concentrating power within a single group. Taffese criticizes the regime for publicly denouncing clan divisions while simultaneously concentrating power within a single clan. His remark, *"The day the government of the King of Kings ceases to be a monopoly of one ethnic group,"* exposes the systemic inequalities, while the man's warning, *"This tongue of yours is your enemy,"* underscores the dangers faced by those who dare to challenge authority. This dialogue encapsulates Abdiisaa's growing political consciousness, as he reflects on the entrenched social stratification and hypocrisy shaping his world.

Abdiisaa's contemplation of Bealu Girma's life and mysterious disappearance adds another layer of political critique. Bealu's fate, widely believed to be government-orchestrated, symbolizes the risks of dissent in oppressive regimes. For Abdiisaa, Bealu's disappearance intensifies his understanding of the fragility of life under such regimes. Rumored to have been assassinated for his outspoken criticism, Bealu represents the dangers of challenging authority.

Reflecting on this, Abdiisaa likens life to “a bus, picking up and dropping off people along its journey”:

“Tarii jireenyi ofuma ishee akka awutoobisii geejjiba nama garii harcaasaa kaan yaabbisaa itti fufti jechuu isaa ta’innaa?” (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 373),

“Perhaps life itself is like a bus, picking up and dropping off people along its journey?”.

This metaphor encapsulates Abdiisaa’s growing awareness of life’s transitory nature and the unresolved tensions between individuals and oppressive systems. Bealu’s fate becomes a symbol of the existential uncertainties Abdiisaa faces, reinforcing the novel’s broader philosophical concerns about mortality, fate, uncertainty, and resistance.

By incorporating *Oromay* and *Hadis*, Dhaabaa weaves a complex intertextual web that enriches the thematic, philosophical, and political dimensions of *Godaannisa*. These intertexts not only illuminate Abdiisaa’s personal struggles but also connect his narrative to the collective experiences of marginalized communities under systemic oppression. Through these references, Dhaabaa situates *Godaannisa* within Ethiopia’s literary tradition of resistance, while also engaging with universal existential questions, underscoring the novel’s relevance both locally and globally.

### ***Intertextual Reference to Tsegaye Gebremedhin’s Poem***

Dhaabaa employs intertextuality by incorporating Tsegaye Gebremedhin’s poem *Esat woy Abeba*, particularly *To My Brother Unknown to Me*, in the 2020 edition of *Godaannisa*. This literary reference serves as a profound exploration of identity, belonging, and the socio-political dichotomy between the center and the periphery. Through this engagement, the protagonist Abdiisaa reflects on his societal position, the marginalization of his people, and his personal quest for self-knowledge, resonating with the broader existential and societal themes that permeate the novel.

The poem addresses an unnamed brother who, despite knowing the speaker, remains unknown to him. This paradoxical relationship, characterized by

distance and incomplete understanding, underscores the tension between individuals from disparate sectors of society—those in positions of power and those on the margins. This central theme mirrors Abdiisaa’s internal conflict as he grapples with reconciling his identity as a member of a marginalized Oromoo community with his experiences in Ethiopia’s often alienating social structures. The poem’s lines encapsulate this tension:

To you, unknown to me  
My brother, I pass by with a distant sight  
You know me well, yet I don't comprehend.  
You see me, but I cannot see,  
Who are you, my brother, unknown and near?  
Without experiencing love or trust about me, you doubt and fear me  
You listen to my speeches genuinely and with attention  
To you, honorable brother, the village farmer  
To the distant villager, son of the land  
To the unknown to me, one at the periphery  
Who are you... (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 523)

As Abdiisaa reads these verses, he embarks on an introspective journey, questioning his identity and social position. He reflects on his societal role, wondering whether he aligns with the speaker or the unknown brother—or oscillates between these two positions. This reflection prompts Abdiisaa to ask: “...who am I?... am I like the one who wrote the letter, or the one to whom it is written?... or do I become both, once like the one, the other time like the other?... where is my place?... where do I belong?” (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 524). This internal dialogue mirrors Abdiisaa’s broader existential crisis as he contemplates his marginalized position within a society that often disregards him and his people.

Tsegaye’s poem functions as a profound meditation on the experiences of the marginalized and forgotten. Abdiisaa interprets the poem as a letter to those at the periphery of society—individuals and nations who, though alive, are treated as though they do not exist. Reflecting on this, Abdiisaa observes:

*“Walaloo kana Tseggaayyeen sabootaa fi namoota utuu jiranii akka hinjirreetti gatamaniif akka xalayatti akka barreesse nan beeka. Keessattan of ilaahuu yaale,”*

*I know that Tsegaye wrote this poem as a letter to the people and nations who, although alive, were left as though they do not exist. I started looking at myself within that context (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 524).*

This realization not only deepens Abdiisaa's personal reflections but also ties his individual struggles to the collective plight of the Oromoo people and other marginalized groups in Ethiopia.

The poem further interrogates the center-periphery dichotomy, with the speaker, from a position of privilege, addressing a brother on the periphery. The speaker acknowledges the brother from a distance but fails to fully comprehend his lived experience. This dynamic mirrors the societal structures that Abdiisaa navigates, where those in power often fail to recognize or understand the realities faced by marginalized communities. The poem thus becomes a lens through which Abdiisaa reflects on the socio-political dynamics between Ethiopia's central powers and peripheral communities, who are often excluded from meaningful participation in national political processes.

Tsegaye's poem, with its focus on the unseen and the unknown, serves as a powerful intertextual moment in *Godaannisa*, prompting Abdiisaa to confront his own invisibility within a society that marginalizes him. This theme of invisibility echoes earlier existential concerns in the novel, particularly through the intertextual reference to Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 11), where the protagonist's transformation renders him invisible to his family. In *Godaannisa*, Abdiisaa's marginalization is not solely a personal affliction but also a reflection of the historical exclusion of his people within Ethiopian society.

This intertextual reference to Tsegaye's poem also ignites Abdiisaa's creative energy. After engaging with the poem, Abdiisaa begins to perceive himself and the people around him as characters in a larger story, transforming his lived experiences into material for his own writing. He reflects: *"I saw myself as a character in fiction. The people I knew in my life course also came to my mind turn by turn, one after the other... all appeared to me like characters in a story"* (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 524). This shift in perspective signifies Abdiisaa's growing awareness of the need to reclaim his narrative. By doing so, he asserts his voice and the stories of his people in the face of erasure.



Dhaabaa's intertextual references to Tsegaye Gebremedhin's poem adds a thematic depth to *Godaannisa*. The poem's reflections on identity, belonging, and marginalization not only amplify Abdiisaa's personal struggles but also connect his narrative to the broader historical and socio-political realities of his people. This intertextual engagement situates *Godaannisa* as a work that bridges the individual and the collective, the personal and the political, enriching its resonance within other literary traditions.

In conclusion, Dhaabaa's integration of intertextual references to the works of Franz Kafka, Bealu Girma, and Tsegaye Gebremedhin infuses *Godaannisa* with profound thematic, cultural, philosophical, and stylistic depth. Through Kafka's existential reflections on alienation and absurdity, Bealu Girma's incisive critique of political oppression, and Tsegaye Gebremedhin's poignant exploration of identity and marginalization, Dhaabaa elevates the novel's complexity. These intertexts not only deepen the portrayal of the characters' internal struggles but also expand the narrative's engagement with broader socio-political realities, positioning *Godaannisa* as a significant work within both Ethiopian and global literary canons.

### **3.2.1.3. Allusions to Historical, Cultural, and Religious Dimensions**

Dhaabaa intricately weaves historical, cultural, and religious intertextuality into *Godaannisa*, enhancing its exploration of identity, resistance, and redemption.

A significant politico-historical intertext is the theme of land dispossession, symbolized by the suicide of Abdiisaa's father, Solan. His death represents an act of defiance against the feudal government's land appropriation (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 18–19). Solan's tragic end reflects the broader Oromoo struggle against systemic marginalization, anchoring Abdiisaa's personal story within a wider political and historical context. Through this narrative thread, Dhaabaa critiques the systemic oppression of the Oromoo people, illustrating how political injustices shape individual and collective destinies. This theme is further supported by historical references to Bealu Girma's *Hadis*. Bealu's incisive critique of clan-based power monopolization, encapsulated in the line, "*The day the government of the King of Kings ceases to be a monopoly of one clan group*" (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 101), exposes the contradictions between the feudal government's rhetoric of unity and its practice of ethnic exclusion. By invoking *Hadis*, Dhaabaa situates *Godaannisa* within Ethiopia's historical

discourse on ethnic inequality and power imbalances, deepening the connection between Abdiisaa's personal disillusionment and the nation's fraught political history.

Historical references to the Gibe Kingdom and King Abajifar (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 302–303) further contextualize Abdiisaa's struggles within the broader narrative of Oromo resistance. The actions of characters like Henok, Cuutaa, and Shaafii, who join armed resistance movements, reflect the historical reality of Oromoo youth in the 1970s and 1980s resisting state oppression. Their stories underscore the interplay between personal defiance and collective political resistance (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 491), illustrating how individual and communal acts of rebellion intersect within the fabric of Oromoo history.

The novel's cultural intertextuality draws heavily on Oromoo oral traditions, grounding Abdiisaa's personal journey in his ethnic and cultural heritage. These cultural references not only add emotional depth but also serve as an act of cultural preservation, highlighting the enduring importance of oral traditions in shaping both personal and collective identities. Abdiisaa's reflections on traditional courtship practices in his hometown, for example, reveal his internal struggle between the simplicity of rural life and the complexities of modern relationships (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 29, 36–38, 106–110). These intertextual references to Oromoo cultural practices underscore the dissonance between Abdiisaa's cultural roots and his present reality, illustrating the tension between tradition and modernity as he seeks to reconcile his identity in an ever-evolving world.

Religious intertextuality is another key dimension of *Godaannisa*, particularly through the character of Yohannis Dibaabaa, who embodies themes of redemption, forgiveness, and spiritual renewal. Yohannis's transformation from a life of crime to one of religious devotion stands in stark contrast to Abdiisaa's political and cultural struggles. His spiritual journey, intertwined with his relationship with Abdiisaa's sister, Kuulanii—forced into prostitution—introduces profound themes of forgiveness and redemption. Biblical allusions enrich this religious dimension (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 111, 492, 502, 522), as Yohannis's belief in the transformative power of divine love becomes central to his efforts to save Kuulanii from despair (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 421). His redemptive arc echoes the biblical parable of the prodigal son, reinforcing the novel's exploration of moral and spiritual renewal. These

religious intertexts act as moral and spiritual counterpoints to the novel's political and cultural themes, broadening its narrative scope. By engaging with questions of morality, faith, and personal transformation, they provide an added layer of complexity to Abdiisaa's journey, highlighting the interplay of resistance, redemption, and the search for identity.

### **3.2.2. Functions of Intertextuality in *Godaannisa***

In *Godaannisa*, Dhaabaa masterfully employs intertextuality to enrich both the thematic depth and stylistic complexity of the novel. The intertextual references—spanning music, literature, politics, history, and religion—not only deepen the novel's exploration of its central themes but also serve as critical stylistic devices that shape its narrative structure, tone, and rhythm. By embedding these references, Dhaabaa creates a multidimensional reading experience, guiding the reader's emotional and intellectual engagement with the story.

Musical intertextuality functions as a key stylistic device that establishes the novel's emotional rhythm and tone. Allusions to artists such as Stevie Wonder (p. 247) and Ali Birra (p. 291) extend beyond mere cultural connections to reflect Abdiisaa's internal turmoil, setting the emotional cadence of the narrative. By juxtaposing global and local musical traditions, particularly socially conscious lyrics that express longing and struggle, Dhaabaa constructs an emotional landscape that mirrors Abdiisaa's personal conflicts. This musical intertextuality shapes the form of the novel by aligning its emotional rhythm with Abdiisaa's experiences, drawing readers into his internal struggles while amplifying the emotional intensity of key moments.

Literary intertextuality further enhances the novel's stylistic and thematic dimensions. References to Franz Kafka, Bealu Girma, and Tsegaye Gebremedhin serve as more than thematic devices for exploring philosophical questions; they also influence the narrative structure and tone. Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (Dhaabaa, 2020, p. 10), for example, not only thematically examines Abdiisaa's alienation but also serves as a stylistic model for the fragmented and surreal narrative style that mirrors his existential crisis. These literary allusions introduce reflective pauses in the narrative, slowing its pace and prompting readers to engage deeply with the broader philosophical

questions being raised. This dual function of intertextuality allows the novel to explore complex themes of identity and isolation while simultaneously shaping its form and rhythm.

Political and historical intertexts also perform dual roles within the novel. The reference to Solan's resistance against land dispossession (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 18–19) connects Abdiisaa's personal struggles to the broader Oromoo resistance against systemic oppression, grounding the narrative within Ethiopia's political history. Stylistically, this intertext infuses the novel with a tone of collective defiance and struggle, shaping the reader's understanding of Abdiisaa's internal conflicts as part of a larger socio-political reality. This layering of individual and collective experiences through political and historical intertextuality broadens the novel's scope and situates Abdiisaa's journey within a larger historical framework.

Philosophical intertextuality, drawn from thinkers such as Kafka, George Orwell, and Rainer Maria Rilke (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 1–12), adds intellectual depth to the novel's thematic and structural elements. Rilke's exhortation to "go into yourself" (p. 9) thematically drives Abdiisaa's introspective journey, while also functioning as a stylistic device that introduces contemplative pauses in the narrative. These pauses disrupt the narrative flow, creating moments of reflection that challenge readers to engage with the deeper existential dilemmas central to Abdiisaa's character. By manipulating narrative pacing through philosophical references, Dhaabaa shapes both the thematic and structural dimensions of the text, inviting readers into the intellectual and emotional struggles that define Abdiisaa's journey.

Religious intertextuality serves as a thematic counterpoint to the novel's political and existential concerns by exploring redemption and spiritual renewal. Yohannis's transformation from a life of crime to one of religious devotion contrasts with Abdiisaa's political disillusionment, adding a layer of spiritual introspection to the narrative. Biblical and theological references (Dhaabaa, 2020, pp. 111, 492, 502, 522) deepen this dimension, introducing moments of transcendence that balance the secular, conflict-driven aspects of the novel. For instance, Yohannis's belief in the transformative power of divine love, evident in his efforts to save Kuulanii from despair (p. 421), mirrors the parable of the prodigal son, reinforcing themes of redemption and forgiveness. Stylistically, these religious intertexts alter the tone of the novel,

oscillating between moments of intense political struggle and spiritual reflection, contributing to its overall rhythmic complexity.

Thus, in *Godaannisa*, intertextuality is not merely a thematic tool but a fundamental stylistic element that shapes the novel's structure, tone, and rhythm. By embedding references to Oromoo land dispossession, existential philosophy, and Christian theology, Dhaabaa extends the thematic horizons of the narrative while simultaneously manipulating its form to create a layered and engaging reading experience. Whether through the emotional cadence set by musical intertexts, the fragmented structure inspired by literary allusions, or the interplay between philosophical reflection and narrative action, these intertexts guide the unfolding of the story and the reader's perception of its characters and themes. Through these intertextual elements, Dhaabaa links Abdiisaa's personal journey to broader cultural, political, and spiritual frameworks, solidifying *Godaannisa* as a multifaceted work that resonates with both local and global audiences.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Dhaabaa Wayyeessaa's *Godaannisa* highlights the transformative potential of literary revision and intertextuality, demonstrating their ability to enhance both thematic depth and narrative sophistication. This study has shown how Dhaabaa skillfully integrates intertextual references—encompassing music, literature, politics, history, and religion—into a multi-layered exploration of personal and collective experiences.

The 2020 edition of *Godaannisa* significantly expands the original 1992 text, transforming it into a nuanced and multifaceted work that engages with the politico-cultural realities of the Oromoo people. Enriched by intertextual layers, the revised version deepens its exploration of identity, resistance, and redemption. Dhaabaa's approach reflects his dedication to revisiting earlier narratives to address evolving socio-political discourses and preserve the cultural memory of the Oromoo. The revised edition captures both historical and contemporary Oromoo experiences while emphasizing the fluid nature of literary texts, which adapt to shifting cultural contexts.

This revision is not merely a technical exercise but an intellectual and artistic reimagining. By revisiting and reshaping the narrative, Dhaabaa achieves a more intricate articulation of themes such as cultural survival, resistance, and personal redemption. The novel's intertextual elements position it within a

broader global literary tradition, fostering a dialogue on the legacy of oppression, the role of cultural memory, and collective consciousness. Drawing from global literary, philosophical, and musical influences, *Godaannisa* balances its transnational perspective with a profound connection to Oromoo cultural and political realities. This interplay enriches the novel, making it a work of significant intellectual and emotional resonance.

The use of intertextuality in *Godaannisa* also invites reflection on its broader implications for Oromoo literature. In a context where literary traditions have been historically marginalized, intertextuality becomes a powerful tool for reclaiming and reframing cultural narratives. By integrating references from both Oromoo and global cultural landscapes, Dhaabaa underscores the vitality and relevance of Oromoo literary traditions. This synthesis transcends storytelling boundaries, demonstrating that local narratives can effectively engage with universal themes of alienation, struggle, and redemption.

In conclusion, *Godaannisa* exemplifies the transformative power of literary revision and intertextuality. Through these strategies, Dhaabaa crafts a richly layered narrative that resonates on both personal and collective levels. The novel's expanded thematic and narrative horizons address issues of identity, resistance, and cultural memory, situating it within both Oromoo and global literary traditions. This study underscores the importance of revision and intertextuality as tools for reimagining narratives to reflect the complexities of identity and resistance. Ultimately, *Godaannisa* affirms storytelling's enduring capacity to transcend boundaries, offering profound insights into the interconnectedness of narrative, culture, and politics.

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