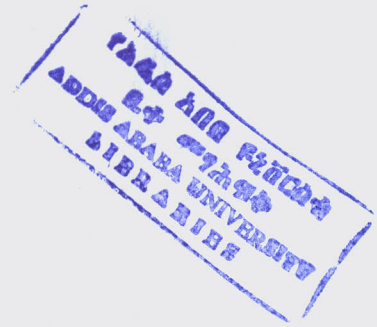


**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
(SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES)  
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES**



**ASPECTS OF ETHIOPIAN CULTURE AS REFLECTED IN  
ETHIOPIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**SIMRET WONDIRAD**

**JUNE 2009**

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(SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES)  
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DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND  
LITERATURE**

**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in  
Addis Ababa University in the Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Literature.**

**By: Simret Wondirad**

**Advisor: Dr. Berhanu Matthews**



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Approved by

Signature

Advisor:

Dr. Berhanu Matthews

Examiner:

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First I would like to owe many thanks to my advisor, Dr. Berhanu Matthews, for being generous with his time in reading and commenting on my work.

I want to convey my sincere gratitude to my family who helped me a lot through my study. I also would like to acknowledge my friends, especially YOMI, for their continuous encouragement and support.

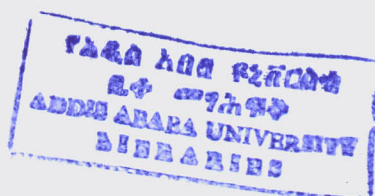


## ABSTRACT

Ethiopian children's literature is an area that has not been given much attention for long even though it has a long history in Ethiopian literature. Researching this area started in 1994 for the first time, that only focuses on Ethiopian children's literature in Amharic. But this research draws attention to Ethiopian children's literature in English. The overall focus of this study is to examine the cultural aspects reflected in Ethiopian children's literature in English whether in their wording or illustration. To attend to this objective the study collected data from Ethiopian children's fiction in English and made a combined analysis of textual and descriptive analysis. The data comprises extracts and illustrations from the fictions.

The study reveals that there are some major Ethiopian cultural aspects depicted in Ethiopian children's literature in English. These major cultural aspects are social roles, norms, beliefs, material culture, customs and language. In addition, symbolic cultural elements were expressed genuinely even though the Ethiopian culture has its own symbol of expressing its artifacts and other aspects of Ethiopian culture. The study also reveals that children's literature uses the illustrations more than the wordings to reflect the cultural elements.

The study consists of four chapters; the introduction, a review of literature, analysis, and summary and conclusion. The introductory section deals with the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the scope and the study methods. The review of literature section gives a conceptual framework on culture and children's literature. Moreover, it reviews related studies in this particular study topic. The third chapter makes a brief discussion on the cultural aspects in selected children's fiction in English. The last section comprises the summary of the whole analysis and the conclusion that is driven from it.



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Culture is a depiction of all the ways of life of a certain society including arts, beliefs and institutions that are passed down from generation to generation. Culture is manifested in human artifacts and activities such as lifestyles, food, painting and sculpture, music, literature, theater and film. It is a particular mode of life, whether of people, period or a group. As such, it encompasses codes of manners, dresses, languages, religions, rituals, games, and norms of behavior such as law and morality, and systems of belief as well as the art. One of the major purposes of literature is to serve as a channel to transmit these traits and manifestations of cultures of a society. Literature, being one major facet of culture, is more cheaply and easily accessible than many other cultural events. (Brumfit, 1986)

Literature can play a role in the needs and self-realization in children as it does in adults (Encyclopedia Americana, 1997). To many readers, children's books are a matter of private pleasure. However, they have a direct influence socially, culturally and historically. And they are indispensable educationally and commercially. The earliest of what came to be considered as children's literature was first intended for adults.

The history of children's literature follows a similar pattern all over the world. Before printing developed, children shared stories with adults. Children's books were rare at the time when printing was introduced, which were at first largely educational. Children tend to adopt books written for adults that were often derived from the traditional stories. Children's books are seen as an important part of the culture. The encyclopedia Americana (1995) reads that the first books for children

were lesson books with question and answer form, produced in hand written manuscripts.

Ethiopian children's literature, as part of world children's literature, originated from the tradition of telling stories to children. Elder people have been narrating tales around the fire place in the house or at any place where it is convenient to both narrators and listeners. This has long existed among the different nations and nationalities of Ethiopia.

Though the publications of children's books in Amharic has started in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its original intention was to be used as a teaching text for children and it had been used for long time. However, the format and contents were not properly designed to fit the psychological and intellectual capacity of the children (Ellene: 2003). When people prepared books for teaching alphabets to children, they included tales. In addition, collections of tales were published both translated from foreign and domestic narratives. From time to time, especially around the 1970's, the publications of children's book in Amharic became scarce except for a few translated children's books.

On his thesis, Dereje (1994) said, 'most of the children's books translated from different (foreign) languages into Amharic do not reflect the culture, tradition and thinking patterns of the society. They do not nurture the coming generation nor impart fundamental skills and know-how'. There are some children's books written in different languages of Ethiopia. These are children's books that talks of different tales of the nations and nationalities of Ethiopia.

English-language children's literature has had a dominant influence across the world. As Ethiopia's national language is Amharic, most of the children's books (for that matter most of the adult books) written are dominated by Amharic language. But there are few books that are written in English language only or translated into English

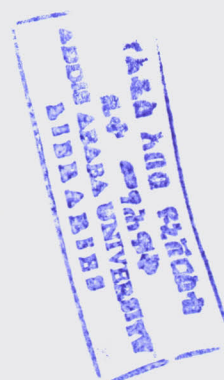
language. In a journal of Ethiopian studies, Akalu (1981:128) stated that Ethiopian literature has in general been afforded an inadequate attention by critics of African literature. He also added that some writers have certified this fact to difficulties of language and lack of translation. But from time to time Ethiopian writers started writing in English or translating their work in English, which is an encouraging development in Ethiopian literature. Nowadays there are many books in Ethiopia that are in English. And since children's literature is one part and parcel of Ethiopian literature it has also made its progress in using English.

This study aims to explore the cultural facets of Ethiopian children's fiction in English. The study made an attempt to show which aspects of Ethiopian culture are most reflected in Ethiopian children's books in English, a language widely used in academic environment in Ethiopia. Moreover, it tried to find out the success of the writers in depicting Ethiopian culture to the world.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Since children develop an awareness of culture and become receptive of expression of people around them at an early age, there is a greater risk that their identities, attitudes, and understanding of their societies could be negatively affected when literature encloses misinformation and warped images. In order for children to identify the world around them, to appreciate and value the differences and similarities between other people and themselves, it is important for them to discover their own identities first. Providing children with literature is one way to help them achieve this sense of uniqueness.

Not enough work has been done on Ethiopian children's literature. A few research studies made their focus on analysis of children's fiction, their design and illustration. But not much attention has been given to explore the reflection of the cultural aspects of Ethiopian children's



literature. On top of that, a significant effort has not been made to focus on Ethiopian children's literature in English. It is hoped that this study would fill this gap.

This study tried to answer the following research questions.

- a) What is the relation between culture and children's literature?
- b) What major aspects of Ethiopian culture are expressed in children's fiction?
- c) How well did the writers use the medium of these texts to depict Ethiopian culture?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study was to explore Ethiopian children's fiction written in English with specific focus on the extent to which they reflect Ethiopian culture to their readers. The study also has the following specific objectives:

- To find out the main cultural aspects that are reflected in children's fiction, and
- To explore the achievements made by the writers in depicting Ethiopian culture in foreign language.

### **1.4 Methods of the Study**

This study used the combined descriptive and textual analysis as basic methods. Data was drawn from selected Ethiopian children's fiction in English. Depending on its nature, this study comprises available literature reviews as much as possible.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that this research will be helpful for those who are interested to engage themselves in writing children's literature or for those who want to further their research in the depiction of culture in children's literature. Moreover, the research will be supportive for the teaching learning process, which focuses on children's literature and/ or English language for children. In addition, the study is hoped to help other literary researchers who are engaged in exploring Ethiopian culture in creative writings.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study focused on children's books in English. The books studied do not represent a complete list of books written in English, but comprise a large percentage of books in this category. The genre selected for this study encompasses the young adult fiction. This study is, thus, limited in scope by the above criterion; excluding non-fiction books, biographies and books for school children (text books).

## CHAPTER TWO

### A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this study, as stated in the introduction, is to explore Ethiopian children's books in English with the focus on the extent to which they reflect Ethiopian culture. The purpose of this section is, therefore, to provide a conceptual review of culture and children's literature and a review of studies related to this topic.

#### 2.1 The Concept of Culture

##### 2.1.1 Definition

The word culture has many different meanings. For some, it refers to appreciation of good literature, music, art and food. For anthropologists, culture is full range of learned human behavior patterns. Even if culture is a powerful human tool for survival, it is a fragile phenomenon; constantly changing and easily lost because it exists only in our minds. Bodley (2006) defines culture as follows:

*Culture is derived from the Latin word 'colere', meaning to cultivate as in the practice of nurturing domesticated plants in gardens. ... It refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structure that give such activities significance and importance.*

According to Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (2008), culture is an incorporated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that is both a result of an essential human capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. Variation among cultures is attributable to such factors as differing physical habitats and resources, language, social organization, and development of links with

other culture. An individual's attitudes, values, ideas and beliefs are greatly influenced by the culture in which he or she lives.

According to Slonim (1991), culture refers to value systems that are transmitted from generation to generation and represent an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior. Culture change takes place as a result of ecological, socioeconomic, political, religious or other fundamental factors affecting a society. It is helpful to consider that culture is an adaptive response of people to their environmental and historical circumstances.

Some groups of people share a distinct set of cultural traits within a larger society. Such groups are often termed as subcultures (Bodley, 2006). For instance, the members of a subculture may share a distinct language or dialect (variation based on the dominant language), unique rituals, and a particular style of dress.

Large societies often have subcultures. According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2008), the subculture may be distinctive because of the age of its members, or by race, ethnicity, class, or gender. The qualities that determine a subculture as distinct may be aesthetic, religious, occupational, political, sexual or a combination of these factors.

Slonim (1991), mentioning Frab, also defined culture as:

*"... a word used in referring to the totality of learned behaviors in the context of a social system. It exists only within the contexts of human society ...Culture is societies blue print for behavior." (Slonim, 1991)*

I somehow take some part of this definition but totally reject the way it defines culture as "... exists only within contexts of human society." If culture is learned behavior, many other animal species teach

their young what they themselves learned in order to survive. For example, chimpanzees teach their children about dominance hierarchy and the social rules within the communities. Such learned behaviors, as you can see, also exist in other animal species, since humans are not the only animals that have societies with culture.

One of the functions of culture is to provide a highly selective screen between man and the outside world. In its many forms, culture, therefore, designates what we pay attention to and what we ignore. Man needs experience of other cultures. That is, to survive all cultures need each other (Slonim, 1991). Cultural norms specify what must be done, what ought to be done and prescribe solution to basic life problems. In this respect, tradition provides stability. At the same time, culture is dynamic in that it is a product of people's responses to changing life situation. (Ibid) Cultural anthropologist have viewed culture as broader in function and significance- a complex system, (partially) shared and created among members of a society that organizes meaning of events at different levels. (Ochs, 1993)

This all encompassing definition is reflected in five criteria which define culture thoroughly (Slonim, 1991); a common pattern of communication, sound system or language unique to group: a common basic diet and method of preparing food: a common pattern of dress: predictable patterns of relationship and socialization between men and women, mother and child, uncle and niece; and a common set of values and beliefs or common set of ethics.

Culture must benefit people, at least in the short term, in order for it to be passed on to new generations. But it can clearly also harm some people. Despite the efforts of the older generations to transfer their cultural values to the forthcoming generations, many tend to remain

unaware of their culture. People are often found to have an incomplete knowledge of their culture. People seldom know their culture completely.

Cultural awareness is the foundation of communication and it involves the ability of standing back from us and becoming aware of cultural values, beliefs and perception. Cultural awareness becomes central when we have to interact with people from other cultures. People see, interact and evaluate things in different ways. What is considered an appropriate behavior in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another one. Misinterpretation occurs primarily when we lack awareness of our own behavioral rules and project them on others. Becoming aware of our cultural dynamics is a difficult task because culture is not conscious to us. Since we are born, we have learned to see and do things at an unconscious level. Our experiences, our values and cultural background lead us to see and do things in a certain way.

In conclusion, we can say that culture is shared language, tradition, norms and beliefs of society that set them apart from others. With such view of culture, this study will make an attempt to depict the culture of Ethiopia in selected children's fictions.

### **2.1.2 Elements of Culture**

As this thesis has a lot to do with culture, it is appropriate to discuss the numerous elements of culture.

While defining the term 'culture', there are several elements that together constitute as the culture of a particular region or the culture of particular people. The language, the thoughts and emotions of the people, their social and cultural norms, their principles and beliefs are the basic elements of culture (Brown, 1995). For an effective transfer of culture from one generation to another, it has to be translated in terms of symbols, which represent the cultural values of a community.

Language, art and religion form the system of symbols that render a deep meaning to culture.

Brown (1995) explains thoroughly these different elements that could be taken as the visible attributes of culture.

### **A) Artifacts**

Artifacts are the physical things found that have particular symbolism for a culture. They may be endowed with mystical properties. When people in the culture see the objects, they think about their meaning and hence are reminded of their identity as members of the culture, and, by association of the rules of the culture.

### **B) Language**

The various languages are essentially an important part of the culture. Language is a set of symbols used to assign and communicate meaning. It enables us to name or label the things in our world so we can think and communicate about them. People have culture primarily because they can communicate with and understand symbols. Symbols allow people to develop complex thoughts and to exchange those thoughts with others. Language and other forms of symbolic communication, such as art, enable people to create, explain, and record new ideas and information. (Bodley, 2006)

### **C) Norms and Values**

Norms are humanly created rules for behavior. Every society or every civilization has a set of norms, which are an inseparable part, and an important element of the culture. Values are anything members of a culture aspire to or hold in high esteem. Values are things to be achieved, things considered of great worth. They are human creations or social products. The values of a culture often refer to the things to be

achieved or the things which are considered of great worth or value in a particular culture. The norms and values of a culture are effectively the rules by which its members must abide, or risk rejection from the culture (which is one of the most feared sanctions known). They are embedded in the artifacts, symbols, stories, attitudes, and so on.

#### **D) Religion and Beliefs**

Beliefs are the things members of a culture hold to be true. They are the "facts" accepted by all or most members. Beliefs are not limited to religious statements, but include all the things people know and accept as true, including common sense and everyday knowledge. Like all other cultural elements, beliefs are humanly created and produced. They are collective social agreements produced during interaction. What is "true" or "factual" for a given people is what they collectively agree to be true at that point in time. Beliefs can and do change, especially in modern industrial societies. Today we laugh at things our grandparents used to believe and chances are that our grandchildren will laugh at many of our beliefs as well.

#### **E) Social Collectives**

Social collectives refer to the social groups, organizations, communities, institutions, classes, and societies, which are considered as symbolic social constructions. Such social collectives tell how people interact and organize themselves in groups. Bodley (2008) describes the distinct types of societies. The smallest societies are known as bands while a tribe is the next largest type of society. A larger form of society, called chiefdom, binds together two or more villages or tribes under a leader who is born into the position of rule. (Ibid)

## **F) Social roles and Status**

Roles are norms specifying the rights and responsibilities associated with a particular status. The term role is often used to mean both a position in society and role expectations associated with it. Roles define what a person in a given status can and should do, as well as what they can and should expect from others. Roles provide a degree of stability and predictability, telling how we should respond to others and giving us an idea of how others should respond to us. Roles are negotiated and produced during interaction. However, roles can be renegotiated and changed. A status is nothing but a slot or position within a group or society, which gives an overall idea of the social structure and hence is an important element of culture. This can also include traditional gender-based or age-based roles. (Brown, 1995)

The above mentioned elements of culture; artifacts, language, norms, social collectives and social roles are taken as the features that help to examine the texts under study.

### **2.1.3 Categories of Culture**

Scholars put the different elements of culture into several categories as common practices to divide culture. In this section, an attempt is made to discuss the three broad categories explained by Bodley (2008).

Bodley (2008) puts four broad categories as common practices to divide culture: material culture, social culture, ideological culture and art.

Material culture, as Bodley explains, includes products of human manufacture. Anthropologists look at several aspects of people's material culture. These aspects include the methods by which people obtain or

produce food, known as a pattern of subsistence; the ways in which people exchange goods and services; the kinds of technologies and other objects people make and use; and the effects of people's economy on the natural environment.

Bodley (ibid) clarifies that social culture pertains to people's forms of social organization. That is how people work together and categorize themselves in groups. People in all types of societies classify themselves in relation to each other for work and other duties, and to structure their interactions. People commonly organize themselves according to bonds by kinship and marriage, work duties, economic position, and political position. Important factors in family, work, and political relations include age and gender. (Ibid)

Bodley (2008) describes ideological culture as the other category that relates to what people think, value, believe, and hold as ideals. He further explains that anthropologists often study how these categories of culture differ across different types of societies that vary in scale (size and complexity). In every society, culturally unique ways of thinking about the world unite people in their behavior. Anthropologists often refer to the body of ideas that people share as ideology. Ideology can be broken down into at least three specific categories: beliefs, values, and ideals. People's beliefs give them an understanding of how the world works and how they should respond to the actions of others and their environments. Particular beliefs often tie in closely with the daily concerns of domestic life, such as making a living, health and sickness, happiness and sadness, interpersonal relationships, and death. People's values tell them the differences between right and wrong or good and bad. Ideals serve as models for what people hope to achieve in life. (Ibid)

The fourth category put forward by Bodley (ibid) is art. The art is a distinctly human production, and many people consider it the ultimate

form of culture (ibid). The arts include such activities and areas of interest as music, sculpture, painting, pottery, theater, cooking, writing, and fashion.

In this thesis, the above mentioned categories of culture; material culture, social culture, ideological culture and art, are dealt to group the facets of culture in the selected texts.

### **2.1.3 Characteristics of Culture**

In this section an attempt is made to discuss the characteristics of culture.

Culture has several distinguishing characteristics. Bodley (2008) explains that culture is based on symbols that are abstract ways of referring to and understanding ideas, objects, feelings, or behaviors, and the ability to communicate with symbols using language. A symbol has either an indirect connection or no connection at all with the object, idea, feeling, or behavior to which it refers. To convey new ideas, people constantly invent new symbols, such as for mathematical formulas. In addition, people may use one symbol, such as a single word, to represent many different ideas, feelings, or values. Bodley states that symbols provide a flexible way for people to communicate even very complex thoughts with each other. People have the capacity at birth to construct, understand, and communicate through symbols, primarily by using language. For example, only through symbols can architects, engineers, and construction workers communicate the information necessary to construct a skyscraper or bridge.

The other characteristic pointed out by Bodley (2008) is that culture is shared. People in the same society share common behaviors

and ways of thinking through culture. For example, almost all people living in the Amhara region share the Amharic language, dress in similar styles, eat many of the same foods and celebrate many of the same holidays. All the people of a society collectively create and maintain culture. Societies preserve culture for much longer than the life of any one person. They preserve it in the form of knowledge, such as scientific discoveries; objects, such as works of art; and traditions, such as the observance of holidays.

The third characteristic given by Bodley is the “learned” quality of culture. While people biologically inherit many physical traits and behavioral instincts, culture is socially not inherited. A person must learn culture from others in his society. People are not born with culture; Bodley argues that they have to learn it. For instance, people must learn to speak and understand a language and to abide by the rules of a society. In many societies, all people must learn to produce and prepare food and to construct shelters. In other societies, people must learn a skill to earn money, which they then use to provide for themselves. In all human societies, children learn culture from adults. People also continue to learn throughout their lifetimes. Thus, most societies respect their elders, who have learned for an entire lifetime.

The last characteristic put forth by Bodley is “adaptive” nature of culture. People use culture to flexibly and quickly adjust to changes in the world around them. Cultural adaptation has made humans one of the most successful species on the planet. (Ibid)

The aspects of culture that change vary across societies. With the passage of time, new technologies emerge, new modes of work come up, social thinking undergoes transitions and so does culture. A gradual change is characteristic to almost every culture. Cultures are subject to change. Culture loses some of its traits and gains new ones. Studies have

brought out a fact that no culture can remain in isolation. There is hardly any social community that is completely isolated from the rest of the world. Every culture, hence, is mostly influenced by cultures of the surrounding regions. Cultural values are prone to be affected by the values of communities in close district. The cultures, which emerged during the same periods of time often, show certain similarities.

## **2.2 Children's Literature**

This section makes an attempt to define children's literature from the view point of different scholars. Moreover, it explains the different types and characteristics of children's literature.

### **2.2.1 Definition**

There are a number of arguments on the definition of children's literature. Some have asked if a children's book is the one written by children, or for children. And what does it mean to write a book for children? If it is a book written 'for' children, is it then still a children's book if it is (only) read by adults? What about 'adult' books also read by children – are they still children's literature? These questions have been raised by many scholars most of the time. Some even argued that children's literature is by far any literature that is enjoyed by children.

Encarta (2009) defines children's literature as follows:

*“ ... writings designed to appeal to children—either to be read to them or by them—including fiction, poetry, biography, and history. Children's literature also includes riddles, precepts, fables, legends, myths, and folk poems and folktales based on spoken tradition.”*

According to Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (2008), “Children's literature is a body of written works provided to entertain or instruct young people”. Children's literature comprises those books written and

published for young people who are not yet interested in adult literature or who may not possess the reading skills or developmental understanding necessary for its perusal. In addition to books, children's literature also includes magazines intended for pre-adult audiences. Children's books are habitually illustrated, sometimes in abundance, in a way that is rarely used for adult literature.

Children are the young seedlings of societies, and there are so many things their brains gulp in. They need to expand their knowledge and creativity as well as broaden their imagination. And children's literature is destined to bolster that process. It makes them wonder, fantasize and imagine different outcomes. It is a common knowledge that kids who read more have better scores in school, and are better in performing arts.

Literature serves children in countless ways to better understand themselves, theirs and others' world and the aesthetic values of written languages. When children read fiction, narratives, poetry, or biography, they often tend to assume the role of one of the characters. Frequently, because of experiences with literature, the child's mode of behavior and value structures are changed, modified or extended. When children assume the role and place of a character in a book as they read, they interact vicariously with the other characters portrayed in that particular selection. In the process they learn something about the nature of behavior and the consequences of personal interaction. Moreover, they become aware of the similarities and differences among them.

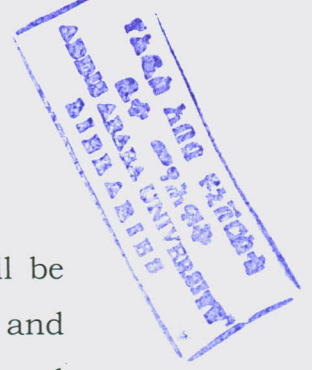
According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2008) children's understanding of the world is increased through traditional literature in eight ways. The first one is that tales help children understand non-scientific cultural tradition of early humanity. Moreover, it shows children the consistency of different types of stories and motifs, and

educates them about cultural diffusion. Literature also helps children develop an appreciation for culture and arts of different countries and provide them with an exposure to many different languages and dialects around the world. It encourages children to realize that people all over the world have innate goodness, mercy, courage, and industry. For instance, the use of folktales in the class room, usually in the form of picture-storybook adaptations, can help children understand the world and identify with universal human effort.

Researches indicate that those children who have had an early and continuing chance to intermingle with good literature are more successful in school than those who have not. Children make a lasting connection between books, which provide pleasure and the undisputed attention from the parents who read aloud books to them. Children's book should be a union of the highest art with the simplest form. (Lesnik-obesterin: 1994)

Children's books, and the discussion surrounding children's reading, evolved further alongside and become integral part of the creation of this cultural narrative of childhood. The story of children's book critics and historians tell about the origins of children's books is that they were intended to amuse children's as opposed to educating them primarily. Good children's books have to do with strong materials-good plots, rich setting, well-developed characters, important themes, artistic styles, and bold and imaginative language.

This study will operate the definition that states children's literature as those books intentionally written for children and determined by authorities as 'appropriate' for children. Authorities include teachers, reviewers, scholars, parents, publishers, librarians, retailers, and the various book award committees.



## 2.2.2 Types of Children's Literature

In this section, the different types of children's literature will be discussed. Children's literature includes almost every type of writing and illustration-from fiction to picture books, and from the simplest board books for babies to sophisticated multimedia texts. Nursery rhymes, playground songs, and folktales preserve some of the oldest materials from the oral tradition.

Children's literature can be divided in different ways. One division could be genre. Most children's literature experts agree on several identifiable genres. Norton (1983) for instance, lists approximately fourteen different literary genres that are available for children of all ages. They include fairytales, picture books, poetry, theater, fantasy fiction, biography, animal stories, science fiction, mystery and folks tales, that can be further divided in to legends, fables and myths.

According to Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (2008) children's literature genre encompasses a wide range of works, including acknowledged classics of world literature, picture books and easy-to-read stories, and fairy tales, lullabies, fables, folksongs, and other primarily orally transmitted materials.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2008) has also delineated six major categories of children's literature; picture books, traditional literature, fiction, non-fiction, biography and poetry (verse). Fiction in its various forms-contemporary realism, fantasy and historical fiction, poetry, folktales, legends, myths, and epics, has its presence in children's literature. Non-fiction for children includes books about the arts and humanities; the social, physical, biological, and earth science; and biography and autobiography. As one can see from such divisions, most of the literary genres of adult literature appear in children's literature as well.

In addition, children's books for children include storybooks, alphabet books, counting books, wordless books, and concept books. Water color is taken as the most popular medium for picture book illustration. (Ibid)

Ideally, the literature available to children would include a careful balance of genres to appeal to the different age levels, and interests of children. According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2008), Children's literature is divided by age category; but is then sub-divided further due to the divergent interests of children's age 0-18. The division includes picture books (appropriate for 0-5), early reader books (appropriate for children age 5-7), chapter books (appropriate for children age 7-11) and young-adult fictions (appropriate for children age 13-18). Usually young adult literature is more mature in content and more complex in literary structure than any other children's literature.

This study will give much emphasis on cultural aspects of children's books by collecting data from the fiction books (or young adult fictions), since these category is more complex in literary structure for the sake of discussing aspects of culture.

### **2.2.3 Characteristics of Children's Literature**

In this section an attempt has been made to discuss some of the characteristics of children's literature given by two scholars.

Nodelman (1992) argues that there are some typical characteristics of children's literature. For Nodelman, Children's literature is simple and straight forward. But he comments that the vocabulary needs not to be overly simplistic and that the style should not be choppy or flat. He also describes children's literature as action-focused. He says the events are often simplified through narration and comments on actions. He goes on to say that children's literature is optimistic and expresses a child's point

of view. Nodelman (ibid) also argues that fantasy is the other characteristic of children's literature. Fantasy often implies a symbolic defiance of our knowledge of reality, and represents the potentials that lie below the surface in each of us. Repetition with variation of words, phrases, situations, and narrative patterns, he says, are common in children literature.

Griswold (2007), on the other hand, says "five themes recur in classic and popular works of children literature and can be looked at in a different way. They can be seen as feelings or sensations prevalent in childhood". These five themes, according to him, are smallness, scariness, lightness and aliveness. The smallness of these works makes it to be enjoyed by the readers (children).

There is some central paradox of children's book. As Hunt (1994) explains 'pictures are accessible to children, but the meanings derived from them are not.' He elaborates his argument by saying that the picture 'closes' the text, in other words, limits and cuts off the possibilities of interpretation and stimulating imagination. Of course, sometimes a picture may complement or contradict the words. These picturesque characteristics of children's book happen to have such limitation but can be avoided by being careful since children's pay much attention to pictures at an early age.

Such characteristics are identified in many of Ethiopian children's literature in English that are reviewed in the later section. The smallness and aliveness are the most important characteristics observed in those fictions. Moreover, the vocabularies are not complicated and they mostly utter the child's point of view. In addition, they are more of action-focused.

### **2.3 The Relationship between Children, Literature and Culture**

So far, an attempt has been made to clarify concepts on culture and children's literature. Now is time to turn to the relationship between child, literature and culture.

The relationship between a culture and its literature is not at all simple. Brumfit (1986) explains that literary texts have a significant role in teaching culture and many people wish to study it. One of the major functions of literature is to show the culture of a society. Lazar (1993) asserts that studying literature enables us to understand the foreign cultures more clearly. Some novels, short stories and plays could claim to be a purely factual documentation of the society. But it would be wrong to fall in to the fallacy of assuming that a piece of writing represents the entire society. Brumfit (1986) argues that the relationship between a literary text and the culture in which it is produced is highly complex since few texts are more accurate representation of their culture.

Lazar (1993) puts forward a list of cultural aspects in texts. She takes objects or products that exist in one society but not in another as one aspect. Proverbs idioms and formulaic expressions which embody cultural values are the other values to consider. Social structures roles and relationships are also taken as aspects as well. She further mentions customs/ rituals/ traditions/ festivals and beliefs /values/superstitions to be taken as some more aspects. Political historic and economic background of a country expressed in a text is also another feature. Institutions, taboos, metaphorical connotative meanings, humor and genre are also additional aspects. Along with representatives - to what piece of a culture or society the text refers to, Lazar also puts the status of the written language in different cultures and the resulting strategies for reading a text as the way to investigate expectations of readers.

The study of literature recognizes cultural values defined collectively and socially as power. The potential of critique in literary studies has ethical implications for the understanding of 'culture' and those implications are perhaps clearest in the institutional conduct of the study of literature. (David, R. C. and R. Schleiter, 1992)

The family is our first culture, and like all cultures, it wants to make known its norms and morals. It does so through daily life, but it also does so through family stories which underscore, in a way invariably clear to its members, the essentials, like the unspoken and admitted family policy. Since we are all the products of our early family values, culture provides the foundation for our physical and intellectual development. Yet family environment alone does not constitute a child's cultural community. His or her environment and social norms are also elements of human development.

Folktales are very popular with children and numerous reasons exist for their use in children's education. Folktales originate from the oral story telling traditions of their respective. Recognized as fiction, generally timeless and placeless, they usually tell the adventures of animal or human characters and contain common narrative motifs, such as super natural adversaries, supernatural helpers, magic and marvels, tasks and quest, and common themes (Norton, 1999). Folktales can help children appreciate the reality of human diversity and increase children's empathy with people of other cultures. Through folktales, children can experience the wishes, dreams, and problems of people share a need for love, hope, and security.

Norton (ibid), furthermore, stated that culturally genuine literature has the capacity to break down negative stereotypes and encourage understanding and appreciation of different cultures. Tales help children understand non scientific cultural traditions of early humanity, teach

children about cultural diffusion, help children develop an appreciation for culture and art of different countries, and familiarize children with the many different languages and dialects of culture around the world. (Ibid)

Cultural studies scholars investigate children's literature as an aspect of culture. Children's literature is a product consumed like other aspects of children's culture: video games, television, and the like. The cultures in which we are raised strongly affect our attitudes, beliefs, value, and in turn our behavior. In this sense, to understand culture is to understand learned behavior. Without cultural standards of behavior, it would be impossible for any society to function or to survive. (Ibid)

In this thesis, an attempt has been made to explore the aspects of culture in Ethiopian children's fictions in English with the help of the cultural aspects explained by Lazar.

## **2.4 Ethiopian Culture**

This section attempts to discuss the culture of Ethiopia roughly, since Ethiopian culture is so wide and multi dimensional.

Ethiopia, one of the oldest nations in the world, is blessed with natural and cultural heritages. Cultural heritages are verifications of the material and spiritual lives of peoples. It follows then that preserving and conserving the cultural heritages of a country is like preserving the existence of the peoples of the country (Ellene, 2003). Even though Ethiopia has a variety of unique and precious cultural heritages, it was only by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that it was able to draw the first world wide attention in archeological research. The discovery of ancient hominids in Ethiopia shows that the nation is original home of mankind. (Ibid)

Ethiopia has a rich tradition of both secular and religious music, singing and dancing, and these together constitute an important part of cultural life. Singing accompanies many agricultural activities as well as religious festivals and ceremonies surrounding life's milestone-birth, marriage and death. Best clothes are worn in these important events.

In the Ethiopian community, musical instruments play a social and entertaining role. Traditional musical instruments include *Massinko*, *Kirar*, *Washint*, *Begena* and *Kebero*. The single stringed *Massinko* produces a wide variety of melodies. The *Kirar* is a lyre – like plucked instrument with 5 or 6 strings while the *Begena* is the portable harp. Up in the hills can be found boys looking after cattle and playing on their *Washint*, a simple reed flute played with both hands. Very common in popular and religious music is the *Kebero*, played with the hands. When the women and men dance in their beautiful white robes, they dance on the rhythm of the drums.

National dresses are usually worn for festivals, which are made basically in woven cotton with long strips sewn together. It is called *Habesha Libse*. Sometimes shiny threads are woven in to the fabric for an elegant effect. These traditional clothes are still worn on a day-to-day basis in the countryside.

The hair styles are also additional costumes. The women usually wear dozens of plaits (*Sheruba*), tightly braided to the head. Young children often have their heads shaved with some leftovers on the front side of their head (*Kuncho*), while the adults usually keep it short. But in places like Afar, the men keep their hairs long and tightly braid it. In many parts of Ethiopia, elderly women will cover their hair with a *Shash*, a cloth that is tied on the head.

Among many traditional customs, respect (especially of one's elders) is very important. In Ethiopian culture, it is customary to rise up

out of one's seat or give up one's bed for an older friend or family member, even if they may be just a year older. Even when elders speak, any other youngsters should be quiet and should not talk with equal tone. Not to do so is a sign of being rude.

Ethiopians place a great emphasis on formal but very courteous greetings to both friends and strangers. Shaking hands and kissing shoulders are common greetings between the societies. When it comes to elderly people, it is taken as respectful to kiss their knees while greeting them.

Ethiopian cuisine is the other most important part in conveying Ethiopian culture. Ethiopian's staple grain is called *Teff*, and from its flour *injera*, a large pan-cake – like bread, is made. Thick stew called *wat* is the most important dish that is served with *injera*. *Wat* can be made from meat, chicken, vegetables or beans. These thick stews are portioned onto the *injera* and diners eat by scooping these portions into rolled-up pieces of the *injera* that they have torn off. The food is eaten with the fingers of the right hand. Ethiopian brew a barley beer called *Tella* and honey wine called *Tej*, usually served in holidays and celebrations. The coffee ceremony is the other culture in Ethiopia. Objects like *Jebena* (coffee pot) and *Sinne* (cups) are used to prepare the ceremony.

Another unique feature of Ethiopian culture is its native style of painting that is to be found in every church and in many other locations. The almond-shaped eyes on the figures are particularly appealing characteristics. These figures are directed and simplistic portrayal with strong colors and clear lines.

In this section, a brief discussion on Ethiopian culture is made so that it will be a good reference to the analysis of cultural aspects in children's fiction.

## **2.5 Ethiopian Children's Literature in English**

In this section, an attempt has been made to make a review on Ethiopian children's books in English. When I write of Ethiopian children's literature in English, I refer to creative writings in English done by any writers for children and thus focus on Ethiopia.

There are a number of children's book writers nowadays. But most of the compilations are dominated by few children's book writers like Alem Eshetu, Tesfaye G/Mariam and Aboneh Ashagre. They wrote books in both languages. Tesfaye G/Mariam, for instance, has produced a number of stories for children's both in Amharic and English. He has written more than 14 children's books in Amharic and more than 11 children's books in English. The English ones include 'Baba the Fool', 'Chuchu and Shasho', 'Blame Me Not', 'What If I Refuse', 'The First Blessing', and 'Shifting For Fun'. 'Baba the Fool' and 'Chuchu and Shasho' have few pages but enough illustration for kids to understand the stories.

Ethiopian traditional tales have also had the chance to be written in English. One traditional tale 'Silly Mamo' has got the chance to be translated into English in 2002. The book was prepared by Yohannes Gebre Georgis and illustrated by Bogale Belachew. The text is presented as bilingual text both in English and Amharic, and includes a glossary. This book had become children's Africana Book Award winner. The book is a unique choice for librarians looking to strength their international or bilingual folktale collection.

There are also non-Ethiopian children's book writers for Ethiopian children. Jane Kurtz is one of the writers who wrote for Ethiopian children. Her book is in the title 'Fire on the Mountain'. The other example could be Lara Deguefe, who was a teacher in elementary school

in Ethiopia. Her book is entitled 'Korkoro Boy and Other Stories', which is found in Shama children's books series.

My blue ink print series is another collection of books for children. It has children's books in different languages. The English ones include 'Necho and The Hungry Hyena', 'The Butterfly and The Little Frog', 'The Race' and 'Mimi's Baby Brother'.

There are also collections of stories written by different authors: like 'Coo-coo-loo' by members of Writers for Ethiopian Children that comprise of ten members. These children's book writers are Alula Pankrhurst, Firmaye Alemu, Macha Chamargachew, Michael Daniel, Natasha Selinger, Renate Ahrens-Kramer, Samuel Lijalem, Tesfaye G/mariam, Tesfaye Gesesse and Yewoineshet Masresha. All the collections in this book are written in both Amharic and English language. This change in use of international language is a benefit to extend the cultural heritage of the children's literature in Ethiopia.

There are many books designed to be a good reference for young adults in their lessons. One model is a book entitled 'How does your heart work?' which still is a bilingual text. This book helps children to get a closer look to nature.

Almost all books are printed in black and white although some books have very attractive pictures on their pages. One model could be 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption', a story by Sahle Tilahun with the attractive colorful illustration. 'Fire on The Mountain' is the other example with the colorful pictures on each pages of the book. Often a very young child can read the story from the pictures found in the book long before he recognizes the words in print. He cannot do this when the structure of the story is weak or when the pictures either contradict the story or fail to communicate anything specific. This problem is seen in some of the books. For example, in a book 'Chuchu and Shasho' the

picture of the boy is presented with two different traditional hair styles in consecutive pages that represent the same day.

The writers show an encouraging attempt in using a second language in writing fiction. The prices for these books are so cheap ranging from 5 to 20 birr in average. But some gets up to 25 birr like 'Fire on the Mountain' and 'Korkoro Boy and other stories' which happens to be of highest quality.

In this study, fictions will be taken as data source to analyze the depiction of Ethiopian culture in children's stories, either in their words or their illustration. The six children's fictions studied are 'Fire on the Mountain', 'My Father Sold me for Adoption', 'Barcot's Visit to Hyena Land', 'The Bully', 'Ferega the Frog' and 'Korkoro Boy'.

## **2.6 Related Studies**

In this section, an attempt has been made to review related researches done on children's literature.

Research studies has been made on Ethiopian children's literature with their main focus on selected Ethiopian children's books in Amharic, either on their condition, design, illustration, language or their implication on the mind of the child reader. Some research works were also conducted on different foreign children's books.

Dereje Melaku was one of the researchers who made his MA thesis on children's literature with the topic "The State of Children Literature in Amharic" in 1994. He focused on the background history of children's literature in Ethiopia and the development on the field until 1994. He comments that translated books have brought much cultural diffusion. He suggests that original works based on a variety of traditional folktales are more useful than translations as they sound closer home and cultivate and propagate the cultural roots of the nation.

Lensie Bekele is another master's thesis researcher with a topic "Children's literature: Its Impact on the Mind of the Child Reader" in 2005. The purpose of her study was to identify features of literature which would have a positive impact on the child reader during the different stages of his/her growth. She says that there is direct relationship between the reading interests of children and their developing mind. She used foreign children's book for study. She briefly mentions that children's literature does not only increase their knowledge of the world but also serves as a 'release' from the daily routines life-not to mention the reading and other skills they developed from others. She explains that children's literature enables children to get acquainted with their surroundings, with the norms of the society in which they live, provide answers for some puzzles of life and help them explore the outside world.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to review important concepts related to children's literature and culture. Moreover, Ethiopian children's literature in English has been reviewed. In the next chapter, analysis of cultural aspects in children's books in English will be made thoroughly.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL ASPECTS IN CHILDREN'S FICTION IN ENGLISH**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the cultural aspects of children's fiction. The term aspect, in this study, refers to parts/elements of culture that are found in the texts. In view of this, the following aspects of Ethiopian culture are discussed: social values and norms, social roles, objects, customs/ festivals, beliefs/ superstitions, and finally language/ symbols. As stated in the introductory chapter, the study makes descriptive analysis of data from Ethiopian children's books in English. In this analysis, not only sentences or words are analyzed, but also the illustrations found in the texts since children's books express more through their pictures than through their wordings. The words are taken as extracts while the illustrations are appended at the end of the thesis.

#### **3.1 SOCIAL VALUES AND NORMS**

One important cultural aspect in Ethiopian children's fiction in English is social value and norms of the society. Social values and norms are anything members of culture aspire to or hold in high esteem. Even if these values and norms are human creations, they are considered of great worth. These values and norms are rules in a certain society that should be achieved and must not be avoided at any cost. Social values that are central to Ethiopian culture include respect, ways of greetings and many more. These social values and norms will be discussed in this section.

The first children's book studied for this particular aspect of culture is 'Fire on the Mountain'. This children's fiction is written by a non-Ethiopian writer, Jane Kurtz and illustrated by Yohannes Fitsumbirhan. It has 28 pages with best illustrations. The story is about a young boy, named Alemayu, and his life in a rich man's house. There are many cultural aspects identified in this book. Social values are one of them.

In showing respect the servants who work with Alemayu do not respond directly to their master. They rather bend their heads down. And they bow their heads while taking orders.

*... All the servants but Alemayu bowed their heads and went about their works. But Alemayu said, "many times, when I watched my uncle's sheep, I too, stayed in the cold air of the mountains throughout the night with only a thin cloak against the cold." Rage choked the rich man's voice...*

When all the other servants achieved all the values expected, Alemayu didn't. This offended the master. As the norm and values of the country Alemayu was supposed to keep silent even if he had a lot to say on the matter; because he is with his master, not with his colleagues. This violation led Alemayu to spend the night at the mountain.

*"Are you trying to make me even angrier?"  
"No master," said Alemayu. "I speak the truth."  
The rich man looked around at all his servants.  
They did not appear to be listening but he knew they were. "We will see if you are telling the truth or lying."*

The extract tells more about the norm of the society on telling the truth. If a person is not telling the truth, it is taken as violating the norm and might lead him to lose the trust of the society. This is actually

universal value. And in the above extract we observe that the master is getting angrier whenever he thinks that Alemayu is not telling the truth. To be lied is a symbol of disrespect.

Greeting is the most important part in Ethiopian culture. In 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption', the other selected children's book, many ways of greetings take place between different people. This children's fiction is written by Sahle Tilahun and illustrated by Eneyew Tsegaye. It is a 32 pages text with great illustrations and story.

The story is about a shepherd, Alemu who lived in the southern region of Ethiopia, at a time when the area was hit by severe famine. His family was among those that were hit hard by the famine. Alemu's father, who loved his son dearly, was forced to give him up for adoption. What began as a terrible misfortune and a painful separation, led to a happy future both for Alemu and his family as Alemu's new life offered him the opportunity to go to school. School had been a mere dream for Alemu and his friends in his old neighborhood. All the ways of greetings found in the text are related with the norms of the society.

When Alemu and his father were on their journey they met many people and they greeted them in a respectful way. It is shown on the illustration on page 9 in the book (Picture 1.1). They removed their hats and bowed in front of the people. When Alemu and his father arrived at his new father's house, he greeted Ato Gemechu (the adoptive father) by kissing his feet. This greeting is usually done to elders to show respect (Picture 1.2). In the meantime, the hat is removed from the head. Sometimes the greeting involves kissing the knees. Kissing the cheek or the shoulder follows after the elder picks the person up on both hands.

*... It was on the fourth day about 5 p.m. that my father and I arrived at the land owner, Ato Gemechu's house. Each in turn, we kissed Ato Gemechu's feet, he also kissed us on our cheek and we were told to sit down.....*

Kissing the knees or feet is not only for greeting but also to say thank you for one's deed. When Alemu's father arranged the marriage for Alemu, the gratitude was expressed by kissing the father's knees.

*... Meanwhile my father insisted that his friend, Ato Tefere, let his daughter be my wife. I didn't have a chance to say no. what I had to do was say, "thank you" and kiss his feet. I really didn't like it.*

And once again, when Alemu was allowed to attend school, he kissed his father and mother's feet to show his thankfulness and respect. This norm is attended by young ones while the elders show their class at the same time.

*...that night my father talked to me in a very special way "my dear son, I love you so much that I have decided to let you and your wife go to school, starting immediately" I jumped up, ran to him and kissed his feet. I also kissed my mother's feet. I was very very happy.....*

The way of greeting is an important aspect in Ethiopian culture. It is always taken as the first important step in beginning communication whether with neighbors or strangers. But the way of greeting differs according to the relationship between the people. Kissing shoulders is the most common one in the society. If it is between close people like family members, greeting is done by kissing the cheeks. Such way of greetings are observed in 'My father Sold Me for Adoption' between father and son and again in 'Fire on the Mountain' between brother and sister.

*... While he was still a long way down the road, his sister ran out to meet him and kissed him on both cheeks and wept with him over the news he brought. ...*

On ‘My Father Sold Me for Adoption’ the wedding between Alemu and a young girl was made in the traditional way. First Alemu’s father insisted on having marriage arrangement between Alemu and his friend’s daughter. This is seen as a social value in the community. It is done to show respect for the female’s family. When Alemu’s father asked Alemu about it, Alemu agreed even if he didn’t like it. Because, if he refused to do so, he will be considered as a person who doesn’t respect the culture or his parents. This norm tied Alemu to be in an early marriage.

*It was so confusing. Imagine, at 13 years of age becoming a husband and my promised wife being 6 years old. I couldn’t escape from it. I prayed’ “God of my neighbors! Please help me. Amen.*

Such norms are of great worth in Ethiopian culture. In general there are many parts in the stories that depicted the norms and social values expected to be fulfilled in the society. The most valued norms being respect and special way of greeting the fictions made a strong reflection while telling the story and teaching the moral.

### **3.2 SOCIAL ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

The other important cultural aspects, identified in children’s fictions are social roles and relationships. The social roles in a culture are rights and responsibilities associated with gender or age. Roles and relationships reflect what to do and what not to do which engaged in any social activities. There are certain kinds of relationships expressed between people in a society and it differs from culture to culture. In

Ethiopian culture, women's role is totally different from men's role in work, responsibility or decision making.

Social roles were the important aspects identified in children's books in English. When we read 'Fire on the Mountain', Alemayu is a shepherd, a role usually given for young boys in Ethiopia. He takes care of the cattle all day and collects fire wood for cooking.

*... So Alemayu became a watcher of cows. While he was watching the cows, he also watched the rich man, who rode by everyday on his mule. Behind the mule walked a man who carried the rich man's umbrella, and behind him walked seven servants with baskets of food on their heads...*

In this book, we can also observe the roles of the servants. The servants follow at the back carrying baskets of food (Picture 2.1). Before they serve food, the servants would bring water for guests to wash their hand, since Ethiopian cuisine is eaten by scooping with the finger (Picture 2.2).

*... After he and his friends were seated at the mesob, a servant brought water so they could wash their hands. The smells grew as strong as loud music but no food was brought to the great basket....*

Alemayu's sister is a cook in the house of the rich man. This could reflect the role of women in Ethiopian culture. While the other men servants work outside the house she stays in the kitchen cooking *wat* and baking *injera*.

*Then Alemayu packed a small bag with some food, an extra shirt, and his shepherd's flute and set off to find his sister, who was a cook in a house of rich man.*

The same role of a woman is reflected in the book entitled 'Korkoro Boy', a story is written by a non- Ethiopian children's book writer, Lara Deguefe. Bashir's mother is the one who goes to the market to buy food, and cooks in the house. Moreover, it is the woman who prepares the bread that is made at the holiday.

*He especially liked going to the foreigners' residence. They always had many tin cans. All their food seemed to come out of them. Perhaps they were too lazy to go to the market with a basket to buy things and cook all day like his mother did.*

The job of a poor kid in town is so much different from that of the countryside. In the book entitled 'Korkoro Boy' this role is depicted clearly through the main character. Bashir (the main character) lives in the market place in one-room hut with his parents. His parents are poor and couldn't afford sending Bashir to school. So he spends his days collecting empty cans for his father. This made him to be called "Korkoro Boy".

*... And he [Bashir] had a job which is a big deal when you are only eight. He was a korkoro boy and sent around to house everyday with an old string bag on his back and asking for empty cans and bottles. He would trudge along the streets shouting 'korkoro-allay' (anyone with any tin cans?) to announce his passing by....*

Bashir wanted to help his mother by changing the traditional pot that is made of clay since it is heavy for her and is hurting her. But this was not a concern to his father who believes that it is a women's duty to care about the house. He believes that he is only responsible for the tins he flattens.

*... His father didn't even take note of this because that was women's work. It was a plastic one he really wanted because then his father couldn't take it and flatten it into what ever he wanted to make....*

As a tradition men do not engage themselves in any house work. In the society it is called women's work. This is clearly depicted in the story when Bashir's father pushes himself away from the responsibility that his wife needs a better water container.

*... He cut the large tins two- thirds down and fitted them with long handles to make saucepans which women bought for roasting coffee as is the custom....*

In the above extract, we can also understand that it is the woman who is engaged in making the traditional coffee. This role of women is also depicted in 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption'. On page 31 of the book, the woman is making coffee for the guests (Picture 1.3).

In this particular book, it also depicted that a man can have more than one wife. Such status is usual when the man is capable of feeding two families. At time the number of wives might increase if the man is wealthy enough. If not the society might not allow it to be. The wives might leave in the same compound or nearby village. This arrangement is done by the will of the previous wife.

*"Alemu my boy is a good boy" my new father said. "He is working very hard with us and is obedient and honest." My father's first wife agreed.*

All in all, the children's books studied in this section reflect the roles of a young boy and women in the society. The duties of a young boy would be taking orders from elders and helping the little works in the house while the women in Ethiopian culture is responsible for all the

house work available. The men have nothing to do with that part of life but can make decisions whenever needed. The fictions also reflect the relationship between the societies.

### **3.3 MATERIAL CULTURE**

These aspects of culture are products of human manufacture. These aspects include objects that societies make and use, ways of preparing food and ways of exchanging goods and service. Ethiopian culture comprises many kinds of technologies that help them to survive. These technologies are traditional objects that they manufacture for their daily use. These artifacts have particular symbolism for a culture.

The other major cultural aspect depicted in children's book in English is material culture, or artifacts that symbolize Ethiopian culture. This aspect is reflected in 'Fire on the Mountain'. While Alemayu was on the field he played flute, *washint*, a significant musical instrument in Ethiopia (Picture 2.3). He spends most of his time by playing the flute to himself. On the illustration found on page 5, it is easy to observe Alemayu playing the flute.

*... While the sheep grazed, he would find a rock somewhere out the wind where he could play his shepherd's flute and watch the birds and dream of flying....*

*Kirar* is the other musical instrument used in the story (Picture 2.4). The rich man ordered the servants to play the instrument for the celebration of his 'victory'. Such traditional musical instruments are commonly used in the society for celebrations and festivals. The musical instruments are used both in secular and religious ceremonies.

... Finally, the master waved to a nearby servant. "Here! Can't you see we're tired of waiting? Play us some music on the Kirar to make the minutes pass." The servant lifted his Kirar. His fingers began to move but not once did they touch the strings....

In the extract a reader can also understand that *kirar* has string and is played with fingers. This explanation helps to know the traditional instrument more. The other important object was *mesob* (illustrated on page 10), a wicker table used as a dining table to serve food. On the *mesob*, there lies the *injera* with the spicy *wat*.

... After he and his friends were seated at the *mesob*, a servant brought water so they could wash their hands. The smells grew as strong as loud music but no food was brought to the great basket....

The same cultural aspect is reflected in the book 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption'. When the mother was making food in the kitchen (page 7), it is easy to observe the traditional utensils of Ethiopia. The pan, called *mitad*, is placed on three stones and is used to bake the *injera* and *kita* (Picture 1.4).

The *mesob* and *agelgil* are also the other objects that could be taken as other pieces of the culture. *Mesob* is used to put in the baked *injera*. The mother puts the food inside the *agelgil* for the journey. This small bowl like bag is made up of animal's skin and dry grasses and is used to take foods from place to place. The other object in the picture is the *kil*. This particular object is used as water container. Usually Ethiopians use the *agelgil* and the *kil* while they go out for a long journey. In the same book, there are small chairs that are illustrated in the small house of Alemu. The traditional chairs are portrayed; the one

four-legged chair made of animal skin and the other three-legged chair made of special wood. These chairs are hand-made.

The other object portrayed in this book is the pot that the women carry to fetch water from the river. This is observed on page 22, when the little girl carries the pot on her back and heading to the river (Picture 1.5). In 'Korkoro Boy', the same kitchen-equipment is depicted.

*... But there was something he longed to find and never failed to ask and look for everywhere. A jerry can, either of plastic or tin, to take home to his mother for her to fetch water with from the river. The earthen pot she carried on her back everyday was so heavy, that already, she had become somewhat bent and stopped....*

The traditional house of Ethiopia is the other cultural reflection observed in 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption'. This traditional house, hut, is built from dry grass and is round in shape. It has a long trunk in the middle of it to support the roof that is also made of dry grass (Picture 1.3). The illustration of the hut is seen on page 28 and 31 clearly. The same traditional house is also portrayed in 'Barcot's Visit to Hyena Land'.

To conclude, the objects depicted in these children's book are *washint*, *kirar*, *mesob*, *agelgil*, *mitad*, *kil*, hut, pot and the traditional chairs. These cultural artifacts are mostly depicted on the illustrations. While some are used as their original name given by the society, some are translated into English. For example, flute is used in the English term whilst its original name in the Ethiopian society is *washint*. But for the others, this is not the case. For instance *mesob* and *kirar* takes the original Amharic term and are used in the story. The use of these original terms contributes a lot to the introduction of the labels of the objects in the society.

### 3.4 CUSTOM/ FESTIVAL

Custom is something that people always do in a particular way by tradition. This traditional practice helps societies in culture to behave in similar way. Festival is a time of celebration often one of religious significance. Sometimes it is a program or series of performances or other cultural events, usually held at regular intervals, regularly in one place. There are many religious or cultural festivals held in Ethiopia at different times of the year.

The coffee ceremony is one of the important regular social gatherings in the society. In ‘My Father Sold Me for Adoption’, when Alemu’s birth parents and adoptive parents were discussing about life, they were accompanied by the traditional coffee ceremony (Picture 1.3). Even if this culture of Ethiopia is not told in the story, it is clearly shown in the picture on page 31. There is the coffee pot, called *Jebena*, and the cups, *Sinne*, with the little breads as the snack for the coffee ceremony.

In ‘Barcot’s Visit to Hyena Land’, Barni’s mother orders her son to invite the neighbors for the coffee ceremony she prepared. This ceremony helps people to discuss any social matters in their neighborhood or village.

*Before Barni could find a hiding place and shout  
“Nega!”, his mother came out of the door of her  
tukul and called him....*

*“Barni!” she said, “come and call the neighbors  
for Buna,”*

The book ‘Korkoro Boy’ also reflects the traditional coffee ceremony partially. Bashir’s father makes household implements out of the cans that Bashir collects. And one of the household implements is the saucepan that is used in the coffee ceremony.



*... He cut the large tins two-thirds down and fitted them with long handles to make small saucepans which women bought for roasting coffee as is the custom when friends drop by for chatting and just visit. The coffee beans were roasted over the hot household coals so all could enjoy the delicious aroma. They are then pounded in a small wooden mortar before being thrown into a jebena of boiling water....*

This traditional ceremony includes many activities. One of the activities is explained in the above extract. The roasting of the coffee beans is important because people need the aroma as much as drinking the coffee. The coffee should be pounded in a mortar. *Jebena* is the coffee pot that is used to boil the coffee.

The most important traditional ceremony of the country is also depicted in 'Korkoro Boy'. This traditional ceremony is *Boohay*. It is most of young boys' festival with many traditional activities.

*... But today he wasn't interested in collecting cans. Everywhere in the market they were preparing for Boohay. The women had collected the special seasonal rushes from the river or fields or from the little girls who came around selling them for the Boohay bonfires as is the custom. They were also baking spiced bread which they wrapped in the leaves of false banana and placed on the top of three hot stones over the coals of the open fire....*

This great celebration involves the *Boohay* bonfire and is accompanied by the specially baked bread, the *Boohay* bread. While the boys are engaged singing and dancing, the women will be busy preparing the *Boohay* bread. The celebration takes place once in a year at summer time, just twenty two days before the beginning of the Ethiopian new year.

*... It was the annual Boohay celebration that takes place just two weeks before their (Ethiopian) new year which is during the second week of September. This celebration is especially for boys....*

The above extract tells more about Ethiopia, which is the unique calendar. It explains that Ethiopian New Year starts in the middle of September.

Ethiopian young boys gather in groups and celebrate this festival in a special way. Since *Boohay's* celebration includes going to people's house, the young boys spend the day going here and there. When the boys go from house to house, they would get specially baked bread or a few coins. The old traditional didn't include giving coins but since culture is dynamic, such practice is common in the town area. When they get these breads or coins, they ask a special blessing for the house and go to the next. This all is reflected in the story.

The boys hold a stick and make a loud sound using the stick and their voice so that people would listen to them. Holding stick is a tradition. Long ago the young boys in the countryside used to sing *Boohay* songs. Since these boys were shepherds, they hold the stick to protect their cattle. Still now, young boys hold the stick when they sing the *Boohay* song. When they gather around the bonfire, they sing a special song.

*... With the tall stacked rushes alight, the boys would all dance around them for good luck in the harvest of the coming year and they would eat the spiced bread while sitting around the dying coals of the fire....*

As a tradition, marriage arrangement by parents is common, and is made when the couples are young. They believe that the couples will grow up together and will have strong relationship for the marriage. Such early marriage has been Ethiopian's culture for long time, but now it is practiced only in some parts of the countryside. In 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption' this custom is depicted clearly. Alemu's father arranges the marriage for the good deed of Alemu.

*"Alemu, my boy, is a good boy," my new father said. "He is working very hard with us and is obedient and honest."*

*My father's first wife agreed. She said, "He is good. I like him very much."*

*"Even though he is young, I will get a wife for him. Husbands and wives should grow up together." Father reminded his wife, "Don't you remember when you and I married? We were younger than he is now. Don't worry, I have an idea. I will ask my friend for his daughter. She is 6 years old."*

It is a custom in the society to ask a girl for marriage. Especially when the couple are young, the family of the male asks the family of the female. At this stage, the couples have no say on the matter. They might not even be aware until the family finish the deal and set a wedding day.

In the tradition, the bride and the bridegroom will sit in different mules while an adult accompanies the bride holding an umbrella (Picture 1.5). Other young children will be around the newlyweds. This ceremony is tried to be depicted in the text on an illustration on page 23.

*... The marriage was conducted in a very special way, so that we would grow up together as husband and wife. It was an amazing decision. I*

*had hoped to be much older when I married, and  
be able to choose my own wife....*

Many Ethiopian traditional cloths are depicted in many children's books. In 'Fire on the Mountain' the master wears hut that is made of the dry grass. *Netela* is the other traditional cotton woven cloth that he wears. He also puts on the animal skin on his coat in stead of *netela*, whenever he goes out. This is observed on the illustration given on page 6 of the book. The animal skin is worn by people to show their heroism (Picture 2.1). Most of the time, they put on the animal's skin they hunted to show their strength. The servants hold long sticks as a traditional practice.

The other traditional cloth is *shemma*, a thin blanket made of cotton. Alemayu was wearing *shemma* to protect himself from the cold at night.

*... That evening Alemayu's sister kissed him,  
and Alemayu set out only a Shemma wrapped  
around him and his flute in his  
hand....Alemayu shivered and wrapped his  
Shemma around his shoulders....The wind bit  
his feet and he couldn't tuck them far enough  
under his Shemma to make warm....*

National dresses were worn on the special days, in the story 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption'. On the wedding day (Picture 1.6) and the graduation day (Picture 1.7), all the people put on the cotton waved cloth with shiny threads at the end of each edge. These clothes are usually in white color as it is clearly put on the illustrations on page 23 (the wedding) and page 29 (the graduation). In almost all of the time, the women were wearing the *shash* and some of the man had the hut on their heads. The *shash* is made of cotton while the hut is made up of dry grass. Some old men hold a fly swish made from the tail of a horse. Only men use it for showing maturity and sometimes prosperity (Picture 1.5).

The other cultural element described in most of the books is the traditional cuisines of Ethiopia. In 'Fire on the Mountain' the servants were preparing food in the kitchen when the master arrived.

*... That night when the rich man arrived home, he saw his servants carrying stacks of the white finest injera. From the kitchen came smells of wat of all kinds. The man rubbed his hands. His stomach rumbled....*

The *injera* and *wat* are the most famous Ethiopian cuisines. The extract conveys that the white *injera* is the finest one and *wat* could be made in different kinds. The specially baked bread for a special holiday is the *Boohay-bread*. In 'Korkoro Boy' we observe the process of making this bread by the girls.

*The women had collected the special seasonal rushes from the river or fields or from the little girls who came around selling them for the Boohay bonfires as is the custom. They were also baking spiced bread which they rapped in the leaves of false banana and placed on top of three hot stones over the coals of the open fire.*

It is a tradition in Ethiopia to slaughter an ox for Easter. It is never the women who slaughter an ox but the adult men. Women are not allowed to do so as a tradition. After the men slaughter an ox, they share the meat equally. It is called 'Kircha'. The story, 'Barcots Visit to Hyena Land' starts at the eve of Easter when the men gathered on a field to collect their portion of the meat. This part of the story tells more about the social gatherings that are made when holidays approach and the activities that the societies make to celebrate the holiday. This sharing culture is an important aspect in Ethiopian culture.

### 3.5 BELIEFS/ SUPERSTITIONS

Like all other cultural aspects, beliefs are humanly created and are things members of a culture hold to be true. Superstitions, on the other hand, are irrational, but usually deep-seated beliefs in the magical effects of a specific action or ritual, especially in the likelihood that good or bad luck will result from performing it.

The belief of the society is revealed in many parts of the story in the title 'The Bully'. In the society, raw meat is one of the traditional cousins served with hot peppers.

*The size of the bull and the glossy whiteness of the fat excited all the men. But Belay simply waited while the bull was being cut up. He had no special love of raw meat with hot peppers.*

Fasting is Christian religious happening that lasts 56 days during which animal products are forbidden. Young children are not forced to do so. When the fasting ends the people gather and slaughter an ox or a sheep or hen for the holiday, Easter. It is a belief that something must be sacrificed for the celebration of the end of the fasting.

*Besides being a boy, he had not been forced to fast. He had sometimes eaten meat, milk eggs and other animal products over the last fifty-six days.*

The belief that is reflected at this story is that eating the liver, which is not cooked, is seen as a way to make a toddler brave and strong. They believe that a man should be brave and strong no matter what. This might not be done for the females because they are not expected to be brave or strong in the society. In the story, Belay's father gives the liver to Belay.

*... His father took up a bit of the dark-brown liver and dipped it into the hot chili powder. "Here taste this. It will make a man out of you," he said placing it into Belay's mouth. Belay felt the rubbery bit of liver warm in his mouth and chewed on it slowly....*

The liver is served as soon as it is taken from the dead ox. In the tradition of Ethiopia, people think that drinking the blood of dead ox helps to be healthy, and use it as a traditional medicine. They believe that it will add more to the human blood while drinking it. And in some parts of the country, it is taken as a traditional practice that moved from generation to generation and has no explanation at all.

*... "Thank you Abbaye, thank you!" he said and ran off with the blown up bladder in his hand.*

*"Won't you stay and have some of the grilled blood? It's almost ready and it will do you some good," his father shouted after his disappearing figure....*

When Belay lost Hailu on the field, he gently spat into the palm of his left hand then struck it hard with his right index finger. This method is used traditionally by children to find the way when things get lost. When most of the spit flew to some direction they believe that the thing they are looking for is on that direction. Belay used this way to get Hailu and he sure did. This belief usually works for children.

In 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption', Alemu's parents were not spiritual people and used to say that they don't believe in God. And as it is the tradition to inherit parent's belief, Alemu was also like them. He was not as spiritual as his neighbors.

*... Father said, "I think you are right, my daughter, but we don't have faith like our*

*neighbors. That might be the problem....And some day we will have to decide to follow our way or to believe in our neighbor's God...*

This shows that in Ethiopia, there live people with no faith at all. And this as a tradition was taking place in most family. At the end of the story, we see Alemu's parents having a spiritual life.

*... The next day my adaptive father and his family, along with my wife and me, were very impressed by the testimony of my natural parents, and we too accepted Christ as our lord and savior. ...*

There are also supernatural beliefs practiced in the society and this is clearly reflected in the book 'Ferega the Frog'. This story is written by Michael Daniel Ambachew. In this particular story, erroneous belief is depicted when the story moves to the plot. The frog was so bored of the present and wanted to know about the future. Then he went to the wise man, called "tenquay" in the Amharic term or fortune teller. In the society there are people who are called wise people that predict the future with some benefit from their customers.

*Fikru the fortune teller could tell you about the future. But he demanded payment. He demanded a bundle of qat. He chewed the qat and told you your future. He was always right.*

Qat (chat) is a narcotic leaf that grows in the country. This leaf is used by the society for concentration. And the fortune teller uses it while he is telling the future. When the fortune teller predicts the future for the people, they provide different kinds of gifts. As a matter of fact the fortune teller is not only a man. It could also be a woman. These people live in a unique place of heir own and are so feared by the society.

### **3.6 HISTORIC AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AS CULTURAL ASPECT**

Most cultural aspects of a society are the result of historical and economic background of that certain country. They reflect the cultural activities that the members of the culture are engaged in.

One of the historical event in Ethiopian history is the famine that happened in the mid of 1970's. This was depicted in the story 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption'.

*"Alemu, my son," father said sadly, "you know there has been a very bad famine for four years now."*

*It was in 1973 that a sever famine came to the southern part of Shoa. It hit our family especially hard. One by one we sold our animals, our possessions and even our household goods. The family survived for some time.*

In this same book the flag of the country is seen in the compound of the school. This is clearly put in the first page. This is to show that it is the culture of every school in Ethiopia. On page 27 also, Alemu is seen rising up the flag while his schoolmates are standing in a queue (Picture 1.8). In this same book the way Alemu ploughs the field is put in picture on page 20. This economic background tells much about the traditional practices in the country.

Transportation tells a lot about the economic background of the country. In the mean time, it will be easy to understand the technological development. In the book under discussion we observe that there is no any means of transportation and people in the story goes on foot from place to place (Picture 1.5).

*The next day, early in the morning, my father and I got up and started to walk the three day's journey... After walking two and a half days my father showed me Ato Gemechu's Village. It was way out there behind the mountain.*

In 'Fire on the Mountain' a traditional means of transportation is used by the people. On page 8 of the book, we observe a mule as transportation in the story. It tells more about economic background of the people. (Picture 2.1)

*...so Alemayu became a watcher of the cows. While he was watching the cows, he also watched the rich man, who rode by everyday on his mule....*

In 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption' the way Alemu ploughs the field is put in the picture on page 20 of the book. This economic background tells much about the traditional practices in the country. Moreover it expresses the development of the society in using technology (Picture 1.9).

Since Ethiopia is an underdeveloped country, not much of the technologies that the society uses are different from the ancient times. There are still nations and nationalities in Ethiopia that have a unique culture of being naked and bare foot. Even though these Ethiopian children's fictions do not reflect of these parts of Ethiopian culture, it is one of the elements in Ethiopian culture.

In general, expressing the economic background and history of Ethiopia in the story explains more about the cultural objects and cultural beliefs practiced in the country. These aspects are still powerful enough to explain why people use different traditional artifacts.

### 3.8 Language as Cultural Aspect

Perhaps the most important aspect of Ethiopian culture is language. It enables the members to be able to name things around them and communicate meaning with each other. One unique variety of Ethiopian culture is the languages. There are many languages spoken in different nationalities of Ethiopia. The national language of Ethiopia being Amharic, the following discussion is based on the use of these unique languages in an English medium text for reflecting culture.

Since Ethiopian's use a unique language of our own, there are many symbolic terms that are used in naming things around and using them in communication. This common pattern of communication has its own sound system. Since we are dealing with a written text we might not observe these sound systems, but might be possible to identify the symbols. Because, all the texts under study are all in English it is not also possible to see the unique letters of the national language of the country. But there happens to be a book that could show these alphabets on its picture. In 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption', page 27, the picture shows the poster of the school written in Amharic alphabets. But in the rest of the books, such thing is not observed (Picture 1.8).

There are many terms used as their original pronunciation in the book 'Barcot's Visit to Hyena Land'. For example, 'Buna' is an Ethiopian coffee but used in the Amharic term. Barcot's mother is asking him to invite the neighbors to the coffee ceremony.

*... "Barni!" she said, "come and call the neighbors for Buna," But I'm playing coo-coo-loo with Barcot", answered Barni. "I will call 'Awoo' if you don't obey me", warned his mother. "But mummy.....".*

*"Awoo- woo!" howled his mother. "Ishi-ishi!" cried Barni, and went to call the neighbors....*

In the above extract, there are terms that could refer to the Ethiopian unique language. The Amharic term 'Ishi' is used in the story, meaning alright. Barcot says this word twice to show that he agreed quickly. In the above extract, 'Coo-coo-loo' is the other term used for the popular children's hide-and-seek game. One child closes his eyes and shouts 'coo-coo-loo' and the others reply 'Alnegam', meaning 'It has not dawned', until they have found a hiding place. Then they shout 'Negga', meaning 'it has dawned' and the first child starts looking for them. All the terms, 'Coo-coo-loo', 'Alnegam' and 'Nega' are used in the story.

*... "Coo-coo-loo!" said Barcot burying his head and*

*closing his eyes on the knees of uncle Jesse.*

*"Alnegam!" said Barni and ran to look for a hiding place.*

*"Coo-coo-loo!"*

*"Alnegam!"*

*"Coo-coo-loo!"*

*Before Barni could find a hiding place and shout "Nega!", his mother came out of the door of her tukul and called him...*

Introducing these Amharic terms helps to depict the cultural heritages of Ethiopia. The use of these original terms has a great advantage in reflecting the unique language of Ethiopia.

As Ethiopian wedding has its own traditional way, it has also a special song that will be sung for the newlyweds. In the story of 'Barcot's Visit to Hyena Land', this popular wedding song is used in its Amharic term, 'mooshirit-mooshira'. Somewhat like 'Here comes the bride-bridegroom'.

*... Then they saw a big zebra that was killed and laid out in front of the hyena bride and bridegroom. Then all the hyenas started to sing a wedding song for them.*

*“Woo-woo – woo- woo!”*

*Mooshirit – mooshira!*

*Awo-woo-woo-woo.”*

*Then the bride and bridegroom each took a big bite from the leg of the zebra...*

Even if all the terms had an English version of their own, using the Amharic term helps to show Ethiopians national language to readers. Since language is one element of culture, this story introduces a lot of Amharic language terms to depict Ethiopian unique language.

There is also an Amharic term used in ‘The Bully’. The term is ‘Abbaye’, an affectionate word for father, like Daddy.

*... Then he tied off the ends with thin Pieces of intestine and handed it over to Belay. “Thank you Abbaye, thank you!” he said and ran off with the blown up bladder in his hand.*

In conclusion these different aspects of culture are depicted in many of these children’s fiction in English. Many of these aspects are reflected on the illustrations given on the pages of these books. Moreover the wordings were expressive in the way that most of the time they used the original meaning, not the translated one to show most of the symbolic expressions of the culture.

As I tried to explain in the above discussion, many aspects of Ethiopian culture are reflected in this fiction. Even if writers like, Jane Kurtz and Lara Deguefe, are not an Ethiopian, they sounds so familiar with the culture. Jane translated the traditional Ethiopian folktales in to

English and wrote it in a very expressive way. She expressed the culture in a way that any reader in the world would understand. Her way of expressing the social values is so easy that a reader understands how to respond to it. The illustration in each page played a vital role in reflecting the culture. Moreover, the writer made the aspects clear in her story by using the original terms of objects. The effort the writer made in transmitting the exact cultural aspects to the readers is something to appreciate.

In 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption' the writer's use of words and illustrations played significant role in reflecting culture, since the writer is an Ethiopian who is more familiar with Ethiopian culture. Most cultural aspects are portrayed in the colorful illustrations. The use of illustration was the best method that the writer used while reflecting these important cultural aspects. Most of the material cultures are depicted on the pictures while the ideological cultures are reflected in most parts of the story.

The writer of the story 'Korkoro Boy', being a foreigner for the culture, has succeeded in reflecting most aspects of culture to readers by taking the town as a setting for her story. Lara succeeded in depicting the most common traditional practices that could be found even in town area; these facets being the celebration of *Boohay* and the preparation of coffee in the traditional way.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Since children's literature originated from traditional storytelling, the societies express the traditional cultural practices through the stories it produces for the children. And when these stories are retold again and again, they happen to step forward from generation to generation with their potential of transmitting the important cultural aspects of the society. In Ethiopian children's literature story telling takes the first step in reflecting major aspects of cultures of Ethiopia.

The chief aim of this thesis has been to analyze the reflection of Ethiopian cultural aspects in Ethiopian children's literature in English. In addition, the study aimed at exploring the achievements of writers in reflecting Ethiopian culture using English language. Taking the young adult fiction as a data source, the study analyzed these children's fictions and came to the following findings.

The major cultural aspects depicted in Ethiopian children's literature are social values and norms, social roles and relationships, material culture, custom/festival, beliefs/superstitions, historical and economic background and language. These cultural aspects were reflected on the fictions through their wordings and illustrations.

Social values and norms are depicted in many ways so that children can understand them and react accordingly. Meanwhile, roles reflected in these fictions give a genuine depiction of Ethiopian culture to the outside world. The traditions, beliefs and language (use of words) used in the fictions explains more about Ethiopian culture. Even if all these children's books studied are in a foreign language, they have not failed to transmit the culture of Ethiopia which includes its own unique language. The fictions that used these unique symbols or names had

given glossaries for equivalent meanings in English. On the other hand, other Ethiopian cultural aspects like social collectives or arts (like sculptures, fashion and theater) were not as such reflected in these children fictions.

Some of the fictions studied were written by foreigners while the rest were Ethiopians. Even though the foreigners were expected to be somewhat unfamiliar with Ethiopian Culture, they were successful in transmitting the important cultural aspects of Ethiopia through their works. Representativeness is also a character to the other children's fictions reviewed in section 2.5. Most of the fictions studied represent the people of Northern Ethiopia. It is observed that the representativeness is limited to some parts of Ethiopian society. Still some fictions also narrate of Addis Ababa, but were very limited.

The aspects of culture reflected in these fictions were mostly expressed in illustrations and in some parts of the story in wordings. For example, on 'Fire on the Mountains' and 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption', many artifacts and social roles are depicted through the best illustration given on each page. Again the norms of the society in greeting and showing respect are reflected on the illustrations. On the other hand, in the story of 'Korkoro Boy', the traditional ceremony is explained thoroughly in the story by explaining every activity and steps that the ceremony happens.

In general Ethiopian children's fictions in English reflect major aspects of Ethiopian culture. These aspects are social values and norms, social roles, material culture, customs, Beliefs and language. The use of foreign language was not at all an obstacle to depict these cultural facets. Moreover, the writers were successful in expressing these cultural aspects in their creative writings.

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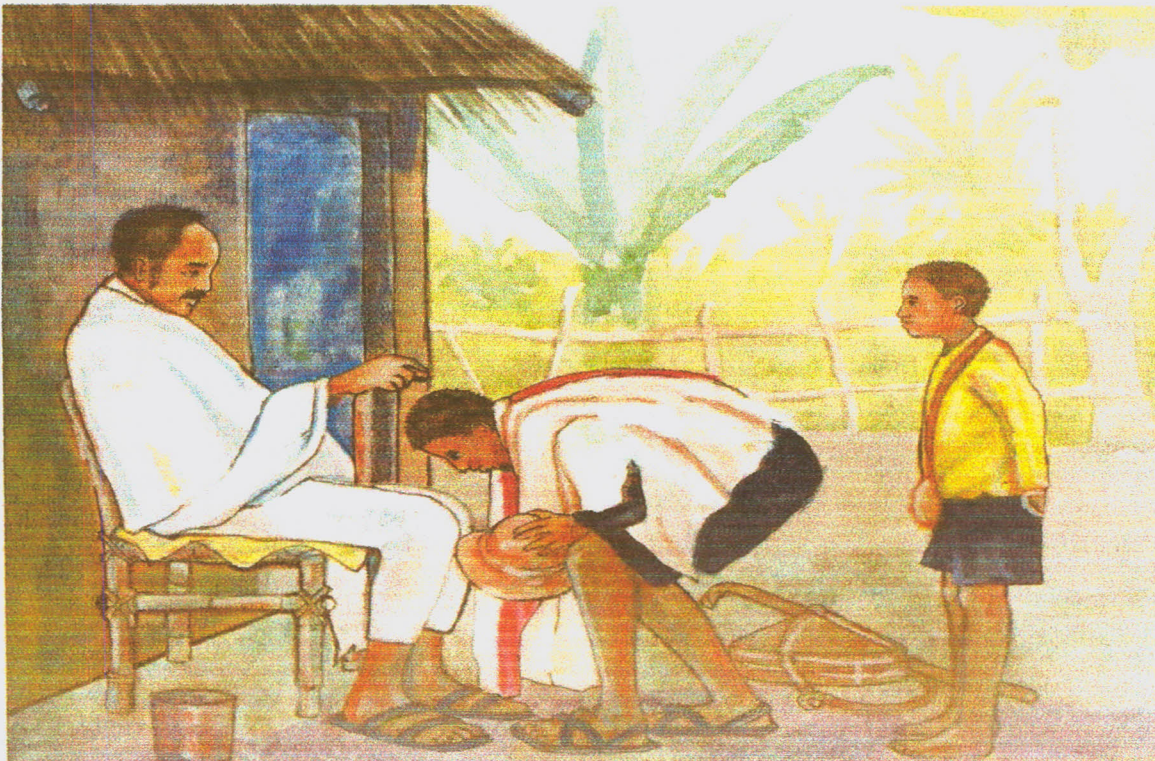
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## APPENDIX I

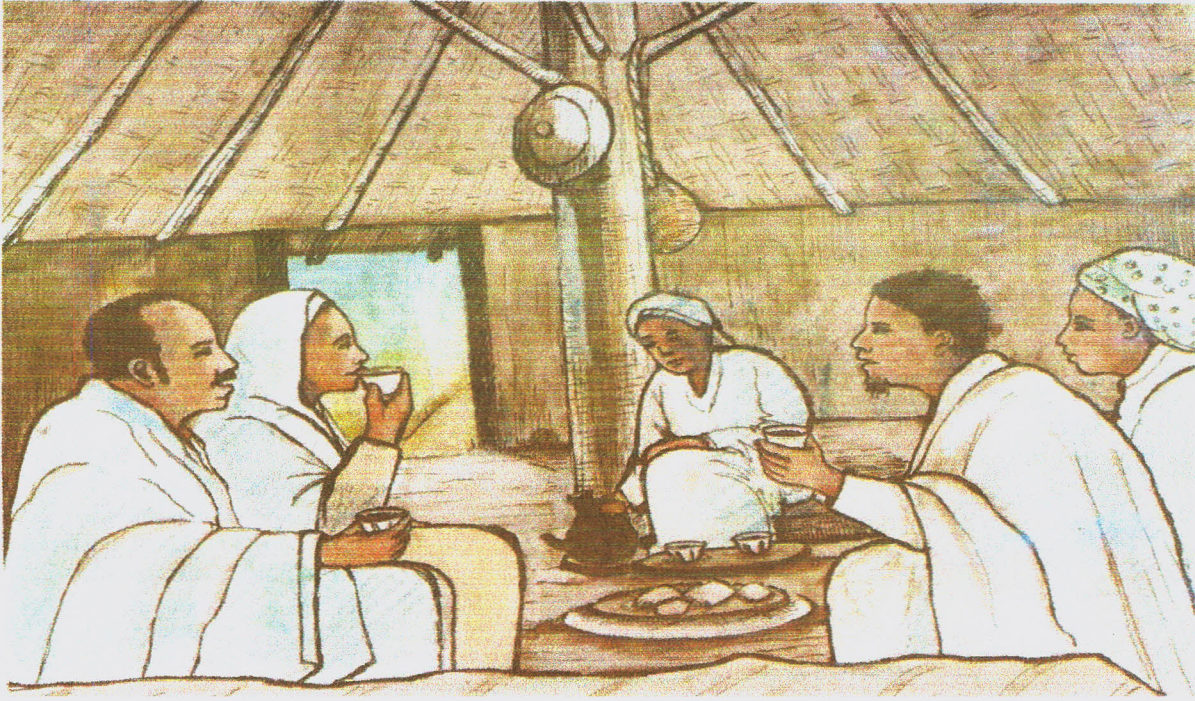
### Illustrations from 'My Father Sold Me for Adoption'



Picture 1.1



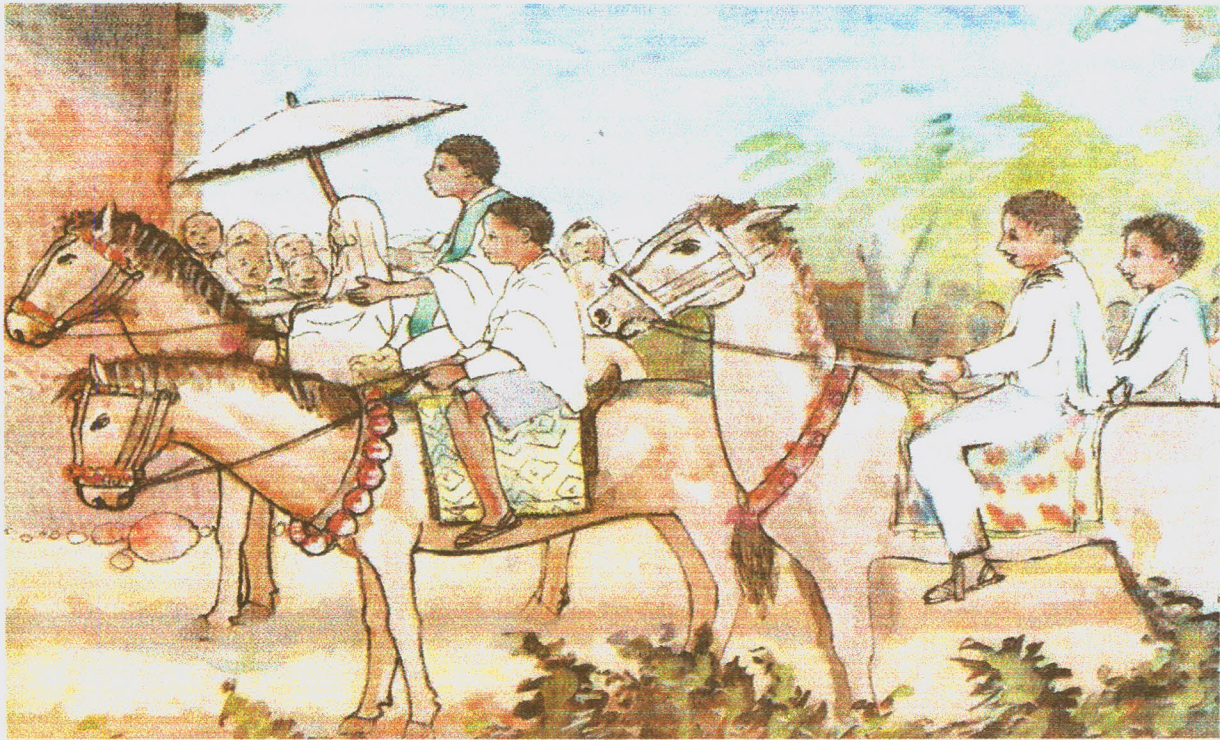
Picture 1.2



**Picture 1.3**



**Picture 1.4**



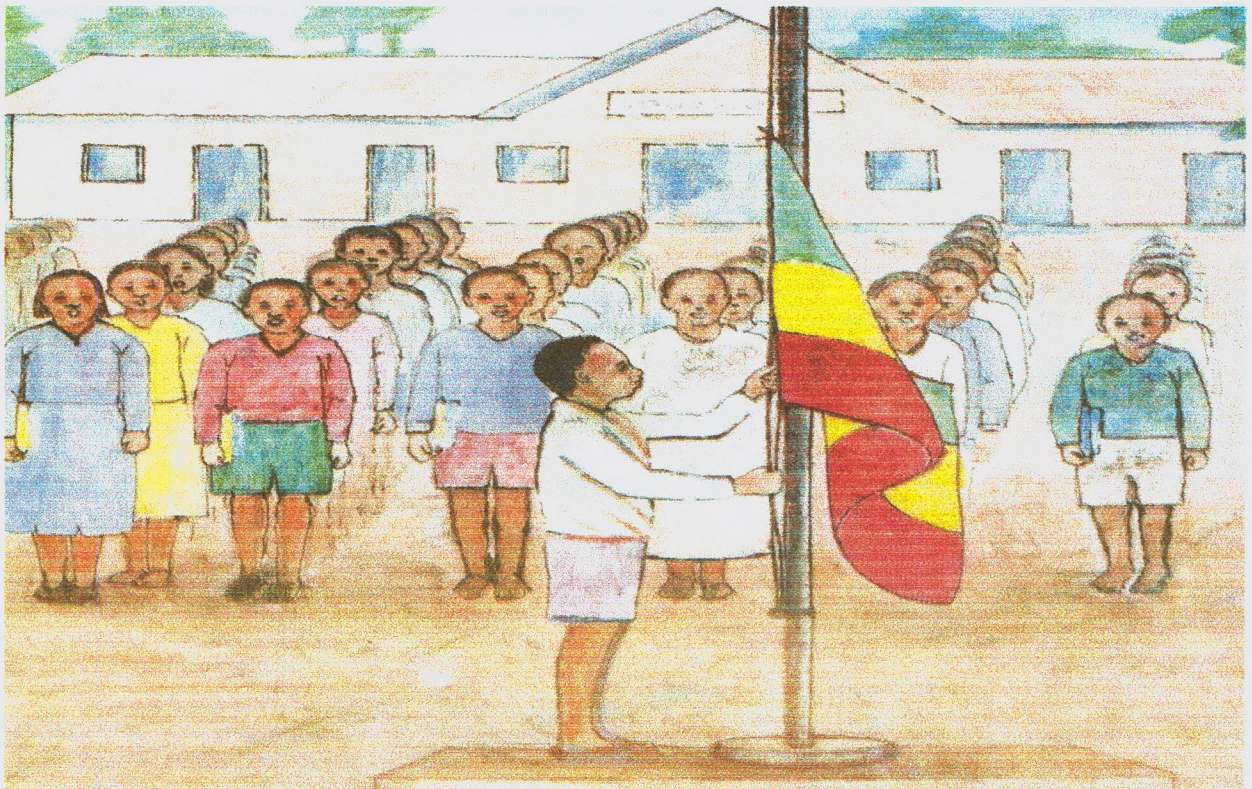
**Picture 1.5**



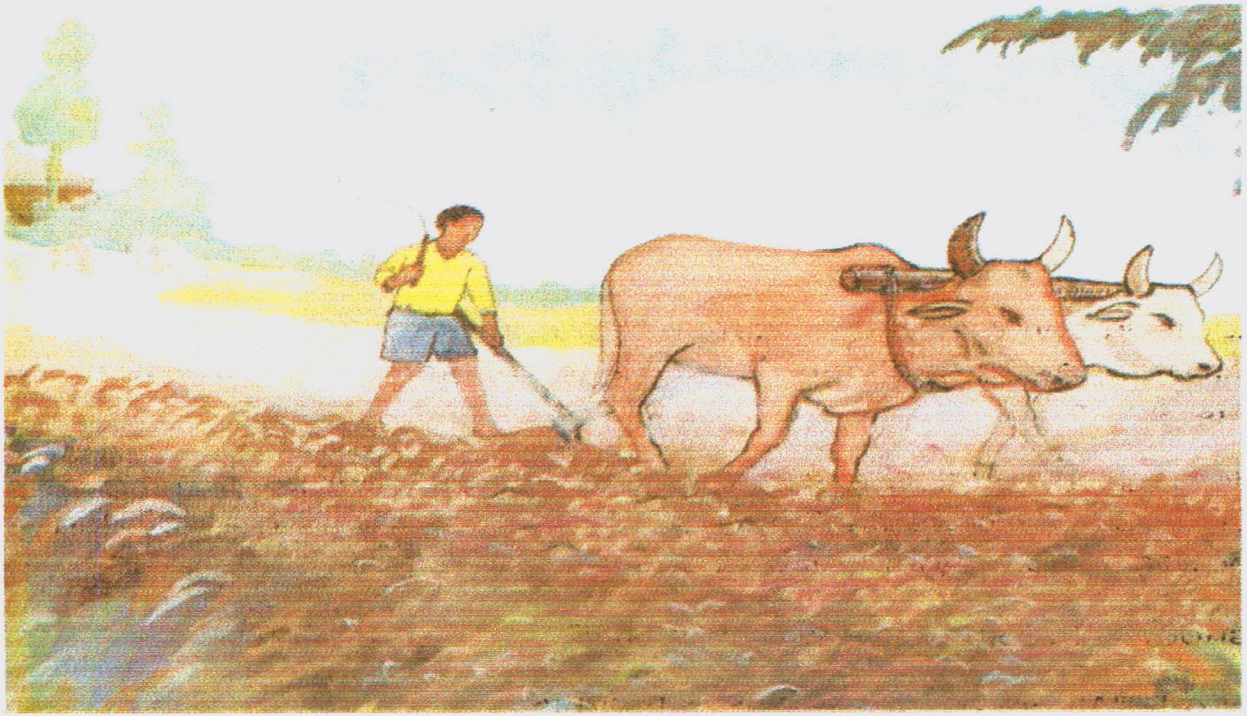
**Picture 1.6**



**Picture 1.7**



**Picture 1.8**



**Picture 1.9**

**APPENDIX II**

**Illustrations from 'Fire on the Mountain'**



**Picture 2.1**



**Picture 2.2**



**Picture 2.3**

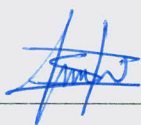


**Picture 2.4**

## Declaration

I the undersigned declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name Simret Wondirad

Signature  \_\_\_\_\_

Date June 30, 2009