



**Addis Ababa University**  
**College of Performing and Visual Arts**  
**School of Theatre Arts**  
**Department of Multimedia Theatre**

**Ethiopian Theatre in the Eyes of Expatriates**

**By**

**Eyasu Sleshi**

**A Thesis Submitted to the College of Performing and Visual Arts,  
School of Theatre Arts, Addis Ababa University, in Partial  
Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in  
Multimedia Theatre**

**May 2022**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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# Letter of Approval

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

College of Performing and Visual Arts

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by **Eyasu Sleshi**, entitled **Ethiopian Theatre in the Eyes of Expatriates** is submitted for the fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master's Degree (MA) in Multimedia Theatre complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards of originality and quality.

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Chair of Department of Graduate Program Coordinator

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Letter of Approval .....	i
Acknowledgments .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	iv
Abstract .....	vi
Chapter One .....	1
Introduction .....	1
1.1. Background .....	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem .....	3
1.3. Research Questions .....	6
1.4. Objective of the Research .....	6
1.4.1. General Objective .....	7
1.4.2. Specific Objectives .....	7
1.5. Significance of the Study .....	7
1.6. Scope and Delimitation .....	7
Chapter Two .....	9
Related Literature Review .....	9
2.1 Introduction .....	9
2.2 Theoretical Framework .....	9
2.3. European Perspectives towards African Theater .....	11
2.4. Afrocentric Perspective and Indigenous Knowledge .....	14
2.5. Eurocentric and Knowledge Production .....	18
2.6. The Concept of Otherness .....	22
2.7. The Philosophy of Colonialism .....	23
Chapter Three .....	28
Research Methodology .....	28
3.1 Introduction .....	28

3.2. Research Design .....	28
3.3. Sampling Design .....	28
3.4. Data Collection Method .....	29
3.5. Data Analysis Technique .....	30
3.6. Research Limitations .....	30
3.7. Research Code of Ethics .....	30
Chapter Four .....	32
Data Analysis and Presentation .....	32
4.1 Introduction .....	32
4.2. Major Gaps Observed in Expatriates' Studies .....	32
4.3. Literary History as a Predominant Motive .....	49
4.4. Revisiting Expatriates' Findings and Conclusions .....	56
Chapter Five .....	58
Conclusions and Recommendations .....	58
5.1 Introduction .....	58
5.2. Conclusions .....	58
5.2. Recommendations .....	59
References .....	61

## **Abstract**

*Since the opening of Higher Education in Ethiopia, various foreign scholars have studied Ethiopian theater. For the past sixty-seven years, these foreign scholars have studied Ethiopian theater with the help of translators. Although the contribution of these foreign scholars to the development of Ethiopian theater is undeniable, their research findings on Ethiopian theater are often misleading. This study argues that Ethiopian theater should also be studied from an Ethiopian perspective. The aim of the study was to answer the question of how Western scholars understand Ethiopian theater and which field of theater they prefer to study. The study also revisits expatriates' conclusions and findings about Ethiopian theater. The study had the following research questions. First, which aspect of Ethiopian theater do western writers deal with? Second, what is their generic preference in Ethiopian Theatre scholarship? Third, what are the expatriates' conclusions and findings in study of Ethiopian theater? This study employed a comparative approach to Ethiopian theater by comparing and contrasting various local and international research findings on Ethiopian theater. The study found that most expatriates studied the historiography of Ethiopian theater. They ignored other practical and theoretical aspects of Ethiopian theatre scholarship. Most expatriates also studied the theater staged in Ethiopian theaters. Popular theater and other genres were left out of their studies. Moreover, the expatriates' findings and conclusions about Ethiopian theater were misleading, inaccurate and biased. Still, some of the expatriates had a distorted and colonial thinking about Ethiopian theater. They often interpret their research findings from the western perspective. The study concluded that the previous studies on Ethiopian theater conducted by expatriates need further appraisal and critical evaluation. Most of the studies have been one-sided and have dealt with the theater only superficially. The study recommends that any previous study on Ethiopian theater by expatriates needs to be re-evaluated in terms of its research methods, findings, conclusions and implications.*

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1. Background

Ethiopian theatre started related to the establishment of modern schooling. Menelik II School opened in 1900/1908 (Aboneh, 2013). In the coronation of "The Crown of the Empress Zewditu", students presented Modern theatre and the students participated in the theatre production (Tesfaye, 1970, pp. 302-315). Tesfaye explained that theatre received various gold awards from Crown Prince Teferi Makonnen (Tesfaye, 1970). For the past sixty-seven years, different countries' expatriates have come and published studies on Ethiopian theatre (Taye & Shiferaw, 2000). They studied the theatre either by learning the vernacular language Amharic or, through a translator (Yonas, 2001). The contribution of these foreign scholars to the development of Ethiopian theatre is undeniable. However, from the perspective of Ethiopian experts, expatriates' findings on Ethiopian theatre have many pitfalls.

Teklehawariat Teklemariam introduced Ethiopian theatre in 1921 at Terrasse Hotel (Aboneh, 2008). Due to the theatre's satirical nature on the then monarchy and its comment on the corruption and backwardness of the country, Empress Zewditu immediately ordered to ban on the performance and confiscation of the published copies of the play (Aboneh, 2008). After Teklehawariat's play, many playwrights continued the journey to write Ethiopian stories in European form at schools and hotels. Plays were written with double meanings, borrowing the *Wax & Gold* style from the classical Geez Qene poetry (Aboneh, 1996).

During Emperor Haile Selassie's time in the 1940s and 50s, three people were mainly responsible for expanding and making theatre popular art (Taye & Shiferaw, 2000). Yoftahe Negussie, Melaku Begosew, and Eyoel Yohanes were at the forefront of the art. These men of letter were able to expand the idea of theatre and performance art in Ethiopia (Aboneh, 2012b). In the late 1950s, young Playwrights, who later become prominent figures in Ethiopian theatre, joined the theatre houses and produced plays that become very popular

among the capital city audiences(Pankhurst, 1986). The names that stand out among them were Tsegaye Gebremedhin, Mengistu Lema, Tesfaye Gessesse, Abate Mekuria, Debebe Eshetu and Wegayehu Nigatu (Pankhurst, 1986). Most of them encountered drama via secondary and higher education and subsequently traveled abroad specifically to study drama techniques(Balew, 2016).

Foreign research on Ethiopian theatre dated back to the late mid-twentieth century(Pankhurst, 1986). It was after the early 1960s that an increased interest in East African culture that foreign researchers began to start(Taye & Shiferaw, 2000). In fact, it appears that foreign scholars were more interested in studying theatre and Ethiopians themselves for different reasons(Yonas, 2001). In order for us to understand why this is so, we must first look at the history of research on Ethiopian Theatre from its inception up until the present day and examine how each researcher approached their subject matter depending on their cultural background.

The School of Theatre Arts was established in 1978 with few part-time staff from some of the professional theatre houses found in Addis Ababa. The school launched a Master of Arts program in the 2011/12 academic year(Balew, 2016). In this long walk to the development of the profession, Addis Ababa University Theatre Department Graduates helped to develop the industry more professionally(Aboneh,2012). Graduates of the school and now become prominent figures of the Ethiopian theatre namely Manyazewal Endashaw, Getnet Eneyew, Fesseha Belay Yimam, Astatkachew Yihun, Kurabachew Deneke, and Elizabeth Melaku played a significant role in promoting theatre in different capacities. Later, these professionals began to produce culturally appropriate theatres. Fisseha Belay Yimam was known to mix cultural performance forms with European theatre forms(Balew, 2016). The language of Ethiopian theatre since its introduction has been Amharic, the main language spoken by the majority of Ethiopians. Ethiopian theatre after 1991 started to be staged in other Ethiopian languages like Oromiffa and Tigrigna(Taye & Shiferaw, 2000). Despite local academic theatre scholarship is still limited. This thesis critically reviews foreign scholars' contributions to Ethiopian theatre. It examines how they understand Ethiopians and their theatre.

Expatriates began to teach different social courses including History and Arts. This opportunity helped them to inculcate western philosophies into the Ethiopian curriculum (Mesfin,1986). Similarly, when the school of Theatre Arts began in 1978 and later when it began its postgraduate program in 2004, expatriates also began to work worked in theatre houses and began to publish various research papers (Balew, 2016).

However, academic writing on Ethiopian theatre is still limited. This thesis critically reviews foreign scholars' contribution to Ethiopian theater how did they understand Ethiopians and their theater? Related to Ethiopian scholars why do foreigners conduct research based on history? Ethiopians have never been colonized by the western. There is a strong argument that few expatriates may not be neutral as they may be guided by a Eurocentric perspective. These foreign researchers helped the country in teaching at A.A.U, worked in theaters houses, and conducted and published various research papers. However, they have gaps when we examine the studies of those foreign scholars from the perspective of Ethiopian theater scholars. First, why do these researchers focus only on Ethiopian history? Why don't write about theater and theater-related issues like acting, directing, and backstage technologies? This study will help us examine foreign scholars' understanding of Ethiopia. This suggests that a system needs to have been in place that follows up foreign scholars before and after conducting their studies. Local scholars must closely follow up on all their research ethics. Such studies will help us to better understand and explore the culture and identity of Ethiopian theater history. It will then be used as input for research on such topics. Therefore, this study analyzes expatriate scholars' works regarding Ethiopian Theater.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Most expatriates' study of Ethiopian theatre is highly obsessed with historiography and Ethio-musicology which involves studying musical traditions among different ethnic groups across Ethiopia with special attention given to its origin history etc(Pankhurst, 1986). This field has been very helpful when trying to understand how certain genres evolved due to historical events such as mobility from one place to another due to economic reasons or war, conflicts between tribes/clans, etc(Anderson, 1992). It also helps us recognize how certain genres have changed due to technological advancements such as digital studios introducing

new equipment(Abbink, 1998). The goal of the study was to provide them with a better understanding of the art world that served as an inspiration for their productions.

According to Afrocentric academicians, most Western scholars are not genuine or neutral when studying African history. Mesfen (2005) explained that Ethiopia's history began to deteriorate when the main Ethiopian historians and educators became foreigners. Carr (2018, p. 86)said that a historian cannot write history unless he has a certain relationship with the history of the society or the people who own it. Therefore, western scholars' understanding of African Theatre is supposed to be similar to that of African history.

When the University of Addis Ababa was established in 1978 and opened the MA program in Theatre Arts in 2010/11, foreign researchers helped the country in teaching and research(Taye & Shiferaw, 2000). They supported both the technical and theoretical aspects of the field. They also worked in theater houses as directors, backstage designers, and costume designers(Aboneh, 2012a). Foreign scholars are repeatedly involved in conducting and publishing various research papers(Plastow,1996). However, in a prior course titled *New Ways in African and Ethiopian Theatre*, I saw gaps in the work of western experts. Then I assume that if I read and investigate the works of foreign scholars, I will discover more fallacies based on Ethiopian theater studies. When they examine Ethiopian theater a cursory observation of their studies shows that their methods, findings, and conclusions are often against the Ethiopian theatre realities on the ground. There may be different factors for these erroneous theoretical and methodological problems. One of the chronic problems that expatriates faced may be language problems. They often study the Ethiopian theatre without understanding the language of the theatre including the society's way of culture that they researched.

Indeed, few expatriates are lifetime friends of Ethiopia and they have contributed a lot to Ethiopian theatre development(Pankhurst, 1986). One of the earliest scholars who attempted to study Ethiopian theatre was Richard Pankhurst, a British scholar who first visited Ethiopia in the 1960s. With his wife, they traveled to Ethiopia for two months as part of an Anglo-Ethiopian Research team that was sponsored by the University of London and Addis Ababa University (then Haile Selassie I University). He focused on studying traditional Ethiopian

music and dance, particularly those performed at festivals and ceremonies such as weddings, baptisms, funerals, etc., which were then performed at these events(Assefa, 2009; Yonas, 2001). In addition, he also took interest in the traditional arts such as weaving fabrics using natural dyes; painting wall murals using natural pigments; carving wooden furniture using various techniques; making clay pottery items through different designs with hand-made stamps called kiln firing it afterward etc(Assefa, 2009).

This study argued that expatriates' engagement in the Ethiopian theatre scholarship has shown different flaws. This study assumes that expatriates often take Ethiopian history written by different individuals that have conflicts of interest for granted. Of course, Ethiopia's history is a controversial field of study (Bahru, 2001). Due to this prominent factor as a backdrop, most expatriates' study of Ethiopian theater is ambiguous and contradictory. Besides, most of the expatriates who study Ethiopian theatre are obsessed with Ethiopian theatre historiography. They would have better assisted the Ethiopian theatre in the technical aspects of the production such as light, sound, makeup, and so on (Aboneh, 2012). Yet, their obsessions are seeing Ethiopian theatre in the eyes of Ethiopian history. Yet, the Ethiopian history they claimed is full of historical inaccuracies and distortions. Moreover, they studied only the mainstream theatre without emphasizing the various ethnic performances(Akalu, 1981). They often study the theatre in an office setting without conducting ethnographic research. This interview-based research in an urban setting often leads expatriates to come up with wrong findings and conclusions.

This study does not generalize that all the studies of expatriates on Ethiopian theatre scholarships are wrong. There are outstanding research works done by expatriates(Pankhurst, 1986). Expatriates are necessary for developing the Ethiopian theatre stage(Aboneh, 2012). They contributed a lot to the teaching experiences by sharing their knowledge with others. They taught theatrical languages and different types of plays but need to know about local people's choices and selections in this field. They share their experiences with Ethiopian theatre stakeholders, train young people, and help to develop the theatre field. They also offer new ideas and promote theatre development by giving a certain level of support to Ethiopians(Balew, 2016). They can also contribute to promoting the theatre stage through their work. Besides, for local scholars, it is better to have a chance to learn from

expatriates(Yonas, 2001). Their knowledge of theatre may be more advanced than local scholars' knowledge. They can bring new experiences into their study and research in the field of theatre. They can teach local students about new ideas and experiences that are not included in textbooks or courses at school so far.

The purpose of the study is to review foreign scholars' academic publications in recent years related to Ethiopian theatre. It aims to explore major publications and answered how foreign scholars understood Ethiopian theatre. The study also examines their conclusions and findings in a comparative study. This study portrays the understanding of foreign writers about Ethiopian Theatre about local academicians. This study uses related studies by Ethiopian academicians as a counter-discourse for expatriates' studies. As far as my reading is concerned, I could not find academic studies focusing on the examination of foreign writers regarding Ethiopian Theater. However, in the domain of Amharic literature, I came across two articles: Yonas Admasu's "On the condition of Amharic literary scholarship" from 2001 and Taye and Sheferaw Bekele's "A study of Amharic literature" from 2000. Those studies concentrated on Amharic literature, whereas I concentrated on Ethiopian theater. However, all of the research, including these two, concentrated on the works of expatriates. This motivates me to investigate the understanding or perception of expatriate scholars regarding Ethiopian Theater.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

1. What is their generic preference?
2. Which aspects of Ethiopian theater do expatriates deal with?
3. What is their conclusion and findings in Ethiopian Theater?

How did they frame Ethiopian theater?

### **1.4. Objective of the Research**

The primary objective of this study is to examine how foreign scholars study Ethiopian theatre. This study investigates how the scholars theoretically frame the Ethiopian theatre. It explores their methods, findings, and conclusions. In this way, the aim of the research is not

only to show their grave errors but also to open a door to correct these errors. Ultimately, the study will give a balanced picture of the Ethiopian theatre scholarship.

#### **1.4.1. General Objective**

The general objective of the study is to examine how expatriates studied Ethiopian Theater and to appraise whether their findings and conclusions are consistent with local theatre scholarship or not.

#### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives**

This study has the following specific objectives:

1. To assess which aspects of Ethiopian theater expatriates often deal with.
2. To explore expatriates' theatre scholarships' findings and conclusions regarding Ethiopian Theater.
3. To identify expatriates' major gaps in their studies of Ethiopian Theatre

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

This study will help major theatre stakeholders to examine the perceptions of foreign scholars about Ethiopian theater. It may help foreign scholars who want to study Ethiopian theater in the future. The study will also be significant to familiarize research ethics in the study of Ethiopian theatre. Some expatriates often manipulate the data they draw from Ethiopia without any research ethics board. This study, by correcting the injustice committed on an Ethiopian theatre scholarship, will help the next generation to know about the true picture of Ethiopia's true theatre identity, culture, and history. This study will be also used as a resource for other researchers.

#### **1.6. Scope and Delimitation**

Foreign scholars have written, taught, and conducted publications in Ethiopian theater. However, from the perspective of Ethiopian theater scholars, their studies manifest various gaps. This study examined the works of foreign scholars and exposed their mistakes. The

sources for this research are books, articles, journals, MA and Ph.D. thesis, etc. Therefore, for the past 70 years, foreign scholars conducted research on Ethiopian theater. The volumes of the publications are huge in number and this study only selected those works that have grave impacts on Ethiopian theatre. This study did not include articles written by Africans, as well as those works whose impacts are insignificant. The researcher also faced limited financial resources and time constraints as the volumes of work are huge and they are inaccessible to the university's library.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Related Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This section deals with the review of related literature. The review is premised that colonial powers still perceive Africa with a unique eye. Probably, their methodological choices to study African theatre are also different. According to Yirga (2017), “education for all means western education for all, not including African indigenous and social thought education”. With this in mind, Westerners bring their education to Africa that suits their colonial mission. They targeted not only exploitation but also the divide and conquer of Africa. This review will look at Western theories against African Theatre: Eurocentric, knowledge production, otherness, and the third world. It also explores Afrocentric perspective theories. The review is thematic progressing logically from one idea to the other in interconnected ways (Maeso & Araújo, 2015).

#### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This research uses interdisciplinary areas; African or Afrocentric perspectives, culture, identity, and knowledge. The major hypothesis permeating the thesis is Afrocentric, positioning the thesis within ongoing African discourses. Furthermore, the theory contends against Western views towards African theater.

Western scholars are one who interprets their findings from the western perspective. An eastern scholar, therefore, is one who interprets information and facts from the Eastern perspective. In the same logic, an African scholar is one who interprets information and facts from the African angle. There is a great need for a new form of African scholarship to describe analyze, and interpret the African more especially traditional and social thought (1974, p. 204-214).

The recentering of African perspectives toward the center of the analysis is defined as Afrocentricity (Asante, 1991). Furthermore, Afrocentric education emphasizes the African perspective to inform students' learning. Afrocentric education promotes the following goals for students, teachers, and school structures. Afrocentricity is supported by Pan-Africanism and Black Nationalism (Shockley & Frederick, 2010). The Afrocentric paradigm's African Centered perspective is a critical contributor to a holistic approach to studying the world and its diverse peoples. An African-centered perspective should not be confused with an apologia or chauvinist posture based on an exclusivist principle that promotes the analytical dichotomy of studying "them" versus studying "us." When applied correctly, the African-centered perspective liberates all minds and lays the groundwork for a global perspective that does not marginalize the peoples of Africa, Europe, Asia, the Americas, or the Pacific (Tunde, 2009).

The theoretical study shows that the creation and maintenance of first-class institutions dedicated to the common goal of severing the bonds of colonization is an essential prerequisite for building an effective weapon of decolonization. An already difficult endeavor is further complicated by political and ideological disputes, religious apathy and ethnic divisions (Adyanga, 2012, p. 616). Anti-colonial thinkers have recognized that the knowledge that European colonialists introduced into colonized countries was constructed with the intention of controlling, suppressing and denigrating indigenous forms of knowledge. If we do not create strong counter-discourses that expose privilege and dominance for what they are, we run the risk of Indigenous worldviews disappearing from our field of vision (Adyanga, 2012, p. 616).

The opposite of Afrocentric discourse is Eurocentric discourse. Western knowledge was the standard by which European colonists defined acceptable knowledge, and their methods of knowing are widely regarded as universal and objective. Europeans gained power and authority because of the monolithic worldview enforced by Western knowledge mediated by the colonists and influenced by Western ethnocentrism. Alternative forms of knowledge were denigrated as barbaric, superstitious and archaic (Adyanga, 2012; p. 601). This explains why the histories of Africans, as well as other colonized peoples, are validated by Europeans (Mignolo, 1995). The imposing of colonial education on the colonized society

fashioned Western ways of knowing that proved disparaging to indigenous knowledge and culture. "... Eurocentric paradigms, particularly British and French paradigms. There was no consideration of local knowledge or local people's everyday experiences" (Adyanga, 2012, p. 165).

Such knowledge was seen as either nonexistent or of little value. The dominance of Eurocentric knowledge over indigenous ways of knowing undoubtedly creates inequality, which results in conflict and failure of the education system since any questioning of the dominant ways of knowing is seen as primitive and uncivilized. To remedy the inequality in knowledge production, societies need to decolonize from the dominant system of knowledge. The key question remains: How do we decolonize from the dominant knowledge system entrenched in our society and education system" (Adyanga, 2012, p. 615).

The concept of "otherness" was also used as a conceptual framework in this study. According to Maldonado-Torres (2008, p. 13), "the idea that the Indigenous were like a blank slate, and that they were to be viewed as merely another interesting element among the flora and fauna "discovered" in the New World." "Religious identity" was the first marker of "otherness" in the "European/Euro-American Christian- Centric Capitalist/Patriarchal World-System." Grossfoguel and Mielants (2006), The concept of the 'Other, the non-European, was based on the presence of a soul, a religious concept, within the theological framework. In general, African theatrical and literary productions were linked to religion, so that in Islamic countries education was Koranic, while in Christian Ethiopia education was oriented towards the training of priests. The colonizers did not introduce education in Africa, but created a series of new formal educational institutions that supplemented and replaced those that already existed (Opoku, 1973, p. 379). Colonial education was an education for subordination, exploitation, mental confusion and the growth of underdevelopment (Opoku, 1973).

### **2.3. European Perspectives towards African Theater**

Ethiopia existed until 1936, and since Ethiopia was an African country, most European

capitalist countries were reluctant to recognize it as a sovereign state. According to Agyeman (1973), Africans were meant to be colonial subjects. The Europeans have had many stereotypical assertions about Africans. In his book "Freedom", John Stewart Mill argues that "barbarians" or "uneducated people are better off in a good government." On the other hand, in his "Political Economy" states that "savage people do not have the ability to cooperate as civilized people" (Mill, 2005). African literature based on such racism and contempt has not been truly evaluated and the African context should be given greater emphasis. Achebe (1995, pp. 297–309) said that the criticism of African literature is dominantly in the hands of expatriates. Before embarking on other issues in African literature, it is crucial to give an operational definition of African Literature (Yirga, 2017). Hence, for this purpose, the following operational definition is given to African literature:

African literature is intimately as well as dominantly related to the African experience and no other. Since this literature is an account of African historical experience beginning from the pre-colonial period to the present, it is a form of literature in which this experience is reflected.

Emenyonu (1971; P. 4) concludes that the judges of African literature without the existence and depth of oral literature in Africa are meaningless. He adds that without the knowledge of African oral literature, judging African written literature and the true roots of African literature is meaningless. For Emenyonu, African literature has its roots in Africa and is neither an appendage to French or British literature nor yet an African replica of popular Western authors. In his article entitled *The Criticism of African Literature*, Irele (1971, p. 27) has also stressed the fact that the problem of creating a criticism adequate to modern African literature is extremely important. He adds that the integrity and specificity of an African work can only be brought to light if the work itself is situated within its African perspective and related to its African reference. The work of criticism, of interpreting African literature should consider this fact. Irele said the whole imaginative tradition in Africa is essential. According to Irele, understanding the work of an African writer would be incomplete without taking this African aspect into account and then bringing it to light. If we do not relate the work to its particular cultural context, it is not only criticism that is limited (Maeso & Araújo, 2015).

Jene Wari (1976, p. 300) believes that indigenous literature should be acculturated in indigenous languages without ignoring the fact that distinct cultures should be expressed in concrete and permanent forms of writing. In this regard, African writers have forged an independent literary tradition, one that is linguistically related to the literature of the works of colonial masters while forming independent literary areas (Maeso & Araújo, 2015). By implication, they call into question critics' language competence, as they are thought to be incapable of fully utilizing the English language's resources. As a result, it disregards their educational level. The consideration of the African experience from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial period, regardless of language, medium, or author identity, is the most convincing of the approaches mentioned above.

Nigerian prolific writer Chinua Achebe (1995) said that: Pre-colonial Africa is no stranger to democracy. In his book "Things Fall Apart", Achebe points out that colonialism in Africa, in particular Nigeria, was being undermined. It is well known that when Europeans come here, they will not train or improve Africa. When the Portuguese began exploring the continent's western shores in the 1400s, Africa came under European occupation. The gold-plated foreigners invaded West Africa and established their influence in the Gambia and the Gold Coast. Then they began to improve their military prowess.

Colonialism has become the source of Eurocentric criticizing African literature (Yirga, 2017). British, Belgium, France, Portugal, and Spain invaded Africa and subjugated the Africans (Gann et al., 1969). Although Ethiopia and Liberia escaped the onslaught of colonialism, they shared much of the continent's destiny (Pankhurst, 1986). Colonialism did not start benefiting Africa for the sake of righteousness or the soul. It will only exacerbate the problem by making it easier for them to consume resources. Europeans grew up to be larger than us. Another significant challenge of colonialism is that it is now more knowledge-based and economically based than it was previously. Another major challenge in Africa is the persistence of religious and racial issues from the past (Wa Thiong'o, 1992). In Somalia, Britain and Italy have divided the city into two lines to prevent two ethnic groups from meeting in Mogadishu (Nkrumah & Nkrumah, 1965). Given that colonialism was the cause of the wars in Africa, we should be concerned that the frontiers will be judged by what they do (Achebe, 1995). But we must re-instill a strong sense of self-determination in Africa, not by

classifying today's Europeans as hostile, but by enriching Africa economically, academically, and socially.

#### **2.4. Afrocentric Perspective and Indigenous Knowledge**

Afrocentrism is an intellectual movement that has gained considerable critical attention since its inception (Messay, 2004). It is a method of analysis used to study history and culture from an African perspective, which differs from African-centeredness or Africentrism in that it analyzes knowledge systems (such as religion or language) not just from one's origin but also how things were received by other cultures at different times (Akena, 2012). In this way, Afrocentric scholars use interdisciplinary methods when analyzing history; they also incorporate oral traditions into their research about cultural practices over periods spanning centuries to support their findings with primary sources rather than relying solely on secondary sources written by scholars working from Eurocentric perspectives (Messay, 2004). Afrocentricity is rooted in the belief that African people, both on the continent and in the diaspora, share not merely a common history but also a common destiny (Yirga, 2017).

For instance, some Afrocentrists argue that science should be studied from an African perspective because they claim that Africa has been unfairly left out of mainstream science due to Eurocentrism (Nott, 1851). In addition to viewing science differently than mainstream scientists do, Afrocentric scholars have argued for the need to incorporate traditional African religions into education so as not to ignore them completely (i.e., by teaching only about Christianity) (Ojiaku, 1974). The main themes of Afrocentrism include “race” as a socially constructed category, the development of African civilizations, religious and cultural continuities, and a positive black identity (Kipling, 2015).

The primary purpose of Afrocentric studies is to explore the history and culture of Africa. Afrocentrism also asserts that people from all over the world are connected through their African roots (Martin, 1975). It teaches students about this connection by examining how different cultures relate to each other through these shared roots or ancestors in Africa (the motherland). In essence, it encourages us to look at our heritage differently than how we were taught growing up in school because most textbooks were written by white men who

tried to erase our history by portraying us negatively for them not only to control us but also to profit from us(Carr, 2018). From an academic perspective, Afrocentricity requires black scholars to ground their research in African history and culture(Balew, 2016). Afrocentricity emphasizes critical thinking because it has historically been a tool used by African slaves in the Americas who were forbidden from learning how to read or write. Pedagogies that emphasize critical thinking are often needed. The guiding principle behind Afrocentrism is that students should learn about themselves to be empowered(Lugard, 2013).

Afrocentricity stands on the shoulders of Pan-Africanism and Black Nationalism thinking (Shockley & Frederick, 2010). In fact, it should be noted that Kwame Nkrumah, organizer of the Fifth Pan-African Congress and former president of Ghana, first used the word “Afrocentricity” in the 1960s, before the term was popularized in the 1980s by Molefi Kete Asante (Asante, 2009; Shockley & Frederick, 2010). Today, Molefi K. Asante is known for developing Afrocentricity into a social and theoretical framework. Asante (2010) contends that African stores of knowledge positively scaffold productive community and cultural practices, extend and build on the indigenous language, reinforce community ties and idealize service to one’s family, community, nation, race, and world, and promotes positive social relationships, imparts a worldview that idealizes a positive, self-sufficient future for one’s people without denying the self-worth and right to self-determination of others, and Supports cultural continuity while promoting critical consciousness (Lee et al., 1990, p. 50)

Lee and colleagues (1990) propose that Afrocentricity is a unified educational effort that encompasses much more than simply learning about Africa. Afrocentric school curriculum focuses on heritage, community, and African-centered pedagogy. (Marcia j. Watson, 2021.) Yerga (2017) said after following Africa's independence in 1960, African countries were forced to borrow money in the form of loans. The educational alignment and approach are designed not to develop the essence of the people as a whole, but to bear the brunt of Western thinking. Those educated in the West were considered scholars; it is a system that discriminates against indigenous people. The majority of Ethiopia's population is indigenous, and 85 percent of the population lives in rural areas. Only 15% of Ethiopians are barred from city government institutions, but Ethiopians are generally indigenous. We cannot approach them in the same manner. The foundation of knowledge has failed to change even those who

have entered university, let alone those who have used it. According to Kidane Wold Kefle, Ethiopian education has not provided the opportunity to be born, grow, mature, and live in an Ethiopian context. In Ethiopia, the education system is undernourished. It is analogous to a child who does not have a good guardian. As a result, Ethiopia's foreign-import education system is less functional. Eguwale (2003) stated that *Qune* can be compared to the literature of any country. In fact, it is a unique and indigenous source of knowledge. On the day of the inauguration of the first Ethiopian University in Ethiopia, His Majesty the Emperor made the following speech. Here are some excerpts from the speech:

This is the university we are inaugurating today; Based on Ethiopian history and culture, Ethiopia's historical and cultural heritage has been explored, sketched, and traced back and forth; It is a place where knowledge is traded to guide the future history of the Ethiopian people and to guide them. At this stage, we need to build on the foundations of the books and knowledge that we have acquired in other parts of the world. This university can inspire and revitalize this cultural heritage of time without losing the taste of antiquity and adapting times. Ethiopia has ancient literature that you should be proud of. As Ethiopian youth study and research these writings of their country, their spirit and mind will be guided to a higher level(2003, p. 86).

Since 1934/42, at *Yeagr Fiker* after the Italian invasion, the performances were divided into three parts. The first musical instruments are *Masinko* played, *Medina* and *Zelesega* dancers play the sound of music. This is the opening and a traditional song and dance. The dance was presented in a fun way. Then there was the traditional dance of various ethnic groups. On the other hand, there are short, theatrical productions called "Drama". Finally, a long theatre will be presented. Occasionally it includes music in the theatre. The musicians were not seen(Tesfaye, 1970, pp. 302-315). A spectator and a performer are separated when an *Azmari and Aleho* singer stands in the middle of a big party or nightclub. Ethiopia's first show or performers are almost *Azmari and Aleho*. They are paid for their skills, and their wisdom is appreciated. They help to make the party look good or to make the party even more fun. Their work was not based on the intended purpose of the highest level of wisdom and beauty, so it could not spread much and gain a good reputation(Tesfaye, 1970).

Ethiopians do not know their historical sources because the documents were written in Geez. Thus, they go abroad and read the research and books that British, Americans, and Italians have written about themselves (Messay, 2004). *Gebbar*, for example, is written in the feudal system. Ethiopians acknowledge that but there is a translation error. There was no feudal system in Ethiopia and *Gebbar* means landlord. Ethiopian scholars took it from western and translate *Gebbar* as a landless person (Mesfen, 2005). Tsegaye (2014) said that Europeans need to unify a whole world in religion and language that clashed with the existing ones. Queen of Sheba said, "I do not worship the sun, but the God who created the sun." She clashed with society. Her worship came from the Jews. Christianity and Islam have developed Ethiopian culture (Messay, 2004).

According to Adeleke (2009), Afrocentric consciousness is a sense of attachment to Africa characterized by a commitment to African cultural values, the promotion and invocation of African ideals and idiosyncrasies, and the conceptualization of existential realities within an African cosmological framework. The proclamation of African identity logically follows from this Afrocentric consciousness. Africa becomes the source of one's identity and self-awareness, the very core of who one is. Due to a profound and widespread sense of alienation, Afrocentric consciousness and the identity formation that accompanies it have become increasingly popular among black Americans (Akena, 2012). Afrocentric consciousness and the African identity it promotes are part of a powerful, ideologically charged, and combative movement with both popular and academic facets. An Afrocentric paradigm thus appears in two ways in the analysis and reconstruction of the past. First, it establishes the African continent as the historical core or center around which a narrative is constructed and a study is made of the experiences of peoples of African descent in Africa, Eurasia, the Americas and elsewhere. In a broader dimension, the Africentric perspective that emerges from the Afrocentric paradigms seeks to interpret and understand global events by incorporating into the 'accepted' conventional guidelines extrapolated from the experiences of the 'East' (Asia) and the 'West' (Europe) those additional components whose histories are wholly or partly attributable to the African experience (Adeleke, 2009; Asante, 1991).

## **2.5. Eurocentric and Knowledge Production**

The tendency to evaluate another culture solely by the values and standards of one's own culture is termed Eurocentric. There are several ways in which cultural misunderstandings can lead to euro-centricity(Nkrumah & Nkrumah, 1965; Yirga, 2017). Eurocentrism is the belief that one's group, nation, or culture is superior to others. It can be seen as a form of cultural imperialism. Eurocentric views are often an example of ethnocentrism. The term reflects the Western point of view that Europe is the central region around which cultures evolve(Akena, 2012). The idea has been used to support claims that European culture had been held up as a standard for human development and progress since at least the Age of Enlightenment (17th century), and was used by philosophers such as Immanuel Kant who argued that people's native to different parts of Africa were incapable because they had no inherent capacity for moral judgment due to their lack of education. In its most extreme form, this ideology led Europeans during the late 19th century into direct conflict with indigenous peoples around the globe; some examples include colonial expansion into Africa and Asia(Acemoglu et al., 2001).

Judging the experiences of people of non-European descent (such as African Americans and Latinos) in comparison to European-American norms is called Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism can confirm common prejudices about members of non-European communities and often leads to unfavorable attitudes and views about certain groups of people. A Eurocentric belief system essentially assumes that Western, particularly European-American, culture is the norm and should serve as the standard for judging other civilizations. Both implicit and explicit Eurocentrism serve as a basis for prejudice. Though Eurocentrism has significant implications for mental health and psychology, little research exists on the subject.

The Eurocentric Forms of knowledge favored the West over the rest of the world. This can be seen in developmental discourses, which have recently become a so-called scientific form of knowledge. This knowledge favored the West as a development model. Developmentalist discourse provides a colonial recipe for becoming more like the West(Ramon Grosfoguyel 2202, p. 221). The global racial/ethnic hierarchy of Europeans is an integral part of the development of capitalist world systems and international division of labor (Wallerstein,1983,

Quijano 1993 Mignolo 1995), Grosfoguel 2002 p.206). From 1500 onwards, a global racial/ethnic hierarchy was created as a result of the international division of labor brought about by European colonialism (Quijano and Wallerstein, 1992). This hierarchy is still an essential component of the modern global division of labor in the post-independence era (Grosfoguel, p. 206).

Anti-systematic movements and utopian thought around the world have been influenced by colonialism in all of its manifestations at many levels (global, national, local, as well as its Eurocentric Knowledge) (Grosfoguel, 2002, P.207). The sixteenth-century Spanish and Portuguese advance to the Americas (Wallerstein, 1974; Quijano and Wallerstein, 1992; Mignolo, 2000) created the first colonial civilization and the global capitalist system that exists today. In the name of blood purity (*purza de la sangre*), the Spanish Empire drove Jews and Arabs from Spain concurrently with its expansion into the Americas in 1492. Constructed concurrently with the outward barrier against individuals from peripheral geographic zones, this inside barrier was intended to keep out Jews and Arabs (Mignolo, 2000).

The expansion of the Spanish and Portuguese to the Americas established the racial categories that were later generalized to the rest of the world (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992). Before European expansion to the Americas, no one defined themselves as Black and White in Europe or Indians in the Americas. In terms of the racial narrative of superior peoples, Western Europeans were superior to non-Europeans during the period. This is why Mignolo claims that Occidentalism, the dominant discourse of the first Modernity, emerged from Orientalism, the second discourse of Modernity; Christianity was central to the formation of the world system's colonial imaginary (Mignolo, 2000).

Individualism, competitiveness, dualistic thinking, a belief in control over nature, hierarchical decision-making processes, standard English, and rigid time orientation are all hallmarks of the Eurocentric worldview (Messay, 2004). Patriarchy, the Protestant work ethic, future orientation, "objective/rational" thought, property ownership, and nuclear family structure are all Judeo-Christian beliefs. When one expects others to behave in ways that reflect these values, regardless of their cultural background, deviations are pathologized and

frequently serve as the basis for some form of group-based oppression(Asante, 1991). Eurocentrism is harmful in the context of US society and other multicultural societies because non-Western cultural values (e.g., collectivism, living within an extended family system) are viewed as novel and, at worst, "deficient" in comparison to European American cultural values. When individuals do not possess and display traits valued within European American culture, viewing others' experiences from a Eurocentric perspective may lead to exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination. Eurocentrism can manifest itself in overt and covert ways at the individual, cultural, and institutional levels(Messay, 2004).

Grosfoguel (2012) posed the question, "How is it possible that the canon of thought in all disciplines of the Human Sciences (Social Sciences and Humanities) in Westernized Universities?" He inquired if it was founded on the knowledge of a few men from five Western European countries (Italy, France, England, Germany, and the United States) (US). He continues, "How is it possible that men from these five countries have achieved such epistemic privilege that their knowledge is now considered superior to the knowledge of the rest of the world?" He wonders how they came to have a monopoly on knowledge in the world Santos (2010). Why do the socio-historical experiences and worldviews of men from these five countries form the basis of what is known today as social, historical, philosophical or critical theory? The theories developed by men in the five Western European countries mentioned above form the basis of the canon of thought that students of all social sciences and humanities disciplines need to understand (Santos, 2010).

In other words, the Western college is reduced to 'applying' theories developed from the experiences and problems of a particular region of the world with its time/space dimensions to other geographical locations — even though the experiences and time/space dimensions of the former are very different from those of the latter. The human sciences at today's Western-oriented institutions are built on these social theories based on the socio-historical experiences of men from five Western countries. Epistemological inferiority is the opposite of epistemological superiority. Epistemic superiority and inferiority are two sides of the same coin known as epistemic racism/sexism (Grosfoguel, 2012). Knowledge derived from the Global South's social/historical experiences and worldviews, also known as 'non-Western,' is regarded as inferior and excluded from the canon of thought. Furthermore, knowledge

produced by women (Western or non-Western) is regarded as inferior and excluded from the canon of thought. The Westernized university's foundational knowledge structures are both epistemically racist and sexist(Asante, 1991).

The definition of indigenous knowledge varies according to scholars' various perspectives and life experiences. According to Kincheloe (2006), indigenous knowledge refers to a multidimensional body of understandings that have been viewed by European culture as inferior, superstitious, and primitive, particularly since the beginnings of the European scientific revolution in the 17th and 18th centuries. Indigenous knowledge is a lived world for indigenous peoples from North America, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and parts of Europe. It informs and sustains people who live in the local area. The transformation of knowledge production from theology to science was a distinguishing feature of the rise of colonialism(Fanon, 2008). Knowledge production evolved from a search for the truth in the Holy Script to the discovery of natural and social laws, as well as man's ability to understand these laws. When it comes to understanding the 'laws' that govern human societies, however, a new problem arises: is knowledge production about seeking the truth or preventing it from being discovered? This question arises when science attempts to deal with colonialism and comprehend the nature of that peculiar system(Acemoglu et al., 2001).

As Frantz Fanon put it, colonization "turns to the past of the oppressed people, distorts, disfigures, and destroys it by a kind of perverted logic" (1963, p. 10). This process, which combined the obliteration of Africans as human beings with the imposition of new, 'superior' ethic values, quickly recreated Africans as specters, with no capacity or ability to exist beyond European colonial interference. This explains why the histories of Africans, as well as other colonized peoples, are filled with the silence of exclusions, erasures, distortions, and arbitrary fiction – histories written, authorized, and validated by Europeans(Fanon, 2008) Ideological/symbolic strategies, as well as Eurocentric forms of knowledge, are components of the capitalist world system's political economy. In the capitalist world system, global symbolic ideological strategies are an important structuring process of the core-periphery relationships. For example, core states develop ideological symbolic strategies by fostering accidentalism. (Mignolo ,1995).

## 2.6. The Concept of Otherness

For the next five centuries, race relations would be determined by the relationship between Europeans and non-Europeans (Maeso & Araújo, 2015). According to Maldonado-Torres (2008, p. 13), "the idea that the Indigenous were like a blank slate, and that they were to be viewed as merely another interesting element among the flora and fauna "discovered" in the New World, gave rise to the question of whether or not Indigenous people had souls" (cited in Grosfoguel and Mielants, 2006, p. 2). "The first marker of "otherness" in the "European/Euro-American Christian- Centric Capitalist/Patriarchal World-System" was around "religious identity," according to the concept of 'otherness.' Grosfoguel and Mielants (2006). Within the theological framework, the concept of the 'Other' is the non-European was based on having a soul, a religious concept. The White Enlightenment's Eurocentric scientific framework did not eliminate the concept of the "Other," but rather altered the debate. It had nothing to do with the soul and everything to do with race. Maduka Eniyamba has gathered material from various White Enlightenment philosophers that demonstrates how European thinkers (for example, Hume, Kant, and Hegel) viewed Africans as inferior human beings to White Europeans. The 'Other' as a lesser creature was then argued against using a scientific classification of human beings. As was common in the Natural Sciences, the classification was based on racial traits such as skin color, hair texture, or physical appearance (Maeso & Araújo, 2015).

The dominant feature of the concept of 'Other' over the last four centuries has been race. As a result, we now use racism as a catch-all term for Eurocentric discrimination against non-Europeans. However, it is a general notion of the 'Other,' the non-European, as a creature of inferior nature to the European. We could call the theological argument 'theological racism,' and the scientific argument 'biological racism.' The argument for the inferiority of the other in the first case is based on a theological concept about the soul (Martin, 1975). The second scenario is based on biological traits. When the argument is based on measuring these physical characteristics, the term "scientific racism" is used. What was the catalyst for the shift from theological racism to biological racism? Grosfoguel attributes this to the changing nature of knowledge production authority (Hira, 2013). In the early stages of colonialism,

theology was the authority of knowledge production. With the rise of the White Enlightenment, this authority shifted to science(Lugard, 2013).

This argument requires the addition of two elements. The first component is scientific evolution. Science was primarily Natural Sciences from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries, with Philosophy serving as the cornerstone of epistemology. The natural sciences attempted to discover answers to natural laws; thus, race relations were viewed through the lens of the natural sciences. Social Sciences introduced another element at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries: the social laws that govern society(Asante, 1991). The concept of 'inferior' cultures is then used to argue for the inferiority of the 'Other.' Non-Western cultures and societies are viewed negatively. According to Marxist analysis Dunn (1982), capitalism is the highest stage of social development in Europe. Non-Western societies are analyzed in cultural Anthropology Doda (2005, pp. 39–40) in terms of earlier stages of human development, with European societies at the top of human social development(Maeso & Araújo, 2015).

Grosfoguel (2010, p. 33) explains how racism manifests itself in the social Sciences as a cultural form in which Western-Christian culture is regarded as superior to non-Western cultures, specifically Islamic cultures. According to Max Weber's analysis, "it is only the Christian tradition that gives rise to economic rationalism and, thus, to Western modern capitalism." In that it lacks individuality, rationality, and science, Islam cannot be compared to the "superiority" of Western values. The inferiority of the 'Other' in relation to Western man is now debated in terms of culture rather than race. According to Grosfoguel (2010), cultural racism has its roots in nineteenth-century European intellectual traditions. But it gained political prominence with the rise of the extreme right in the new multicultural societies of Europe as a reaction to a new generation of immigrants demanding full equal rights in Europe (Hira, 2012).

## **2.7. The Philosophy of Colonialism**

Civilization, Christianity, and Commerce are the three philosophies of colonialism. As European imperial powers sought to expand their spheres of influence in the nineteenth

century, Africa emerged as a prime location for colonization due to its wealth of natural resources and ostensibly undeveloped economies ripe for exploitation. In reality, European colonialism wreaked havoc on traditional African societies and economies. The leaders of the movement, on the other hand, invoked the "white man's burden," a term popularized in Rudyard Kipling's poem to morally justify imperialist expansion. The "Three Cs of Colonialism: Civilization, Christianity, and Commerce" were the philosophical underpinnings of the "White Man's Burden."(Acemoglu et al., 2001).

Civilization: The Berlin Conference in 1884 marked the official start of colonialism in Africa. One of the justifications for colonialism was the need to civilize Africa's backward peoples. The supposed imperative of civilizing non-whites was expressed fifteen years after the Berlin Conference in Rudyard Kipling's poem "White Man's Burden," published in McClure's Magazine in 1899: The White Man's Burden concept was to better ("seek another's profit") an ostensibly backward people (anyone who was not white). The lines that follow this initial declaration reveal the general attitude toward how such a civilizing mission would be carried out. Kipling laments that the African people will "slowly come to the light" and laments their freedom from "bondage". In essence, Kipling believed that these non-white racial groups were so backward that they would be unable to comprehend the benefits of Europeanization. Kipling believed that Africans must be pulled toward the "light" to see the error of their, in his view, savage nature(Grosfoguel, 2002).

At the time, the sentiments expressed in "White Man's Burden" were not uncommon. Scientific racism supported the notion that Africans were culturally inferior. According to a lecture given in the United States 35 years before the official start of colonialism, "deep-rooted intellectual and physical differences seen around us, in the White, Red, and Black Races, are too obvious and too important in their bearings, to be longer overlooked..." (Nott,1851). The speaker, a medical doctor named Nott, goes on to say that the races of black, white, and "red" are diametrically opposed and cannot be related. Towards the end of his speech, Nott states that Africans are incapable of civilizing themselves: "There Africa stands with her fifty million blacks, and there she has stood for the last five thousand years, with these people occupying the same countries, without one step towards civilizations; and all the experiments in the United States, the West Indies, &c., have failed" (Nott, 1851, p. 19-20).

These attitudes eventually resulted in a violent and forceful takeover (Conklin, 1997, 230-231). Before this, however, the notion that Europeans had a responsibility to colonize and thus civilize Africans existed. Civilization was defined as "the triumph and development of reason, not only in constitutional, political, and administrative domains, but also in moral, religious, and intellectual spheres... the essence of French achievements in comparison to the uncivilized world of savages, slaves, and barbarians". In France, this idea was followed by a campaign to popularize ideas about Africans' lack of civilization through educational and media materials. Practically, this was carried out in the colonies through increasing infrastructure, public health campaigns, education, and political reform. Unfortunately, the eventual result of this was the use of coercive measures, including forced labor and violence that would ultimately cripple the continent (Conklin, 1997).

**Christianity:** Christianity was one of the justifications used by European powers to colonize and exploit Africa. European nations such as the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands attempted to educate and reform African culture through the dissemination of Christian doctrine. Fage (2013) describes the racially-based logic of European intellectuals and missionaries in his book *A History of Africa*, writing, "Mid-and late-nineteenth-century Europeans were generally convinced that their Christian, scientific, and industrial society was intrinsically far superior to anything that Africa had produced" (Fage, 2013, p. 322). Unacquainted with the continent's diverse cultures, European explorers perceived unfamiliar practices as inferior and savage. To many European nations, Christianity represented western civilization and the basis for Anglo-Saxon morality. Christianity served as a major force in the partition and eventual colonization of Africa (Boahen, 2020). During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, European nations increasingly vied for global power. In an attempt to augment political and regional influence, nations like Great Britain and France needed a justification for expansion.

Essentially, Christianity served as a cover for Western governments to justify their exploitation and conquest of African nations. "Take up the White Man's burden, The savage wars of peace—Fill full the mouth of Famine and bid the sickness cease," poet Rudyard Kipling exclaims in his poem *The White Man's Burden*. Originally intended to be a reference to US imperialism in the Philippines, the poem's Anglos-centric foundation adheres to the root structure of imperialist ideology. Denouncing African religious practices as witchcraft

and heathenism, European nations sought to convert and then exploit Africa's indigenous peoples.

The lines "Your new-caught sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child" in Kipling's poem refer to the European belief that Africans were heathens resigned to a life of savagery. Furthermore, European missionaries called on Christians to spread what they saw as a just and compassionate doctrine. In practice, they were used to denigrate African culture and society. European powers strategically used Christianity as a divisive imperialistic tool under the guise of humanitarian theology. Flickinger describes the state of African culture, religion, and society in Ethiopia in a missionary memoir written by a monk named Daniel Kumler Flickinger (Messay, 2004). In a chapter entitled *Evangelization—Its Difficulties*, Flickinger states, "The only reason theological views are not as foolish and corrupting as theirs (Ethiopians), and that we are not believers in witchcraft, devil-worship, and a thousand other foolish things, is simply because the light of Heaven shines upon us". Flickinger articulates an argument used by Christian missionaries to justify the exploitative and coercive tactics implemented by European nations (Acemoglu et al., 2001).

Commerce: While European powers justified colonialism in Africa as a moral obligation to bestow modern civilization and Christianity on African societies, the true impetus for colonization of Africa was the potential for commerce and natural resources. Following the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807 and the subsequent decline in trade with the United States in the mid-1800s, Africa represented Europe as a newly legitimized and untapped region for economic expansion (Lugard, 1893, p. 69-75). To add to the risk of aggressive competition, the industrial revolution and mechanization of European industries sparked an unprecedented demand for natural resources. The abundance of raw materials available in Africa (such as rubber, minerals, and oil) thus emerged as a viable solution to fuel the burgeoning industry of European factories. This amalgamation of factors drove Europe, into a race to claim territory and obtain raw materials in what became known as the "Scramble for Africa" (Gain & Duigan, 1969).

While European and African merchants had established trade alliances before colonialism, European trade companies, often funded by colonial governments, served as the first primary

agents of economic expansion. The untapped wealth of natural resources enticed these trading companies to aggressively establish economic control over African territories. These initial attempts at establishing control were met with mixed results, but upon their return to Europe, the individuals effectively used nationalistic rhetoric to lobby for increased government support. Upon being expelled from the Ugandan kingdom of Bunyoro, the British explorer published *The Rise of our East African Empire*, in which he justifies the colonization of Africa as an imperialistic and economic obligation:

It is sufficient to reiterate here that, as long as the policy is one of free trade, compelled to seek new markets; To allow other nations to develop new fields, and to refuse to do so ourselves, is to go backward; ... We owe to the instincts of the colonial expansion of ancestors those vast and noble dependencies which are pride and the outlets of trade today, and we are accountable to posterity that opportunities which now present themselves of extending the sphere of the industrial enterprise are not neglected" (Lugard, 1893,p. 69-75).

Lobbying efforts and memoir publication were successful in gaining national support for the establishment of colonies. As the volume of factory goods increased as industrialization progressed, European demand could not keep up with the rapid rate of production. According to Ferry & Kleinman(1884), "the policy of colonial expansion, as seen from the perspective of a need, felt increasingly urgently by the industrialized population of Europe, particularly the people of the rich and hardworking country of France: the need for outlets [for exports]." To match the volume of production, European powers flooded their African colonies with European exported goods, driving domestic African industries out of competition(Gann and Duigan, 1969).

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the method adopted by this research. It provides a detailed explanation of the selected mode of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This chapter mentions every component involved in conducting this research from population identification and sampling techniques used for document analyses and interpretation.

#### **3.2. Research Design**

A research design means a structure to plan and execute particular research (Punch, 2013). Research design is the crucial part of the research as it includes all the four important considerations: the strategy, the conceptual framework, the identification of whom and what to study and the tools and procedures to be used for collecting and analyzing data. In this study, the researcher used the qualitative research method. The qualitative research method was developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena: observe feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and the belief of the mass society (Punch, 2013).

#### **3.3. Sampling Design**

The method of purposive sampling was used to develop the sample of the research under discussion. According to this method, which belongs to the category of non-probability sampling techniques, sample members are selected based on their knowledge, relationships, and expertise regarding a research subject (Freedman *et al.*, 2007). Within this context, the participants of this study were three out of seven expatriates namely: Albert Gerard, Thomas Lipper Kane, and Jane Plastow.

The study of expatriates' theatre studies was the focus of this research. I took the study samples in terms of publication impacts, citation, and relevance; others have looked at a

theatre in conjunction with other disciplines. This study targeted three of the seven Western researchers. Those who study Ethiopian theatre without speaking the Amharic language meet the selection criteria. After that, I look at publication distributions and citation scores.

In this regard, those who have only studied theatre separately are first Jane Plastow, "The Development of Theatre concerning the state and societies of Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, 1991", African theatre and politics the evolution of theatre in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, 1996", "A history of theatre in Africa, 2004 ", " African Theatre History 1850-1950,2010 ", " African Theatre Contemporary Women, 2015 ", and finally "East African Theatre history, 2020" studies have been explored. Second, Thomas Lipper Kane's, "Ethiopian Literature in Amharic, 1975", and Third, Gerard Albert's, "Amharic Creative Literature: The Early Phase" journal of 1968, were taken for this study. In general, the works of these three scholars are critically reviewed.

Out of this selected three academicians works. I purposely select texts based on the following themes such as misconception, faultily assumption, unwarranted, defamation, malign and data distortion, second, literary history as a predominant motive, and conclusions and findings of western studies.

### **3.4. Data Collection Method**

The researcher's data collection techniques were more on textual analysis. This was done to collect adequate and relevant data to address the research objectives of this study. Nonetheless, the researcher used the qualitative research method.

Walliman (2011) stated that desk research is a process dealing with the analysis of evidence such as historical records and documents. Similarly, it means gathering data from library materials which includes textbooks, both published and unpublished academic documents such as journals, conference proceedings, dissertations, and theses. Library research also includes information gathered from internet searches. Data gathered via library research is categorized as secondary data.

Secondary data means the data are readily available and are used by anyone besides researchers. This means that secondary data is not originally collected but rather obtained from published or unpublished sources. Document analysis gives the ability researchers to structure the qualitative data collected in a way that satisfies the accomplishment of research objectives. However, human error is highly involved in document analysis, since there is the risk for researchers to misinterpret the data gathered, thereby generating false and unreliable conclusions (Krippendorff & Bock, 2008). Based on the above assumption, I used a document analysis data collection tool from an article, journals, and published books.

### **3.5. Data Analysis Technique**

Punch (2013) explained that data analysis is the process that most differentiates quantitative from qualitative research. Data analysis is a process whereby researchers make search and arrange it to enhance their knowledge of the data and to present what they learned to others. Similarly, James (2004) highlighted that data analysis is to arrange data, separating it into effective units according to topics and themes. The data that are collected using document analysis are categorized under six basic themes such as misconception, faultily assumption, unwarranted, defamation and malign, and data distortion. Then, I analyze the texts using meta-analysis which includes also a critical review. Finally, the researcher discussed the texts (data) with the selected theoretical frameworks and local research findings.

### **3.6. Research Limitations**

This research had the following limitations. The size of the sample was relatively small. A bigger sample would probably need more time. The researcher focused predominantly on Jane Plastow's work due to her focus on Ethiopian theater. Others' works like Gerard and Kane were treated relatively in a cursory approach.

### **3.7. Research Code of Ethics**

Researchers need to provide an accurate account of the information. This accuracy may require debriefing between the researcher and participants (Berg, 2001). It may include one or more of the strategies to check the accuracy of the data with participants or across

different data sources, through strategies of validation. Other ethical issues in reporting the research involve the potential of suppressing, falsifying, or inventing findings to meet a researcher's or an audience's needs. These fraudulent practices are not accepted in professional research communities, and they constitute scientific misconduct (Neuman, 2009). A proposal might contain a proactive stance by the researcher not to engage in these practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 158) When a researcher collects data, he/she must have to be careful about sensitive information that creates harmful effects on the wider community. To the displeasure of academic integrity, most of Jane Plastow's data fuel Ethiopian unity. As Creswell & Creswell (2018) said "Avoid collecting harmful information. Researchers also need to anticipate the possibility of harmful, intimate information being disclosed during the data collection process.

## Chapter Four

### Data Analysis and Presentation

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the analysis and interpretation of the data. Three foreign scholars and their works are selected according to the criteria stated in the sampling techniques. These scholarly works are Thomas Lipper Kane's "Ethiopian Literature in Amharic, 1975", Gerard Albert's, "Amharic Creative Literature: The Early Phase, 1968" and Jane Plastow's six different published works namely "The Development of Theater concerning the state and societies of Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, 1991", "African Theater And Politics: The Evolution Of Theater In Ethiopia, Tanzania And Zimbabwe, 1996", "A History of Theater in Africa, 2004", "African Theater History 1850-1950,2010", "African Theater Contemporary Women, 2015", and "East African Theater history, 2020". To comprehend and select the aforementioned academic outputs, the study used a critical reading approach. As stated in chapter three, the researcher used meta-analysis, which included critical review, to analyze purposefully chosen texts. As a result, he identified three major themes to analyze those carefully chosen texts. First, there are major gaps in the studies of expatriate scholars, such as misconceptions, faulty assumptions, unwarranted, defamation, malign, and data distortion. Second, literary history as a primary motivation, and finally, Expatriates' monolithic findings and conclusions concerning Ethiopian Studies.

#### 4.2. Major Gaps Observed in Expatriates' Studies

**Data Distortions** are observed in western scholars' studies as follows. First, Plastow did her Ph.D. dissertation on Ethiopian theatre. Her dissertation is titled "The Development of Theater concerning the state and societies of Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, 1991". It was republished in 1996 with conceptual and title changes. There are paradoxical statements between the published and unpublished volumes. For instance, she wrote this statement in the unpublished volume "after Zauditu's ban on theatre no further productions were attempted in her lifetime" (Plastow, 1991, P. 100). On the other hand, she wrote a statement that confirms

the existence of production in her published volume; “after Zauditu’s ban on court theatre, the drama was performed only in the few modern high schools of the capital” (Plastow, 1996, P. 51).

Jane Plastow 1996 published the book “African theatre and politics ”. She said “With Tsegaye and new director of arts appointment from 1959-1970, Ethiopianised the hole concern Haile Selassie Theater” (Plastow, 1996, P. 95). However, Tsegaye G. Medhin served as the director of the National Theater for one year and five months from 1966 to 1968 (1974-1976). The plays performed during this period (1966-1968 / 1974-76) were eleven; nine of them were the works of Tsegaye G / Medhin himself (Dagne, 2013, 164-169 p). The preceding text contains two fundamental data misconceptions. On the one hand, it is difficult to claim that Tsegaye has Ethiopianized the country in such a short period of leadership. Tsegaye's leadership, on the other hand, lasted less than a year and six months, not eleven years. As a result, such errors demonstrate how western researchers study Ethiopian theater blindly and carelessly. Tsegaye, in fact, was the subject of numerous complaints in various newspapers at the time. In this regard, the researcher's statement, "Laureate Tsegaye G. Medhin and Seyoum Sebhat, Ethiopianized National Theatre," is unconvincing, and the circumstance is not mentioned.

In her previous work, Plastow included translated dramatic plays taken as evidence, with no sense within the Ethiopian context. Later, when she came up with a book entitled “East African Theater History” in 2020, she ignored that mistake with no excuse. She didn't even mention the year. As a result, it suggests that Plastow is unconcerned about the errors in previous publications. To make matters worse, here are some excerpts from the previously mentioned book. She criticizes Laureate Tsegaye G / Medhin in the following ways:

The problem, and arguably the hypocrisy, was shown in that when given the opportunity he made no move to live the egalitarian ideas his theatre promoted. Tsegaye held jealously on to power and patronage and amassed a considerable personal fortune while failing to promote any equality or opportunity for most of those working in theater. The man I met in his later years fitted the

stereotype of an elite Amhara—proud, reserved, speaking carefully and often obliquely (Plastow, 2020, P. 224).

It is dynamic and difficult to understand what she wants to tell us about Ethiopian theatre history. Plastow purposely describes Tsegaye as a stereotype of Amhara. In her previous book entitled “African Theater and Politics” in 1996, she did not identify Laureate Tsegaye's ethnicity. She labeled Tsegaye as Amhara's elite in order to defend her previous conclusion about Ethiopian theater as a reflection of Amhara culture, language, and religion. This demonstrates the extent to which Plastow's work is negligent. In addition to the aforementioned errors, she made the same errors regarding Ethiopian theater writers. Let us look at the following texts from her 1996 and 2020 books “African theater and politics” and “East African Theater History” respectively.

From 1930 until the Italian invasion of 1936. The development of Amhariya drama was exclusively in the hands of two Lycee teachers, Yoftahe Negussie and Malaku Baggosaw, both of whom learned their skills by assisting French teachers in the production of school plays. Five Amharinya plays were produced in this period three of them by Yoftahe, all of which were commissioned by the emperor for state occasions, and two by Malaku Baggosaw.... Which were performed at the Lycee Menelik. (Plastow, 2020, P. 51 and 1996).

According to Ethiopian academicians, Melaku Beggosew and Yoftahe Nigusse are not the only Ethiopian theatre writers in the period between 1922-28 E.C (1930-36). Fantahun Engda in his book entitled “*Tarikawi Mezgebe Seb k Tenete Eske Zare*” (2000)” mentioned Hadis Alemayehu as the fourth author in Ethiopian theater history. He also wrote about Hadis Alemayehu's play in the 1922 edition of Berhanasalam Newspaper. Hadis's first play “*Ye Habesha ena Ye Wede Huwala Gabcha*” was written in 1922 E.C. Again, in 1923 E.C, he wrote a play called “*Hod Amlaku*”, “*Nagadras*” and “*Ye Birhanu Sedet Be Ethiopia*”. This indicates that Hadis Alemayehu was among the Ethiopian theatre writers next to Tekle Hawariat, Yofetahe Nigusse, and Hruyi Wolde Selassie. Following these writers, Afewerk Adafre was also one of the Ethiopian playwrights between the periods from 1922-28 E.C

(1930-36). Afewerk Adafre was a great artist who contributed to the development of Ethiopian theater. Amongst his works, “*Ye Andenet Gulbet*”, “*Atalaye Memheran ena ye hager gudadYe cheka Shum*” and “*Mekentuwan Tefta*” were some of them. These were the dramas that have been seen over the years (Birhanena Selam 1926, 26-28).

There were other plays performed at Menelik II School from 1922-1928 E.C (1930-1936) written by Captain Nalbandian. “*Netsanet Man Alebegn*”, “*Bewnet Sekerku Duche*” and “*Gondrew G. Mariam*” were some of his plays. “*Gondrew G. Mariam*” was nice and everyone who saw them was amazed. Many spectators were requested to attend. The author of the play, Captain Nalbandian’s regular job was teaching music at Menelik II School (Dage 2012, 425, p.). Among the people who were pioneers in the foundation and expansion of Ethiopian theatre were Blata Bekele Habtemichael, Hadis Alemayehu, Mesfin Kelemework, Grazmach Tisbit Wolde Agde, Kevork Labandian, and Blaten Geta Sahle Tsedalu were some of them. They built the first theatre in Menelik II School in 1925 E.C or 1933. By the time, young Lord Sahle Tsedalu was the Minister of Education and the Arts (Yohannes, 2004 p. 90).

Despite having the above solid evidence from Ethiopian writers, foreign scholars either distorted or misinterpreted Ethiopian theatre history. It is not enough to rely on Ethiopian writers to learn about Ethiopian theater. However, I demonstrate how the data of western researchers are paradoxical on their own. According to Plastow, only five plays were performed between 1922 and 1928 E.C. (1930-36) According to Ethiopian writers, however, more than ten theaters were shown. These were “*Menajo*” by Yoptahe Nigusse in 1919 E.C or 1927 (Yohannes 2004, p. 95), *Yamare Melash*, *Yehod Amlaku Ketat and Yegama Mushera* by Yoftahe In 1924 E.C (1932) (Ibid, 2004, p. 95-96), ‘*Dadi Turah*’ (Amharic based on Oromo culture) in 1925 E.C (1933), ‘*Emet Atalay Balachewn Ato Mtaleyan Endastamemu*’ in 1925/33, ‘*Ye Hezb Tseset Yemet Beleyu Gudat*’ in 1926 E.C (1934), ‘*MesheBekentu Sera Lefetu*’ in 1927 E.C (1935) and “*Dekorowochu*” in 1927/35. In addition to the above misconceptions, she presented numerical data about Yoptahe’s plays. As Yohannes (2004, P. 73-74) confirmed, Yoftahe wrote more than five theaters in two years. Also, Melaku Begoseew did not write only two plays as she mentioned; rather, he wrote more than four plays such as “*Ney Ney Bedamena*” in 1926 E.C (1934), “*Eyayu Matat Yebego Sew Metfat*

*Yezelalem Tsetest*" in 1920/1928 and *Sostu Balnjeroch*" in 1927 E.C (1935) (Dage, 2012 p. 405-406).

According to Yohannes Admasu, Yoftahe Niggusse's first theatre *Menajo* was co-hosted with Bekele Habtemichael at the closing break at Menelik II School in 1919 E.C (1927) (Yohannes, 2004; p.62). In her book published in 1996 (African theater and politics), Plastow said that five plays were on the stage between 1930 and 1936 G.C. On the other hand, in her 2020 edition (East African theater history), she wrote "Yoftahe's plays have been lost, but writing and producing some twelve plays between 1927 and 1934"(Plastow 2020, P. 151). When it is critically seen, the above statements distract each other. Yoftahe produced and staged 16 theatres and hymns, which were composed of special secrets and inspired melodies. He is well-known for his theatrical and literary prowess. So, he is one of the most well-known authors in the field of theatre writing (Yohannes 2004, p.83).

Related to theatre activity during the Italian occupation, Plastow's statements are opposite to other Ethiopian writers. She said that "Prior to the seven-year close of all theatrical activity under Italian occupation..." (Plastow 2020, P. 153;1996, P.54–55). In this text, there are two major fallacies. First, the Italian occupation was not for seven, rather it is for five years from 1928 to 1933 E.C (1936-1941). Second, the theatre activities were paused just for five years for the patriotic struggle against the Italian invasion. On many pages, the researcher used *Fabula* and *Yawreoch comedy* (Fable the comedy of Animals) as the same titles. In the first place, there is no play called "Fabula" in Ethiopian theater history. *Fabula* was a tale written to criticize king Lij Eyasu in 1904 E.C (2012). However, she said that "his only play was called *Fabula: Yawrewoch, Commedia* (Fable: the comedy of Animals)" (Plastow, 1996, P. 50 and 2020, p. 152). We can also see on page 52, and 53 of her books in 1996 and 2020 respectively, that she used the term *fibula*. In fact, "*Yawrewoch commedia*" was the first Ethiopian play written in 1913 E.C (1921) during the period of Empress Zewditu (Aboneh, 2009; Yohannes, 2010 and Dage, 2013, p. 257-260).

In addition, she mentioned, "*Teyaki*" as it was performed in both national and Ras theatres houses (Plastow, 1996, P. 159) and "*Tsere Kolonialist*" on the national theatre house stage in 1978 (Plastow, 1996, P. 160). However, according to Dage (2013), those mentioned theatres

were not staged during the year. Another controversy that I found in Plastow's book is about Ethiopian women's playwrights. In her book entitled "East Africa theater history", Plastow said "the first, and for many years the only women playwrights were Romanawork Kasahun and Sennedu Gebru" (Plastow 1986, P. 84–87). However, Sarah Workeneh, the daughter of Workeneh Eshete (The first Ethiopian who received a degree from abroad and a government diplomat) was the first female writer who translated Shakespeare's works into Amharic. The title of the play was the "Tempest" and it was softened and censored by Yoftahe in 1923 E.C (1931) (Berhanasalam, 1923; Yohannes 2004, P. 65). Generally, as is stated in the above examples, western scholars' academic writings are full of data distortions. This kind of data distortion has to be clarified because it gives the readers wrong interpretations and confuses Ethiopian theatre history.

A diverse group of expatriates working in Ethiopian theatre has distorted data on the country. Jane Plastow purposefully generalized Ethiopian theater as Amhara culture, language, and religion in her various articles and books, particularly in the 1996 edition mentioned. She contended that Ethiopian theater reflects Amhara theater. She also claims that Ethiopian theater reflects the dominant Orthodox Tewahido religion and the Amharic language. Plastow's research relied on primary sources of data and personal observation. As she stated, the interview was a significant source of her data. Her location, however, is not included in the appendix of her textbooks. Other researchers who wish to conduct research based on Plastow's findings will be unable to do so.

Copies of the interviews can inform readers about the content and question types. Any evidence presented by a researcher should be directed to the University's library or another location. If not, the researcher's statements may be invalidated unless they can be verified. Following research ethics, all data should be made available to the public. Her research is a fabrication, deliberate jumping, and falsification because what she claims contradicts Ethiopian scholars' research findings.

Plastow did her Ph.D. dissertation on Ethiopian theatre. In her dissertation entitled "The Development of Theater concerning the state and societies of Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, 1991". She clearly stated, "Ethiopian theatre is an Amhara theatre". There is no

Amhara or Oromo theatre sort of classification in Ethiopia. Ethiopian writers generally talk about Ethiopian theatre. However, the way she claimed about Ethiopian theater into Amhara Theater is political. She was playing a role in dividing the Ethiopian nation which is the extension of the European imperialist approach. To answer the hypothesis, Plastow focuses on secondary data. However, as she stated in the book's introduction, her primary sources of data are primary sources. She did not use her data collection tool as intended. Furthermore, the information gathered through secondary data is one-sided. Perhaps, as most scholars agree, different interpretations of Ethiopian history exist. On the one hand, some see it as a problem, while others see it as a way to unite the state. As a result, when a researcher designs a study, it is critical to consider all angles. Otherwise, it will result in a skewed conclusion. Plastow's studies revealed lopsided conclusions in this regard. She only uses foreign scholars as sources, rather than attempting to triangulate it using local experts.

In the introduction to the 1996 book “The African Theater and Politics of the Evolution of Theater in Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe,” Plastow presents herself as an independent researcher, but we see a divisive colonial ideology in her writings. In general, Jane Plastow's data is created through fabrication, falsification, and deliberate jumping. As a result, it would be difficult for a researcher to re-examine Plastow's study. According to the research principle, statements must be made consistently after reviewing the data.

**Misconception, faulty assumptions, and unwarranted assertions:** This section demonstrates Western scholars' misconceptions and incorrect assumptions about Ethiopian theater. Artistic works, in general, are reflections of culture, language, and social values. As a result, when a researcher sets out to study theatre arts, he or she must first understand the culture, language, and social values of the subject public or country. Otherwise, there is a high risk of misunderstandings, incorrect assumptions, and unwarranted remarks. Furthermore, if the researcher uses translation, the translators must be experienced and have a thorough understanding of the culture, language, and values. Otherwise, the interpreted texts and sub-texts would be distorted. Some expatriate scholars learned local languages and culture before they started to conduct Ethiopian theatre to encourage themselves. Others like Jane Plastow tried to study Ethiopian theatre with the help of local scholars or translators. If this is the case, data and methods of data interpretation will be guided by their interests.

Based on Taye and Sheferaw, “Kane very frequently makes the sweeping generalization that has very little by way of substantiation” (2000, p. 39). They also said that “Kane does not make hasty generalization but he also shows poorly considered judgment on the quality of specific works” (2000, p. 39).

Tomas Lipper Kane said that “playwrights in Ethiopia do not know how to penning and innocent of art no even to produce, their plays also based on historic events and the recent war with Italy” (Plastow, 2020 and Kane and 1975, p.153). Related to the above-mentioned statement, Kebede Michael is described by Westerners as an Ethiopian modern playwright. His well-known play was “Hannibal” written in 1948E.C/1956 (Gerard 1971, 281, Plastow 1996 and 2020). Using the above statement, western scholars are generalizing Ethiopian theatre writers using one theatre and one playwright. The most extraordinary examples include the 1955 work of Yesowaworq Haylu entitled “*Nesannet Kebre*” (Independence is my Honor) which was in eight acts told the story of three guerrilla fighter heroes. Kane tells us the play ‘does not offer any items of interest’ (Kane 1975, 153). Firstly, Ethiopians would not be judged due to their social and psychological crisis if they wrote plays praising patriotism and the horrors of the Italian occupation. The world has different kinds of theatrical ideologies that originated from the social and political conditions of the time. Absurdism, for example, is a product of the European War. Not only historical but also social dramas have been made in Ethiopia since the Italian invasion. Concluding in a single play as evidence is not convincing for a researcher.

Plastow in her book in 1996 wrote the following statement “Caplan brought modern foreign drama to Ethiopia helped to break the insularity of Ethiopian drama” (Plastow, 1996, P. 152). It is funny how she understands Ethiopian theater without the knowledge of the local language. Even if she used translators, it is too difficult to use such hasty words due to two main reasons. One, the translators might have no expertise quality to in understanding theatre in terms of the discipline. Second, Ethiopian playwrights wrote the plays in the form of wax and gold to pass the censorship. Thus, the term “insularity”, may not be an appropriate word to explain Ethiopian theatre, unless there is an explanation or criterion to define it. Otherwise, it will incline to a personal opinion or insult for Ethiopian theater. Second, her criteria to say modern is confusing. Before Caplan came to Ethiopia in 1954 E.C

(1962), the Cultural Center or The Brainstorming Club (*ye amero mafafiya ena mabeltsgiya*) was established at Addis Ababa University, 4 Kilo campus. Also, there were some playwrights namely Tsegaye Gebremedhin, Mengistu Lemma, and Kebede Michael. Are these plays not modern? Caplan's theatres were in English. Therefore, the reason to say modern is the language; otherwise, there were Amharic plays before Caplan did it.

Let's take a look at different texts about modern theatre mentioned by Plastow in her books. She said, "Modern Ethiopia theatre possibly begins with the construction of the Haile Selassie I Theatre" (Plastow 2004, P. 198). Here, she is saying, Ethiopian modern theatre began in 1955 G.C because the National Theatre was established during this time. On the other hand, she again said "modern theater In Ethiopia: 1960–1974. In the early 1960s, Tsegaye Gebre-Medhin, Mengistu Lemma, and Tesfaye Gessesse were seen as giants of Ethiopian theatre that would lead to a radical change in the form and content of the national drama" (Plastow,2020 p. 166). There is a paradox between the above two statements about the beginning of Ethiopian modern theatre;1955 G.C and 1960-1974 G.C. Which one is correct? Therefore, about modern Ethiopian theater history, Plastow herself provides different evidence. Also, as Taye and Sheferaw stated "Gerard makes similar contradictory remarks in various parts of his survey" (Taye and Sheferaw, 2000 p. 36).

According to Taye (2009 p.110), "those early scholars who took the trouble to research and write about Ethiopia's language, history, culture, and literature, were writing primarily for their own audience in Europe". Whether scholars admit it or not, Ethiopians can set their modernity without western principles. There are no parameters to convey modernity. Foreigners do not judge African theater on the level of European norms, aesthetic tastes and traditions form of theater. They cannot evaluate African theater from a Eurocentric perspective. The African continent needs to be created in the imagination and thought of African scholars or Afrocentric perspectives. Jane Plastow's way of expressing Ethiopian theater in her all books and articles describe as it is followed; -

Ethiopian art that what is almost always being referred to is only Amhara culture and language, entirely on Amhara experience. From its first introduction, nearly all drama in Ethiopia was written

& performed in Amharinya. from 1952 to 1991 and has theatre traditions in both Tigrinya and Tigre” (Plastow, 1996, P. 53,140; 2004, P.194;2010, p. 140 and 2020, p.153 & 179).

It seems intentional to conclude someone’s ethnicity using the language he or she speaks. Professionalism has not any ethnic bounding. If someone writes a play in Amharic it does not mean he or she is Amhara. In other words, she is saying the playwright who writes in English is British or American. In fact, she might have evidence that shows the making of theater in other languages and cultures in Ethiopia until 1984 E.C (1992), which was written in only two languages, Amharic and Tigrigna. However, it does not mean there were no plays in other local languages. The problem happened due to a lack of research because the previous “*kinet*” groups such as “Arfenkelelo” in Dire Dawa (1954 E.C /1962), and “Biftu Beya Kenya” in Harar (1970 E.C /1978) have not been studied. The truth is that there were dramas about Oromo culture like “*Daditura*” written by Yoftahe Negusse (Yohannes, 2004; 78.). a play entitled “*Dadi Torah*” written in 1925 E.C (1933) by Yoftahe Negusse and “*Dukeen Duba*” by Daba Weyesa in 1984 E.C at Mazegaja theater house plays were about Oromo culture and in Affan Omro respectively (Dagne, 2013 p. 189). Plays like “Oda Orak” / (*Yewarkaw Ser Negert*) by Tsegaye G / Medhin which was first written in English about Oromo culture and “*Adabna*” a play based on Gurage culture by Tesfaye G. Mariam (Dage, 2013) are examples about the holistic nature of Ethiopian theatre.

If we look at the others, even though their descendants are from Amhara, they wrote against the monarchy in their theaters. This was demonstrated by playwright Mengestu Lema. Jane Plastow described him as Amhara's elite priest son's enthusiasm for the monarchy, but Mengistu wrote anti-monarchy dramas. In his play "Yalacha Gabcha," he argued that marriage should be based on love, not on class differences; therefore, if they believed in race and ethnicity, they would not have written this play and would have supported the monarchy at the time. Relegating theater art to an Amhara ethnic group is risky. Because of Western divisive political ideology, Africans must be separated by ethnicity, religion, and border to fulfill their needs.

Let's take a look at three different pieces of information about Tsegaye G. Medhin in Plastow's book, "African Theater and Politics". She said, "the famous Swahili and Amhara playwright, Ebrahim Hussein and Tsegaye Gebre-Medihh are nationally acknowledged masters of politic language but have also used the techniques of Kufumba and Samena Worq" (Plastow, 1996, P. 39). As described in the above text, Tsegaye is portrayed as an Amhara. On the other hand, she wrote the following text "Tsegaye Gebremedihh, Mengistu Lemma, Tesfaye Gessese, Debebe Eshetu and Wogayehu Nigatu... except for Tsegaye, all were Upper-class Amharas" (Plastow 1996, P. 94). There is a fallacy between the above two sentences. Plastow deliberately jumped Tsegaye's ethnicity in this study because if she mentioned his ethnicity, the finding of her study clashed with previous remarks. Again, in her last book, she identified his ethnicity as "Tsegaye's father came from the despised Oromo ethnic group"(Plastow, 2020 P. 166-167). Here we can take two basic issues. On the one hand, she identified Tsegaye's ethnicity without admitting the previous as an error. Next, she used the term "*despised*" to define Oromo which seems divisive.

The emperor graciously congratulated the actors on their performance but refused to meet the playwright who mocked the aristocracy in Yalacha Gabcha," Plastow said of Mengestu Lema (Plstow, 1996, P. 98). Mengestu Lema, the play's author, is described by Plastow as an Amhara elite who is fundamentally opposed to the monarchy. He would write to defend the monarchy if he supported the emperor. According to Plastow, we see biased information in the three cases mentioned above. This means she examines information rather than data.

People in early Ethiopian Christianity changed their names when they converted to Christianity and were baptized. We find texts used to label a person's ethnicity using the name he or she has in various essays of her articles and the 1996 edition of her book. However, due to the aforementioned religious sect, identifying one's ethnicity through names is difficult. Tsegaye himself stated in local studies that just because you are Oromo does not mean you are not Amhara, and just because you are Amhara does not mean you are not Tigre (Tsegaye, 2014). Also, Donald (1972) concludes there is no community called Amhara that has the same attitude as ethnicity. From the above statement, Jane Plastow's reading and way of data interpretation are only one-sided and she does not look at other sources of information from another angle. This approach is unacceptable to me as a researcher. This

demonstrates that the early writers stood up for their beliefs. That is, they support when it is necessary, but they also oppose when it is necessary. Some playwrights used to support the monarchy, but when things got bad, they protested and later did the same to the Derg. We cannot draw any conclusions based on unconfirmed information. In terms of research, it should be based on convincing evidence rather than personal opinions. As a result, what we examine in Plastow's study is subjective rather than objective.

The following text shows the unwarranted perception of western researchers about Ethiopian theatre. Plastow in her book entitled "African Theater and Politics" wrote this "... the characterization of women as evil. Lustful and mercenary beings were not unusual. Women are commonly described only in relation to stereotyped roles as lover, wife or mother also Characterization of women tends to be particularly crude"(Plastow, 1996, P. 97). Extensive research is needed in this regard, before concluding as Ethiopian actresses took a stereo-type role in theatres. To falsify this statement, theatres such as "*Alekashna Zefag*", "*Tayitu*", "*Hendeke*" and "*Ye Kaki wordewot*" are enough. In these plays, women are characterized as heroes.

Let's see other misconceptions by Plastow. She states "while successful department-trained playwrights like Fisseha Belay and Astelkachew Yihun produce social comedies with serious undertones about the plight of the rural and urban poor respectively" (Plastow, 1996, P. 221). I think this text would be not included in the book if she was really read his play and analyzed the information about *Fisseha Belay*. He is a famous Ethiopian referred to as a man of culture due to his works (Fert Magazine, 1994). Before Plastow wrote her books, Manyazewal and Belayneh said to her due to the colloquial nature of writing it is impossible to translate Fiseha Belay's work, as she confirmed (Plastow 2020, P. 285).

Therefore, as stated above, Plastow did not read or listen to the Amharic language so her understanding of Fisseha Belay is not based on reading and understanding of his plays; rather she had been told or observe it to some degree. Plastow way of expressing Fisseha Belay is based on her intention like this "Fisseha is unusual, in that he comes from rural Shoa and sets his work in the context of traditions of rural life" (Plastow, 1996, P. 227). When she finds it important to mention the person's ethnicity, she did, but if it is not, just she passes it by

saying “come from the countryside” like what she did about "Fisseha Belay". Thus, we can see that the researcher's intentional use of information is only to reflect and emphasize personal ideas, not to confront reality. This refers to the divisive policy that she came from.

There are unconfirmed conclusions by Plastow in her book entitled “East African Theater History”. She claims that “my inquiries have not resulted in any information about local language productions emanating from these new universities, most of which are, perforce, staffed by Amhara” (Plastow 2020, p. 258). Unless it is proven by the extent of research on these universities, simply saying it is not an accurate method of study is pointless. This assertion also propagates hatred. In various articles and published books, foreigners define Ethiopian theater as it is didactic, preacher, and does not have artistic quality (Plastow, 1996 p.36 - 54 and Yonas, 2001, P. 29-31). The following quote proves this fact as “in the place of didacticism Mengistu offers more of a dilemma” (Plastow 2020, P. 181). As mentioned earlier, we perceive two different pieces of information in Plastow’s works. Which one do we believe the previous or the former? If the previous information is incorrect, as stated earlier, it should be explained in the new version; otherwise, it will be confusing to the reader.

Plastow ignored her previous failures most of the time. When a newcomer reads it, it does not give a positive impression of Ethiopian theater and its development. Foreign researchers did not understand Ethiopian society from the start. Clearly, in previous Ethiopian dramas, as long as the Ethiopian people are religious, it makes no difference whether the theater reflected religious ideas and ideologies.

The Director-General of Education and the Arts, 'Sahle Tsedalu' (Belaten Geta), defined Ethiopian theatre from an Ethiopian perspective. He gathered ministers and persuaded them that we needed a theater from June 1-7, 1926, and they established an institution and built a theater. He claimed that theater can be used for four things: they agreed that theater teaches children more than books and teachers; theater is a mirror that reflects community problems; it helps to teach Geez and Amharic to those who speak at the time; and folklore. They gave their land and money to build Qusquam School when it opened in 1925. Azeze Workeneh spoke about the benefits of the theater during the gathering at this time.

His Majesty, the theater is made up of three things; 1st for happiness, 2nd for benefit, 3rd for education. In the developed world, too, they enjoy life in theaters. They are getting a lot of benefits from the theater. At the same time, they will find many talents and lessons in a theater. I think we also started a theatrical play for the fun and benefits of what we said, and for the education of the children, and I think it showed us a little bit of the three things we mentioned above in the play (translated from Amharic) (Berhanena Selam Newspaper, August 29, 1922).

According to Tekle Hawariyat, "theatre is learning through play or play through learning" (Tekle Hawariyat, 1997, P. 106). Foreign scholars do not analyze African theater in the same way that we do. As a result, when it comes to the theater industry, African theater is not comparable to that of the West. As a result, the black man's burden includes the obligation to make amends. Because Africa is a continent created by European history, it remains a prisoner of European history. Tesfaye Gesesse stated that theater is indistinguishable from history, but it is based on contemporary works; for example, we cannot distinguish Moliere's work from that of Louis XIV. What happened at the time is inextricably linked to the plot. Molière wrote "Tartoyof" or translated into Amharic as "*Awenabaju Debtera*" as a churchgoer. It was important to know what kind of transition is coming when Ethiopian man Laureate Tsegaye G. Medhin's play called "*Yekermo Sew*". Therefore, it is important to consider the history of theatre and the work of the theatre to tell and explain the history of the country.

There is another misconception and faultily assumption in Plastow's book "East African Theater and politics" . she wrote that "Yoftahe Negussie and Malaku Baggosaw, both of whom learned their skills by assisting French teachers in the production of school plays"(Plastow, 1996, P. 51). If Melaku Bgosew and Yofhtahe Negusse grasp their knowledge from Western, the role of foreigners cannot be said to be small in Ethiopian theater because both playwrights are prominent in the Ethiopian theatre landscape. On the other hand, she said "foreign teachers seldom spoke local languages, and their influence over how drama developed was largely limited to the externals of formal presentation" (Plastow, 1996, P. 53). So, Jane Plastow wants to say Caplan started modern theater in Ethiopia, and on

the other hand, she says their role is small. The information she provides is vague and ambiguous in itself. In addition, the play she translated show examples such as “*Anchin Alu*” (1996 p. 226), “*Hoda Yifejew*” (1996 p. 226), “*Tizibt*” (1996 p. 226), and “*Inba Ayhonem Mefithe*” (1996 p.209) are not good enough due to the context.

Plastow's other flawed assumption is that "the value of the theatres to the state in the 1980s was primarily as an opiate." Their purpose was not to make people think but to divert attention away from the increasing tensions of everyday life" (Plastow, 1996, P. 219). The Christian theater has been replaced by socialism, as Jane Plastow describes. Based on the preceding findings, theaters prior to the 1880s can be considered stimulants. Without a study, theaters in the 1980s could not have reached such a conclusion. This is because Ethiopian playwrights used wax and gold to write censorship. According to one Ethiopian theatre scholar, Westerners are frequently dissatisfied with vernacular writing because their goal is to internationalize colonial languages. Finally, Plastow ranked Mengestu Lema as a second Ethiopian playwright as follows: “since Mengistu ranked second only to Tsegaye in the Ethiopian dramatist’s league of fame, the Dergue wished to have him on their side” (Plastow, 1996, P. 159). If there are no criteria to measure, it is difficult to describe the data she had.

Albert Gerard in his entitled book “Amharic Creative Literature” states that, “Yoftahe Neguse came from Gojam, had a church education and knew some French” (Gerald p. 46). However, according to Yohannes Admasu, Yoftaheh's close friend ‘Mersea Hazen Wolde Qirqose’ tells him that Yoftahe did not speak French, except for a few words (2004 p. 95). Before 1960, there were dramas presented provocatively. However, Plastow in her book 1996 and 2004, stated that “much Amhara Drama, even into the sixties, was written in poetic form and was heavily didactic...”(Plstow, 1996, P. 39 and 2004, P.141). There was a play produced on July 11, 1932, in response to Dejazmach Haile Selassie Gugs’a’s and Princess Zenebe’s Work. The theater gave a piece of advice and was written provocatively. The language was easy to understand. It was fun and exciting as Yohannes Admasu stated (2004, p. 66). Scholars have a different perspective on Ethiopian theater. Some make it perfectly European, while others describe it as Jane Plastow asserts:

It is important to note that the form was never directly imposed on the Amharas, However, he does not seek to simply imitate European form. Rather he merges indigenous and imported ideas and forms to create the hybrid which gradually becomes immensely popular amongst urban Amhara. in Ethiopia, the kind of theatre which was being introduced was consequently modified”(Plastow, 1996, P. 53,43 and 2004,141-144).

Eguwale stated a young man may move overseas for education. While still a student, he studied law. It cannot be said that the young man learned; if an Ethiopian student who attended a European university and directly apply his learning without an Ethiopian context can no more be considered educated. Education is all about context adaptation and for local purposes. However, most European educated during that time simply try to apply western education in their local Ethiopian context which was far from the reality. A copy of this young man's education is a true copy. The young man must not forget his spirit but must strive to be like one another. This is what education is all about. With this kind of education, a person achieves the goal of learning (2003, P.83). As a researcher, Ethiopia should follow this path in the field of theater because it is appropriate as long as the performance is in the local language. Thanks to Robert McLaren, Debebe Seifu, and others have developed Ethiopianised theater education content.

**Defamation and Malign:** Jane Plastow had been teaching in Addis Ababa University's theater department for two years since 1984. Her contract had expired, so she left Ethiopia in 1986. She believed her contract could not be renewed because of a theater production she presented in 1986 that mocked current politics. The play she was directing at the time was Christopher Marlow's "Dr. Faustus" (Alemayehu G / Hiwot, 2020). Before writing, a researcher must be certain of what he is saying. An event or action that has occurred or has been stated to be true. She should have asked herself the following questions before coming to this conclusion. How did the first event have so many different perspectives? How should it be said? Who is the perpetrator? What exactly did he do? What exactly did he say? What is the location? What is its name? Time.... When did it occur? When did it happen? Who are the witnesses (the evidence)? Who witnessed it? What did they notice? Where did he witness it? When did he notice it? Who was listening? What did you notice? When did you hear

about it? Is there anything incorrect or contradictory in the evidence? Do the evidence and evidence support one another, or do they contain contradictory ideas? The fragmentation or contradiction of evidence can raise suspicions or even lead to skepticism. What is the ramification of this occurrence? Where? When? What are the consequences of the outcome? How do they relate? She would have asked all of these questions before making such broad generalizations. Plastow's work appears to be defamatory and malicious.

Let's see it step by step. She claims "The depth of the antipathy was demonstrated by Theatre Studies lecturer Aboneh Ashegrie who, when he heard I was conducting a study of actresses, told me he would never consider going out with such a woman as they couldn't be trusted" (Plastow 2020, P. 269-270). First, when, where, and how, and if the speech is not recorded, it is useless except for slander. Plastow said this, not in an interview, but rather in an informal conversation. This kind of information is malign. Again, Plastow wrote that "Jemanesh Solomon was apparently democratically elected by city hall theatre workers, but the fact that she had recently married a senior member of the EPRDF has inevitably led to rumors that her appointment was also the result of political pressure from above" (Plastow, 1996, P. 228-29). She often puts the unconfirmed statement in her academic publications. Regarding Abate Mekuria, she stated:

Abate Mekuria was extremely suspicious of outside interference in his theatre. He was the only person in Ethiopia I asked to interview for this book who refused to see me. Until 1987 Abate resisted all pressure to admit university graduates to his company....but Abate recruited no permanent actors of any kind between 1976 & 1987. Even when members of the original company left, they were not replaced (Plastow 1996, P. 222).

First and foremost, he has the right to decline an interview. Next, he might have a reason not to welcome university graduates. Plastow reached his conclusion without questioning him. Abate is a well-educated man who studied theatre in Glasgow in the mid-1960s and film in Germany and London from 1969–to 70. He may believe that university graduates are unfit to work for him. We couldn't conclude this statement unless the person explained why it was slander. Let us look at the final example from Plastow's book:

But the most blatant case of the 1987 production of TilahunGugsah's "Tizibt" (the watcher) at the Ager Fikir. Telahun used to be TesgayeGebre-Medhin's secretary although the man has little education, Tsegaye at the ministry of culture. Informants tell me that Telahun received scant respect from other staff. He, therefore, determined to prove his artistic credentials by writing a play. The rumor is that Tizibt was largely goest-written. For political reasons, the people who gave me this information cannot be named" (Plstow, 1996, P. 226).

Jane Plastow criticized and sometimes insulted people in the examples above without providing any evidence. This is a theme that appears in other texts as well. It is both unacceptable and unethical for a researcher to write about someone's personal life without providing evidence.

#### **4.3. Literary History as a Predominant Motive**

For the past sixty to seventy years, many foreigners have pursued opportunities that Ethiopian professionals do not have. Ethiopian theater would not have been studied in this way if it had not been divided by a political agenda. Mesfin Wolde Mariam, a well-known historian, and geographer stated that "let us see it in an opposite way why do foreign scholars focus on linguistics, race, culture, history, religious and linguistic diversity, and so on, why do they study less about the soil, the minerals, the plants, the climate, and the resources at all" (Mesfen, 2005, p. 56). In the same way, Nevins(2018) in his books stated 'history distorts not only by distance, but sometimes distances, inaccuracies, distort history. Based on Western psychology, no one can properly write today's Tibetan history' .... (Allan, 1962, p. 255).

Foreign writers make errors in everything from food and drink to language and governmental systems because they do not understand the culture of the society. Ethiopians do not require foreign historians to write about the history of Ethiopian theater. What would happen if an Ethiopian went to Britain to study and teach British history? Foreign theater researchers who come to this country to study do not teach us about their home country's history, but they do

teach us about Africans. That is why, in his book, Mesfin made the following statement: "*Mekshef Ende Ethiopia Tarik*"; "Every foreigner who teaches Ethiopian history to Ethiopian youth has never taught his country's history to his own countrymen" (Mesfen, 2005; P. 74).

According to Mesfen (2005), "there are two reasons why a foreigner writes the history of another nation: one is for bread, the other is for knowledge." When the main Ethiopian historians and educators were foreigners, Ethiopia's history began to deteriorate. It is thought to have adopted not only previous generations but also current and future generations." I discovered some examples that demonstrate how Plastow's works are politically motivated. Plastow stated:

In Ethiopia, where the imperialists were native Amhara rather than the Europeans typical of the rest of Africa. The Amhara ruling class were the equals of any European colonist in failing to recognize any possible worth in the cultures of the conquered or minority groups" (Plastow, 1996, P. 48-49).

Ethiopian societies conflicted once in a long history, but they have not been separated. They are closely related by marriage and birth. This does not apply to some in the suburbs but to most. As Ethiopian societies became more and more intertwined, their culture became more and more intertwined (Pankhrust, 1986, p. 31). As Mesfin stated, most of the Ethiopian house building and life styles are the same; whose food is *Enjera*, whose *Genfo*, *Qenchee*, *Kitfos*, *Chechebsa*, *qoloo*, *Nfros* and *qochoo*. Ethiopianism is a multi-ethnic culture. Ethiopianism is a broad identity that transcends ethnicity. Ethiopianism is in the possession of this volatile land. Ethiopianism is defiance in the face of oppression and violence. Being Ethiopian is a source of pain and suffering, but it is also a source of pride and dignity. Ethiopianism is a long and unfinished story that many people have suffered. The goal of Ethiopianism is not to recreate the Ethiopia that has existed and will exist in the future. Ethiopianism's goal is to create a system that benefits all Ethiopians, accelerates their growth, and strengthens their unity. Ethiopia is not the source of the Ethiopian problem. The issue is a lack of a system.

Furthermore, according to Plastow, "the Amhara had little respect for the radically alien cultures over which they ruled, and which they tended to regard as savage in much the same mowed as European colonists elsewhere in Africa" (Plstow, 1996, P. 55). As a result, no one from the language's major speakers or any of the three denominations has ever risen to power. Ethiopia is a country with many languages and religions. Ethiopians were able to travel from one part of the country to another as a result of the war and get to know one another. This is still going on. Thus, it can be said that it strengthens unity at the community level (*Mesfin, 1986, P.3.*).According to Plastow "in 1942 `ye Agar Fikir Mahber Teatre` Official approval for the minority ethnic, the Amharas have given credence to cultures within the empire other than their own" (Plstow, 1996, P. 57). As it is stated in the above quotation, she prefers to pen history and politics rather than theater arts like directing, acting, playwriting, and backstage technologies. Ethiopia is one of the few countries with its profile and has a history of more than three thousand years. Ethiopian history is largely full of resistance. Adyanga (2012), stated that in the Berlin Conference, the West explored Africa's potential through missionaries to spy, and then subjugated Africa along its borders and religions, and then colonized Africa.

According to Plastow, "Amhara society was intensely secretive, and devious use of language was admired as a sign of a cultivated man even in secular life" (Plastow, 1996, P. 43; 2004, P.140). Literary treasures are among Ethiopia's national treasures. In the modern world, neocolonialism is founded on knowledge rather than power. They are contributing to the continent by fostering border religious and ethnic differences, and Plastow did the same in the name of theatre history. "Ethiopia drama has been heavily dominated by church art-forms—hence the symbolic characters, preference for allegorical tales, and strongly moralistic and didactic flavor of the early plays," she added (Plastow 2020, P. 54).

European civilization is founded on faith and language; they clashed with the existing ones because they said to accept ours. Queen Sheba worshiped the God who created the sun, not the sun itself. She snatched it from the Jews. Ethiopian culture has been enriched by Christianity, Islam has been enriched by Islam, and the Gedam monastery has been enriched by Ethiopian culture. Europeans want Africa to emulate them, but Ethiopians have their own

religion. For example, the presence of a religious theater should not be regarded as a major blunder. Religious performances were once common in Europe.

Plastow's book contains a colonial thinking perspective, as she stated, "Most Ethiopian writers have remained firmly committed to producing work in Amharinya for their own community." This, in and of itself, can be interpreted as an imperialist attitude..." Plstow (1996), p. 44. What justifies labeling Amhariga an imperialist? First and foremost, was there another alphabet in Ethiopia? If not, why did Plastow characterize it as an imperialist attitude? Indians, for example, write in English, but they are not British. Other great African writers include Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi Watyango, and Ikiwi Armah; they write in English; do we call these people British? Countries ruled by the British also use English, including their working languages and various works of art. Can we say these people or the works of art themselves reflect English or English culture? Ethiopia is home to many different ethnic groups, languages, and religions. Tsegay G / Medhin, Fkere Tolossa, Mekonnen Dori, Gifty Abasia (Ras theater director) and Yilma Deresa are not from the Amhara. But they wrote and staged theater in Amharic. This does not mean that they are Amhara.

According to Plastow, Mengistu Lema and Tesfaye Gesesse, who were classified as Amhara elite, would not have written against the monarchy at the time if they were. They were, on the contrary, writing against the monarchy. During the emperor's reign, Mengistu Lema's works were generally written in opposition to the monarchy; "YalachaGabcha" is one of them. The author Mengestu Lema mocked the aristocracy in his play, which was screened at the Cultural Center: The king refused the shake after the performance. As described in other essays and throughout the book. She used one indicator that does not tell in the data. Ethiopians define a person based on his ethnicity. Tsegaye stated in a 2014 interview, "Just because you are Oromo does not mean you are not Amhara, and just because you are Amhara does not mean you are not Tigre." When Amhara says Ham Hara (New Ham), she is referring to the addition of the New Testament to the Bible(*Tsegaye Gebre Medhin Interview with Getachew Abera and et Al*, 1993). He is a new believer. I'm a Ham, but I'm a New Ham. This is ideology in action. Furthermore, Doland Levin concluded in his book *Wax and Gold*

that no Amhara community has the same attitude (Mesfen, 2005). As a result, Ethiopian theater is not the same as Amhara theater.

According to Sergew(1972, p. 156), "in the sixth century, one Bishop Grigentius issued a law in Axum's South Arabian domains that 'public singers, harpists, actors, and dancers were all suppressed, and anyone found practicing in Geez was punished by whipping and a year's hard labor.'" Tsegaye G/Medhen also stated that the Amharic language was created as a result of the revolution. Early Christian popes forbade society from praising Geez's poem, speech, and song 800 years ago. The Amharic language was then developed by society and became popular in the community over time (*Tsegaye G/Medhin*, 2019). Westerners study and work in their native tongue. The primary goal of this organization is to make this language universal. As a result, they divided the alphabetic languages, destroyed them, and adopted them instead. This is one way of colonialism. Europeans do not care about local language development.

Basically, the Ethiopian tribes and ethnic groups have been closely related in appearance, color, shape, religion, neighborhood, and lifestyle for thousands of years, perhaps even millions of years; even those who were white and black, were married and lived. Ethiopia is a multi-lingual, multi-religious country with a diverse population in the lowlands and highlands. Writing Oromifa in the Amharic alphabet began in the 1960s (Berisa newspaper, July 27, 1968). It is now written in "Kube" alphabet since 1984 with the new alphabet. Despite there being a contesting and political argument about whether it can be written in the Ethiopic alphabet or not, the orthography helps the growth of Ethiopian local languages.

Ethiopians, in my opinion, have reached a point where one of the country's ethnic groups is only told about their differences and not about their relationships with the others. The increasing number of Amharic speakers in Ethiopia does not imply that all Amhara are kings and emperors. Ethiopian leaders from Oromo, Tigre, Somali, Gurage, and Wolayita ruled Ethiopia at various times, according to Ethiopian history. As a result, arguing that one tribe should rise against another is counterproductive to national unity and divisiveness. Looking back at Ethiopian history, it is clear that Ethiopians, whether Amhara, Tigre, or Oromo, all benefited in some way from those who came to power.

For propaganda purposes, we are talking about the destruction of the Amhara, Tigre, and Oromo, but it should not be forgotten that throughout Ethiopian history, they have all been on the administration's ladder and will continue to exist. "For some years politics and art had been broadly in sympathy with each other in the Amhara heartlands all drama was performed in Amharinya," says another text (Plastow, 1996, P. 163). Westerners claim to believe in equality and democracy, but people are not treated equally in their respective countries. They have never shied away from using the term "democracy." There is no end to what they did when they fought against one nation after another for the sake of their interests and the sake of their divisive ideology.

Tanzania has a considerable number of very local languages, but the nationalist movement would quickly realize that multilingualism was potentially divisive. Since English was the language of oppression and was moreover spoken only by a small elite, it was logical to promote Kiswahili, which was already in widespread use, as a lingua franca ..... (Plastow, 1996, P. 44-45).

Why does multilingualism not work for Ethiopians if it is divisive? Switzerland's people speak German, French, and Italian, just like the rest of the world; however, the Swiss accent differs from that of the Germans, French, and Italians. Ethiopia, on the other hand, exists. Furthermore, some people claim to be Ethiopian. "Ethiopia is a political name, not the name of a specific community, religion, or language" (Mesfen, 2005). Rumors and gossip are not an issue for white people. Ethiopians must read white supremacist narratives carefully and distinguish between the lie and the truth. They are not discussing liberty, rights, economic growth, or social development. Plastow's racist perspective in a 1996 book stated that "as the home of the organization of African unity, Ethiopia plays lip-service to pan-Africanist ideologies. But there remains a strong sense of racial superiority towards black Africa" (Plastow, 1996, P. 209). It is unwarranted to divide Ethiopia into Africa. As far as my understanding of the above text, Ethiopians might treat whites as ordinary people but whites need extra respect from Africans due to their white supremacist ideology.

One of the Ethiopian plays by Tesfaye Gessese called “*Tehadso*” was against South African apartheid. Former African freedom fighters such as Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Seko Touré, Haile Selassie I, etc. took Africans to the top. However, their era was ruined and their history was tarnished by white supremacists and selfish Africans. It is well known that when the Europeans come here, they are not going to train Africa and make it better. Africa came under European occupation in the 1400s, when the Portuguese began exploring the western shores of the continent. The gold-plated foreigners invaded West Africa and established their influence on the Gambia and what is now known as the Gold Coast. The roots then began to strengthen their military prowess. In 1914, Belgium, France, Portugal, and Spain invaded Africa and subjugated the Africans.

Although Ethiopia and Liberia escaped colonialism, they shared much of the continent's fate. Neighbor growth is beneficial not only to us but also to failure. Colonialism did not start benefiting Africa for the sake of righteousness or the soul. It will exacerbate the problem rather than help Ethiopians by making it easier for them to consume resources. Europeans grew faster than Africans. Africans can benefit greatly from their progress. But, rather than labeling today's Europeans as hostile, we must instill a strong sense of self-determination in Africa by enriching it economically, academically, and socially. Another significant challenge of colonialism is that it is now more knowledge-based and economically based than it was previously. Religious and racial issues that have left us in the past are another major challenge in Africa. In Somalia, Britain and Italy have divided the city into two lines to prevent two ethnic groups from meeting in Mogadishu. Given that colonialism was the cause of the wars in Africa, we should be concerned that the frontiers will be judged by what they do. Finally, Plastow wrote in 2020 book the following text;

It is interesting that at no point was there any discussion of approaching the by then plentiful Black African departments of the continent; indeed, very little non-Ethiopian African theatre has been taught or shown in the country. The tragedy of Ethiopian racism towards the blacker inhabitants of the continent has long flourished and precluded any desire to share learning across the continent. (Plastow 2020, p. 247).

Many foreign scholars' writings reflect this kind of racism and divisive thinking: It is slander with no foundation or evidence. This researcher wanted to think about the following issues. Why are they returning Ethiopia to its past? Why do they write so much? Is the goal to save Africa or them? Is it to build a better and more equal country like the West, or is it for vengeance? Adwa's victory was based on an anti-imperialist ideology. When we look at Plastow's work, we can see how she used it to create a social hierarchy. As a result, the struggle for many African brothers and sisters is a triumphant victory for many powers. According to Shimeles, there are two ways to understand Ethiopian history. As a researcher, you cannot conduct research based solely on one side of history. Plastow, however, did it. It is sufficient. History can be a saver or a healer; however, the healing power requires a confrontation with historical events. There is a solution, but those on both sides, particularly politicians, will flee. When kings ascend to power, they rule over a country rather than a single nation. This is especially true in light of the West's contentious buy-in policy in Africa. They achieve their objectives by exaggerating and inflaming such differences to isolate a married-born co-ethnic community.

#### **4.4. Revisiting Expatriates' Findings and Conclusions**

In researching Ethiopian theater, Tomas Lipper Kane, Albert X. Gerard, and Jane Plastow took the lead. Gerard and Kane studied Ethiopian theater as well as other Amharic Literature genres, but Plastow only studied theater. Compared with Thomas Lipper Kane, Albert Gerard has excelled in the field of theater. Gerard examines the themes in the plays of theater practitioners. Kane, on the other hand, conducts the poll (Taye and Sheferaw, 2000 & Yonas, 2001). Albert Gerard and Thomas Lipper Kane said that Ethiopian literature and theatre are didactic, unrealistic, and moralistic (Taye, 2000 & Yonas, 2001).

In contrast, Jane Plastow's study on Ethiopian theater presented findings and conclusions differently. She explains that the original Ethiopian Theater was created to accommodate Amhara culture, language, and beliefs. Ethiopian theater is associated with Christianity and is devoid of artistic beauty. It's a slapstick comedy with a lot of preachers, ethics, and heroic stories and characters. It is also melodramatic in acting abilities; the audience is a manic that delights a little. This is true not only for Ethiopian theater but also for East Africa as a whole.

There is no such thing as African theater; everyone has their own identity. Plastow claims that Ethiopian theater is not African because it focuses on Amhara culture and language and does not represent other ethnicities; her conclusions about Ethiopian theater, in general, are rooted in Christian culture, which is closely linked to the Christian faith and is considered Amhara culture. According to Ethiopian scholars, this assertion is completely false.

The way Plastow describes Emperor Haile Selassie in her most recent book should be viewed positively. As she confirmed, King Haile Selassie is one of the most influential figures in Ethiopian theater history. Theaters were built during his reign and are still in use today. "One of the book's unsurprising findings is that without state support, it is very difficult for a vibrant theatre culture to grow and develop, but Haile Selassie is an exception because of his personal interest in the drama" (Plastow 2020, P. 192). Although she explained, "...the emperor's love, not only of excessive flattery but also of a good stage play".

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the study's findings, conclusions, and implications. This study's summary and recommendations discuss the distorted view of Ethiopian theater from an African perspective. The issues discussed in this chapter are summarized based on the research questions. Finally, Ethiopian scholars expected future contributions in the field are mentioned.

#### **5.2. Conclusions**

Theatre served as both an entertainment and a communication medium. It was used for education, worship, and the transmission of history and traditions. Theatrical performances have both social and religious implications. Ethiopia has a diverse range of theatrical performances. Traditional dance, songs, and music were among the forms used in these performances. They also included plays about global, religious, and cultural issues. The plays are used to educate and persuade people about various issues. However, most research on Ethiopian theater is conducted by expatriates. Ethiopian theater is a part of Ethiopia's rich culture and a window into its history. Nonetheless, scripted theater first appeared in Ethiopia in 1913 E.C. Since then, many viewers have expressed their thoughts on Ethiopian theater. Following the opening of higher education in the country, expatriates began to flock to Ethiopia to study Ethiopian theatre. Nonetheless, their research has revealed numerous flaws.

This study has come up with the following findings. First, most expatriates concentrate on studying Ethiopian theatre in its historical context. Even the history they choose to study is suspect. They write in the form of opinions and judgments. They also sprout on staged productions at national theatres. They have no desire to investigate other popular theatres. Furthermore, they purposefully twisted their research findings, which could be motivated by various colonial ideas. The expatriates declared that Ethiopian theatre no longer exists. She stated that Ethiopia's theatre is Amhara. She made several incorrect claims about Ethiopian

theatre. This is because she is unfamiliar with the culture. Moreover, the translators she uses for her data collection are also problematic. From the above studies, it is possible to conclude that the studies so far connected to expatriates have shown a lot of academic errors. The information they used and the interview they made did not lead to conclusions.

Ethiopia is a country rich in ancient literature, and expatriates must first understand the local culture before embarking on cultural studies. According to Taye and Sheferaw, evaluating Amharic literature using Western standards and aesthetic notions is pointless (Taye and Sheferaw, 2000, p. 40). Ethiopian theater does not directly copy Western theater; rather, it is adapted to the Ethiopian context, culture, beliefs, and practices. Jane Plastow, in particular, did not speak the local language; studying theater without it was a major factor in her failure. The theater is a field of study in which text and subtext interpretations are inextricably linked. In general, the imagery and knowledge provided by Western scholars about Ethiopian theater mentioned in this study are completely false and inconsistent with Ethiopian theater's scholars.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

Many foreign scholars make serious mistakes when it comes to Ethiopian theater. They arrived in Ethiopia without seeking permission from local authorities and began collecting data before publishing erroneous results. Foreign researchers must be strictly monitored by the Ethiopian government. The government, in particular, should establish a research board ethic that oversees the research activities of foreign scholars. It is also preferable to establish training centers for foreign scholars to study the Ethiopian language, culture, and history in order to reduce the number of errors in their publications.

Furthermore, Westerner researchers who wish to study Ethiopian arts and literature through translation must ensure that translators have been assigned by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism or Addis Ababa University. Furthermore, before their final works are published, Ethiopian scholars must review, assess, and criticize them for validity and accuracy. Historical and cultural distortions, such as defamation, will exacerbate past errors for current and future generations. Local scholars must publish encounters to correct the errors made by

Western scholars. Such research should be encouraged because it contributes to a better understanding of Ethiopian theater history. In Africa, decolonization studies are common. In Ethiopia, however, the movement appears to be weak due to non-colonization, except for a few scholars. As a result, research on this topic should be encouraged.

To change this situation, we need to understand our literary culture. We must thoroughly research our literature and gather information about Ethiopian theater. Until today, most Ethiopians are unaware of the value of theater or how important it is to us. Ethiopians are unaware of the significance of researching their own culture while spending their days watching foreign films. Expatriates conduct thorough research, but things do slip through the cracks from time to time. Mistakes can be made intentionally or unintentionally. The point is everyone should not propagate or duplicate the errors. This would not resolve the issue. Instead, we all have to take the time to go over their work and fix anything that needs to be fixed.

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