

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LITERATURE
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES



PORTRAYAL OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN
LIBUSE-TILA, A NOVEL BY YORDANOS GUESH

BY
BEKELECH TRUYE

MAY, 2011
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BEKELECH TRUYE

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Literature in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Masters of Arts**

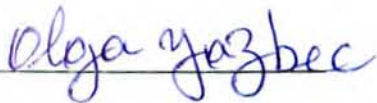
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APPROVED BY EXAMINATION BOARD:



ADVISOR


SIGNATURE



EXAMINER


SIGNATURE

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Abstract

The growing interest in gender issues, relationships, family constructs, etc. can be seen in academia and elsewhere. The power of literary texts, in the formations and perceptions of women's images is immense. These perceptions change with time and ideology. Change in ideology always marks a paradigm shift in the way we understand and interpret social and economic and political agenda.

This thesis examines to what extent portrayal of female characters in 'Libuse-Tila' is depicted relying on Marxist Feminist Literary Criticism from the economic perspective and French Psychoanalytic Feminist Literary Criticism from psychological influence perspective. One distinct quality of patriarchy is its intrinsic ideology that women should stay in the private sphere of life while men should engage themselves in public affairs. This patriarchal ideology in a society predetermined the image and predestined the role of women only to be wife and mother devoted to the house chores. This type of gender-biased sex roles which highly characterize patriarchal society have also been dominant in most Ethiopian writings. Women are a group who work outside the money economy as a result they are treated as slaves.

The female characters in 'Libuse-Tila' are portrayed as independent, the ones who have their own philosophy and reflect gender role in decision-making. The three protagonist female characters in this novel have concealed personality that challenges them. As its title indicates the novel focuses on the hidden aspect of personality which refers to the psychological aspect. Generally, the protagonist female characters think, speak, act, challenge and live differently unlike the expectation of the patriarchal society. They are independent, problem-solvers and educated who philosophize on various aspects. So, this thesis attempts to investigate the progress of portrayal of female characters.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

History attests that women have been protesting against inequality of the sexes since the 17th c. This protest has taken an established theoretical background in the form of feminism since the late 1960s. "Literary theory has been developing in the course of this century into branches of literary studies that is studied and taught as a distinct subject in its own right" (Jefferson, 1982:7). New schools of theories and thought have recently emerged and been modified with new ideas. Feminist criticism is one of the theories which are fore-grounded at present. The issue of women in literature is not a new phenomenon though the development of feminist theory or feminist literary criticism has been set or known as 'feminism' since recently. Truly speaking, women have been protesting against gender based inequalities historically long before.

There has recently been an increasing intention to the portrayal of female characters in various literary genres since the issue of gender is treated in almost all fields in general and literature in particular at the present time. In fact, the issue was raised during different centuries. It has got focus of many theorists like feminist theorists who began to focus on the question of feminist point of view. Feminist theorists apply their tools to build knowledge of women's oppressions and based on that knowledge, to develop strategies for resisting subordination and improving women's lives. Feminist theories respond to questions such as: what are the reasons for women's subordination? How can we understand the way in which specific events might be part of social oppression based on sex rather than unique individual misfortune? How can we be sure that we have a clear understanding of oppressive situations? How can women resist subordination? How should we work for changes that will improve women's lives? (McCann and Kim, 2003).

It is stated at <http://www.novelguide.com> that "The late development of female literature in Africa has its roots in the attitude of African cultures toward women. Women in traditional societies are often excluded from decision making and are limited to defined roles as wives and

mothers, despite significant contributions in farming, housework, and child rearing.” On the contrary, it is again pointed out in the same source that:

The work of many male African authors has focused on the conflict between traditional and colonial society, the destruction of indigenous ways of life, the abuses of colonialism, and the corruption of modern Africa's rulers. Many look back on Africa's pre-colonial past as a kind of glorious golden age. Many women writers, however, have taken a less romantic view of traditional society. For them, the fight for independence meant not only freedom from European domination, but also from a male-dominated world that did not allow them to have a voice of their own.*

(http://www.novelguide.com/a/discover/aes_03/aes_03_00243.html)

This is an indication that ways in which female and male writers from the same culture deal with societal issues in general and gender issues in particular differ in terms of their focus and concern. And though Ethiopia is the only African state that had never been colonized and thereby uninfluenced by colonialism, the dominant tradition of its people is much similar to that of other African countries especially with regard to women's lives.

“Libuse–Tila”, an Ethiopian Amharic fiction, which is produced by a female writer, represents female characters in a different way compared to most previous Amharic writings. In the past three decades, Ethiopian writers mostly paid attention to writing poems and translating novels produced in other languages, instead of writing authentic indigenous works. This novel is one of the fewest Amharic novels that have lately been written. In Amharic novels, authors used to reflect roles of men as significant. And they were the ones to be major characters unlike ‘Libuse –Tila’ which focuses on three female protagonists.

The researcher has a great interest to investigate the changes in images of women in fiction. Therefore, this research intends to analyze the representation of female characters in comparison to male characters in the selected novel.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The growing interest in gender issues can be seen in academia and elsewhere. Literary texts are the medium through which such issues are described. The power of these literary texts in the formation and perception of women's images is immense and undeniable. These perceptions change with time and ideology. As a result, to examine and to understand the change throughout periods, it is essential to look into literary texts from the perspective of related literary theories.

Knowingly or unknowingly, writers are influenced by social or cultural phenomena, and portrayal of characters is affected by such phenomena. Kumah (2000) states that the status of women's authorship and the nature of their depiction in the African literary tradition are issues of great relevance. Kumah also adds that it is unfortunate that the African literary canon is characterized by the inadequate representation of female works.

This research is meant to analyze how Yordanos Guesh, a female writer, portrays female characters in comparison to her male counter-parts. An attempt is also be made to show whether there is a change that she has made in the portrayal of female characters. These are the main points that the research is going to deal with. In other words, the research is going to examine how Ethiopian women are perceived by the writer in terms of their psychological make up and their world outlooks, and how the characters are portrayed in comparison to male characters in the novel.

The characters that Yordanos portrays in this novel live in the city. There are three protagonist female characters who narrate their own stories and they are struggling against the patriarchal domination they have been exposed to during their childhood that continues through their young adult lives. They wish to be free from the burden that the society loaded them with. On the other hand, the male characters play very insignificant roles compared to the female protagonists who are portrayed as fathers, husbands and lovers, who demonstrate their dominance in decision making and are free to choose their sexual partners from any social class or age group as long as they are men. Most of the male characters play the role of victimizing the female characters both directly and indirectly either as fathers or as sexual partners. Therefore, this thesis attempts to address the following research questions:

1. How are educated women portrayed in the novel?
2. How are male characters depicted in the novel?
3. What is the significance of this novel in Amharic literature?
4. How are female characters depicted in the novel?
5. Are there female and male stereotype characters?
6. How do the female characters react to patriarchal oppression?

7. How does the writer perceive the female characters?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The Amharic novel "Libuse-Tila" which is written by a young, female author represents women differently compared to other previous Ethiopian fictional works. The novel shows how young educated girls act in the society, against the grains of societal expectations. Thus, this research tries to meet the following main objectives.

- It examines the social and economic roles of female characters, and their impact on their own lives in the story.
- It attempts to find out whether women are submissive to patriarchal norms that prevail in the society.
- It also analyse the means by which the female protagonists try to overcome the dominant patriarchal ideology that is upheld in the society they belong to.
- The researcher also examines the changing roles of women by examining gender relations in the selected novel.
- Attempt is also made to examine how the female author of the selected novel perceives the male and female characters from a psychological point of view.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Gender as an issue is the fastest growing theory which prevails all over the world. It is also becoming an increasingly dynamic area that feminist theories try to address. As a result, it has become a very significant area of literary study. Maggie Humm (1994:8) discusses this point saying: "Throughout the world, feminist literary criticism has changed the way we teach, write and think about literature....Feminist literary critics are concerned with the way in which literary texts have the power to produce gender representations odd with women's experiences."

In Africa, where women are considered inferior to men, women are even deprived of their rights to education. It has been given consideration by African women writers. Gender as an issue has started during post colonial period. Therefore, African women novelists emerged thereafter. Activists in the feminist movement at present have naturally turned their attention to the world

of imaginative literature anxious to see how far it has misrepresented women through the ages or contributed to imposing on them a falsely limited notion of their role, (Blaires, 1991).

In Africa in general, and in Ethiopia in particular, because of illiteracy and male dominance, women are suffering from lack of education. They have little access to political power and they can hardly take part in decision making on economic matters. "The low status given to women in some countries with some discriminatory laws about inheritance, access of the ownership of the land and credit affects the participation of girls in education," (Rose et.al:1997: 12). Consequently, this research is conducted to show the changes that are taking place nowadays in the Ethiopian society that is portrayed in the selected novel. As Nagarajan (2006) states, black women writers have now come forward to portray, avoiding all cultural stereotypes, their women characters as real people who have to face many complex problems. Their relationships to the society, aspirations, and their creativity are examined in depth. Women are generally suffering from social, cultural, psychological and economic burden. The researcher has tried to examine how the authoress portrays female characters and what she feels towards the characters. The researcher thinks that such portrayal of female characters clearly shows the progress seen in depicting Ethiopian female characters.

Moreover, the researcher believes that analyzing literary texts from the feminist point of view can provide insights into how to eliminate the negative impact of the patriarchal culture in Ethiopia.

1.5. Limitations of the Study

The first hindrance to the study is financial constraints. That is, since the researcher is visually impaired, it becomes obligatory to pay and make someone else read all books and materials since there are no materials in Braille. Secondly, time allotted is not enough to conduct research; hence, the researcher has to do her best to complete it as scheduled by the department. Thirdly, getting references for the theoretical back-ground of the study is another challenge.

Due to all the above challenges, the researcher had to limit the scope of the study to an Amharic novel *Libuse-Tila* focusing on major female characters' social, economic and psychological influences and their struggle to withstand the hardships they are burdened with from the perspective of Marxist Feminist literary theory and French Psychoanalytic Feminist Literary theory.

1.6. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis comprises five chapters. Chapter one gives the highlights of the paper. That is, it pinpoints why this study is important, states objectives of the study, scope of the study, and methodology including definition of operational terms with a brief background of the study. Chapter two presents the review of related literature. Earlier research studies related to African and Ethiopian women's writings are critically reviewed to establish the context of the study.

Chapter three discusses the conceptual framework of the study and research methodology. Parameters for the analysis of the female and male characters in the selected novel evolve from aspects selected from Marxist Feminist literary Theory and French Feminism.

Chapter four focuses on analysis of the novel in line with theories discussed in the previous chapter. The primary data consist of *Libuse - Tila*, a novel written by Yordanos Guesh. The researcher selected relevant passages from this novel. Then, aspects of the conceptual framework discussed in chapter three are used in the critical analysis of gender relations as revealed through the interaction between male and female characters. By focusing on how the characters are portrayed and examining the actions of the characters and the dialogue between male and female characters, she also tried to find out how the authoress portrays the attitudes of her male and female fictional characters. The last chapter consists of conclusion and recommendations given by the researcher.

1.7. Definition of Operational Terms

'Libuse-Tila': The compound word 'Libuse-Tila', which is the title of the novel that this research paper focuses on, is originally a Ge'ez word. It means subconscious. To put it clearly, subconscious refers to ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and whatsoever exists unknown in mind or present in the mind without the individual's awareness of its existence (Cuddon, 1999).

Sexism: The beliefs in the inherent superiority of one sex over the other and thereby the right to dominance. (Lorde, 1984: 495).

Classism: refers to discrimination, maltreatment and prejudice based on people's socio-economic class and status.

Patriarchy: According to Mills (1996), is a social organization which produces and guarantees superior status for the male and inferior for the female (pp. 310).

Philosophy: The use of reason in understanding such things as the nature of reality and existence, the use and limits of knowledge and the principles that govern and influence moral judgement.

Gender: A socially constructed masculine or feminine role as opposed to biologically determined differences. (Ibid: 306)

Sex: The term sex is associated with characteristics of an individual that are rooted in biology; that is chromosomes and genes that make a difference in the physical appearance for the two categories of male and female. (Waugh, 2001:1).

Gender: Gender which stands in contrast to sex, refers to how social and cultural factors shape our reality and our sense of identity. That is to say, gender is a social category of shared meanings about characteristics of maleness and femaleness and the behaviors, attitudes and feelings associated with those characteristics (Ibid: 1).

- CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Studies Related to Images of Women in Fictional Works

Different research studies have been made on representation of female characters since this issue focused in literary genres at present. Not only female researchers but also their male counter-parts are also concentrating on this research area recently. Mekonnen Zegeye's MA thesis (2001), Thomas Abebe's MA thesis (2009) and so on are few examples. They have been carried out by male researchers. Mekonnen Zegeye's MA thesis entitled "Images of Women and Plot Structure in the first four Novels of Fikremarkos Desta" classifies the women portrayed in two categories: women who were depicted as strong and librated, and women as victims of the patriarchal system.

Another male researcher that has dealt with the images of female characters is Thomas Abebe. His thesis is entitled "The Images of Woman in three Amharic novels: A comparative Study". He studied portrayal of the female characters in "Seneselet", "Yelot Meneged" and "Yewedianesh" which were published in 1983, 1998 and 1978 (E.C.) respectively. Thomas has reached a conclusion in these three novels concerning images of women depicted as wives, mothers, daughters, sisters and mistresses. Another point that makes these novels similar is the association of women with the domestic or private life. In fact, there has been some progress made in Senselet and Yelot Menged; however, their roles are very limited. The last similarity is that the women characters are depicted as sex objects. As Thomas has described taking ideas from Lillington and Ross (1979) which points out one distinct quality of patriarchy as its intrinsic ideology that women should stay in the private sphere of life while men should engage themselves in public affairs. This patriarchal ideology in a society predetermines their image and predestines the role of women only to be wife and mother devoted to the household chores. This type of gender biased sex role which highly characterized a patriarchal society has also been dominant in these novels. Askale Lemma, in her research entitled "Images of Feudal Women Characters in Seven Women" (1986) describes that female characters are depicted as cruel, shallow and greedy.

Plays” (1986), for instance, is a research similar to Askale Lemma’s as far as findings are concerned. According to Yeshe’s conclusion, though the plays did not give a genuine representation of the problems of Ethiopian women at that time, the plays tried to show how the culture was detrimental to women. Likewise, Jemanesh Selemon, in her paper entitled “Images of women in Ethiopian Plays” (1988) explores that the women are not depicted in their own nature but in relation to men. She explains that a woman who is submissive is considered as “idiot” where as the one who fights for her rights is taken as “evil”. Tigest Defaru (2006) analyses two popular Ethiopian movies “Kezkaza Welafen” and “Semayawi Feres” employing a psychological framework of Jacques lacan’s mirror stage and Sigmund Freud’s Fetishism theory to show how the male gaze objectifies the female characters. She tries to show how the spectator identifies with the masculine character.

Another research on images of women that the researcher of this paper tries to investigate is that of Muluembet Zenebe’s “The Comparative Analyses of the Images of Men and Women in the Works of Ethiopian Women Writers”(1996). She examines the images of women in various female authored novels. Mulumebet examined the portrayal of six female characters in five different novels written by authoresses. Her findings vocal announces that the majority of female characters in the novels are generally viewed as “sex objects”. They are also depicted as victims of the men’s cruelty and ignorance. She also notes that despite their being victims, most of the women are much determined to live independently.

Muluemebet’s study is similar to the present work in that she brings out a positive aspect of images of female characters into light. Therefore, as seen above, there is a progress in portrayal of female characters from time to time. This research paper is different from the above studies in that:

1. The novel is about three protagonist female characters who are the product of patriarchal society but who struggle to combat psychological and societal influences.
2. The research is on a recent novel authored by a female writer. So, it is the one in which we can envisage the progress of female writings in Ethiopia.
3. It is also a novel in which we have each protagonist female character narrating her own story. So we have multi-voiced narration by female characters in a single novel.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Research Methods and Procedures

This research is both descriptive and analytical. Secondary data consist of information gathered from critical texts on feminism, internet sources and interview conducted by the researcher with the authoress and selected readers of the novel. It is believed that a close analysis of the novel combined data gathered through interview can help the researcher make an in-depth analysis of the selected work.

The study involves a critical appreciation of the selected literary work, gathering information, identifying the flaws and merits, and interpreting by considering the primary and secondary resources. The following procedures are employed to conduct a critical analysis of the selected novel.

- The researcher collected secondary data and information through reading into feminism and feminist literary criticism from books and websites, and supplementing them by gathering and compiling relevant information by examining Ethiopian research studies. This is done with the belief that, it will help in the interpretation of the selected novel.
- Relevant information is also gathered on feminism and feminist literary criticism in general and Marxist literary criticism and French Feminist Literary theory in particular from books and websites so as to evolve paradigms for analysis.
- An interview with the author of the narrative has also been conducted to gather more information for the study.
- Finally, a thorough reading of the novel under study focuses on the depiction of female characters and their male counterparts in the novel. Here, a textual descriptive and analytical approach of qualitative data is used to analyze the extracts from the novel. In other words, although interview with the author of the novel 'Libuse-Tila' has been conducted, the basic methodology for this study is textual descriptive and analytical approach.

Besides, local research studies have been reviewed in chapter two so as to deepen readers' understanding of the selected novel.

3.2. Concept of Feminism

Women's contribution to the overall development of mankind and nature in general is immense; however, they are not treated accordingly. That is to say, they have been dependent economically on either their fathers or husbands. They had the legal status in a society as equivalent as that of children. As a result, they are marginalized socially, politically, and economically. Nagarajan (2006:206) clearly states saying: "By way of redressing the balance, feminist criticism seeks to change traditional notions and establish, instead, the perspective and experiences of women which had been marginalized for ages and ages."

Feminism is a collective term for systems of belief and theories that pay special attention to women's rights and women's position in culture and society. The term tends to be used for the women's rights movement, which began in the late 18th c. Thereafter, the campaign continues for economic, political and social equality between women and men. (Redmond, W.A 2007). Therefore, feminism is a theory that struggles for equality of sexes and actively works to achieve such equality for women.

Besides, Nagarajan (2006) clarifies that the feminist movement, women's liberation movement, etc. are active social bodies and institutions which fight for women's rights. As he puts it, it is from these institutions that feminism has emerged and become influential globally these days. Though feminism is a recent literary movement, it has revolutionized people's outlook on women. So, it has lately been the area of innovation and has developed as an academic discipline.

There are platforms and media support for these women empowerment movements. We are not concerned here with such social and political movements. We are concerned with feminist as academic discipline, an intellectual inquiry that goes by the name of women's study. This academic discipline as it prevails today as a self conscious movement should be understood as the direct product of the women's movement of the 1960s. (Ibid: 207)

Feminism is controversial for challenging traditions in many fields and especially for supporting and shifting the political balance towards women. Wikipedia (The Free Encyclopedia) expresses this idea as: Feminism has altered predominant perspectives in a wide range of areas within

Western society, ranging from culture to law. Feminist activists have campaigned for women's legal rights (rights of contract, property rights, voting rights, etc.)

Feminist theory, therefore, aims to understand gender differences and gender inequality. It focuses on gender politics and sexuality. Providing a critique of these social and political power relations, much of feminist theory focuses on the promotion of women's rights.

In addition to this, the academic aspect of feminist theory concentrates on women's studies and encompasses work in history, anthropology, sociology, economics and literary criticism. Consequently, feminism is an important area of literary study. Activists in the feminist movement at present have naturally turned their attention to the world of imaginative literature anxious to see how far it has misrepresented women through ages or contributed to the imposed, falsely limited notion of their role which is imposed on them (Blamires, 1991: 373).

Since the emergence of feminism, many scholars in the area have come forward with various theoretical and analytical frameworks. Some of them argue that men cause and benefit from sexism. On the contrary, others argue that gender, like sex, is a social construct that harms all people; feminism, thus, seeks to liberate men as well as women. As a result, either male or female can be a feminist for that matter. Taking this point into account, Blamires states, "The feminists are dissatisfied with the wider social and cultural situation" (Ibid). In addition, Blamires denotes that it becomes difficult to isolate feminist literary criticism from the feminist reading of history and the radical social posture it encourages (Ibid).

3.2.1. Historical Development of Feminist Literary Criticism

Since feminist literary theory and feminist literary criticism are inseparable, we discuss both in line with their historical development. Plain and Seller, in their book entitled "The History of Feminist Literary Criticism" pinpoint that the issue of women has a history of centuries.

Across the centuries, women have been the subject of innumerable reconfiguration, with every re-inscription becoming the necessity of rereading. In the space of the text, a woman can be both defamed and defended. And it is here that the most persuasive possibilities can be found for imagining the future of the female subject. (Plain and Seller, 2007:16).

Humm (1994) explains that feminist literary criticism has historically developed in cycle with the women's movement. Here, it shows that women's movement and feminist literary criticism are two faces of a coin which are not isolated. As a matter of fact, feminist literary criticism was not considered as representative of intellectual endeavor in the academy until Second Wave Feminism. They denote that feminist literary criticism begins in aftermath of Second Wave feminism, the term usually given to the emergence of women's movement in the US and Europe during the civil rights campaign of the 1960s. While describing the growth of feminist movement and what feminism is, Humm says: "The growth of feminist movement itself is inseparable from feminist criticism. Women become feminist by becoming conscious of and criticizing the power of symbolic misrepresentation of women (Humm, 1994:3).

A history of feminist literary criticism, therefore, begins by illustrating the remarkable proto-feminism writing which preceded feminism. Furthermore, it is and based on sources other than feminist writings and it eventually forms the basis of modern feminist thought. Feminists' writings then began to appear such as those by Christine de Pizan in the 15th century (www.sociology.org2005.uk).

In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft completed the first major work of feminist theory in history, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. It was to dominate subsequent feminist thought. In 1791, during the early phase of the French Revolution, Olympe de Gouges had issued a street pamphlet in Paris entitled *Les Droits de la femme* the rights of woman. As a result, she was later guillotined (Donovan, 1993:1).

Starting from the nineteenth century onwards, feminism tended to arise in what we now call waves especially in the US and UK. The first wave in feminist movement was in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its principal concern was the right to vote though it included equality and property rights and changes in the marriage relationship. Until 1919, women in the US were not allowed to vote many European countries gave women the right to vote after WWI as well, in order to repay them for the effort they contributed in the war. The colonized states in Africa and Asia gave women the right to vote after independence. Incidentally, in Ethiopia, women were granted the right to vote and to be parliamentary candidates after 1956 G.C.

Second wave feminism which is sometimes called women's liberation began in the 1960s and focused on cultural, social and political issues. *Feminine Mystique* and *The Second Sex* are

famous books on women of that time. Simone de Beauvoir wrote her influential book *The Second Sex* in 1953. She put forward a fundamental question: 'What is a woman?' In her argument, she states that there is nothing natural about femininity. Femininity is being considered as the essence of a woman. The dominant sex, male, dictates the standards and values in a society. Women are the 'other' or second sex which is the title of her book. From Beauvoir's point of view, this hierarchy, male's domination and female's subordination, is not a biological concept but a social creation, "One is not born, but becomes a woman", (de Beauvoir, 1953). That is to say that it is the culture of a society as a whole that produces the feminine character.

Beauvoir, in this book formulates three principles about women that are prevalent in the world.

1. Man "is the subject, he is the absolute: in contrast, She is the other" Man incarnates humanity; woman, by virtue of being female deviates from the human norm. The consequence is that women constantly experience a painful conflict between their humanity and their femininity.
2. Freedom, not happiness, must be used as a measuring stick to assess the situation of women. Behavior assumes that woman, like man, is free and conscious.
3. There is the insight that women are not born but made that every society has constructed a vast material, cultural and ideological apparatus dedicated to the fabrication of femininity. For her, 'feminine' woman is one who accepts herself as the 'other'. Femininity is the badge of not free woman. These principles are Beauvoir's key contributions to feminist thoughts. (<http://postfeminist.wordpress2010>).

In the 1960s there was a massive unrest and demonstrations against many values of Western societies. Feminist movements during this time became an organized political force. Its theoretical backbone was "The Second Sex".

On top of that, feminist criticism was part of the women's movement in the late 1960s and 1970s. Starting from the 1980s to the present is another face of history for feminist criticism. In the 1980s and 1990s, feminist criticism needed to cultivate more multi-voiced critics of literature which the formulation of a single woman, tradition could not address. Marxist feminism took up that challenge. As Cora Kaplan (1986) explains for more problematic notions of feminist criticism one which neither took women's reparation and exclusion from literary

institution as its key nor relied on the authority of women's psychosexual experience. Since then, there have been vast improvements in the establishments of women's rights in the Western world.

The Third Wave feminism began in the 1980s or early 1990s and addresses feminism across class and race lines as being grounded in culture rather than biology. As a matter of fact, in this phase, there is less concentration on particular issues. In line with the third world, there have been vital and important struggles to further solidify women's rights. It can be arranged that much is expected to be done.

3.2.2. Movements and Ideologies in Feminist Literary Theory

Several overlapping movements of feminist ideologies have developed over the years. Liberal feminism seeks individualistic equality of men and women through political and legal reform without altering the structure of society. According to Donovan's clarification, these 18th century feminists were responding to the tide of revolutionary fervor that was sweeping the Western world, (Donovan, 1993:1). Mary Wollstonecraft, for instance urged French Minister Talleyrand to include women in the new French constitution: otherwise, "France would remain a tyranny." (Ibid)

The Enlightenment of feminist theory provides an image of woman as a rational, responsible Argentine; however, consciously or unconsciously, this idea is ignored by the male dominated society, (Ibid: 31). Donovan (1993) also argues that Mary Wollstonecraft and Sarah Grimke's indictment of women's socialization as servants of men still remains an important issue on the feminist agenda.

The other type of feminism is Cultural feminism. It attempts to revalidate undervalued 'female nature' or 'female essence'. Critics assert that it has led feminists to retreat from politics to life style. Instead of focusing on political change, Cultural feminists look for a broader cultural transformation. While continuing to recognize the importance of critical thinking and self-development, they also stress the role of non-rational, the intuitive and often the collective side of life. Instead of emphasizing the similarities between men and women, they often stress the difference. (Ibid)

Radical feminism is also another movement that stands against patriarchal domination. For Roxanne Dunbar (1968) "Feminism must be asserted by women...as the basis of revolutionary social change," (Donovan, 1993:141).

In terms of theory, radical feminists are determined to establish their own personal "subjective" issues which had importance and legitimacy, equal to those great issues social justice and peace in their further argument, radical feminists assert that male supremacy and the subjugation of women was the root and model oppression in a society and that feminism is the basis for any truly revolutionary change. In other words, for radical feminists, it is patriarchy or male domination which is at the root of women's oppression. Women should identify themselves as subjugated class or caste and put their primary energies in a movement with other women to combat their oppressors, men, (Ibid pp141—142).

Socialist feminism which is called Marxist feminism connects oppression of women to exploitation, oppression and labor. Marxist feminists feel that overcoming class oppression, overcomes gender oppression. Man is the bourgeoisie and the wife represents the proletariat, (Fredrick Engels, 1884).

Generally speaking, ideologies and movements in terms of Feminist theory have been flourishing from the 19th century onwards.

3.2.3. Historical Development of Women's Writings

Women's writing has recently come to exist as a separate category of scholarly interest relatively. During the civil rights campaign of 1960s onwards, eventual self-conscious expression of feminist literary criticism became the culmination of centuries of women's writings about women and men's writings about women that is women's minds, bodies, arts and ideas.

In the Second Wave feminism, a general reevaluation of women's historical contributions and various academic sub-disciplines, such as women's history and women's writing developed in response to the wrong beliefs that women's live contributions have been underrepresented areas of scholarly interest. In the late 1960s, the significance of male or female authorship has become the central feature of feminist aesthetics.

Feminist critics try to prove their points by studying the images of women and women's writing. Critics who study the images of women in literature analyze how women characters are presented. Donovan (1988) explains that "images of women" approach was widely spread in the early 1970s and still dominated the pedagogy of women's studies in literature. Donovan states that these feminist critics who follow the 'images of women' approach try to prove whether a woman is "capable of self-determined action".

The first and major achievement of feminist criticism was to highlight gender stereotyping as an important feature of literary form. The second and equally essential achievement of feminist criticism is to give reasons for the persistent reproduction of such stereotypes. The third and successful one was the discovery of lost and ignored egos of women's literature and women's texts.

Generally, since 1970 the interest in women's writing has grown powerful. Much of this early period of feminist literary scholarship was given over to the rediscovery and reclamation of texts written by women. In general terms, themes explored in feminist theory include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification, (especially, sexual objectification), oppression, and patriarchy. (www.sociology.org.2005uk).

3.2.4. African Women Writers

In Africa, voices of men by men have been heard for a long time. However, African women writers have not emerged until recent times. That is to say, the development of African literature during the late 1800's and early 1900's was largely restricted to male writers.

Sexism made it difficult for women to write and to be recognized both at home and in Europe. But as the movements for African liberation gained strength after World War II, women writers joined the struggle and made significant contributions to African literature and politics.

They wrote from their special experience as victims of both colonialism and sexism and they did not spare their home countries from criticism. Especially, since the appearance of Flora Nwapa's famous novel "Efuru" in 1966, women writers have become a leading literary voice on the continent and outspoken voices for change. (<http://www.novelguide.com2007>). In fact, the point that should not be ignored is that women's contributions to African literature are not only limited to the modern period. As Oladene Taiwo (1984) discusses, the role of African women in

literature and society is significant. She states that African women's contribution to oral literature started with the use of "nursery rhymes" in the upbringing of children. Women used to actively participate as story-tellers and performers. "The woman as oral artist has been known to voice her society's experiences as a whole," (Brown, 1981:14). As a result, their contribution to oral literature has played a vital role to the development of African literature. African women's contributions to oral tradition have diminished due to colonialism, literacy and the new technology.

There are studies which specifically deal with the works of African women writers. These works are categorized according to their themes and styles. Critics, on their parts, show directions to these authoresses to fight against patriarchy in their writings. These critics urge authoresses to combat stereotypes in their works.

Various issues have been raised by African women writers. The late development of literature in Africa has its roots in the attitude of African cultures toward women. That is, women in traditional societies are often excluded from decision-making and are limited to defined roles as wives and mothers, despite significant contributions in farming, house work, and child-rearing.

Many women writers have taken a less romantic view of traditional society. For them, the fight for independence meant not only freedom from European domination but also from a male dominated world that did not allow them to have a voice of their own. Meanwhile, in criticizing African society after independence, women are typically less concerned with the political change at the high levels of government and more concerned with individual's role in society.

On top of that, much writing by African women has focused on male behavior not only on traditional male practices such as polygamy but also on the sexist attitudes of modern African men. Such practice in which a man has more than one wife also serves to emphasize the power of males over females in such society. Motherhood is considered the greatest achievement for women and women are often judged on their ability to produce offspring. Such outlook on African women severely limited their ability to express their identities, experiences and hopes.

On the contrary, the works of many male African authors has focused on the conflict between traditional and colonial society, the destruction of indigenous ways of life, the abuses of colonialism and the corruption of modern African rulers. Many look back on Africa's pre colonial past as the kind of glorious golden age. Besides, many male authors blame corrupt

political leaders for the moral breakdown in African society. They portray western style education as a form of colonial domination. (<http://www.novelguide.com>2007)

Molaraogundipe-Leslie (1987) asserts that African women are depicted in literature as “all-accepting creatures” and as “passionate and sensual lovers.” She points out that, African women writers have the responsibility to amend the false images of women in Africa. Leslie explains that for a successful writing, authoresses must know about African woman and womanhood in general. She argues that female writers’ know-how of female experience should be genuine and authentic. “The female writer should be committed in three ways: as a writer, as a woman, and as a third world person; and her biological womanhood is implicated in all three,” (Ibid: 10.)

The problem lies not only on the portrayal of female characters in various literary works but voices of women writers have been silenced. That was why George Eliot has used a man’s name as a pen name to get acceptance. As Brown (1981) states due to the dearth of female novelists in Africa, much was not done previously from the feminist point of view. Few writers like Flora Nwapa attempted to depict African womanhood from a feminist point of view. Women writers are “unheard voices”.

Katherine Frank (1987), in her article entitled as “African Literature Today” describes that the feminist novel in Africa is “in general more radical even more militant, than its Western counterparts”. She gives examples of African authoresses who focus on thought-provoking subjects, like Mariama Ba, Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, and Ama Ata Aidoo. She says that these writers are more radical in their recommendation to the extent of “a world of women without men”.

These African women writers are few in number as Brown denotes. “Women writers of Africa are the other voices, the unheard voices rarely discussed and seldom accorded space in the repetitive anthologies and the predictably male-oriented studies in the field,” (Ibid). These few women writers write on thought-provoking issues such as cultural conflict, gender issues, and changes, though they are overlooked in the literary canon.

The interest of some African women writers nowadays focuses on depicting educated and highly westernized heroines in urban environments. Brown clarifies that black women’s writings have now emerged as diasporic feminist literature. Their writings concentrate on their

experiences, identity and role of a woman. All are distinguishable from a man's attitude and in culturally definable terms.

There is a great preoccupation among women writers with what they conceive to be the limited roles of women and that on this count such women have produced a body of literature. They are distinguished from male mainstream, which is often the only presumed subject whenever we think or write about African literature, (Brown, 1981:21).

At present, modern African women writers are trying to voice their feelings in their writings. They feel that a woman should be seen as a full human being. "God, when will you create a woman, with little being in herself a full human being, not anybody's appendage," Frank, 1987:44).

Even African male authors have not escaped from being criticized by their female counter parts. Female writers accuse African men for allowing corrupt social structure to continue because it preserves male supremacy. Such theme runs through Mariama Ba's novel "so long a letter" (1979). It is the story of Ramatoulaye, an African woman whose husband takes a very young second wife after 20 years of marriage. He dies leaving Ramatoulaye to raise 12 children by herself. The book explores her growth as an independent person.

African female writers, additionally examine other aspects of the tension between modern and traditional society. Many often emphasize that they are Africa women. But in trying to change their society for the better, they don't disregard all western influence.

Generally, African women writers see modern Africa as neither a paradise nor a land without hope. Instead they envisage Africa still struggling to throw off the oppressions of colonialism and sexism. They work for social change that will allow all Africans, men and women, to reach their potential.

3.2.5. Portrayal of Female Characters in African Women's Writings

Mary Annerguson (1977) argues the point that the study of the images of women in literature has to consider people's history, Psychology and other aspects.

To analyze the images of women in literature objectively, we must know something about women in history, about the psychological and sociological views that have existed, and we must know something about the process by which literature makes use of these views. Literature both reflects and helps to create reality, (Ferguson, 1977:10). Ferguson, further, asserts that the image of women in literary works is stereotyped. She defines stereotypes as society's images and she tries to prove that the society's image given to women has been distorted. She explains that women have been viewed in literature as mothers, wives, mistresses and sex objects etc. She says that women have been always defined in relation to men. Men, on the contrary, are defined by their relationship to the outside world.

African women writings are presumed as response to the African male writers' images of the African women. Most African writers fail to present the African woman authentically. Rather, there is a proclivity of catching slight glimpses of her not, on her own but in relation to men. In such male-authored literary works, the wellbeing of the women characters is objectified just to beautify and sweeten lives of the men with the shadow of mother, daughter, sister and wife. As Frank tries to display their routine description is "suckling infants, cooking, plaiting hair, treating husband," (Frank, 1987:14.)

According to Leslie, African male writers tend to stereotype the African women in some extreme imagery like the all-enduring sweet mother, the sophisticated city girl oblivious of her traditional background in contrast to the docile, naïve, rural girl, (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1978:6).

The first and foremost duty of the newly flourishing female African writers has been gravitated towards the correction of the image of African woman in their various literary works. That is, they attempt to place the African women in their works milieu in other words they are known frothier house chores. That is to say, African authoresses "brought new angles and insights into fiction, rejecting the portrayal of women as self-effacing docile and passive observers in the world of mn," Okafor, 1997:82).

3.2.6. Ethiopian Feminist Movement

Ethiopian women are considered inferior in the society. This is explained in Levine's sociological study, (Wax and Gold, 1965). In this study, it is clearly stated that the peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. Even in high ranking families, in which domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she is expected to be passive, reserved, nonentity. Women are

suppressed. They are denied economic rights and are even abused. The proverb which says: "Woman and donkey like stick," backs up this idea. (Levine, 1965:79) Though the concern of the writer is the Amhara Nation, the situation is the same among other nations and nationalities. So, it is possible to take it as an example.

Ethiopian women who are suppressed in such a way have not refrained from contributing to their countries. Thus, in various battlefields, such as Adwa, the Italian occupation in 1935, Ethiopian women assisted as cooks, nurses and soldiers. Consequently, two organizations, the Ethiopian Women Welfare Association and Ethiopian Women Volunteer Service movement, which played a major role in the Italian resistance between 1936 and 1941, were set up. Leaders for these organizations were from the royal family.

These organizations are the first and at their rudimentary level did not embrace other women from the other strata of the society. In other words all the members were from the royal family. Regarding to education, Very few girls had access at every level. For example, at higher educational level, the number of women enrolled at Haile Sillassiel University now called Addis Ababa University, between 1955—1971 grew from 2.9 to 7.9 only which is insignificant when compared to male students. (Central Statistics Office, 2005)

In the University, Women's Club was established to improve the conditions of female students in the University. In politics, in the early 1960s, few women like Martha Mebratu, Tadelech Kidane-Mariam and others actively participated in the mostly male dominated anti-establishment activities.

After the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution, the military government established Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association (REWA). Although much was not done in that period, the literacy campaign paved the way for women's education. The number of girls in schools started to exceed thereafter.

3.2.7. Ethiopian Authoresses

Before 1980, writings of female Ethiopian writers were very few and their role was too insignificant. Sinidu Gebru was the first Ethiopian authoress who contributed a poem among 38 poems written and published by Yilma Deresa entitled *Yadis Zemen Mezmur Silenetsanet Kibir* in 1933 E.C. immediately after the restoration of Haile-Silasie's kingdom following the

evacuation of the Italian troops. Sara Workineh then translated one of Shakespeare's works under the title *Ma'ibel* (though it is not clear exactly which of his works) in 1934 E.C. Then after, Sinidu Gebru wrote a book entitled *Yelibe Metsihaf* which comprises two dramas, one on the massacre of February and the other a play on morality in 1942 E.C. Up to the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 much was not done to improve the situation of Ethiopian women writers. In addition to the period 1974-1980, women writers but also male writers found it difficult to publish their works due to the ideology of that period. Starting from 1980 onwards, famous authors have come forward with their indigenous literary works. Yezina Worku with Jemal Suleyman wrote a collection of short stories entitled "Yeteshetew Seytan and Others" in 1978 E.C. The other authoress, who can be mentioned is Tsehay Melaku who wrote a novel entitled, "Kuasa" which fulfills the criteria of a novel in 1982 E.C. This work focuses on male chauvinism and women's suffrages. In this novel, the protagonist character Woubshet represents chauvinist men in the society neglect and degrade women. Female characters on the contrary, are the victims of chauvinist behavior though they are honest and innocent. All this happened as a result of intrigues and wickedness and shrewd behavior of men (Tsehay Melaku, 1982: 12).

Fekade Azeze, as quoted in Muluemebet Zenebe's thesis (1996), discusses four factors that determine the way an author (authoress) portrays his or her women characters. These are: oral tradition which gives a writer a certain image of women; literature which contributes a lot in shaping the mind of the writer to depict women characters; modern education and civilization that influences the way a writer portrays the characters and the day-to-day activities of the writer which also affect his or her attitudes towards women.

According to Muluemebet, the authoress has allotted much of the story line to "the inner feelings of the women characters".

3.3. Conceptual Frame Work of the Study

A study of feminist literary theory and criticism cannot be treated separately from the feminist movement. The basis and impetus for much of the theoretical foundation for feminist theory and criticism, is the feminist movement.

This critical analysis attempts to depict how female characters are portrayed in an Amharic novel "Libuse-Tila". Gender which reflects the social and cultural roles of females and male

characters can be examined by looking in to their behaviors, attitudes and feelings that characters display in the novel mentioned above. Nagarajan (2006) explains that feminist criticism aims at studying the way in which cultural representations like, literature, undermine and reinforce the economic, social, political and psychological suppression and oppression of women.

Feminist Literary Criticism, which sprang out of the Feminist Movement, is rich with a multitude of criticisms. Marxist feminist literary criticism, radical feminism, French feminist psychoanalytic criticism, liberal feminist literary criticism, post-culturalism, deconstruction, black lesbian, African-American criticism, etc. are some of the approaches which have helped to achieve a deeper understanding of texts from a feminist perspective.

This study has attempted to show particularly the acceleration of portrayal of female characters by a female writer focusing on the economic and psychological aspects in comparison to their male counterparts from Marxist Feminist literary criticism and French Feminist Psychoanalytic perspectives. It is vast and complex to apply theories in this paper. Therefore, the theoretical framework for analysis of 'Libuse-Tila', is confined to Marxist and French Feminist literary criticism.

According to Bengsten (1977:462) "In a society in which money determines value, women are a group who work outside the money economy." She explains that "their work is not worth money, and it is therefore, valueless; it is not even real work. And women themselves, who do this valueless work, can hardly be expected to be worth as much as men, who work for money." So, there are female characters that are portrayed as such. To examine the socio-economic aspects which influence the characters' lives, the researcher believes that Marxist Feminist Literary Criticism is appropriate to apply.

Another theory which the researcher has made use of for practical analysis is French Feminist Literary Criticism, which was drawn from the revolutionary atmosphere of May 1968. This saw a massive unrest on the part of students and workers. In that atmosphere, an integral component of political revolution was seen as the transformation of signifying practices and conceptions of subjectivity, based on a radical understanding of the power of language. As philosophers, French feminists furthered the work of Lacan and Derrida. As literary critics; they privileged the canon of great male writers (mostly of French modernity) as the *locus ecriture feminine*.

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feminine is mostly psychoanalytical. This form of writing is derived from the mother rather than father.

For Cixous, it is illogical to ignore male writings and theories but female body and language being different; it allows women a whole new dimension for expression from men. She also sees solidarity between logo centrism and phallogentrism, an alliance that must be questioned and undermined. She further explains that women must write their bodies, to unfold the resources of the unconscious. Irigaray, additionally, indicates that a feminine language would be more diffuse, like her sexuality, and less rigidly categorizing than male discourse. (Habib, 2005:667). Throughout the 19th century, the majority of French men and women accepted the century's old, patriarchal system that regulated the sexual roles and rights.

Generally, according to the French psychoanalytic feminists, body serves as a locus of resistance to patriarchal thinking. They make a point of distinguishing themselves from liberal feminism that is from a mode of thought that leaves a system of binary oppositions intact and thus supports its collateral power structures, such as capitalism. Aesthetics is politics; therefore, the French discourse tends to be poetic and innovative.(encyclopedia of feminist literary theory, 1997:169).

In 'Libuse-Tila', too, there is a struggle for showing up self-esteemed personality in womanhood; there is also itching-and-blitching to break out the cultural knots that the female characters are enchained with. This system with roots extending into the distant past had survived centuries of social, economic and religious change. The seemingly constant nature of the subjugation of the female sex was the most powerful argument that the 19th century patriarchalists could master in its defense, (Goldberg Moses, 1984:1).

From a very early stage, psychoanalysis maintained that psychic reality of sex had to be distinguished from anatomical reality. Men and women are not physically or socially "made" as male or female but become such. (<http://postfeminist.wordpress.com>).

The researcher believes that this study may be a significant addition to the existing Ethiopian literature in general, because the perspectives selected will add to knowledge on feminist studies in Ethiopia.

Libuse-Tila is analyzed based on Marxist –Feminist theory and French Feminist Criticism because they express ideas that the researcher feels are relevant to this novel. The researcher confined herself to analyzing protagonist female characters in line with social, economic and psychological factors which have their own impacts on their personality and behavior.

The researcher has narrowed down the scope of the study basically due to time constraints and other problems. The parameters used to analyze the female characters are drawn from Marxist Feminism, and French Feminist criticism.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF PORTRAYAL OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL 'LIBUSE-TILA'

4.1. Women as Protesters against Patriarchy

As it is indicated in the previous chapters, gender bias is a characteristic feature of all patriarchal societies. Consequently, in 'Libuse-Tila', there are characters that stand against patriarchy and struggle for change. They denounce the attitudes of patriarchy that prevails in the society.

This gender inequality initiates Melkam Girma to ponder over the difference to the extent of examination. She wants to investigate whether the difference in outlook between male and female is inborn or culturally learned. The following quotation from the text is an evidence for her idea:

እኔ ልጄ ከወለድኩ ወንድ እንዲሆን እፀልያለሁ። ያኔ ከስር ከመሰረቱ ኮትኩቼ አሳድገውና፣ የወንድና የሴት ያስተሳሰብ ልዩነት ተፈጥሮአዊ ነው ወይስ አስተዳደጋዊ የሚለውን አስቸጋሪ የምርምር ስራ መመራመሪያ አደርገዋለሁ።

I pray that my firstborn child be a male. Because I follow him up by bringing him up properly to know if the difference in outlook arises from sex or is inherited from culture; I will examine whether it is natural or manmade. (p.13)

She wishes to do a laboratory test on her own child which may even lead her to an international award of Nobel Prize. The difference that is seen in the society haunts Melkam to this extent. This shows that Melkam has resentment regarding this difference and she wants to know the root of the unfair situation in the society. Melkam, additionally, complains about the hardship women face concerning love. Whenever men love, they have the right to obtain what they require; however, they leave women victims after they satisfy their needs.

ከሸገር እንስቶች ከግማሽ የምንበልጠው ወልደን ያሳደግናቸው አቅፈን የሳምናቸው የ ኢትዮጵያ ጀግና ወንዶች የፍቅር ሰለባ ነን።

More than half per cent of women in Addis Ababa are victims of love caused by hero, Ethiopian gentle men whom we gave birth to, brought up as well the ones whom we hug and kiss. (p 16)

Melkam carries on her complaint in line with sexual relationships.

ለምን መኖርን ጠላሁ እኔን ከሌላ ለይቶ ከኑሮ ጋር ጉሮሮ ለጉሮሮ ያስተናገቅኝ ምክንያት በልቶ ሆኔን ቆዝሮ መኖር ብቻ አለመሆኑን መረዳቱ ነው።

Why do I hate to live? I have well understood that eating and filling one's belly does not make life complete by itself; that is why I exert my effort to struggle with life. But does that make any difference? (p.4)

Bewket says that if her existence is merely for personal satisfaction, if it does not go beyond that, her existence is meaningless. However, her other part (sub-conscious) challenges her when she attempts to put an end to her life. That is, she always face conflicts beyond her control within herself whenever she decides to do anything.

ፈጣን ምላሽ ከእኔው በፍጥነት ተለገሰኝ።

A prompt response is given to me from myself. (p. 4)

Bewket displays dissatisfaction for the simple changes in life from positive to negative. Life becomes at one time interesting, attractive; at other times, cold and depressing in her view.

ተመኘሁ የህይወትን የሙቀት ደረጃ እንደዚህ ጠብቆ የሚይዝ ነገር ሊኖር ቢችል አሁን ምን ነበረበት።

What if there was something that keeps the heat of the life going? (p.5)

Bewket attempts to commit suicide by swallowing sleeping pills when she realizes that she has done nothing valuable in her 25 years of staying alive. She regards not having fulfilled her ambition a sufficient reason to kill herself.

Bewket's mother was married to a rich, old man while she was a very young girl who couldn't overcome her childhood interests and eventually found her marriage responsibilities incompatible with her age. Yet the old husband who could have been her grandfather severely beat and mistreated her in order to teach her the responsibilities of marriage and blaming her for their problem of not having any child within six years of their marriage. As a result, she deserted him and lived the rest of her life in her mother's compound. Without sharing any property from her husband, she brought up her only daughter in abject poverty and shame though she had inherited a huge amount of property from her parents and her husband eventually claimed possession over her inheritance. Consequently, she led a meager life; she was a mother who lived for her only child. This experience has created a deep scar on Bewket's life. She has developed a negative attitude towards marriage taking into account her mother's experience and the negative attitude of the patriarchal society towards women.

ወንድን ስታገቢ ሊያመልክሽ ሳይሆን ባርያው ሆነሽ ልትግኝለት አሊያም ደግሞ እናቱ ሆነሽ ልታሳድገው መሆኑን ልብ በዩው።

When you get married to a man, you have to know that it is not for the purpose of being worshipped. It is either to serve him as a slave or to nurse and treat him just like his mother. (p. 37)

Bewket's philosophy is not only confined to what already mentioned; they are all-rounded something like politics, knowledge, and so on. In her political philosophy, Bewket criticizes both leaders who are unable to rule and the people who can not be ruled. She speaks lowly of them and ridicules both classes.

*“መመራት የማያውቀን ህዝብ መምራት የማይችል መሪ ሲመራው ማይት ስንዴት ያስቃል።”
It is ridiculous to see peoples who do not know how to be ruled and rulers without knowledge of governance.(p. 33)*

Bewket puts her philosophical issue on living like this:

*“ተዉኝ ስባካችሁ ምኑነ ፍርሽ ትሱኛላች? ተኖረብሽ ስትሱኝም! ሌሎችን ስኗኗርኩ ስንጂ፤ ስነዚህ... የስኔ የኑፎ ፍልሰፍናዎች ናችዉ።”
Leave me alone, please; how on earth do you tell me that I am living? Rather why don't you say that the others are living on me! That is, I have the others live. These are my own philosophy on the way of living. (p. 34)*

Generally, she divides them into two: needs of belly and needs of mind. Needs of belly are those basic needs essential for survival. Needs of mind incorporate such things like creativity, practicality, philosophy, problem solving and self-determining abilities. Melkam also reflects her political idea by sympathizing African rulers. In her political philosophy, she criticizes governmental employees by watching what they do at workplaces and during work hours. She puts her idea saying:

*“ስንዳንዴ ሰሎሞን መሪዎች ስዝናሰሁ። ስንዲህ ስይነት ሞዘኔ፤ ከደመዎዝ ስኗ ከምገብ ሲባ ብዙ የሚያስቡት የሚፈጥሩት ነገር የሌላችዉን ግሰሰቦች ጥርቅም በገፈዘደንትነት ወደ ስንድ ስቅጣጫ ስኗመጣሰን ብሰዉ ስሰጣን በመያዛችዉ።”
I sometimes sympathize African leaders because they struggle to bring unity leading lumpens who are interested only in their monthly salary and food; they can not think more than this. They neither create nor do anything different. (p. 41)*

In most African writings, we do not encounter the quality of female characters that are interested in politics, except house chores matters. In here, however, these female characters possess what the other female characters in other novels lack.

On the other hand, Milki's philosophy mostly revolves around her own life and experience which demonstrates women's lives in marriage.

የቤቱ ስራ አያልቅም። ለደቂቃ እንኳን ዕረፍት አይሰጥም። ማን ለዚህ ስራ ደግሞ ይክፈላል። ባልም ቢሆን በፀዳው ቤት ውስጥ ይዘባንናል። ... የቤት ስራ ክብራ ነው፤ የሚሰጥንት ሹመቱ! ከነክብሩና ሃላፊነቱ ጋር የተቀበልኩት።

Though I toil with the house chores, I can't finish it soon; I do not have any rest. Who is to pay me for this job?... My husband also enjoys luxury at home. ...Duty and responsibility are the things I am awarded from my marriage. (p. 49)

As it is described in Bengsten (1976:462), women are taken as non-productive although they perform tiresome hard work at home. No one considers their labor as something important. Milki asks who she is, what she is and who she was. She talks about the similarities that she has with a slave, a maidservant and a prostitute. When she elaborates the comparative analysis of her own life style with these members of the society who occupy the lowest class stratum, she says that a slave and a maidservant serve their masters freely for the food and shelter that he provides them with. A prostitute also sells her body to live. She claims that her own situation is similar to these women who though her class is a privileged one for its name only.

አንዳንዴ ቀበሌ ለጉዳይ ስሄድ ስራ ብለው ሲጠይቁኝ የነፃ አገልጋይ ባረያ፣ የቤት ውስጥ ገረድ ወይም ሴት አዳሪ ብዬ ለመመለስ ይክጅለኛል።
When I some times go to kebele for some matters and get asked what my job is, I feel like I should respond, 'a slave who provides service for free', 'a maidservant' or a 'prostitute'. (p.49)

4.2. Images of Women versus Men in the Novel

The male characters are shadowy in contrast to the female characters in this novel. In other words, the female characters in Lubuse Tila outshine the male characters. The male characters do not philosophize except Melkam's friend, Michael, who happens to have a positive attitude towards women. He is not a main character, but we hear him suggesting some philosophical ideas as revealed in his discussion with Melkam. Michael clarifies his stand concerning the world and women in general saying;

አሁን ግን ዕድሜ ያስተማረኝን እውነት ልንገርሽ ፣ አለም የራስዋን ተፈጥሯዊ ፍሰት ይዞ ቀስ እያለች የምትራመድ አስገራሚ መሆንዋ ነው። ሴቶች ከወንዶች እኩል ናቸው የሚለው ጥያቄ ያሁኑ ዘመን አዙሪት ሆኖ ነው እንጂ ሴቶች ወንዶችን አስከንድቶ መብለጣቸው የተፈጥሮ ሃቅ ነው።
"Let me tell you what I learned from life and my own experience over the years. The world moves slowly in its own natural pace. The idea that 'women are equal to men' is the burning issue of the present time in reality; but I say, 'women are far better than men'." (P.52)

Though Michael's stand is similar to that of modern female characters, he is not a main character; he is there to support the beliefs of the female protagonists and serve Melkam as a good lover to help her accept herself as a beautiful and attractive young woman, the support she needed so badly owing to her inferiority complex in the novel. In other words, Michael is different from the other male characters depicted in the novel in that he has an optimistic attitude towards women in general and he even asks her why people are trying to bring women down to the level of equality with men when they are much superior to men.

Milki's father Ato Debela, is a good example of patriarchal society. He insists that his daughter Milki should get married to his friend's son whom she doesn't know. He, in addition, rejects her choice of a partner-Melaku. We also observe a great difference between the attitude of mother and father although both of them are traditional. Her mother asks her about what she has planned to do with her education when Milki tells them of her proposal to marry Melaku. On the contrary, Ato Debela's worry is about the ethnic background of the will be bridegroom. Moreover, he obliges Milki to study the names of her grand fathers when she was a very young girl.

ስሞቻቸው የዘር ማንዘሮችሽ መከበሪያ ናቸው።

The names of your forefathers express their honor. (p. 12)

Milki, abhors studying the names of her great great and always unable to cache the names; as a result, her father gets angry and beats her. Milki as a character reflects the attitude of the generations towards belongingness and ethnic identity.

Another man that reflects patriarchal attitude in this novel is the shopkeeper. The shopkeeper appreciates Melaku for the kicks he inflicts on Milki at the time when she tries to escape from his assault. She went to the shop in order to call her friend Bewket so as she would come and rescue her from the severe mistreatment she got from Melaku one evening since he took her cell phone from her and kept her prisoner in their house. But Melaku discovers her escape from the prison house, and follows her by car only to find her calling Bewket whom he always hated for her freedom and deviance from the traditional norms of the general public. Then, the old shopkeeper advises Melaku to punish his wife well saying:

ጎበዝ የኔ አንበሳ፣ አሀያና ሴት ዱላ ይወዳል፣ በደንብ እሻት እንድትገራ። ጎበዝ ወንድ ልጅ መውለድ እንደ አንተ ነበር።

What a clever man! Women and donkeys love punishment. Give her more so that she will be well disciplined. It would have been great if all men are courageous like you my lion! (p.140)

Bewkte’s mother is also far better than Bewket’s father. Carrying the responsibility she brought up Bewket without any permanent means of income where as the father being rich, takes no notice of his daughter. Her mother, inspite of her abject poverty, has sacrificed all her house hold to Bewket ; she has led a life of misery for herself.

ሀምሳ ብር ውለጂ አልክዋት ሀምሳ ብር እጅዋ ላይ መቼ እንዳየሁ እንክዋ አላሰታውስም
I urged her to give me fifty birr I am not sure of my seeing fifty birr in her hands. (Page 24).

In other words, she gave whatever she had, including her life to her daughter.

4.2.1. Images of Traditional Women versus Modern Women in the Novel

When we examine Libuse Tila in terms of portrayal of women, it is possible to classify the women in the novel as traditional, the ones who respect the patriarchal domination, and the modern women, the ones who stand against patriarchy and struggle for change.

Milki’s mother, w/ro Chaltu, is a typical traditional woman and an obedient and loyal wife. When her husband gets married to another woman deserting Chaltu with six children, she shows no objection. Even she tries to conceal that her feeling is hurt. She cries hiding herself from her children. In addition, she reflects her husband’s beliefs and attitudes. In other words, she doesn’t have her own stand. Chaltu always backs up her husband even if he does a mistake. Milki strongly reproaches her mother for such stand saying;

ስሚ ሀርሜ... እሱ ገና ምንም ሳላውቅ ሊድረኝ ሲነሳ ተደርበሽ አስማማሽኝ፤ ዛሬ እኔ ባል አመጣሁ ስልሽ አንገትሽን ቀብረሽ አለቀሽ። እሱ ጥሎሽ ሲሄድ የሱን ቁጥ የምትልሽ ውሻ ነሽ።

Listen mom!... when father imposed on me a marriage without my consent, you tried to persuade me into it backing him up. But now, when I tell you that I am going to get married to the man I love, you weep bitterly. He has left you alone but you follow and fulfill his needs. You act just like a dog. (p 62)

Here, Milky initiates her mother by reproaching her to develop her own stand and belief. W/ro Chaltu fulfills the roles of “good” woman in patriarchal society. She is appreciated in the society because she carries the load that the society burdens her with.

Another traditional woman, to some extent, is Bewket’s mother. She sees life only from one angle and has led her life suffering from the consequences of male-dominated society. Bewket sympathizes with her mother as follows:

ሀይወቷን በተቀደደላት ቱቦ አፍስሳ..... ሳትጠቀምበት.... ጨልፋ ሳታጣጥመው ክንብል ብላ የቀረች...

She has passed through the life which was designed for her by others, without making use of it and without tasting it, she has passed away. (P.56)

On the contrary, Bewket has a philosophy of life which is different from her mother’s. She sympathizes with her because she is the one who lived for her only child. Beweket’s mother has targeted only one aim in life, doing good for her daughter at the cost of her happiness. However, Beweket sees life without any confinement. Bewket describes her mother’s life in comparison to hers saying:

ሀይወትን በትንሽ ቱቦ ውስጥ እንደምትፈስ ውሃ አጨንቁሬ አልመለከታትም። ቃል አለብኝ፤ የጠይም ልእልት ቃል። ሂወትዎን በተቀደደላት ቱቦ አፍስሳ... ሳትጠቀምበት... ጨልፋ ሳታጣጥመው ክንብል ብላ የቀረች! ሂወት ትልቅ መስክ ናት፤ ማእቀብ የላትም። ማንም በፈለገው አቅጣጫ እየፈሰሰ ይጋልባታል።

I don't see life as water in a pipeline because I have a promise; a promise from a chocolate-colored princess who passed away with out tasting a good life. Life is a vast meadow without any restriction. Everybody rides it the way he/she wants. (p. 56)

Bewket’s mother hasn’t done anything good for herself. After divorce, she has given her entire life to bring up Bewket. As a good mother, she has devoted everything she has for Bewket. This is what the society expects from a good mother. On the contrary, Bewket enjoys absolute freedom in her life protesting against the dominant social norms other members of her society abide by at large. She violates the rules and regulations in the society and urges men to follow

her instead of following their directions whenever she finds any man of her desire for sexual partnership. She claims that she tastes every bit of life on behalf her mother, and justifies her act as an act of avenging her mother on the society.

Melkam's mother is also another example of traditional women. She strictly sets rules at home to make Melkam good and gentle; however, she is involved in secret deeds that are wrong in the eyes of the community she belongs to. She doesn't allow Melkam to go out or stay outside and something like that. The daughter criticizes such acts, which the society accomplishes confidentially but expects the others to keep themselves away from. The following example quoted from the novel shows this.

“በራስህ ላይ እንዲደረግ የማትፈልገውን በሰው ላይ አታደርግ” እያሉን በጨለማ ማድረጉን ያስተማሩን እራሳቸው የህግ አስከባሪዎቹ ናቸው።

What we have learnt from our teachers of the law is that, they teach us 'do not do unto others what you don't want others do unto you, but they do it either in darkness or secretly. (P.55)

Bewket criticizes the society who obliges others to do what is not permissible. Not only do men oppress but women also do things under the shadow of darkness, things that are morally wrong. This can be seen in Melaku's mother, w/ro Azeb. She has a feudal attitude and she pushes her son to be hard on Milki. Generally, we see these two classes of women who are pro and against patriarchal society.

4.3. Women as “the Other”

Bewket, Milki and Melkam, the three protagonists in this novel, are trying to become themselves though their strength and the way they act differ. French Feminist Literary Criticism denounces the femininity that is manifested in the society. Bewket, being confident in herself, acts and does what men are expected to do in the particular society. In such a way, she deviates from the rules and regulations that the society upholds. Her deviation goes to the extent that she wants to start an affair with one of her colleagues which he repeatedly refuses but finally yields to her seduction, which would have been only proper for women to act this way. Hence, Bewket enjoys reversing the gender role in her society on purpose. She explains the situation as follows:

የቀረውን ወሬ አልጋ ላይ በናውጋው እንደሚመቸኝ ገለፅኩለት። እሱ መጠየቅ የተፈቀደለትን ነገር እኔ በመጠየቁ እንደአሳ ተመላጫላለሁ።

I told him that I would be comfortable if we talk about the rest in bed. I asked him the question that was permitted to ask only for him, so he agreed to my request reluctantly. (p. 70)

The society sets the roles of men and women. Unless they act accordingly, they are condemned and made alienated. In general sense, Bewket's behavior seems to be an act of retaliation. From the very beginning, her father mistreated her mother so her mother does not want to have any affair with any man. She has spent the rest of her life alone. Bewket, therefore, goes with different men on behalf of her mother as she says. She gives a reason to defend her actions saying:

ጠይምዋ ልዕልቴ ማድረግ ያልቻለችውን እኔ አደርግላታለሁ። እስከ ሳታይ ያመለጣትን እኔ አይላታለሁ። ያልቀመሰችውን በደንብ አድርጌ እቀምስላታለሁ።
I taste every bit of life that my chocolate-colored princess could not taste. (P.121)

She applies absolute freedom including sex. As it is mentioned in the previous chapter, Bewket wants the society to see women as themselves not in relation to men.

4.4. Women as Sex Objects

Melkam usually suffers from psychological disturbance as a result of the experiences she has encountered during her childhood. One of her relatives who used to live in her mother's house started harassing her when she was a kid. There after she was deflowered by a man whom she saw only twice; even she does not know his name. Throughout her life, she is hungry for love; let alone to get it from others, she has not deserved from her mother Her mother who dislikes Melkam's father, sees Melkam in the eyes of her father so she mistreats Melkam. She knows well that Melkam has nowhere to go but she urges her to go away.

All this repeated mistreatment leads Melkam to psychological unrest. Above all, she does not trust men. She expresses her feeling towards them saying:

ወንዶች ሁሉ እባብ ናቸው። እየነደፉ የሚገድሉ።
All men are serpents who sting and kill. (P.119)

The suffering she has faced pushes her to develop this pessimistic attitude. The man who deflowered her did not show her any sympathy. When they were in bed, he did not consider her pain. Covering her mouth with his hands to make her shouts not to be heard, he enjoyed his action. That is why she has been thinking of cruelty of men after she comes back home.

If he is the first man to sleep with her, he promises to give her five thousand birr but he disappears breaking his promise. He even gives her a wrong telephone number. He plays on her premature and childish mind. He cheats her while she expected him to keep his promise. If she

were mature enough, though she is needy, she would not go with him before collecting her money. This psychological abuse, results in self-hatred and strong skepticism with hatred towards men. As a result, she could not satisfy the hunger she feels for love without a nagging regret for involving herself in a love affair that is not equally valued by her male partners.

She hates herself and her physical appearance. She thinks that her creator was impartial to her. Melkam describes herself as;

ርካሽ፣ የማልረባ፣ ልቅምቃሚ ሰው መሳይ በሸንጎ ነኝ እኮ።
I am worthless, cheap, that I do not fulfill the status of a human being. (P. 115)

She complains that men want her only to sleep with her. She asks why they do not seek something different from her other than sex.

ለምንድነው ወንዶች ለመተኛት ብቻ የሚፈልጉኝ? ሌላ ከኔ የሚፈልጉት ነገር የለም።
Why do men want only to bed me? They do not want anything else from me.(p.118)

Melkam attempts to challenge bravely the norms of the society. She however, regrets later on. Locking herself in her bedroom without any communication with people, crying, worrying, are manifestations of frustration. For example, after sleeping with Natnael on a field at the workplace, we hear her saying;

“ራሴን እቀጣለሁ፣ እመዘልገዋለሁ...”
I punish myself; I pinch myself, no one else can do it on my behalf.(p.130)

Milki is also another character who is a sex object. Melaku treats her as if she were an object. He disappears from home for many days leaving Milki and her child alone. He does not care about them. Melaku commits adultery with other women, but when he is unable to satisfy his sexual desire with other women, he comes home and uses Milki to satisfy his need. He neither talks nor plays with her. As a husband, he does not care about her feelings. In line with this idea, Milki complains saying:

‘ትፈልጊያለሽ ወይ?’ አልባልም፣ እሱ ሲፈልግ ብቻ...
Whenever he wants sex, he has the right to do it; why does not he ask me whether I'm willing or not?(p.37)

Generally, according to Donovan, the purpose of men chauvinism is to obtain psychological ego satisfaction which is manifested in economic relationships. The economic oppression that is seen in this novel is a reflection of such chauvinism.

Bewket's stand to life seems retaliation. From the very beginning, her father mistreated her mother; this leaves a scar on her life and she is determined to deviate from the society's rules and regulations. After divorcing her father by force, her mother has affairs with no one. Bewket resents for the life that her mother passes through because her mother has spent the rest of her life alone. And that is why she goes with a number of men under her justification of keeping herself in touch with her beloved mother who sacrificed all her happiness to the daughter.

4.5. Marxist Feminism and 'Libuse-Tila'

From the young generation portrayed in the novel, Milki is a character that is greatly influenced by economic oppression. Her marital life can be interpreted from Marxist feminist perspective, which emphasizes that economy is the cause for the existence of oppressors and the oppressed classes. Milki does not have any source of income unless Melaku provides for her and the household. She is provided with food, shelter, a car and so on. However, everything is in kind not in cash. By making her economically dependent on him, he pushed her down up to the level of slavery. Her rights as a wife are denied to her as a consequence.

As it is cited in the previous chapter, Bengsten explains clearly that those who are outside the money economy are oppressed likewise. Milki criticizes herself for her passivity regarding such kind of oppression saying:

“መላኩ እና እናቱ ይወስኑብኝ፣ ይበሉኝ፣ ግኡዝ ነኝ።”

Should they do should Melaku and his mother decide my fate, let them do whatever they like? I am a nonliving thing which does not react to anything.(p.55)

Not only does Melaku degrade her but he also insults her referring to her social status and her parents. Milki asks Melaku to give her money to have her hair plaited; his response initiates her for reaction. He says that she should not spend #100 birr for her and he suggests that she she has it shaven. At this time she starts to wear attractive clothes to go out Melaku says to her:

“ምን ጎደለኝ ልትይ ነው? ሆድሽን እሞላለሁ ደሀ የደሃ ልጅ።”

I have given you everything, I fill your belly, and what else do you want? You poor, a daughter a meager.(p.127)

Here, Melaku tries to indicate the class of society she is in. He is demonstrating his economic power over his wife.

Bewket's mother is another person who is economically abused. The inheritance she got from her parents was snatched away from her by her husband. She tried to take him to the court, but all the judges and community elders sided with her husband and left her and her child empty-handed. Telling her that she will face a problem economically, they advised her to go back to her husband in spite of the severe mistreatment he would inflict on her. They commented that she was wrong to leave home in the words of Bewket as follows:

“በዚች በትንሽ ቤት ልጅ ማሳደግ አትቺይም። ይልቅ ታርቀሽ ግቢ የሚል ምክር ሰነዝሩ፤ የድብደባውን ጠባሳ እንዳላዩ አለፉት፤ የሴት ወግ ነው ሲሉ አሰቡት። ዳኞች፣ ምሁራን አልዋት።

You may face a problem to bring up a child in such a small house. You had better reconcile with your husband and live with him. Ignoring the scar on her body, the elders and elites considered it women's dignity to be beaten by husbands. (p.112)

This is in line with de Beauvoir's explanation that refers to femininity as dependence. The elders impose Bewket's mother with femininity. Bewket also consolidates the idea of economic dependence in line with husband-wife relationship. While she is discussing about marriage with Melkam, Bewket says: "if you marry, you marry to enslave yourself or treat the husband just like his mother."

Donovan illustrates concerning this latent slavery as:

With the division of labor... which in turn is based on the natural division of labor in the family and separation of society into individual of families opposed to one another is given simultaneously... the unequal distribution, both quantitative and qualitative of labor and its products hence property: the nucleus the first form of which lies in the family, where the wife and children are the slaves of the husband.

Though the housewives toil the whole day to perform house chores, their work is not worth money. They get no recognition, no money. Milki who represents housewives, complains that no one considers the tiresome house chores worthy, even the husband; he enjoys the result but cares not about the labor spent on it.

4.6. French Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism and 'Libuse-Tila'

Beauvoir explains how culture and traditions change and sharpen one's attitude and belief. Someone. That is to say, sexual roles are determined by the society. They are not innate. She puts it in precise words saying: "One is not born but rather becomes a woman." Having or losing confidence in oneself is what is developed by the imposition of the society.

Bewket is a character who is fully confident in herself. She is of that type because her mother brought her up in such a way. The following quotations illustrate this point.

**“ እማ አምሳ ብሩን ለምን ፈለግሺው ብለሽ ለምን አልጠየቅሽኝም” እናትዋን ሲመልሱ
“ ለምን እጠይቅሻለሁ ለመልካም ነገር እንደ ፈለግሺው አውቃለሁ።”
Mom, why did you not ask me the reason why I badly needed fifty birr? Mother replied
'why do I ask you? I am sure that you wanted it for some good reason.(p.24)**

She learns how to act as a decision-maker; the trustworthiness that exists between Bewket and her mother shapes Bewket's character. Bewket does not want to be seen as depends on man. She is an independent character. This idea is directly stated in “The Second Sex” of Beauvoir. Whether the society approves or disapproves it is not Bewket's headache; she keeps on performing as she intends to. To cite an example from the text:

**“ ብቻውን የሚጠጣ ወንድ የምትጋብዝ ሴት”
A woman who invites a drinking, lonely man.” (p99)**

Tadesse has never expected that a woman would give him a treat. The society does not allow women to act in this way. The following example is worth considering:

**መከተል ይፈቀድልኛል። መከተል የምተለው ቃል ገረመኝኝ። ለምን እንደ
ተጠቀመውም ገባኝ፣ ለምን ስለወሰድኩት ነው። እንደለመደው ቢሆን እሱ ነበር
ልጋብዘሽ ብሎ ጠየቁ። ሳይ ግን ተገለበጠበት።
Am I allowed 'to follow you'? The word 'following' takes me by surprise. I clearly
know why he has used it. I have taken his role. In normal condition, it should be he
that is expected to invite me but now, the reversal of role astonishes him. (p.100)**

According to Beauvoir, physical distinctions between women and men have meaning only in social arrangements. The above example dramatizes this point.

Another point that Beauvoir raises is that man incarnates humanity; but woman, by virtue of being female deviates from the human norm. Melkam's behavior is good evidence for such situation. Melkam, constantly, experiences a painful conflict between humanity and her femininity. Melkam says:

**አይምርኖ በድርጊቴ ተሸማቆዋል... ሁሌ ፀፀት፣ ሁሌ ራስ ከራስ መፋጀት። ለምን ባደረግሁት
ነገር አንደኛውን አልኮራም! ወይ ደግሞ ከስህተቴ አልታረምም ተብላሽሁህ ፈጥረት ነኝ።
ማንም ያልጠበቀኝ፣ ያልተንከባከበኝ ኝግኝ።
I am ashamed of my action. My mind is stigmatized. I always regret; I always face an
internal conflict after taking a measure to challenge. Why don't take pride in what I**

have done? Or, why don't i take a lesson from my mistakes? I'm a spoilt creature whom no one takes care of or taken responsibility for, a destitute seedling. (p132)

Melkam, generally, vacillates between of her own beliefs and that of society. She spontaneously deviates from the norms of the society but later on, she feels guilty seeing what others say. She is hesitant, and a victim of inferiority complex.

4.7. The subconscious

'Libuse-Tila', the title of this novel is an Amharic compound word which has a similar meaning to the English word 'unconscious or subconscious. The protagonist characters in this novel do not have only one image. It is possible to observe that three different notions are contained in each of them. Therefore, the title is well reflected as a whole.

Bewket attempts suicide, there is another Bewket in herself who opposes the action. Bewket describes the situation as follows:

“ከውስጤ ተደብቃ ሁኔታውን ስትመለከት የነበረች የሀይወት አምላኪ እና አፍቃሪ እኔነቴ ለስለስ ባለ ድምፅ አሁንም እኮ መኖር ትችያለሽ...

The other Bewket who hides herself in me has been watching the situation intently and has said in a subdued voice 'You still have the opportunity' Here, it is possible to see Bewket who targets death and the one who adores and loves life is eager to exist. (p.5)

Melkam also confronts the same challenge whenever she decides to accomplish something. This happening surprises her and raises a question:

አይኔ ሳቀ ውስጤ ፈራ፣ ከማውቀው እኔነት ሌላ ይኖራል ለካስ ማን ኮትኩቶ ያውጣው?

Smile in my eyes; fear in my heart; do I have another self in me, if it is true, who will extract it for me? (P. 132)

The obscured self whom Melkam does not recognize sometimes appears. In other words, the inner self obtains power and voices its own beliefs and thoughts. Melkam calls them as “right mind” and “left mind”.

“ማን እኮ ብር በደንብ አለሽ። የቀኙ አእምሮ የሳይ። አና ወሩን ሙሉ ደሀይቼ ላሳልፍ? የግራ አእምሮ ፈጣን መልስ።

But you have enough money, "My right mind reproaches me." So what! Shall spend the entire month without money?" My left mind responds promptly. (p. 90)

Moreover, the images reflected on these characters are the portrayal of psychological influence through out their lives.

As the authoress elaborates in the introduction part of her book and explains in her interview that action, speech and thought are completely vary from one another. Yordanos puts this philosophical idea in the introduction saying: --- (Actions and speeches are different from our thoughts in that they are conspicuous. On the contrary, thought is limitless, unseen, not modified, not guided by norm, fast, loose and deep; however, our actions and speeches are daubed smeared with goodnessselected and well-organized sentences diction of words, etc. On the other hand, actions are trimmed and used contextually.

Therefore, the way we implement and the way actions, speeches and thoughts exist make them different from one another. As Yordanos denotes 'Libuse-Tila' mirrors what one has at the back of actions and speeches. The root of the actions and speeches in this book is the unconscious or the psychological part; that is why the researcher considers French Psychoanalytic feminist literary criticism as a theoretical framework of her study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

As it has been discussed in the earlier chapters in detail, 'Libuse-Tila' is a work in which we see reversal of gender roles in line with portrayal of female characters; it is the response to most Ethiopian writings on images of the Ethiopian female characters.

Both African and Ethiopian writers mostly emphasize that the experience, identity and role of a woman all derive from a man's; however, in 'Libuse-Tila' depiction of female characters follows the opposite direction. The three protagonist female characters represent three different images at the same time. In other words, though dominant an image is, each one of them has three images as subconscious.

Milki is a submissive wife who is like her mother in that she has been fully dependent on her husband and she is reluctant. Besides, the way in which she was brought up and lives as a wife with Melaku makes her to be categorized as a traditional woman. She acts in the same way as her husband wants her to be. She leaves all her friends, parents, family; she generally lives under Melaku's full control. This part of hers dominates Milki's image.

Milki's dependency arises from her economical problem. She is submissive because she grew up seeing her submissive mother. Her unconscious part, the desire for change makes her to be determined and takes a harsh measure as far as killing her husband and leads absolutely different life there after.

Milki's second image is that of a philosopher. She philosophizes about life, lives like middle class women and criticizes the authors for not writing concerning the middle class women. She complains that the focus of their writing is on the beautiful, loved and rich woman. They ignore their surroundings, the reality of life. She asks who she is, what she is.

Thirdly, there is a time when Milki becomes a true self. She takes a measure by murdering Melaku, who neither allows her divorce nor a good treatment. He makes her life hazardous. She takes his life pretending as if he committed suicide; we see her-self determined action.

Melkam, by the same token, has three images from which victimization of inferiority complex dominates her image. This psychological impact results from the treatment of her mother's and the way the people around her used to treat during her childhood.

Firstly, she is a philosopher. Her philosophy focuses on women's equality, men and women relationships particularly in terms of love affairs. The image of true self unexpectedly emerges and Melkam deviates from the norm of society.

Bewket is portrayed dominantly as a philosopher. Besides, she also exhibits psychological dissatisfaction, is manifested in her attempts at unsuccessful suicide.

The third point is that she has an image of being a consultant. Be it Milki or Melkam, whenever they face trouble, they call her for help. She is an all all-rounded person.

Bewket was brought up in the free environmental situations in her mother and grand-mother's hands but her mother's suffrages bring a psychological influence on her life principles that is, extreme freedom to enjoy herself and not to be tied with marital knots.

She is, generally, a female character through whom reversal of gender roles is portrayed.

Taking the initiative in sexuality, is Bewket's stand, which is observed through deviation. Bewket believes that sex is for the benefit of both sexes; there is neither donor nor recipient. But Melkam has a different stand in this recent. She says that men use her as sex object; they have no love for her. Milki also complains that her husband has freedom that she does not have concerning sex.

Generally, Milki, raises a question about life and philosophizes on life. Bewket's firm philosophy revolves around life, politics, marriage, culture, sex and the like. These three main characters portray various gender roles: Milki Debela reflects gender role in decision-making. Melkam Girma, on her part, shows gender role in terms of sexual relationship. Bewket Tamene represents an independent woman who has a power of thinking and her own philosophy.

This novel shows progress in portrayal of female characters in Amharic literature. However, there are flaws that we can notice in the novel. Family bondage which is the basis of society is loose especially concerning the young generation. We see no successful family in the novel. Both Melkam and Bewket do not marry. Though Milki gets married, it is not a type of marital life which can be a good example. It ends in revenge. We do not see any sample for good marital life, be it in traditional or modern women's' lives. The novel reveals the hazards for the coming generation.

Another weakness is the ending part of the novel. There is no bright action that we observe. It ends with out clearly indicating the fate of the main characters. There fore, instead of portraying the gloomy life of characters throughout the last novel, at least a successful female character should be depicted. Deviation from the harmful traditions is reasonable but deviation from long-held norms of formation leads the society to disintegration. Successful and optimist female characters have to be portrayed. This can create a sense of optimism that the novel lacks.

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Appendix A

Interview questions

1. Would you mind if you tell me your biography briefly?
2. How many books have you written?
3. What is the meaning of the title of your book, 'Libuse-Tila'?
4. Why have you entitled it 'Libust-Tila', (Unconscious)?
5. In your novel the protagonist characters are females and you have portrays them as independent and decision-makers unlike the previous most Ethiopian literary works?
6. Is there any female character in which the reader sees the author?
7. Do you have any specific reason to produce a novel in which we have active protagonist female characters?

Appendix B

A Synopsis of the Novel 'Libuse-Tila'

Libuse-Tila is a novel with three female protagonists around whose life the main story line rests. They are modern girls who joined Addis Ababa University where they become fast friends during their freshman study at the main campus of Sidist Killo. They are close friends who were born and brought up in Addis Ababa. All three face challenges owing to their sex and the predominantly patriarchal society of Addis Ababa in different ways.

Milki Debela, a girl from the busiest center of the city around Merkato specifically called 'Awtobis Tera', was born into a family composed of two sisters and three brothers as the eldest of all the children in the family. Milki's father, Ato Debela, deserts his family to live with a young prostitute to have other children with her in addition to the six children he leaves with Milki's mother. He feels no responsibility for the household; however, he rarely appears to visit the family and claims that he is the figurehead of the family. Milki joins university, but fails to proceed to a second year course which eventually leads her to decide to marry a man named Melaku against her parents' strong disapproval of her marriage owing to the difference of their ethnic identity. However, she succeeds in rejecting the man that her father approved for marriage, and getting married to a man of her own preference.

Consequently, her parents disown her and she becomes completely dependent on Melaku both economically and psychologically. Unfortunately, Melaku's behavior is changed through time and he begins to mistreat her after she gave birth to their only daughter named Moy. This neglect and mistreatment lead her to a complete despair as all the decisions concerning her private life are made for her by her rich and powerful mother-in-law. On top of this frustrating situation, her husband beats her severely and tells her in the most torturous manner of her being infected by HIV declaring her accountable for infecting him with the virus owing to her adultery. This news leads her to murder her husband and make believe that he committed suicide, and finally leaves her daughter so as the mother-in-law shall bring her up. She then vanishes after selling all their property and visiting the country's historical places, settles at Dire Dawa town with a camouflage of Bewket Geletta where nobody recognizes her any longer. Bewket Tamene, who is a child of divorced parents, was brought up with her mother's love and care in her grandmother's house. She was a result of untimely marriage for her mother and the

father was an old autocrat who abused her mother leading to their final divorce. She lives all her life regretting her mother's abuse at the hand of her own biological father and claims to compensate for her loss by leading her life against the grains of cultural norms and gender relations. She has a great philosophical attitude towards life and has a steadfast belief and self-confidence so her friends, Melkam Girma and Milki Debela, need her advice whenever they are in trouble. A journalist Bewket who is a graduate of university, loses taste in life and tries to commit suicide. On top of that, she is a victim of harmful habits such as smoking, drinking and chewing 'chat' owing to her deviant belief that she has to taste everything as a compensation of her mother's grief and torture by the outcome of cultural practices of patriarchy and early marriage. As a result, she strongly violates the culture she was brought up in.

Melkam Girma who was born from a bar lady graduates from university and works as a journalist just like her friend Be'wket. During her childhood, she was mistreated by different people in the family including her mother. As a result she has experienced inferiority complex. By the age of three she was able to drink up a bottle of beer; besides, it was her own relative who harassed her for sex in her childhood. She was deflowered by a man whom she has seen only twice because he promised to give her five thousand birr but it remains only a promise. Melkam attempts to challenge life just like Bewket; however, she is not as brave as Bewket. She has lived with a strong feeling of inferiority complex owing to her looks and hatred for her mother whom she considers responsible for the death of her father. Fortunately, Melkam finally decides to confront life and start living afresh after her encounter with an old man who becomes her fiancée named Mikael and the courage she collects based on Be'wket's advice and encouragement to face life boldly.

Appendix C

Some Information about the Authoress

As it is discussed in chapter three, Molara-Ogundipe has pointed out that African women writers have the responsibility to correct the false image of African women in literature. Since the same problem is shared both in Ethiopia and Africa in the case of portrayal of female characters, Yordanos is one of the female writers who have stepped forward for practicality. That is, 'Libuse-Tila', her first novel is written in such a way. As a result, she portrays protagonist female characters as philosophers, active and assertive unlike the previous writings. The researcher has interviewed Yordanos on the telephone to obtain further information about the book and her experience.

The interview questions are set in the appendix but the condensed ideas are put in this chapter. Yordanos Gesh was born in Addis Ababa and graduated from Addis Ababa University in Ethiopian Languages and Literature in the year 1998 E.C. A 28-year-old Yordanos worked as a journalist in Ethiopian Radio and Television Organization for two years after graduation. She now lives in America.

According to Katherine Frank's explanation, modern African women writers are trying to show their feelings in their writings that a woman should be seen as a full human being. In the same token, 'Libuse-Tila' is Yordanos's first novel in which she expresses her beliefs and wishes. In this interview she has told me that reading is her hobby. My interviewee starts her explanation from the title of the book. 'Libuse-Tila' has a similar meaning to the English word subconscious. Yordanos believes that each and everyone has something hidden in herself or himself which they don't recognize that is oneself which is unknown to oneself.

In the previous Ethiopian novels, explains Yordanos, female characters are shadows of men; they themselves don't philosophize but male characters philosophize up on them. Therefore, they are depicted as magnifiers of men's lives. On the contrary, things are different in 'Libuse-Tila'. The protagonist female characters act as philosophers.

Yordanos attempts to make Bewket speak on her behalf because Yordanos says that she rejects traditionally regarded ideas concerning women. For instance, she calls herself 'Woizero' without getting married for she does not relate this title to marriage. She sees it that the title is given to respect ladies who are with men.

Declaration

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

Name:

Bekelech Truye

Signature

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'BEKELECH TRUYE', is written over a printed line.

This thesis has been submitted in my consent and approval as an advisor.

Place: Faculty of Humanities; Addis Ababa University