Amharic Adaptations of English Drama

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ABSTRACT

The major objectives of this thesis are to examine closely the theory and practice of literary adaptation and to give a clear picture of the role it has so far played and may yet have to play in Amharic drama. The research is conducted in the hope that it will bring to the attention of readers and students of literature an area of study in which little has been done until this point. Hence, it may hopefully serve as reference material for future research work done in the same or related vein. The thesis also aims to describe the characteristic features of literary adaptation which distinguish it from literary translation, thereby clearing the confusion which exists at present between the two concepts and genres.

The thesis comprises four chapters, excluding the introduction, conclusion and appendix. The introduction describes the aims and structure of the thesis. Chapter I presents some background information and the views of certain scholars about the concept and practice of adaptive writing. Chapter II takes up the Romeo and Juliet theme in some detail. First, a brief account of the ancient and pre-Shakespearean versions of the story is given. Then, Shakespeare's treatment of some of these sources in the writing of his own play is considered. A discussion of post-Shakespearean adaptations and a modern variation of the story is also presented. Later, a scene-by-scene analysis of Kebede Mikael's Amharic version of Romeo and Juliet follows.

Chapter III covers the origin and development of the Faust story, the tragic treatments of the subject by Marlowe and Goethe, and finally Kebede Mikael's Amharic version of the Faust theme. Chapter IV is entirely devoted to the discussion of Teyaki versus An Inspector Calls. The conclusion contains highlights of the foregoing chapters and general remarks made on the basis of the study. An attempt has also been made in this section to show the value of literary adaptation in the process of the world-wide cross-cultural transfer and the invaluable role it can play in Ethiopian literary life once it is given due attention by scholars and writers. The appendix examines the Amharic translation of Macbeth, considers at some length Shakespeare's adaptation of this play from historical sources, and ends with a comparative and contrastive analysis of passages from Tsegaye Gebremehdin's translation of Macbeth and Kebede Mikael's adaptation of Romeo and Juliet in relation to their sources.

INTRODUCTION

Unlike literary translation, literary adaptation is by far a neglected area of research in Ethiopia at present. This is due most likely to the scarcity of adapted drama in Amharic and fiction. Besides, the term is often confused and interchanged with translation both by persons inside and outside literary and academic circles. Therefore, one of the objectives of this study is to bring the subject of literary adaptation to authors, critics and readers in general. In this connection, attempts will be made to clarify existing confusion and misconceptions about the terms and concepts of adaptation and translation in literature by way of establishing marked distinctions between the two genres.

It is also hoped that the thesis will contribute towards the body of literary research so far carried out in Ethiopian drama. It tackles certain Amharic plays, a few of which were never taken up before in official or major research works, and others previously treated only in a sketchy manner. More importantly, however, it approaches and analyses those works from the perspectives of the art of literary adaptation, which, as pointed out earlier, has been an area of study left to itself until now. Moreover, when this project has been completed. it may not only give a bird's-eye view of what adapted drama, in particular, is all about, but it may also make a contribution as a theoretical frame of reference for further research and a guide to supplementary reading in the field. It may thus, mark the beginning of a long

series of related research works which might, in the long run, become a source of encouragement and inspiration for those with the talent and interest in creative writing to turn their attention to adaptation as a potentially rich storehouse of material for literary activity.

The thesis is comprised of four chapters, three of which fundamentally treat a pair of two original English and adapted Amharic plays. Chapter I is devoted to a discussion of the differences between adaptation and translation and focusses on the role that adaptation has played in African literature in general and in Amharic versions of English drama in particular. Chapter II takes up the subject of the Amharic adaptation of Romeo and Juliet. Chapters III and IV respectively dwell on Faust and An Inspector Calls, a play written by J. B. Priestley. In the appendix, Tsegaye Gebremedhin's translation of Shakespeare's Macbeth is considered and the fundamental differences between translation and adaptation are demonstrated through a comparative and contrastive analysis of this Amharic translation and Kebede Mikael's adaptation of Romeo and Juliet in relation to their original sources.

As far as Romeo and Juliet, Dr. Faustus or Faust and Macbeth are concerned, the respective original author's innovations and other alterations on the story he manipulated as source material are analyzed before a discussion of each Amharic version is presented. In the second and third chapters, the stories of Romeo and Juliet and Faust are traced back to their roots in ancient and medieval legends and myths. The literary Faust and Macbeth are

shown to have their historical prototypes in German and Scottish histories. One of the several modern versions of the Romeo and Juliet theme is also discussed briefly. This background material is intended to provide a theoretical reference against which the Amharic texts are to be judged and analyzed. Furthermore, the additional information is thought to be helpful in indicating the origin, evolutionary growth, present developments and future prospects of adaptation as a mode of literary expression.

Although J. W. Goethe was a German writer, and therefore non-English by birth, nationality and language, a discussion of his tragedy is included in this thesis although it is supposed to deal only with English drama adapted into Amharic. This is partly because Goethe's tragedy has been widely translated into the English language. Besides, several English versions of it have, on numerous occasions, been performed on the stage and shown on the screen. The major reason for its inclusion, of course, is the significant contribution that the tragedy and its posterity, or subsequent versions based on it, are believed to have made towards adaptation as a mode of writing and a concept of literary criticism.

The fact that, at present, a marked shift of attention towards adaptation is noticeable on the world scene and the African continent proves that this form of writing is becoming more and more important as a distinct literary genre and as a valid concept of the critical evaluation of a work. The literary situation in Ethiopia could and should be no exception in this respect.

Ethiopian drama, among other arts, should contribute to and receive from the current process of world-wide cultural exchanges. Literary adaptation will no doubt be highly instrumental as a vehicle of this cross-cultural interaction. It is believed that the following discussions in this thesis will call the attention of writers as well as critics to the fact that adaptation, a literary form full of promise in Africa and the world at large, has, nevertheless, been almost unrecognized or forgotten about in this country up to now. Moreover, it is my belief that the study will underscore to readers in general the fact that much more has yet to be done if Ethiopian drama is to respond creatively to foreign literary influences and present world trends towards adaptation both as "a dynamic principle and a valid concept" of literary criticism and creativity.

CHAPTER I

Defining Adaptation as a Literary Genre

Adaptation, as a literary form and trend, is a relatively recent phenomenon in world literature. It has, however, gained increasing importance lately, as the growing number of adapted texts throughout the world clearly manifests. Critiques and theories of adaptation based on such works continue to come forth and draw the attention of authors, scholars and students alike towards this literary form as a distinct, rich and yet-to-be exploited genre. The common and unique features of present human experience, in addition to the diverse cultural heritage from past generations, best explain the major reason why adaptive writing has become increasingly important.

Although nations and peoples may be distinguished from one another by their respective, distinctive cultural and literary systems, no one nation or people is, still, "a cultural island", as it were, with an exclusively unique and original set of its own literary norms and standards. The transmission of traditions to the following generations, including the transfer of literary experience and several other forms of cultural interaction among nations, has been, and will continue to be a never-ending social process. Among the most important vehicles for such a transfer of cultural and literary phenomena is no doubt literature as a whole, and dramatic adaptation in particular.

The role which adaptation is conceived to play both as a literary mode and medium of cultural transmission was emphasized in

the conference which took place in the University of Jerusalem, only one year ago in 1989. It brought together a number of literary critics and researchers representing various nations and cultures of the world. The essays presented at the symposium were collected and published by the Cambridge University Press in a volume entitled The Play Out of Context: Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture.1 The papers provide an in-depth discussion of the challenges and rewards of dramatic or theatrical adaptation from the practical, theoretical and methodological points of view. Some mention is made of the fact that Shakespeare's King Lear was adapted into Hebrew, Moliere's Tartuffe into Egyptian-Arabic, and Chekhov's Three Sisters into Japanese, among many others. Evidently the process of adaptation must have involved in each of these cases crossing wide cultural gaps since the people represented here are separated by vast traditional and ideological differences. Finding direct or exact linguistic equivalents would not, certainly, have worked to get the messages across under these circumstances. Therefore, the plays had necessarily to be taken out of their original context and transplanted in different social and literary environments so as to create new meanings and convey adapted instead of translated messages. In effect, new plays were written for new audiences. Hence, adaptive writing is not identical with or even part of translating because it calls for a greater degree of literary creativity than the latter.

The fact that a play is primarily meant for performance on the stage makes it imperative to adapt a work of drama in a wide range

of aspects so that a strong visual appeal is produced. Characters should speak the language, reflect the behaviour, and in short, live the life of people familiar to the viewer in everyday life situations. The setting, too, must of necessity come within the range of the audience's observations and experiences so that they feel themselves to be part of the world represented on the stage. Such far-reaching effects are to be produced not by a direct replication in another language of the source play but by a highly imaginative process of cultural transposition whereby the adapter changes, shifts, introduces and even invents characters and elements according to the requirements and dictates of the cultural and literary heritage of his audience.

Adaptation and translation differ as activities in objective and scope. One of the various definitions put forward by scholars for translation can be simply expressed as follows; translating is the process of transferring a message from one language to another as accurately and naturally as possible. According to this definition the prime objective of translating is to cover fundamentally the same information as the source language but in a different tongue. Therefore, in spite of whatever variations may exist in the formal linguistic units and patterns of the languages involved, the spirit and total effect of the translation must approximate as much as possible that of the original. According to experts, the accuracy and effectiveness of a successful translation is determined in terms of not just the message transmitted, but also the effect produced. The translated text has to make the same

kind of impact on the second language audience as the source material made on the audience of the original language. This principle of translation pre-supposes complete fidelity on the part of the translator. In other words, his freedom of deviation, subtraction, addition and alteration is extremely limited except under special circumstances.

On the other hand, adaptation is one of the most fluid, flexible and freely used of terms. This is proven by the application of the word in a number of disciplines involving both the social and natural sciences. In a broad sense, it means remodelling, refashioning or restructuring an object, a text, a method or a system of thought so that it suits new needs or serves different purposes which the original does not adequately fulfill. Hence, a clear conceptual and operational, as well as a stylistic and methodological, difference exists between the terms and processes of translating and adapting. They are undertaken in order to achieve different ends or intended to create their own special effects. The adapter, unlike the translator, is not bound or restricted by the message and implications of the original, but may take liberties with it as he wishes depending upon the end he has in mind.

As already pointed out, the term adaptation is so flexible that, even narrowed down to the world of literature, it may denote widely different objectives. The following definitions illustrate only one of the forms or types of adaptation available or practiced in literature.

Definition I - to adapt means "to fit to" and refers to a "process of acquiring a fitness for new circumstances or new purposes. In literature and music the term is used to denote the modification of some form of art so as to allow its suitable expression in another form. Thus, we speak of the adaptation of a play from a novel, or of a poem to music, where certain stanzas are omitted to suit the circumstances of length usually called for in a song." (Everyman's Encyclopedia, Volume I. 2.

Definition II. Harry Shaw, for his part, defines adaptation as; "the recasting of a work to fit another medium while retaining the action, characters, and as much as possible of the language and the tone of the original. Novels are frequently adapted for films, the stage, or television. A play may appear as an adaptation in novel form, as a radio presentation, etc." Dictionary of Literary Terms). 3

The type of adaptation referred to in these adaptations is one that has to do with the transfer of a literary work from one genre, or form of art, or medium of presentation, to another. The changes made do not go beyond the formal aspects of the work, as stated, and therefore are not so deep as to affect essential elements like its themes, characters and language. However, since this type of adaptation is not the subject or concern of this thesis, no further discussion of this subject is necessary, but in passing it should be noted that this is among the unexploited areas of study and work in Ethiopia. Works of research and fiction, as well as drama, in this area or form would no doubt make some contribution to the development of the literary experience and culture of the society.

The type of adaptation being studied in this thesis, however, is that which deals with the rewriting of a work either to improve it or to make it more suitable for a different or an alien audience. For instance, David Garrick's and Thomas Otway's purpose in modifying Romeo and Juliet, as will be discussed in chapter I and in the appendix, is not to make the same effect or convey exactly the same message as the original did. Rather, it is in order to make certain amendments in view of their personal feelings, the attitudes of their contemporaries, or simply for the sake of change and novelty. Thus, the nature of their works is different in style and objective from that of a translator's, who aims at reproducing a work in a different language with all its message and charm intact. Whether Garrick or Otway succeeded or failed is a matter of controversy, but their efforts cannot be dismissed as worthless.

One very simple but important difference between literary translation and adaptation is that the former involves two languages while the latter does not necessarily have to. The adaptations of Romeo and Juliet just mentioned were presented in English, Shakespeare's own language. Similarly, Arthur Brooke's version of the story, which Shakespeare is thought to have used as his chief source, and which he adapted to his own dramatic style and purpose, was written in English. But using the same language does not mean that the adapters in each case simplified the English for their respective audience, as the language itself had undergone constant changes over the centuries. What it means, in Shakespeare's case, is that he recreated the plot in the poetic,

dramatic and imaginative sense. Otway and Garrick, too, made their own rearrangements and emendations where they thought the original was lacking in effectiveness and quality.

Literary adaptation may also involve two languages. Still, its purpose is far different from that of literary translation. Let us take as an example Goethe's Faust. This work was no doubt based on, or at least influenced by, its predecessor, Marlowe's Dr. Faustus. The former is in English and the latter is in German. Goethe never intended to convey the message of Marlowe in German. Instead, he wanted to write his own version of the story utilizing his own language, literary style and philosophical conceptions.

There is also a feeling that although translation and adaptation are different disciplines, a degree of interrelation exists between them. The one always contains some elements of translation in it and vice versa. This needs some clarification so as to avoid confusion. Teyaki, discussed in Chapter IV, is a good illustration of the possibility of some interrelation between the two processes. Teyaki is an adapted play in which some features of the original, An Inspector Calls, such as time, locale, names, setting and theme are all either entirely changed or partially modified. To this extent, one may consider the work to be an adaptation. However, as far as the plot is concerned, one can hardly consider it so. The order, nature, tone and effects of the events and dialogues are strictly and characteristically Priestley's, and so much so that the Amharic work approximates a translation. Nevertheless, it is fairer to categorize Teyaki as an

adaptation because many features of the original, other than the structure, are localized or fitted into an Ethiopian environment - a quality which does not characterize a translation.

Of course, as noted earlier, adaptation or localization is involved in translation as well. But its purpose is not to alter the original work for a different, perhaps a better, effect. Instead, it is to produce the same effect or to create the same impression as that of the source. Let us see an illustration. Suppose the expression "as white as snow" is used in the original, and the people for whom the translation is intended, the target language audience, are not familiar with snow because it is alien to their climate. If then "white as milk" is the figure of speech the natives would use normally to communicate that meaning, the translator would naturally use it too when translating the foreign expression into national, social or local figurative language. But it must be remembered that the adaptation takes place only at the linguistic, structural or cultural level. The translator, moreover, is doing it in order to create the same kind of effect or image that the original writer intended to create in the minds of his audience. The adaptation in this case aims to achieve the same purpose as the original work. Adaptation, in this instance, is used only as a technique or device of translation, and not as a means of making a given literary piece fit a new audience or serve a different purpose. Neither is it meant as an improvement on the original. Admittedly, pure adaptation in translation is usually

cultural or structural or linguistic, and has as its purpose the role of transmitting the original message in the second language with as much accuracy and effect as possible. Translation in adaptations of the kind we find in Teyaki is a rare occurrence. The adapter might do this when he is convinced that certain elements in the original work need no changing or when he is so impressed by the style of the original writer whom he is imitating that he simply retains it.

Adaptation, as noted earlier, is such a fluid and flexible process that it is not strictly governed by a set of rigid structural and artistic rules, but may take place at different levels, in various aspects and degrees. In other words, the degree of influence exerted by the source text and the extent to which the recipient or imitating work or author is indebted to it both vary widely. Therefore, the term "adaptation" covers a wide range of works whose origin can be traced some way or another to a definite source, or in which the influence of a previously existing literary text or system is clearly reflected. Adapted works, whether dramatic or otherwise, are, therefore, the modifications of or derivations from identifiable sources in history, mythology, folklore, literature or other art forms, but not partial or complete translation of the original works.

One fine illustration of a literacy masterpiece which has given rise to numerous variations since its writing is the Faust tragedy by the famous German poet, J. W. Goethe. Nicholas Boyle describes the entire corpus of writings modelled upon this tragedy as "Faust's posterity".4 The credit goes to Goethe that Faust has

survived into the 19th and 20th centuries as a "supreme literary symbol", though he too is indebted to his predecessors from whose works he directly or indirectly derives some of the basic material for his tragedy, as we shall consider later in the thesis. "Faust's posterity" includes dramatic poems, films, operas, novels and plays, besides large volumes of analytical essays, contributions to philosophical theories, and visual arts inspired or influenced by Goethe's Faust. The literary works which are considered to be the adaptations or posterity of Faust contain and develop elements traceable to the tragedy like the wager scene,the Gretchen theme, the hero's christian redemption, etc., all of which are Goethe's innovations. Thus, Faust has, as a tragic masterpiece, given rise to a body of literature with a common descent, thereby opening the gateway to further creativity and innovation in a related subject, but in an adapted fashion. As a result, no more is the Faust story unique to the German literary tradition, where it originated and later developed. It has clearly survived into modern times as a universally shared theme of literature. It managed to penetrate and become integrated into the various cultural and literary systems of the world's nations by way of the imaginative processes of largely dramatic imitation and adaptation.

Adaptation occupies an important place in modern African writing as well. It has come to play a considerable role particularly since most African states gained political independence, by which time a new literary tradition had begun to take shape and to develop. In his article, entitled "African

Adaptations of Greek Tragedies", E. J. Asgill discusses three works by three African playwrights which they adapted from classical Greek drama. They are: Ola Rotimi's The Gods Are Not to Blame, Efua Sutherland's Edufa, and Wole Soyinka's The Bacchae of Euripides. These are the adaptations of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, Euripides' Alcestes and The Bacchae, respectively.

E. J. Asgill is of the opinion that these works are, on the one hand, reminiscent of the colonial educational system of the immediate past, and on the other, indicative of the common dramatic traditions between Greece and West Africa of ancient times. He then gives a textual analysis of the main features of the original works which each African adapter retained and changed. All three playwrights adopted styles of adaptation unique from one another, and modified different aspects of the tragedies they treated. Therefore, Asgill concludes his analysis by saying that "the three African playwrights demonstrate an interesting variability..." in the adaptation of their respective tragedies.5 But what is common and certain about all of them is that they aimed and managed to localize or transform their sources according to African theatrical norms and dramatic tastes. These three cases are proof that the central objective of adaptive writing is to fit a given work to alien literary situations despite the various styles different authors may employ towards achieving it.

Modern African literature, however, is not entirely based on or influenced by the Greek classics. The attempt to revive indigenous oral tradition and the tendency to imitate Western

literary systems have continued to influence post-independence writers who are responding to the domestic and foreign cultural forces, not by a passive duplication, but through the creative adaptation of borrowed techniques and materials to the peculiar styles of the individual author or to the requirements of the period and society portrayed. In his article, "Influence and Originality in African Literature", Bu-Buakei Jabbi says that influence is a dynamic principle and rich source of literary creativity.6 He interprets an author's effort or tendency to adapt and imitate another literary work, culture or genius as an expression of the influence on the adapter's creative personality and works coming from external agents within his experience. These external factors which inspire and influence a writer's power of imagination, and which he may, in turn, adapt to specific situations, could be his immediate surroundings, the remote past, and the continued flow of cultural currents, as it were, from the Western world, in the case of the African adapters. Not only may literary influence spark off creativity but it may also have corrective value through the critical assessment and interpretation of the original work or writer by the influenced adapter in line with the changing times, varying circumstances, intended messages, the audience in mind and other factors. Both the suggestive power of a source writer or work by way of contributing ideas to the adapter and the latter's adaptive and interpretive applications of these literary phenomena may vary greatly with the persons, texts and social factors involved.

The following chapters, which present contrastive analyses of the original and adapted versions of the plays on which the largest part of the study is based, prove the above ideas of Bu- Buakei Jabbi to be true. The Amharic adapters to be discussed, namely, Kebede Mikael and Mengistu Lemma, have been differently influenced by their respective sources, and have adopted varying styles in their adaptive treatments of these works. Indeed, Kebede Mikael, who adapted both Romeo and Juliet and the Faust story, demonstrates in each case the possibility of uniqueness and variety of style even between adapted works of the same author in the degree of influence exerted by the source and the adapter's manner of handling it. The question of Tsegaye Gebre- medhin's indebtedness as a translator to his original author and work is an entirely different matter since the adapter's and translator's objectives and methods differ greatly, as we shall demonstrate in our discussion of his translation of Macbeth in the appendix to this thesis.

CHAPTER II

Adaptations of the Romeo and Juliet Story

Section I: Sources and Various Treatments of the Theme

I. Pre-Shakespearean Versions.

Romeo and Juliet, written in 1595, is among Shakespeare's earliest and most important tragic plays. It contains some of the best and most memorable lines in dramatic poetry. Various orally transmitted legends and written versions of the story are known to have existed long before Shakespeare wrote his play. But his work is unique in that it stands out in sharp contrast from all previous versions because of the world-wide fame it has gained since its production.

The legend of two passionate lovers whose affair ends in a catastrophe similar to that of Romeo and Juliet is present in the oral tradition of peoples and nations throughout the world. One such legend, which dates many centuries back to ancient Babylon, tells of Pyramus (Romeo) and Thesbe (Juliet) who make love through holes in the walls of their houses. One day, they agree to meet in a grove: Thesbe, upon arrival, is scared off by a lion which bloodies her garment. Finding the blood-stained cloak, Pyramus is led to believe that Thesbe was devoured by a wild beast, and commits suicide out of desperation. When Thesbe later returns and finds Pyramus dead, her sorrow is such that she ends her life as well, so as to join her beloved in death.7

This idea of two ill-fated lovers has persisted in folklore and literature alike, and remains today one of the best and most enduring themes of modern fiction, drama, film, ballet and opera.

Particularly in the 16th Century was this subject dwelt upon by many Renaissance writers, figures such as Luigi Daporto, who wrote a version of the story in 1528, Matteo Bandello (1554), Boistauau (1559), Arthur Brooke (1562), William Painter (1567), and Luigi Groto (1578).8 It is assumed that Shakespeare was familiar with more then one of these works, if not with all of them. But his major source is known to have been Arthur Brooke's The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet.9

Shakespeare's version is not, therefore, originally or solely the product of his own imagination. What he did was to adapt the already existing story so that it would fit his purpose, style, and the type of plot construction he preferred for its dramatic presentation. To that end, he made cuts, introduced fresh elements, developed or altered existing features and characters, as well as retaining some of the wording and patterning of the plot from the source materials. Hence, one could say that Shakespeare wrote Romeo and Juliet as an adaptation rather than as an original play.

One of the objectives of adapting is to make amendments or improvements on a work of fiction and drama. That Shakespeare achieved this objective can be proven by the fact that his play is still as popular and inspiring as ever, nearly 400 years after it was written. On the other hand, the sources which he is said to have consulted have not only waned with the passing of time but

have indeed passed into oblivion, and at present they interest mainly those who seek them out for scholarly research.

II. Shakespeare's Innovations and Alterations.

The task of adapting a literary work involves, among other things, modifying it in different aspects and at different levels through the techniques of writing, the use of language, thematic development and character depiction. Shakespeare has infused his play with a good deal of his imaginative genius in these respects, thus raising the story from a popular legend to the standard of a modern drama which has won the admiration of readers and theatre-goers alike since Elizabethan times. As stated before, this was one of Shakespeare's earliest dramatic works. There is no doubt that, as one of his first successful dramas, it contributed considerably towards launching him as an already accomplished playwright.

One of the major innovations made by Shakespeare is the reduction of the time span of the story or plot from nine months in Arthur Brooke's narrative poem to just a few days in his play. This significant reduction in the length of time is vital in that by altering the speed of the central action, he intensifies the lovers' passions and heightens the complication of the conflict. These effects are not caused merely by the shortening of the time span but mainly by a skillful and harmonious transformation of the characters and a deft handling of the events. The balancing of all the major incidents during the five-day period in which the story takes place clearly indicates Shakespeare's effective use of time

as a technique of drama and as a means of adaptation. The fast pace at which one action succeeds another intensifies the mutual passion of the lovers and the overall dramatic crisis. In turn, the speedy action and intensifications, which progressively lead to the tragic doom of the protagonists, draw us ever closer to them, making us sympathetic with their cause by sharing their joys and sorrows. Almost every major character involved is manipulated so that he or she contributes to the passion-filled, concentrated and fast-moving plot, with all their ultimate effect on the play's time-scheme and tragic climax.

The intemperate behaviour of the hot-headed Tybalt sparks off a whole series of perilous and grievous incidents. He interprets Romeo's masked attendance at the Capulet feast as an act of defiance and decides to punish him for it, and to do it in public so as to display the bravery of the house of Capulet. Romeo, for his part, manifests a lack of restraint when he loses control of himself and runs at Tybalt. He stabs him to death in order to avenge the blood of his intimate friend, Mercutio, thereby proving his own manliness. The Capulets, too, waste no time in arranging a hasty marriage between Juliet and Count Paris. They are motivated to act so swiftly and decisively, partly by their ambition for social prestige, and partly by their parental concern for their daughter whom they want to see consoled for her grief over the death of her cousin, Tybalt. Likewise, Romeo and Juliet are quick to make declarations and avowals of mutual love, and marry each other less than two days after meeting. Similarly, Prince Escalus passes sentence right on the spot and soon after the events. Romeo,

who leaves Verona full of regrets after receiving a sentence of banishment, hurriedly returns upon hearing of Juliet's death. He then courageously steals into the family vault, determined to take his own life after paying his last respects to Juliet's supposedly dead body. In her turn, Juliet unhesitatingly refuses to flee with the Friar when she awakens from her state of induced unconsciousness. She shows unusual courage and determination when she kills herself with the very dagger Romeo had brought, and falls dead beside him. The events are so instantaneous, occurring within minutes of each other, that they seem inevitable. Besides, they trigger decisive and irreversible situations that seal the fates of the lovers. There is no doubt that the characters are developed in such a way that their responses stimulate a chain of spontaneous actions and reactions which move the plot forward to its disastrous end. John Wilders makes a similar point when he describes the tragedy as the result partly of "the emotional ferocity of the characters" and "the rash, impulsive actions of nearly all the protagonists." 10

Thus, the five-day time frame within which all the tragedy is conceived and concluded makes possible, among other factors, the various psychological makeups of the characters which are reflected in their practical actions. These features constitute the major differences between Shakespeare's play and Arthur Brooke's narrative poem. Furthermore, they demonstrate the playwright's skill as an adapter.

Shakespeare's adaptation also involves a shifting or reordering of the events in his source text. Thus, he begins his plot with a street fight between the servants of the two warring households. The brawl has a multiple role to play from both thematic and technical standpoints. It prepares the audience psychologically for further crises by arousing their curiosity as to what will follow as a result of the incident. Moreover, it sheds light on the mood and behaviour of the people in the play. The street fight does not remain limited to the servants but draws to the scene casual passersby, the heads of the two families, along with their wives and, at last, the ruler of the town himself. Both Lord Capulet and Lord Montague, as well as the members and supporters of their respective households, are determined and intent on inflicting harm upon their enemies while defending themselves. There are clear suggestions right from the first scene that a family feud has been going on for a long time, possibly for generations, and that further dangers are immanent. The brawl is also important in that it ultimately signifies the destructive nature and futility of the feuding culture, which is the underlying moral of the play.

Shakespeare also alters and develops certain characters so as to make them major participants in the dramatic events. To that end, he imparts to them a depth, subtlety or character which they do not possess in the previous versions. Thus, they become the vehicle or driving force of the central action, pushing the plot forward with particular speed.

Mercutio and Tybalt are but two examples of this. Mercutio, who is referred to only once in the source text, has been

transformed into a witty and humorous companion of Romeo.11 His wit and humour are evident in the "Queen Mab" speech. Furthermore, he is brought into several scenes and actually speeds up the plot, since it is his death which rekindles Romeo's rage, causing him to assault Tybalt. Brooke also makes mention of Tybalt in his poem not more than once, and then as a noble person.12 In Shakespeare's play, however, he is characterized as a notoriously aggressive and furious man who roams the streets picking fights with his enemies. He plays a role which is of particular significance to the development of the plot and the complication of the dramatic crisis. Without him, Romeo would not shed blood, for which crime he is banished, and his tragic separation from Juliet would also not occur. Besides, but for Tybalt's death, the Capulets would not rush to give Juliet's hand in marriage to Paris in a bid to console her.

Apart from such changes in the plot, characters and general content of the story, Shakespeare adapted the language to fit the intense passions of the lovers and to harmonize with the fast-moving events and the tragic atmosphere of the play as a whole. Besides altering and modifying existing features, he eliminated certain elements which he considered unimportant, while he borrowed certain others. Had he not borrowed and made omissions and changes, his work would not have been an adaptation, but rather a new creation or an exact reproduction of the existing versions.

Among his borrowings are such major aspects as social antagonisms, conflict between youth and age, unfulfilled passions,

and the determinism of fate or the chance factor in the lives of people.13 These are concrete social problems which control the underlying conception of the story and run throughout as its recurring motifs. Shakespeare does not originate but incorporates these ideas into his play from his source materials and quite possibly also from his observations of social experience through an imaginative process of dramatic adaptation. It is as though he built a new structural framework on a previously existing foundation. The themes on which his tragedy are founded are so fundamental that all other incidents are either the results or reflections of these profound human concerns. Besides borrowing these themes, he also retained a number of beautiful phrases and images.

It must be remembered that Shakespeare's work is not a narrative in poetic fashion as is Brooke's version, but a dramatic presentation of essentially the same story in an adapted form. Of course, it contains at the same time lines of poetry some of which are described as "the best yet to have been heard on the English stage". 14 But mainly his is a drama primarily meant and adapted for performance on the stage, where real actors interpret and play out realistic conflicts in true-to-life events and situations. Therefore, its worth as an adaptation and the success of the author as an adapter should be judged in terms of the effective, dramatic treatment and the impressive, poetic presentation of material which had previously existed as little more than a legend or tale.

III Post-Shakespearean Adaptations

For all its poetic beauty, emotional intensity and dramatic quality, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet did by no means end further attempts to adapt the tragic story. It may be that his successors felt some parts or aspects of the play were inconsistent, deficient, superfluous or even out-of-place. They may, for these reasons, have wanted to rearrange it so that it would be more relevant or appealing to the sensibilities of their contemporaries. Hence, the adaptation of a story, a play, or a novel may be thought necessary because of various factors.

One of these factors could be man's appreciation or enjoyment of variety. No matter how artistic a work of drama or fiction may be, it will not be indefinitely enjoyed with the same degree of pleasure or understanding every time it is watched or read. Elizah Haywood, writing in The Female Spectator on the adaptation of Romeo and Juliet by Thomas Otway, makes similar points in the following remarks:

> If the eye could be satisfied with seeing, or the ears with hearing the same things over and over repeated, it must be own'd there are many plays which the best of our modern poets would not perhaps be able to excel; but nature delights in variety, and tho' it would be unjust and ungrateful to strip the laurels from the brow of Shakespeare...,to adorn those who shall succeed them, yet we love to see a genius the growth of our own times and

> might find sufficient trophies for the merits of such without any injury to their predecessors.15

Haywood also adds; "The poet(s) I have mentioned will always preserve the same charms, and would do so yet more were they less frequently exhibited."16

Another reason for adapting a particular literary work might be the desire to make amendments to certain aspects which need to be readjusted or refined. Underlying this point as one of the factors necessitating adaptation, Elizah Haywood goes on to say;

> Some of Shakespeare's comedies and all of his tragedies have beauties in them almost inimitable; but then it must be confessed that he sometimes gave a loose to the luxuriancy of his fancy, so that his plays may be compared to fine gardens but choked up with weeds through the too great richness of the soil. Those, therefore, which have had these weeds plucked by the skillful hands of his successors are much the more elegant entertainments.17

However, without giving details or citing illustrations of the features which Thomas Otway altered or eliminated, Haywood concluded by praising the adapter in these words; "It must be

own'd he has improved and heightened every beauty that could receive addition, and been extremely tender in preserving all those entire which are above the reach of amendment."18

Otway's is among the earliest adaptation of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, and it dates back to the late 1670's. It is entitled Caius Marius, Marius being a parallel to Romeo, and Lavinia to Juliet. David Garrick, another adapter, whose version came out nearly 70 years later,in the 1740's, is said to have based his adaptation on hints made by Otway. Garrick's major cuts involve Romeo's passionate love for Rosaline, which the lady scornfully ignores, and does not, therefore, reciprocate. According to Garrick, this aspect need to be cut out because Romeo's sudden shift of love from Rosaline to Juliet marks inconstancy and immaturity which could be taken for a flaw in his character. Arthur Murphy, who wrote an article on this adaptation by David Garrick, admitted that the adapter removed some superfluous "branches" from the play and commended him for it. But then he added that in the process Garrick had injured the "trunk" and almost destroyed the "root".1 Because, argues Murphy, it is the desire to appreciate Rosaline's beauty that prompts Romeo to attend the Capulet feast in the first place, where, instead, he falls in love with Juliet at first sight.18 That incident sets in motion a succession of dramatic events which end in the tragic doom of the hero and heroine. That is why Arthur Murphy refers to this major background detail as the trunk and root of Shakespeare's play.

Another significant change made by Garrick, and this time highly appreciated by Murphy as being "very happily imagined", is Juliet's waking up from the effects of the drug a little before Romeo dies rather than afterwards as in Shakespeare's version. Such a complete deviation truly presupposes a real exercise of one's powers of imagination. It called for imagining, on the part of Garrick, fresh, original, beautiful and yet powerful phrases of poetry adequately expressive of the tender and bitter feelings of the lovers suffering the agony of having to be reunited only to be separated soon, once and for all. They part only after a brief exchange of tender words and looks. Quite ironically, Romeo, to his surprise, sees Juliet restored to life, while she realizes, to her disappointment, that he is already on his way to a self-inflicted death. Garrick, thus, heightens the tragic pathos and ironic significance of the situation. The reunion which fills their hearts with joy is short-lived. This newly and imaginatively contrived incident seems to have been intended to aggravate the dramatic conflict and intensify the irreversibility of the effect caused by fate or chance, which is one of the motifs running through the play.

Yet another reason for adapting a literary work could be the need to modernize it so that it appeals to the tastes and reflects the experiences of young lovers in the industrial or urbanized societies of present world. One such Romeo and Juliet variation is West Side Story which was first presented as a musical on the stage in the U.S.A.,and then made into a film, some three decades ago. It featured the tragic love affair of Tony and Maria, parallels of Romeo and Juliet. Although the

original theme is maintained in its essentials, it has been handled in the light of today's youth and their problems. The setting is changed from the beautiful garden and palace scenes in Verona to the unattractive, dreary streets of lower-class sections of contemporary New York City. The central conflict itself has undergone a great deal of transformation since it is radically altered from a feud between two families to an antagonism between rival gangs from different racial backgrounds.

The two sides of the conflict are represented by the Jets, whose hero is Tony, a former gang leader who now works in a soda fountain, and by the Sharks, led by Bernardo, Maria's brother, a street gang composed of recent emigrants from Puerto Rico. Both groups are hostile street gangs who seek out and taunt or fight each other in the streets and school playgrounds of their neighborhood on the West Side of New York City. The love of Tony and Maria aggravates this hostility as it causes Bernardo to become furious with Tony. When Maria sees conditions getting worse, she pleads with Tony to avoid an all-out fight with Bernardo, but to no avail: immediately the scene bursts into violence. Tony stabs Bernardo to death, which Maria later accepts as an unintentional act. Hence, the two lovers continue to make love despite the murder and decide to marry secretly. Sadly, though, Tony is led to believe that Maria has herself been killed, at which he runs into the street shouting for his own death and is shot dead by a Shark. The tragedy is concluded with a murder rather than with sacrificial suicide, as is the case of virtually all the other versions of the Romeo and Juliet story.

The premise of the story, i.e., the destruction of lovers or their causes as a result of hostilities on the part of members of their families or races has been effectively modernized in the context of young people living in large cities and industrial centres where antagonisms based on racial prejudice and criminal activities are acute social problems. However, there are also several points of striking similarity between West Side Story and Romeo and Juliet. As the Montagues and Capulets eventually reconcile, so too do the Sharks and Jets ultimately forget their bitter enmities and together, led by Maria, they carry the body of Tony to the waiting ambulance. Besides this ray of hope, there are touches of wit and flashes of humour, as well as tender love scenes, both in the play and in the film version. Of course, in spite of basic resemblances, they differ notably in their styles of characterization, setting, language, and overall presentation of the material from the original Romeo and Juliet play.

Therefore, not only are the ill-fated lovers, Romeo and Juliet, together with all their parallels and variants, one of the enduring themes of literature and sources of literary inspiration throughout the ages, but they have also contributed immensely to the emergence and development of adaptation as a genre of literature and a theory of criticism. This is so because, as we have been discussing, the Romeo and Juliet story has been handled by writers who lived in different periods in history and in different parts of the globe, with the result that variations on its theme and style are now abundant.

Section II: The Amharic Version of Romeo and Juliet

I. About the Author

Romeo and Juliet was adapted into Amharic well over three and a half decades ago, in 1946 E.C. (1952 G.C., or thereabouts), when Amharic literature was still in its infancy. Kebede Mikael, who adapted this play, is one of the highly reputed writers of pre-revolutionary Ethiopia. Until recently, when he stopped writing, he produced a great quantity of writings - some of them of academic orientation and of a historical nature which were for a long time used as school textbooks - and many others having great literary worth and a special charm of their own. From his writings, it is evident that Kebede Mikael is well-read, especially in the Classics. This has been further proven by his adapting into Amharic, among many others, Romeo and Juliet and the Faust Tragedy, which are the main subjects of this and the following chapters.

In the preface to his Romeo and Juliet, the adapter presents a brief but illuminating theoretical explanation of adaptation or imitation in literature, as he views it. He also defines translation and indicates what distinguishes it from adaptation. He says that he did not translate Shakespeare, but rather, he imitated or adapted him. By that, he means that his work is not a direct copy or exact reproduction of the original version. Instead, he wrote it in imitation of Shakespeare, taking the best aspects of his work, leaving out others which did not serve his purpose, as well as making changes whenever necessary. In other words, he adapted it (meaning he neither transferred it into Amharic exactly as it is, nor changed it completely), so that it

would suit the literary tastes and the social conditions of an alien audience living in a foreign locality.

Kebede Mikael defines translation as an attempt to convey the message of a given work in another language just as it is, without altering it in any way. On this point, he shares the same position with almost all experts in the field of translation who unanimously hold that the job of a translator, unlike that of the adapter is to produce through his translated work the same effect on his audience as that created by the original text on its own audience. On the contrary, an adapter is not bound or required to be strictly faithful to the message, purport, spirit, or style of his source. He has the freedom to handle it in a way that serves his purpose or advances his objectives, which are, in turn, governed mainly by the cultural levels and the aesthetic tastes of the audience whom he tries to reach through a particular work of literary art. To that end, Kebede Mikael tells us that he has made cuts as well as alterations, though not that significant, and while retaining the essentials of Shakespeare's play, he redramatizes it using his own language, order of events and division of scenes.

The major quality that has made Kebede Mikael popular among the public of his time, and which is plainly observable in most of his works including those under discussion, is his gift for versification. True, the power of his verse does not lie in special or modern poetic devices such as figurative expressions, symbolic language, concise or concentrated writing, irregular metre or varying rhythms, although some of these features may not

be totally absent were a thorough investigation of his style to be carried out in order to discover them. Rather than that, his art of verse mainly rests on his remarkable ability to express his ideas in an easy-flowing, unbroken, well-rhymed, and pleasant-sounding traditional verse. Indeed, his style of verse, coupled with his vast knowledge of the Amhara culture, and no less important, his keen desire to expose his public to some of the world's classics in literature has made his adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, in particular, an artistic achievement.

Hereafter, we shall examine his version scene by scene.

II. The Orchard Scenes

The Orchard scenes, known also as the Garden and Balcony scenes, are among the most tender, most passion-filled and tense parts of the play. They occur twice, in Act II Scene II, and in Act III Scene V. They represent some of Shakespeare's finest imagery and powerful poetry manifested in the soliloquies and dialogues of the protagonist. Besides, the orchard scenes are marked by the lovers' expressions of wit, endearment and passion. These not only add to the poetic beauty of the lines and the tenderness of the situation, but also arouse sympathy for the lovers in the minds of the audience.

The same may be said of these scenes in the Amharic adaptation. However, although there are a number of strikingly similar or parallel expressions and thoughts in both versions, some important variations also exist which are worth noting and considering. In the adaptation, as in the original, the first

Orchard Scene begins with Romeo's monologue in which he glorifies the beauty of Juliet and openly confesses that he is enamored of her. Kebede Mikael however, presents him at the start of the scene, as having been impatiently waiting until Juliet comes into view. When at last she appears at her window, he is at the end of his tether, almost at despair. His impatience and despair are clearly stated in these lines from Act I Scene I;

> የሚያፈቅራትን ልጅ ፡ የሚጠብቅ ወጣት ፡
> ረዥም ይታየዋል ደቂቃ እንደ ሰዓት
> ሰዓቱም እንደ ቀን ቀኑም እንደዘመን
> እኒስ መምቴ ነው በፍቅሯ ስመመን
> .... ልቤ ተስፋ ሲቆርጥ የማትወጪ መስሎት
> ኟቻት የኔ ጨራ ብቅ አለች በመስኮት ፡፡

20.

The gist of the above lines is that, for a youth waiting to see his sweetheart, the time drags on as though a minute were an hour, and hour a day, and so on.

In fact, Romeo later catches sight of Juliet almost when he has lost all hope that she will ever leave her chamber. His words suggest that he is there as though by appointment, and that he is upset, if not irritated, by her seemingly long delay. This is neither stated nor implied in the English play. There, Romeo notices Juliet's presence not long after his arrival, and although he soliloquizes a little before seeing and hearing her speak, no clear mention or implication is made of the length of time that has passed, or of his awaiting her so impatiently. Moreover, in the adaptation, the lovers start a dialogue. But in Shakespeare, Romeo speaks in a short monologue without Juliet

hearing him and realizing his presence. In her turn, she confesses loudly to being captivated by his love without knowing that she is being overheard, as she acknowledges later on in the scene.

A more important point which Kebede Mikael introduces concerns Juliet's expression of her doubts and fears about ever marrying Romeo because their families have lived for generations in bitter enmity with each other. She discloses her uncertainty and anxiety that this love will ever develop into a marriage which is officially accepted or legalized. Romeo does not seem to be bothered by this, at least not for the moment. He is at this point absorbed in his admiration of her graceful and majestic personality, which he celebrates in a speech of high poetic grandeur. He pours out his heart and gives up his entire soul to her with such exclusive devotion that what concerns him most at the moment is not the danger facing his own life, or the opinions of their families on the matter, or even the future of their common cause, but whether his passion for Juliet is one-way, or whether she reciprocates in equal measure. In her reply to his advances and avowals of love, she describes the family feud as the product of human sin, inherited (not acquired) from their ancestors, and says that it could well frustrate their cause to the extent of precluding its permanence or continuance, at the cost of his very life. She goes still further and tells him that it has been one of the facts of life in the society that, besides bitter hostilities and bloodshed, prejudices based on racial differences and economic inequalities prevent many youths like

Romeo and herself from loving and marrying others of their own choice.

Shakespeare's Juliet makes no such critical comments on conservative and rigid social conventions. It is not explicit in the original version that the two lovers are directly the victims of feudal values and customs which, among other things, interfere with young people's choice of their own marriage partners. The adapter, quite apparently, put these words in the mouth of Juliet in order to make the dramatic conflict more pertinent to his audience.

In the Ethiopian context, family feuds transmitted from one generation to the next and involving the hostile households in bloody vendettas of such spectacular proportions as in Shakespeare's play are not a common experience. Therefore, it is clever of Kebede Mikael to fit the idea of a family feud to the Ethiopian situation by extending it into the practice of tribal and economic discrimination. Tribal chauvinism and discriminatory practices and attitudes based on one's traditional vocation, economic background and social status were some of the principal features of Ethiopia's predominately feudal society, and much more so when the author adapted this play. In those days, many writers of fiction as well as drama dwelt upon the themes of marriage problems and unfulfilled passions resulting from such attitudes and distinctions. This is by no means to suggest that Kebede Mikael intended to attack these values or the system which promoted them. In fact, he dedicated a number of his works personally to the Emperor, glorified him as the chosen and

appointed King of God, and praised his reign as an era in which great things were accomplished. Because of this, he is widely regarded as a chronicler and advocate of the imperial system. However, his effort and success in making the dramatic conflict in his version more relevant and acceptable to his audience by converting it from purely a family feud into a partly social problem resulting from local socio-economic and tribal factors cannot be denied or underestimated.

In the adaptation, Juliet's repeated mention of human sin as being partly the cause of social evils, including the unwarranted, ruthless interference of parents into the motives and passions of young lovers, is also important. Besides lending local colour to the Amharic version of the play, it reflects the writer's conception and interpretation of life's problems in the context of Orthodox Christian values and traditions. Although prohibitions or restrictions on the intermarriage of different tribes and social classes were not an official policy of the State, they were, nevertheless, practiced openly by the politically dominant tribes and their socially powerful members. Rather than deterring it, the Church, its clerical class in particular, is known to have encouraged the attitude in practice, if not in doctrinal or theoretical terms. Therefore, just as Lord Capulet did, parents in those days usually desired and strove to find their sons-in-law from the so-called "super" or "better" tribe. The interests and will of the daughters, as well as other factors of vital importance for a lasting marriage, were ignored or neglected.

Romeo and Juliet, however, assure each other that love triumphs over hate, and truth over the superficialities of social standards. To that effect, both of them pledge a solemn oath to remain mutually devoted, even if this should mean their death. Furthermore, both of them agree that the real threat to their love and very existence is the failure of either of them to love the other perfectly, rather than the long-standing and irreconcilable antagonisms existing between their families. Romeo also allays Juliet's fears by convincing her that he is safe even on her family's grounds as long as she confirms to him her unconditional and unwavering devotion.

Another aspect of the Orchard scene that Kebede Mikael has effectively localized is Shakespeare's language. In both versions, the lovers pour out their heartfelt emotions in highly poetic and inspiring soliloquies and dialogues. Perhaps nowhere in the entire work has Kebede Mikael demonstrated his skills as an adapter as in his handling of the beautiful imagery in these scenes. His special quality lies in the unique and effective style with which he rephrases and refashions the images he borrows from the original. The images chosen, which are either natural or man-made objects, are carefully selected and aptly used; and in the case of the Amharic version, they fit into the rhyme scheme with so much beauty and precision that the romantic situation appears as though it were real, and the reader or watcher cannot help but sympathize with the cause of the protagonists. As soon as Romeo catches sight of Juliet, he compares her window with the east, and her body to the sun.

Kebede Mikael uses this image, associating it with the pleasant and refreshing effects of dawn. Hence, Romeo says that the mere sight of Juliet immediately revitalizes his system, causing his eyes to open, his thoughts to reawaken, his body to loosen and his blood to function. His heart is greatly delighted, his spirit renewed, and all his anxiety that she might not appear is completely gone. He also adds that the rays of light radiating from his beloved bathed him from head to foot as if he were basking in the pleasant morning sun. In Shakespeare, Romeo glorifies Juliet as the sun whose brilliant light contrasts with that of the moon. Metaphorically speaking, therefore, Juliet outshines the moon to the extent of making it envious. The adapter does not stretch the image that far. But he introduces his own image when he makes Romeo wish that his eyes were rings for Juliet's fingers. The speeches of both lovers abound with powerful images, among them; gloves, the rose, the moon, lightening and the ocean.

Most of these and other images have been incorporated into the adaptation. Their special significance here is that they are transplanted, as it were, in a structural and social setting by means of the adapter's thorough knowledge of the language and culture of his society and by his remarkable rhyming skill. Each image is woven into the structural pattern of the adaptation in relation to some social value which the reader or watcher accepts as real or as his own.

When Juliet appeals to Romeo to change his name because of the hatreds and enmities the mere mention of it calls to mind,

she uses a logic which is a linguistic fact. Her argument is that there is no inherent relationship between the name Romeo and the actual person, any more than there is a necessary connection between the word rose and the real plant. If the society conventionally and unanimously decided to call the rose plant by a different name, all of its natural qualities, including its fragrant smell, would be unaffected by the change of name. Likewise, if Romeo renamed himself, that would in no way affect his love and committment to Juliet. Hence, in the Amharic version, Romeo confirms to his sweetheart that there is nothing he would not do for her sake. Thus, he promises to be re-baptized on her behalf. Re-baptized implies renaming since, traditionally, the baptismal ceremony is an occasion when the baby being baptised is also named. The images of lightening and moon, too, are employed in connection with traditional ethics. If the vows and oaths lovers make are to remain solid and solemn, they must be well thought-out first, before they are signed. So Juliet stresses to Romeo that lovers must avoid the haste, spontaneity and inconstancy which characterize, in a sense, lightening and the moon. Proving true to one's oath or pledge, as opposed to becoming treacherous or unfaithful, is considered to be one of the virtues which brings a person social acceptance and respect.

Juliet's comparison of her love for Romeo to the depth, size and abundance of the sea is the other image localized by Kebede Mikael. She assures him that she is as generous with her love as is the sea with its waters which never run out no matter how much

one takes from them. There are elements of tradition in this as well. It is common to compare the extent and intensity of one's love and fondness for a beloved with the depth and abundance of the sea. Thus, by effectively Ethiopianizing many of Shakespeare's images and adding some of his own, Kebede Mikael has re-dramatized the Balcony scene so beautifully and inspirationally that, overall, it sounds as though it was originally written in Amharic. The effectiveness of the imagery is further attested to by the fact that quotations from Kebede Mikael have continued to be made by generations of young lovers in their love letters and expressions of sentiment.

It should be remembered that there are certain images which have either been omitted from the original play or not included in this discussion.

III The Churchyard Scene

The Churchyard Scene is one of the most important parts of the drama since it is here that the tragic climax is reached and felt. It is important to this discussion, moreover, as it represents the features of Shakespeare's play which have been altered to the greatest degree in the Amharic adaptation both in terms of language and content.

Romeo's speech here is significantly transformed although it closely resembles the original in tone and mood. In both versions, Romeo personifies the vault when he adresses it as gorged or filled up with dead bodies from ancient times. The adapter naturalizes this figure of speech, lending it force and

variety, by likening the graveyard to a glutinous man who is not selective about what he feeds on and does not have his fill, even after helping himself to worthless stuff. Moreover, he presents Romeo as having come determined to confront death itself and snatch away Juliet from its grip or belly; but only to return her to it later, adding his own body as well, so that it will have its fill swallowing up both of them. This highly metaphorical expression is based on Shakespeare's material, but it is rephrased and developed in the adapter's unique style. The fact that it is accurately rhymed with well chosen words heightens the tragic pathos, filling the audience with pity and poignancy to the extent of making them wish that the inevitable, ultimate catastrophe could be averted. In other words, it draws them into the world of the drama so that they participate emotionally in the process of the actions to the extent of forgetting that they are in a theatre or that they are reading a play.

Kebede Mikael's Romeo goes on to say that he has speedily come to the vault so as to set Juliet free from its jaws and then lament her death with bitter sobs before returning her to it. This aspect has particular traditional relevance to the Amhara society where it is widely believed that a person has to attend in person the funeral ceremony of a deceased relative or intimate friend. Furthermore, he must express his grief with loud sobs and cries of lamentation. Only in this way is he thought to have relieved himself of his grief and discharged his duty toward, or show his love for, the deceased. Experience confirms that the practice has a psychological value in bringing relief to bereaved

individuals. To make it more local and realistic, therefore, Romeo says that he will put back Juliet's body in the vault only after having poured out his tears and thus relieved himself of his deep grief. Even more pathetic and Ethiopianized is Romeo's soliloquy prior to poisoning himself to death. The language with which he pays his last respects to Juliet's supposedly dead body is highly lyrical and spoken in a tone clearly suggestive of his desperate, grief-stricken state of mind. The speech effectively arouses a sense of terror in the audience and casts a shadow of gloom over them mainly because the adapter gave it the form and tone of the cultural funeral songs usually sung by professional mourners. In his song-like speech, Romeo adores the beauty of Juliet's body, which he admiringly says has not been diminished or overpowered by her dead condition. He calls attention to the various parts of the body in which her charms are particularly evident - her hands, face, eyes and lips - in fact, her entire physical structure, which he describes as overwhelmingly graceful and imposing or majestic. Besides her physical qualities, he stresses her moral virtues, such as her fidelity, decency, hospitality, courtesy and wit, qualities traditionally believed to be the attributes of a fine virgin girl and a mark of her marriageability.

Much of this is absent in Shakespeare's handling of the Deathbed scene. Against the background of her physical qualities and moral virtues, the Amharic Romeo goes on to speak of his "now-dead beloved" as being an innocent youth, comparable to a beautiful, delicate flower, plucked off prematurely by the

merciless hand of death. He personifies death as a savage beast with no consideration whatsoever for the young, the innocent, the pretty and the noble. Then, he describes Juliet and himself as the victims of vendetta and as martyrs to love. He adds that they are persecuted only for the cause of pure and passionate love, and the world, with all its animosity and cruelty, offers them no accommodation. He concludes by saying that the place for them is not the world, but the grave. Describing their experience in life as bitter and sour as vinegar, he exclaims how much better, joyful - a bliss indeed - it is to live together with one's beloved in the peace and quiet of death!

It should be noted that less of the imagery and thought in Shakespeare is transferred into the Amharic version of this section. But the tragic pathos of the original has been effectively carried over. Quite apparently, the adapter set his source aside and, based on his readings and experience, imagined what emotions would be felt, which expressions uttered, and what actions performed in a similar local situation. These he later wrote out in his peculiar way, but within the cultural context of his audience. Therefore, only an Ethiopian would really be affected or moved by Kebede Mikael's style.

To cite a few examples of the adapter's wisely made omissions, we may consider Romeo's suspicion of death to have taken away Juliet for the purpose of making love to her, and the description of the churchyard as a feasting ground for the lovers rather than a mourning place. Pity-arousing though these ideas may be to an English audience, they are hardly palatable to the

Ethiopian. Hence, their omission is discreet and praiseworthy on the part of the adapter. That also shows Kebede Mikael's use of cuts as a technique of adaptation with respect to unfit or unadaptable features. Omission may, therefore, be regarded as an adaptational device which the adapter cannot afford to employ casually. It calls for extraordinary care, skill and a keen sense of personal judgement both to determine whether a given feature is not suited to local conditions, and how to eliminate it in a way that does not affect the unity of the adapted play. These qualities are also very well reflected in this adaptation.

IV The Brawl Scenes

The fights which take place between two feuding sides contribute one of the major features of the central conflict in practically all versions of the Romeo and Juliet story. Both Shakespeare's and Kebede Mikael's plays on this theme open with a street fight started by the servants of the two belligerent households. Then, two acts later, another brawl explodes, this time caused by the provocative and violent kinsman of the Capulet family, referred to in the English version as the "fiery Tybalt." The second brawl proves to be decisive since it entirely changes the course of the plot and precipitates a succession of sad and swift events which lead up to the doom of the protagonists. As usual, the adapter treats the brawls, which are a structural and thematic necessity of the drama, by modifying them so that they fit local circumstances and appeal to the Ethiopian audience.

He, therefore, makes the servants in Act I Scene I provoke each other into a fight in a stronger tone and more belligerent mood than does Shakespeare. In the original version, Sampson and Gregory tell each other that they will attack only if provoked. Of course, they also try to incite a quarrel when they show contemptuous gestures to Abraham and Balthassar, their counterparts. Their speeches, however, betray a lack of confidence, and hesitation beneath their intentions and mood of belligerence. Likely because of this, Tybalt later calls the servants cowardly men. Nevertheless in Kebede Mikael's work the servants are characterized as bold men of the sword, determined to defend their respective houses. Somson and Gorgonwos, (translated forms of Sampson and Gregory) take turns saying that on that particular day they feel strong and have an inward impulse to fight with the Montague men. They are so determined to fight that even if they did reason with their opponents, their swords would still fight. One of them adds that the mere sight of the dog of the Montagues - clearly the contemptuous word for a man of that family - would bring his blood up to a boiling point, thereby inciting him to fight with his most hated enemy, without his will. When, a little later, the men of the Montagues appear, Somson says that the sharp edge of his sword began to move from side to side at the sight of them, automatically, without his hand touching it. In the source, Sampson and Gregory plan to provoke their enemies by frowning and biting their thumbs at them. If Abraham and Balthassar do not react, it would be a sign of fear and weakness. When Abraham inquires whether they were remaining to insult him and his friend, Balthassar, by that

contemptuous gesture, Sampson and Gregory are not bold and determined enough to answer straightforwardly. They would not directly and courageously say that they want to have an all-out fight with them. Nor are the Montague's men any more decisive. They delay in retaliating the provocative and contemptuous frowning and thumb-biting of the Capulet's servants. They, instead, tolerate being so insulted and humiliated, and start asking roundabcut questions, as if to prove the real intent behind these gestures, even though they are fully aware that they are hostile expressions directed at them and intended to belittle them.

The gesture of thumb-biting is changed in the Amharic version to biting the lower lip, which has a similar intention and implication of insult and contempt. When Montague's men ask Capulet's servants whether they are mocking or provoking them, the latter respond with bold and outrightly aggressive language telling them the Montague's men that they are not the sort of persons fit to talk to Capulet's people. The sword is the only language with which they can communicate, or which a Montague man can understand. Thus, they challenge them to a direct confrontation in order to fight and to prove the question of which family is braver. The servants of the Montagues, likewise, respond without hesitation or delay, in equally violent, arrogant and derogatory manner, calling the enemy cowardly and incapable of wielding the sword.

The adapter, thus, alters the Brawl scenes not only in the contents and tone of the speeches, but also, more importantly, in

this appeal to the local audience, by colouring them with typical Ethiopian elements. As a result, the two warring sides give the impression that they are always bent on attacking and avenging each other whenever circumstances allow them.

To illustrate this point, we may take only a single stanza from the speeches of the servants in the Amharic adaptation;

ዛሬ ሳር ቅጠሉ ፣ አፈርና ሙጂ
ደም ደም ይሸተኛል ምስኀያቱን አኀጂ

Act I Scene I

The above words of Sampson may be paraphrased to mean that whatever he looks at; be it the grass, the leaves, the dust - smell of blood to him, strongly suggesting that he feels like shedding the blood of his enemies and is out that day to have a fight with one of them by hook or by crook. The adapter's style enables him to establish, right at the outset, a background of not only a particular fierce clash but also of irreconcilable antagonism and bitter enmity. Thus, it becomes clear right from the first scene that tensions will mount and that further blood-letting will occur in the course of the plot. Both Shakespeare and Kebede Mikael alike use the first brawl as a springboard for a sequence of bloody events and as a means to create suspense in the audience. Furthermore, they utilize it for the logical development and outcome of the conflict. The tragic failure of the lovers to marry and survive becomes plausible in view of the deadly enmity between their families.

The hostilities are even more violent during the second brawl which occurs as Tybalt approaches Mercutio and Benvolio with threatening language. This is barely stated or suggested in

Shakespeare's version. Kebede Mikael's Tybalt ironically refers to his enemies' swords as having rusted because of disuse. This is an indirect and very strong insult. The implication is that the Montagues are too cowardly to take up arms against their foes. Mercutio and Benvolio respond with equal vehemence and contempt. What seemed to be rust to Tybalt is in reality the blood of one of his kinsmen which has dried up on the blades of their swords. In the meantime, Romeo appears and Tybalt turns towards him with even more infuriating words of insult, calling him unmanly and lacking in heroic qualities.

In the case of the adaptation, this handling of the Brawl scenes sharpens the conflict and speeds up the play, while capturing the attention of the reader or watcher and maintaining a high degree of emotional intensity right on to the end. As has been said, the handling lends it a strong local flavour.

To be noted, however, is the fact that all the wit evident in Mercutio's speeches, and the word-play and vulgarity characterizing the conversations of the servants are totally missing in Kebede Mikael's version. Of course, they are impossible to translate as they are or even to adapt and imitate since they are conditioned to the culture as well as to the lexical and grammatical peculiarities of Elizabethan English, which is itself no longer used and is found today only in the written texts of the time. While omitting these elements is wise, the gaps should and could have been filled in with similar expressions or uses of language taken from the author's imagination and the cultural heritage of his society. Since he

has not attempted this effect, the language of the brawls is deficient in poetic significance, depth, and subtlety of thought. What wins our admiration though, is Kebede Mikael's manner of drawing the antagonists into irreconcilable and easily explosive conflicts which cannot be resolved except through bloodshed. He makes the characters extremely hostile toward one another and sensitive about their identities as the servants or members of their respective households. Whenever they happen to meet by chance, emotional verbal exchanges and fierce physical violence are certain to occur. The accurate rhyme, in combination with the boastful and provocative language of the characters, most of whom are arrogant and aggressive, effectively conjures up in the mind vivid pictures of violent and bloody battle scenes.

V. Theme and Structure

As far as theme and structure are concerned, it must be said that Kebede Mikael adapted Shakespeare's play so little that the differences that exist between the two versions are virtually insignificant. However, there are certain structural rearrangements and cuts worth discussing, as they have an impact on the adaptation. Major omissions include Romeo's depressed state of mind because of his rejected love for Rosaline, his secret attendance at Capulet's feast and all that takes place on that occasion, Juliet's taking of the sleeping potion, as well as her wedding and funeral ceremonies.

All of these important events are omitted in the sense that they are either suggested or narrated but never dramatized in

dialogue form. Romeo's love for Rosaline plays an important role in the plot since it is his motive for going to the Capulet's party where he happens to meet Juliet and fall in love with her. His masked presence at this feast forms the first incident which gets the story starting. Juliet's drinking the potion also marks another stage in the plot development. Her suspicions of the Friar's motives, her uncertainties about waking up at the right time, and her fears and disgust at the corpses in the vault, etc., besides being natural reactions, add to the dramatic quality by arousing the curiosity of the audience. Kebede Mikael fails to include all these dramatic details, thereby depriving his audience of a full enjoyment and appreciation of the play. The wedding ceremony, which is colorfully celebrated by the Capulet family, is also convincing and an important part of the entire plot. The music and lyrics accompanying the feast, the speeches and manners of the servants, together with other details characterizing the occasion, are truly impressive and inspiring. Notably, Lord Capulet's manners when taking full command of the ceremony, capture our attention. He orders his servants about and rushes in and out himself in order to get things done. His love and best wishes for his daughter are obvious. The Capulets' feelings as parents are even stronger and their situation even more pathetic during the funeral ceremony. Juliet's supposed death shocks the Capulets and the Nurse, in particular, and instantly changes the Wedding scene into an occasion for deep grief and loud outcries of mourning. The talkative Nurse and the ambitious and rough parents naturally do not impress us at first.

But their great joy at the wedding and their bitter sadness following Juliet's apparent death change our attitudes, compelling us to feel sympathy for them.

Although Shakespeare treats these events with such emotion, the adapter has given them very little attention. An attempt to localize them in harmony with Ethiopian marriage and funeral customs would not only have made this work more complete but would also have enabled him to exploit fully the cultural resources at his disposal. It would also have been more enjoyable and effective as an adaptation.

As has already been mentioned, the original theme is not substantially modified. It is known that most of Kebede Mikael's writings are religious in content and didactic or moralistic in intent. This characteristic feature of his works is also apparent in his adaptation of Romeo and Juliet. The religious overtones of certain passages concerning the family feud confirm that the author has attempted to associate the causes and effects of the dramatic conflict with traditional faith and norms. The speeches of the protagonists and the Prince bring out this point clearly. Juliet describes the hostilities between the two families as the product of man's sins, one of which is his desire for vengeance. It is strongly suggested that sinful human nature has corrupted the entire world in which innocent persons are often severely persecuted, and their genuine causes are miserably frustrated. Romeo's words in the Churchyard scene draw an even darker picture of mankind and the world in general. He laments that the earth abounds with all sorts of sin, vengeance and cruelty so much that

love is crowded out, and its practitioners, like himself and Juliet, are mercilessly martyred. Thus, a note of despair, gloom and pessimism dominates the entire Churchyard scene. The speeches of the lovers in relation to sin and its evil consequences represent the adapter's religious and pejorative view of worldly or secular life. Even more expressive of his outlook and the moral intent of his work are Prince Escalus' statements upon the subject of man's sinful nature, manifested in his spirit of vengeance and antagonism. He describes the tragedy as a manifestation of God's wrath and the execution of his judgments upon the warring households. Therefore, the protagonists are destroyed, not because of their own sins or errors, but on account of the evil practices of their families.

There is partial similarity on this point between the two versions in question. Unlike Shakespeare's other tragic characters, Romeo and Juliet are not the victims of some moral flaw of their own. They are, therefore, different from Macbeth, Othello, King Lear, and Hamlet, all of whose destruction emanates from a certain flaw in their characters. Some critics (22) hold that this quality raises Romeo and Juliet to heights of moral perfection while others argue that it reduces the status of the tragedy by making it immature and less objective.23 The reason for this is that the moral purity or flawlessness of the characters is not in keeping with the behaviour of real people in the objective world. However, although Shakespeare's and Kebede Mikael's versions are similar on the moral perfection of Romeo and Juliet, they are, to some extent different on the external

causes of their destruction. In the former, they are drawn as helpless victims of fate or chance. Such repetitive and important failures as the delay of the Friar's letter to Romeo and Juliet's waking up immediately after Romeo's death, are inexplicable other than in terms of fate and pure chance. There is a strong influence of classical Greek drama in Shakespeare since the hand of fate is in control of the destiny of the hero and heroine.

Kebede Mikael, on the other hand, clearly reflects local traditions which are themselves rooted in the Old Testament, distorted and coloured with indigenous, superstitious beliefs. Prince Escalus' statements in the adaptation clearly imply that the tragedy is caused by the sins of the lovers' parents. This is an echo of the deep-rooted and widespread traditional belief that children will be made accountable for or suffer from the vices and wickedness of their ancestors. It is, therefore, common for moralizing preachers to urge their laymen to behave themselves and quit doing evil so that God may not hold their future offspring accountable for their evil-doing. According to Kebede Mikael, Romeo and Juliet pay heavily for the great sins and wrongdoings of their parents. Thus, he modifies the Greek fatalistic orientation in Shakespeare so as to convey a moral lesson which reflects his personal as well as the cultural beliefs of his society, beliefs solidly founded on the age-old Church doctrines and traditions.

The foregoing discussion reveals that the author has effectively Ethiopianized Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet by

changing much of its content and spirit so as to harmonize the story with local experience. Several Ethiopian critics have mentioned in their research writings the fact that this work is only one of the adapter's achievements in which his unique and remarkable literary and adaptive qualities are reflected. One of these is Ato Tesfaye Gessesse, a noted Ethiopian playwright, actor and director, whose words in Amharic I translate thus:

> The author's poetic genius and Amharic flavour is rich and evident in his work. As stated in the preface, this is not a literal translation but an imitation of the great Shakespeare's play. Although the story is set in Verona, the literary style and language of His Excellency Kebede Mikael makes it look as though it took place in one of Ethiopia's provinces. It begins and ends crowned with typical Amharic taste and flavour.24

In spite of certain flaws indicated previously, Kebede Mikael's adaptation of Romeo and Juliet has, on the whole, been popular among Ethiopians, and therefore very well deserves to be praised.

CHAPTER III

Variations on the Faust Theme

Section I: The Historical Origin and Development of the Faust Legend

The Faust subject has been variously treated by a number of writers in virtually all literary forms as well as in film and opera. It has existed for over four hundred years as an important tradition in Western folklore and literature. Throughout its long period of existence, the story has passed through many stages of development that have resulted in significant changes in the nature, scope and style of presentation, as well as in the evolution of the basic theme. Thus, different authors have depicted Faust differently: as a symbol of moral decadence, disobedience to the Supreme Being, rebellion against authority and convention; and as a reflection of man's pride, ambition, and quest for the elusive goal of absolute power, knowledge and prestige.

Faust is believed to have actually lived in Germany in the 16th century. Documents suggest that he was born in the small town of Knittlingen, in Wurtemberg, south-west Germany, in 1540 or 1541. Although not much is confirmed about his academic career, he is associated with Heidelberg and Wittenberg Universities. He is said to have used different names though he was widely known as Dr. John Faust. He reportedly engaged in a wide range of magical and superstitious practices, including alchemy and astrology, activities which are supposed to have boosted his fame across Germany and beyond. In spite of his increasing popularity at home

and abroad, he was charged by religious fanatics with moral perversions, blasphemy and practicing different forms of magic. As a result, he suffered humiliation and was unable to settle down as he was forced to keep moving from town to town to flee his persecutors. 25

Nevertheless, the claims that he performed spectacular acts by means of magical powers continued to persist and circulate among, by and large, the common people. These supposedly wonderful exploits include: casting horoscopes for the powerful, assuring military victories for emperors, travelling large distances through the air, conjuring up ancient Classical beauties, and, most important of all, signing a pact with the Devil. Faust owes a good deal of his reputation and cult to the posthumous myths which inflated these feats beyond all human imitation and practical proportions.

Thus, Dr. John Faust was ultimately transformed from a historical personage into a legendary figure. Gradually, books began to be written about his life and deeds. The first of such books, entitled The Tragic History of Dr. John Faust, was published by Johann Spiess in 1587. It consisted of separately titled accounts which variably focussed on Faust and his largely fictitious projects and wonders. Spiess' first collection of such stories is widely known as the Faust-Book, and was soon translated into English and circulated throughout Europe.26

Section II: The Literary Faust

I: Marlowe's Tragedy

The Faust story stopped being mere history and myth when it entered the realm of literature with the publication around 1592 of Christopher Marlowe's The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus. Quite obviously, Marlowe based his work on the Faust-Book since, apart from other details, he borrowed its title with little modification. Hence, as Marlowe did not originate the story of Faust, he, too, wrote an adaptation of previous versions. The first important change that he introduced is the unprecedented poetic and dramatic quality with which the Faust story was presented. This adaptation established Marlowe as a man of high poetic imagination and dramatic genius. With artistic craftsmanship, he turned the Faust story from a collection of separate tales lacking artistry and unity into a single, highly concentrated plot.

The greatest of Marlowe's innovations, however, is his transformation of Faust himself from an evil character into a representative of mankind as a whole. The Faust-Book and its sources in legend are all didactic stories warning against the religious apostasy and moral corruption that the hero is claimed to have practiced and advanced. In Marlowe, Dr. Faustus does not symbolize such evil but mostly represents man's universal and eternal ambition for greatness and advancement. This is in accordance with the dictates of the Renaissance period during which time the poet lived. It is common knowledge that the Renaissance was marked by new discoveries and revolutionary views. These

developments stimulated people's aspirations to know even more, and led some intellectuals to question the validity of tradition and church dogma. A climate of rebellion against convention reigned all over Europe, accompanied by sweeping changes in social and moral values. The violation of the established code of conduct and the exploitation of new fields of knowledge became fashionable.

In keeping with these ideals, and also to reflect the image and spirit of the Renaissance man, Marlowe made Dr. Faustus an embodiment of the human quest after limitless knowledge and absolute power. Rather than a vicious character, as in legend, Faustus is here presented as a figure rebelling against God and religion, who faces the terrible consequences of his acts. Marlowe, thus, brought the Faust story out of the world of mythology by adapting it to Renaissance ideals, thereby endowing it with a human interest of universal scope and giving it an enduring literary shape. The play is considered to be one of Marlowe's masterpieces by means of which he demonstrated his vast poetic potentialities and dramatic ingenuity. However, he failed to fully realize his rich literary potentialities because he was murdered at the youthful age of 29, apparently as a result of his own rebellious spirit and explosive temperament. His experiences resemble that of his own hero, which may lead one to conclude that Marlowe adapted the Faust story to his own life and personality.

It is to Marlowe that we owe the fact that Faustus' character is balanced and complex, whereas in the Faust-Book the hero's

personality is flat and shallow. In the source, Faust falls away from the faith and resorts to magic, attracted by the Devil's offer of sensual gratification for a specific, limited period of time. Hence, he forfeits eternal joys in a heavenly paradise and incurs ever-lasting damnation instead, as legend has it, eventually making himself a symbol of all evil. In this context, Faust lacks positive and tragic human qualities, while he is instead possessed of extreme flaws.

Marlowe's Faustus, on the other hand, is a plausibly human character who possesses both virtues and vices. Within a single soul, he combines two contradictory impulses common to mankind - lofty desires and petty acts.27 What causes Faustus' denial of God and his resort to necromancy is his insatiable ambition for infinite knowledge. However, the more he knows, the more ambitious and arrogant he becomes. Hence, unlike his legendary parallel, Marlowe's Faustus possesses a complex moral character which is neither completely evil nor purely good. His is a personality in which human greatness and folly are represented and contrasted. Dr. Faustus' intellectual curiosity, revealed in his preoccupations with private study and constant queries to Mephistopheles, demonstrates the noble aspect of his nature. He shares this characteristic in common with all human beings. On the other hand, his abuse of knowledge and power for the sake of personal glory and sensual delight, as manifested in his petty tricks on the Bishop and by the conjuration of Helen of Greece, lays bare his deep-seated instincts and animal stupidity. This too, is a typically human behaviour. History has constantly proven Christopher

Marlowe's premise regarding the personal pettiness or weaknesses of reputable persons of otherwise high ideals and great accomplishments.

It should be noted that Marlowe's adaptation is not limited only to thematic manipulation and character portrayal. It also includes altered structural and stylistic aspects. Although he borrowed his history and hero from Faust legends, Marlowe took his style of plot construction from Medieval morality plays.28 He therefore incorporates into his work the angel and demon characters, though in a modified form. In the morality plays, the good and the bad angels represent literal spirit-beings who respectively try to persuade the hero to repent and be forgiven or to remain stubborn and be damned. The good angel always succeeds and defeats the bad angel in persuading the principal character to repent of his sins, thus bringing about his ultimate salvation, in spite of a wicked and sinful way of life. Marlowe alters this aspect so that it meets the requirements of modern drama. He attaches symbolic rather than literal value to the antagonistic angels by making them the symbols of the opposing forces within Faustus' personality which contend with each other for the control of his soul. Contrary to what happens in the morality play, the evil elements in Faustus' nature dominate and involve him deeper and deeper in sinful practices. The old man, a symbol of Faustus' own conscience and a balancing factor of the two contending instincts within his personality, puts things in perspective for him so that he will repent, resist the influence of evil hereafter and return to God.29 However, this comes at about the end of the

twenty-four year term of his contract with the Devil, at which time he is completely trapped by evil so that repentance proves impossible. The scholars, his own conscience, and the elements of good in his nature act as an external agent and internal principles of truth in pointing out to him the right direction to take toward the repentance of sin and the redemption of his soul. Their advice and guidance, however, prove weak and fail to counter-balance the high-sounding offers of Mephistopheles and the symbolic bad angel within Faustus himself which made the prospects of knowledge and power look so appealing to him. Thus, not only does Marlowe change the angels and the old man from allegorical characters in the morality play into the symbols of contrasting human qualities, but he also alters the moralistic intentions of the Medieval drama to become a realistic representation of the human condition. Faustus himself is transformed from a monstrous villain in the Faust-Book into a tragic figure and a complex moral being who suffers the horrible consequences of his own ambition, pride and arrogance resulting from his natural desire for increased knowledge and advancement. His experience is a tragic expression of the moral dilemma and predicament of all mankind. It illustrates the good and evil components of the soul of man, and the strong tendency he has toward practicing what conscience and society would disapprove of as a whole. Besides, Faustus character and fate epitomize man's abuse of knowledge, power and wealth and the disastrous effects caused by his extreme behaviour.

Nevertheless, Dr. Faustus possesses and practices much good, which wins our admiration and sympathy for him at the time of his horrifying damnation. For one thing, he is a doctor and master of the major branches of knowledge. He also strives to unravel the mysteries of nature and solve the problems of life, including death. But the acquisition of abundant knowledge and power leads him astray from his noble projects and corrupts him morally and spiritually. He remains dedicated to his cause down to the last minute of his life, although he is aware that it is un-godly and means his destruction. He faces the horrors of his damnation with extraordinary courage, showing no sign of cowardice or lack of self-possession.

In so doing, Marlowe raises the historical and mythical Faust to the status of a tragic hero by ennobling him with great qualities and by tainting his character with the flaw of unrestrained ambition for knowledge and greatness. His adaptation, moreover, involves the modification of the themes of his sources. Far from being moralistic or didactic like the morality plays and the Faust-Book, his play is a commentary on human limitation. It is an attack on pure humanism in the light of Christian theology. According to Marlowe, man's position in the universe is relative to that of the Supreme Being, and has to be seen vis a vis that One's will. Man's ultimate destiny is not so much dependent on his own will and power as it is upon divine guidance and judgement. Faustus' experience illuminates the poet's views and the moral of his work in this respect. He could have saved his life by revoking his pact with the Devil and ceasing to conjure, by making a

complete repentance of his sins and a reaffirmation of his submission to the Lord.

Faustus' wrongs and shortcomings are not only gross but also manifold. When his ambition leads him to seek absolute knowledge and power through the world of magic, he commits a double sin by aspiring for an authority that rightfully belongs to the Creator alone and then compounds this error by attempting to achieve it through devilish means. He therefore, tries to bypass the natural barriers drawn by God for mankind within which to pursue his legitimate goals. However, he couldn't have done so with impunity. Salvation is possible only with a humble acknowledgement of his sins, a complete renunciation of necromancy and a return to a godly way of life. But to make things worse, his deeply entrenched pride and arrogance effectively prevent him from taking such steps in the right direction. He fails to recognize and abide by his limitations or restrain his ambitions as a human being. The result proves to be disastrous.

The career and fate of Dr. Faustus as treated by Marlowe is likely based on the thesis that a purely humanistic philosophy which rejects God's authority and transgresses the limits of human activity is both un-Christian and detrimental. Along with these radical changes in theme, structure and character delineation, Marlowe also dignified the Faust story by turning it into a play of high poetic and dramatic excellence. Its tragic appeal is universal and its lines are among the best in English dramatic verse.

II. Goethe's Tragedy

Marlowe's Dr. Faustus continued to inspire further adaptations of the Faust theme in diverse forms for centuries. The most successful and profound of these is Goethe's Faust, which was written about two hundred years after Marlowe's version.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe was the supreme German literary genius of the 18th century. He devoted a considerable part of his life and career to the writing of the Faust tragedy, investing the theme with human dignity, variety, depth and scope. His work highly exceeds previous and subsequent treatments of the subject by other authors. The complete tragedy consists of two parts, excluding the two earlier unpublished works of the poet related to it, which are known as the Ur-Faust and Faust- The Fragment. Goethe embarked on the Faust project in his early years, kept up with it through his middle age, and brought it to completion in his eighties. The second part was in fact published in 1832, one year after the poet's death.30 The fact that Goethe invested the greater part of his life as a writer to this tragedy enabled to approach it with fresh insights and perceive it from various perspectives at different points in this long span of time. The four-part series of his entire work on Faust is proof of the different stages of maturity he underwent during this long period of nearly sixty years which elapsed from the beginning to the end of the project. Thus, he managed to represent in a single work diverse human outlook and experience ranging from the period of Greek classicism down through

the Middle Ages until modern times. Faust is, therefore, characterized by a variety of stylistic features combining lyric, epic, dramatic and musical forms into an integrated structural whole. Its contents, too, are many-sided and wide-ranging, encompassing the fields of mythology, theology, philosophy and economics. His work is indeed a symbolic and large-scale portrayal of the hero's, and by extension, mankind's unquenchable thirst and continued search for knowledge and success often frustrated by inherent human imperfections. Hence, one of the important aspects in which Goethe's Faust is an improvement on Marlowe's play is its universality of appeal and comprehensiveness of style. The scope of the work is unlimited in time, and its locale is the whole world. This quality marks the high degree of the poet's artistry and the long reach of his imagination. He has recreated his hero with a character and experience epitomizing and embodying human aspirations and interests throughout the ages and the globe so comprehensively that his counterparts or parallels have lived always and everywhere.

Goethe also introduces a fresh element into his adaptation when he converts the blood contract between Faust and Mephistopheles into a wager between God and the Devil. This is an important development in the evolutionary process in the story since the blood contract constitutes an invariably common characteristic feature of all the previous legendary and dramatic forms of the Faust tradition. Obviously, Goethe in here drawing upon the Bible story of Job, manifesting the Christian influence in

his work and philosophical work. The Bible account too, is incorporated in an adapted form. In Job's case, the Devil challenges God to test whether His servant will forfeit his integrity if he is made to suffer material loss and physical torment. In Goethe's version, Mephistopheles wagers with the Lord that Faust would turn away from him if his intellectual curiosity and sensual desires were satisfied. As in the sacred Book, so too in Goethe's Faust, the Lord expresses his trust in his servant but gives Mephistopheles a chance to try him out. The Devil then approaches Faust and keeps tempting him so as to corrupt him spiritually and morally thereby causing him to abandon his devotion to God and to the service of his fellow man. Mephistopheles first challenges Faust at his studies. But Faust makes it clear to him that he will by no means give up his pursuit of ever higher achievements in exchange for cheap sensual gratification or similar selfish advantages. He makes a wager with Mephistopheles that he will accept eternal damnation should he ever come to feel such contentment with some material or social achievement that he would fail to desire any further attainments.31

After repeated unsuccessful attempts, Mephistopheles realizes that he may never defeat Faust through an acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, he changes his method and tactics by resorting to tempt Faust with sexual debauchery. Thus, he causes him to fall in love with Gretchen, (also called Margaret) a simple country girl who Mephistopheles bewitches into being attracted to Faust. By so doing, Goethe introduces yet another feature which was never part

of previous variations of the Faust legend and drama. The Gretchen element adds a new dimension to the tragedy as it complicates the dramatic crisis and reveals Faustus' real inner self .

Faust loses his wager as he is overcome with Gretchen's beauty and falls a tragic victim to it. However, rather than indulging in immorality, he decides to marry her, and they beget a child. They then enjoy a period of marital and parental life which is but short-lived because of a sad turn of events. Remembering his wager with the Devil and his pledge on behalf of his noble cause, he avoids wishing his happy experience as a family man to continue. After Margaret's death, he makes up his mind and renews his pledge to lead a life of the highest moral discipline and professional striving so that he will accomplish his cherished ideals in the best interests of humanity. To this end, he keeps himself thoroughly and actively engaged in a wide range of political and socio-economic undertakings. Finally, Faust obtains a large area of land from the German emperor which he plans to turn into productive property for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area. Eventually, when Faust has achieved his long-cherished dream of constructing a project as valuable and beneficial for the community as this reclaimed area of land, he loses control of his feelings. He feels so satisfied and pleased with himself that he wishes that moment of accomplishment and sense of fulfillment to continue or linger on indefinitely. At this point, the fault-finding Mephistopheles catches Faust and accuses him of having lost the wager, demanding his immediate condemnation by the Lord.

However, Faust finds pity and favour in the eyes of the Lord, who, realizing his tragic situation, absolves him of his sins and rescues him from damnation. This is perhaps the most vital of Goethe's innovations which he introduced not only into the subject of Faust but also into the dramatic art as a whole. It represents a marked point of departure from Marlowe as far as Goethe's conception and the structural framework of the tragedy are concerned. Unlike Dr. Faustus who is damned in horrible circumstances, Faust is at last forgiven and redeemed, despite his loss of the wager through corrupt practices and the sense of complacency or psychological contentment with his achievements. In this way, Goethe rebels against the Greek Classical rules of literature and arts.

Much like Marlowe, Goethe is known to have resisted tradition and defied authority, and even pressed for far-reaching socio-political changes. He also advocated the freedom of literature as well from the age-old Greek Classical traditions. Just as the Renaissance is believed to have had a powerful effect on Marlowe and his work the Age of Reason in which Goethe lived is thought to have tremendously affected his Faustian philosophy of life.32

Goethe's was an era characterized by the spirit of revolt and the tendency to rationalize. He was one of the ranks of radical intellectuals, philosophers, and literary critics known as the Storm and Stress movement who, through their writings and by other

means, fought for changes in almost all social institutions. The human intellect and power of rationality were so highly celebrated and emphasized that the period is known as the Age of Reason or Enlightenment. It is one of the strongest social factors which sparked off the French Revolution and the American Revolution in the last quarter of the 18th century.

Therefore Goethe's conclusion of his tragedy with the ultimate salvation rather than with the eternal damnation of his tragic hero is very likely the effect of the Age of Reason to which he himself belonged. He probably rationalized that Faust's life-long preoccupation with becoming the master of all knowledge was far from being wrong and sinful in itself. It is symbolic of the human drive to probe into the secrets of the universe which is both an obligation and a privilege of man in keeping with his unique intellectual faculty. Besides, Faust's committment to the goal of bringing about social justice and economic prosperity for his fellowmen is a noble and humane ideal. Obviously, Goethe consistently and sympathetically portrays Faust as an agent of God and the friend of mankind from the beginning right through to the end, despite his constant failings and even his miserable blunders at times.

Goethe seems to have based on this rationale God's sympathy for and forgiveness of Faust, which brings about the transformation of the hero's destiny from damnation to eternal salvation. This happy ending distinguishes Goethe's tragedy from Marlowe's play and all Greek tragedies in which the protagonists end up as the tragic victims of their errors of judgement and the hand of Fate. Instead, the element of salvation brings Goethe's Faust much closer to the

Bible stories where, particularly in the Old Testament, God is often reported to abundantly reward the integrity of Job and to forgive the gross sins of his servants whenever they repent.

In the final analysis, Goethe's philosophy of life is humanistic and circles around the Divine. It reconciles the two extremes of the purely humanistic conception of man's advancement, which is promoted by Marlowe's hero, and the purely fatalistic notion of life, as expounded by Greek tragedians. Goethe holds that pure humanism implies man's total rejection of God and complete self-reliance. On the other hand, the belief in Fate leaves man inactive and completely dependent on the Supreme Being. His thesis, which is a reconciliation of the two extremes, is that the mystery of life and the universe rests with mankind's sense of humanity, power of rationality, and Christian integrity, as represented in the symbolic life and career of his own tragic hero.

The foregoing discussion is only a brief look at Goethe's Faust, but it gives some idea of the depth and scope of the work. Not only does it show that Goethe's version is the profoundest of the Faust tragedies, but also proves the value of adaptation as a genre of literature. When an adaptation is written by a skillful and creative author, it can be much more enduring and of far greater worth than its sources, as Marlowe's and Goethe's adapted versions of the Faust story clearly manifest.

Section III: The Amharic Version of the Faust Theme

I. General Remarks

The story of Faust was adapted into Amharic by Kebede Mikael, as indicated in Chapter One, in the mid-1940's, at about the same time as his Romeo and Juliet. The first edition of the play was entitled Yekitat Maebel, which literally translated means "The Storm of Punishment", signifying the terrible consequences of the hero's ambitions and evil practices. When the play was re-edited, with certain new elements added to it, the author re-titled it Belayneh (Superman), this time emphasizing the cause rather than the effect of the central character's ungodly way of life, namely his aspirations to become the greatest man on earth.

Although the idea of Faust is said to have existed throughout the ages in the oral tradition of virtually all nations, Kebede Mikael makes no mention in his preface, nor does he give any hints in the actual text as to the existence in Ethiopian folklore of a story similar to that of Faust. He doesn't say, for that matter, that he adapted his play from foreign sources. However, we may quite logically conclude that his work is an adaptation and not purely his own creation judging from, among other things, his selection of the title Belayneh as the closest Amharic equivalent to the English "Superman" and the German "Faust". This clue, together with references the author makes to Goethe and the similarities that exist between his play and the various Faust stories, prove that he obtained his material from European sources. It is not clear, though, exactly on which or on whose version

Kebede Mikael based his adaptation. He deserves, nevertheless, to be praised for the contribution he made in creating the Ethiopian variation of the Faust theme, even though his treatment, as we shall see, lacks the depth, scope and literary worth evident in the work of either Marlowe or Goethe.

II. The Preface

It is very important to examine closely the preface to Yekitat Maebel (Belayneh) in order to understand better the author's philosophical conception of life. He starts the discussion of his point of view with the natural and logical premise that man, by his very nature, desires and endeavour to get the best out of his short span of life on earth. However, while he struggles to attain success, he is faced with two alternative ways between which he will have to choose. The writer terms them as the "forbidden" and the "permitted" ways. Man has to choose which of these ways to follow, because God created him as a free moral agent rather than as a programmed robot. As a rational being with freedom of choice, therefore, man is endowed with mental faculties and willpower which enable him to decipher or discern between what is good and what is bad. Hence, as long as man works hard to improve his lot in life and thereby attains material success taking into consideration his responsibilities towards the Divine and his fellow man, he may be said to have taken the "permitted" way of life. This will at last lead to God's blessing of his soul in heaven. However, if man becomes thoroughly concerned and preoccupied with the acquisition

of selfish personal gains, using dishonest means such as ignoring his duties to God and causing harm to his friends, then he has chosen the "forbidden" way. Although he may get success and happiness by following such an egotistic and ungodly course, in the long run, they will prove to be only transitory gains, eventually incurring God's wrath.

The author goes on with his argument by providing historical illustration. Some of the world's leaders in this century, such as Lenin, Mussolini and Hitler, according to the author, pursued highly ambitious goals and promoted diabolical ideas and policies. Finally, though, besides destroying themselves, their anti-God and anti-human thoughts and practices created much chaos in the world, caused untold misery for many millions and still continue to confuse immature and inexperienced persons.

Even such a brief look at the preface makes clear to us at least three major points about the play: what the character of the hero is going to be like, what will most likely happen to him as a result, and what lesson the writer would like his audience to draw from his dramatic presentation. Furthermore, it is quite clear, right from the preface, that the work is highly religious and didactic in its tone and content.

However, Kebede Mikael presents two contradictory religious points of view. A comparison of the preface with the actual text of the play reveals these discrepancies. On the one hand, he argues that whether a man goes in the permitted or the forbidden way is entirely his own choice. In fact, God punishes man not by directly pointing out his wrath but, rather, by letting him suffer the

terrible consequences of the evil course he has chosen to follow. On the other hand, however, he sharply contradicts the thesis he has established in the preface in the speeches of some of the characters in the play. Guenet, the daughter of Hailu, and Kassa, the servant of Belayneh, both plainly show in their speeches the author's belief that man's place in life, be it in poverty or in riches, is assigned to him by God at the time of his birth. Furthermore, however hard mortal man may strive to change his predetermined destiny, he is doomed to failure. Hence, their words in Act IV Scene III and Act V Scene II reflect the author's religious point of view, which runs contrary to the views of man's relationship with God which he put forward in the preface. The idea that man is free to exercise his own free will, and the idea of absolute fate which leaves no room for the individual's interests and efforts, are two different, irreconcilably opposed systems of thought.

Then, he concludes the preface by reinforcing his religious and moralistic objectives which he directs particularly towards the younger generation with a well-known Biblical quotation that "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom".(p. 10). Thus, Belayneh's lack of godly fear and concern for his fellowman causes him to aspire to material prosperity and social superiority at the expense of others. Although his unwise choice and wrong course of action bring him temporary luxury and popularity, the outcome of his corrupt ways at long last proves to be eternal damnation. If, however, Belayneh did whatever evil he committed under the influence and guidance of blind fate, which he is unconscious of

and unable to contend with, he becomes a hopeless victim, even a plaything of a supernatural power. Therefore, we would pity him rather than hate him and wish to see him destroyed.

III. The Plot

As we saw in Chapter one, the Amharic version of Romeo and Juliet is an imitation of the original which the adapter wrote utilizing his own language, style and the culture of his society. Therefore, he retained most of Shakespeare's plot and the lineup of major events without making essential changes to them. In the case of Faust, however, Kebede Mikael employs a different style of adaptation, one which requires more imagination than the mere imitation and localization of an already finished and well-made plot. Thus, we can clearly see that there are different styles, types and degrees of adapting a literary work. In this case, the writer created his own plot and characters that differ in many important respects from those of Marlowe and Goethe. We can assume that he was familiar with both versions and took only the basic idea from them and then imagined his own play based on his readings.

Act I of Yekitat Maebel (Belayneh) opens with the conversation between Belayneh and Argaw, two old friends who meet after a long time. Both of them wish to become prosperous and enjoy a luxurious life. Indeed, Argaw arrives unexpectedly at Belayneh's house as he is contemplating in a monologue the way to lead himself out of poverty into prosperity.

However, the two differ greatly on the question of how to achieve their common goal of becoming rich. Argaw suggests that they move to the country and embark on an agricultural project, which he assures Belayneh will be profitable and rewarding. Belayneh, though, rejects his proposal out of hand, saying that he is so much accustomed to city life that he cannot possibly adjust now to rural life and take up farming.

Instead, he introduces Argaw to Kelile, a highly educated man who has just returned to his country after thirty years of living and studying in Berlin. Among other things, Kelile is well versed in philosophy, physics and necromancy, according to Belayneh. Kelile lectures both of them on the non-existence of God, the vast potentialities of the human brain, advancements in the fields of science and technology, and the theory of the survival of the fittest in human relationships. He argues that none of the most powerful and wealthiest people in the world have ever attained the heights of material success and social status by honest means. In spite of their corrupt practices and ill-gotten wealth, the rich always live luxuriously and are considered respectable in the eyes of the community. So, continues Kelile, the fear of God and of what may happen after death, which he says are only products of the imagination, shouldn't deter a person from aspiring and endeavouring to satisfy his selfish interests, even by corrupt means. Once one manages to get on top of the social ladder, what matters is not how one has achieved success but what one has acquired. With material possessions, social importance, power and

popularity will follow by themselves. It is the law of nature that the strong must exploit the weak. As a big or powerful animal makes the weaker one its prey, so it is with human beings, Kelile argues.

Kelile's powerful arguments and oratory become so appealing to Belayneh that he admires, even adores him as the master of the world's wisdom. He takes him into his house and orders his servant to be at his service. He hopes Kelile will help him to attain his goal of becoming a rich and great man.

But Argaw, a symbol of good in the play, condemns both Kelile and Belayneh for promoting the wicked ideas of the Devil, and has nothing more to do with them. They continue as close companions, but Argaw never returns to them. In other words, the conflict between the forces of good and evil stops there. No other force of virtue comes in to fill the vacuum left by Argaw and counterbalance Kelile's influence, thereby intensifying the dramatic conflict further, until a climax is reached. We see no conflict going on in the mind of Belayneh, with the result that he becomes a passive disciple of Kelile. In Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, for instance, the good and the bad angels persist until the very end in trying to win the hero over to their respective points of view. As already mentioned, they represent Faustus' internal conflict between right and wrong principles and explain the resultant depressed state of his mind. Although his wrong desires finally triumph, the struggle between the conflicting principles as they contend for control of his soul is, nevertheless, effectively and convincingly dramatized.

As a result, we feel with poignancy the tragedy of his horrifying damnation, even though we admit that Faustus deserves it because of his unmitigated pride and arrogance.

Similarly, we observe in Goethe's Faust a sharp conflict going on from the beginning to the end of the play. Indeed, the conflict is deeper, stronger and much longer in this play than in Doctor Faustus. Goethe's Faust might be described as the battleground of the forces of rationality, on the one hand, and bodily cravings for sensual gratification on the other, impulses which are constantly at war trying to take full control of the hero's life.

However, in the Amharic version, the dramatic conflict starts and stops with the appearance of Argaw, a character who could have been developed to represent either the positive aspect of Belayneh's moral character or an external power influencing him in the right direction.

Another point which makes the brief moral conflict in this play less dramatic is the weak argument presented by Argaw. The presentation of his point of view proves unconvincing and powerless against Kelile's challenging and attractive style of analysis. In the absence of counter-influence for good, Kelile, the disguised force of evil, manages to possess Belayneh totally. His submission to Kelile is so complete that Kelile can turn him easily whichever way he wants him to go.

The second time we find Belayneh speaking with himself is in Act Three Scene Three. Here we discover him to be rich, popular and self-fulfilled. Kebede Mikael's Faust-figure is again different in

this aspect from the literary counterparts discussed above. Indeed, his apparent satisfaction and sense of fulfillment from his material achievement is incompatible with the complication of his name, Belayneh (Superman), given to him because of his insatiable ambition to become ever greater. Marlowe's Faustus always aspires towards infinite knowledge and absolute power which are humanly unobtainable - a moral flaw which breeds his ultimate downfall. The wager between Goethe's Faust and Mephistopheles holds that should Faust even for a moment feel contentment or a sense of delight at what he has accomplished, he would lose his bet to Mephistopheles. Belayneh's expression of satisfaction with what he has acquired is not only out of harmony with what we expect him to reflect in view of his designation as a "superman", but it is also a relatively positive quality for which he should not be so severely punished.

Belayneh's second monologue, concerning his material and social success, is also unconvincing because such details as how he succeeded and how long it took him to achieve his goals are not treated in either dramatic or narrative fashion. A curious or critical reader would expect to see Kelile's philosophical wisdom and magical powers, on which Belayneh so heavily depended, in action, actually helping him out of poverty by some miraculous means. But not a single dramatic or reported incident exists in the whole play in which Kelile makes a public show of his philosophy and necromancy.

It is an open fact that the belief in witchcraft is widespread throughout Ethiopian society and plays an important role in the

lives of a good many people in all walks of life and religious groups. Well-known magicians are highly celebrated as demi-gods, and it is not uncommon to see crowds flocking to their houses with gifts in the hope that their problems will be solved. Seeing that Kelile, too, is a master of philosophy, medicine and necromancy, he could have easily commanded public attention and made great of himself, or gathered a number of followers by working wonders. Not only would this have spiced the drama but it would have also filled the plot with appropriate and plausible events.

Nor are we made to visualize in Belayneh the pomposity, elaborate life-style and social prestige which accompany the abundant wealth he says he has at last accumulated. No indications are given about his background, family life and social interaction. Almost all the time we find him either speaking to himself, listening to Kelile or talking to his servant. Even in his private life his communication is limited only to these two men and so he is completely cut off from society and family. In such a state of loneliness, the vast amounts of money he claims to possess are meaningless, unsatisfactory, and even frustrating. His limited social interaction, moreover, deprives him of practical opportunities to influence the society and the world so as to make a god or a superman of himself, as he has always wished to become.

The plot is also deficient in other aspects. It does not include the major aspects common to most versions of the story, such as Faustus' studies of the various sciences and books of

necromancy, his blood contract or wager with Mephistopheles, his adventurous travels around the world, his conjurations of ancient mythical figures, his access to bishops and emperors and his powerful demonstrations and exploits. This does not mean, of course, that the plot has no merits. With all its deficiencies it is still interesting to read, perhaps much more so than to watch it performed. As is the case with his adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, Yekitat Maebel (Belayneh) owes its worth and power largely, if not entirely, to the author's versification and effective manipulation of the language and mannerisms of his society.

IV. The Major Characters

A. Belayneh

The name of the hero of the play, Belayneh, is self-explanatory. Belayneh is intended to be the counterpart of Faust of Doctor Faustus, depending upon which version of the work the adapter had in mind. Although there are certain clear resemblances between Belayneh and Marlowe and Goethe's hero, he is not comparable to them in several important ways. Judging by the way he is characterized, Belayneh falls far short of the standard of a tragic hero. In Marlowe, Doctor Faustus strives to unravel the mysteries of life and the physical universe. He has already mastered various social and natural sciences and yet he hungers for still more, in fact for infinite knowledge. Not only does he aspire to limitless knowledge but he also desires and endeavors to make a practical application of it in order to solve the riddles of death

and recreate the material world in a way he imagines suitable and beneficial. However, the high level of knowledge he has already attained in various fields fails to provide him with the power and understanding sufficient to bring his dreams to reality. This causes him to look elsewhere for a higher source of power and wisdom, in the world of magic. Goethe's Faust, similarly, even more unsparingly, struggles with his internal tendencies and external pressures towards evil, without success. He, nevertheless, hopes to accomplish lofty projects for the benefit of mankind in general.

Such things can by no means be said of Belayneh. In the first place, his desire is solely to obtain material gains and to enjoy a luxurious life and high social position. Secondly, as shown in Act I Scene II, he does not intend to reach these goals through the acquisition of knowledge or by doing hard work, but as easily as possible and with the aid of a person having special powers or wisdom. Therefore, he is portrayed as an extraordinarily egotistical and slothful man.

Additionally, unlike Faust or Faustus, he is depicted as a man of little education and low social status. As a result, he lacks the tragic grandeur which both of English and German counterparts fully possess.

One of the striking points of similarity between Yekitat Maebel (Belayneh) and the other Faust dramas is that in all cases the hero resorts to various forms of magic as a means of achieving his objectives. In Belayneh's case, however, magic is much talked about but very little seen in actual practice. It is not by way of

magic, in fact, that Belayneh at last becomes wealthy. Rather, it is by an ordinary act of robbery, murder and fraud in which magical powers are not necessarily involved (Act III Scene V). This further degrades him from the stature of a tragic hero, turning him into a villain whom we can hardly pity at the time of his damnation. Since he is not characterized realistically nor proportionately, as possessing virtues and vices, he also lacks significance as a character.

It gradually comes to light from scene to scene that, under Kelile's guidance, Belayneh murders Kibret, a rich merchant, robs his money and possessions, then transfers responsibility for the crime to Hailu, also a businessman, by putting the bloodied knife in his bag. Reporting to the police, Belayneh also arranges for the arrest of Hailu, who is then sentenced to life imprisonment. Such cruelty and villainy deprive Belayneh of tragic significance and symbolic qualities, bringing him down to the level of an ordinary criminal. Neither Doctor Faustus, Faust, nor any of the heros of the world's great tragedies are involved in criminal activities of this sort. And no reader or watcher of a play would normally identify himself or sympathize with such a criminal character. His destruction is more likely to be desired than lamented by the audience. Therefore, Kebede Mikael's ironically named Belayneh is too selfish, shallow-minded, submissive and one-dimensional a character to resemble closely the literary Fausts of Marlowe or Goethe.

B. Kelile

Kelile is introduced at the beginning of the play (Act I Scene I) as a highly educated man, well versed in medical science,

physics, philosophy and necromancy. However, at the end of the play he turns out to be the Devil in disguise. Certain parallels can be drawn between him and Mephistopheles in the other versions of the Faust tragedy. Both Kelile and Mephistopheles tempt their respective victims with a view to turning them away from God and to the practice of magic. To that end both of them exploit a common weakness of their targets - the aspiration to become great. Furthermore, an important and striking resemblance between the two deceivers is that their arguments and offers are much stronger and more appealing than those of the symbols of virtue. In Marlowe, the bad angel outshines and triumphs over the good one in its appeals and promises to Doctor Faustus. In Goethe, Mephistopheles causes Faust to fall in love with a woman, something he had always wanted to avoid. His affairs with Gretchen or Margaret lead him to commit a crime, beyond and above sexual sin, which spoils the great plans and projects he had made the objective of his life. He returns to them with fresh vitality later on, only after he has recovered from the tragic effects of the love affair he was tempted into through one of Mephistopheles' maneuvers. Similarly, Kelile's arguments and offers prove to be more influential and convincing than those of Argaw. His speeches are so powerful that Belayneh is easily carried away by them and rushes to action.

It is one of Kebede Mikael's qualities of characterization, as reflected in many of his works, that his antagonists are more lively, realistic and stronger than his protagonists, e.g. Kelile's

speeches in Act I Scene II. A possible reason for this might be that he takes extraordinary care in the depiction of his antagonists so that they sound natural and look realistic. He may, on the other hand, take his protagonists for granted; perhaps because their causes and positions are good or right in themselves and don't need to be artistically strengthened and embellished so as to appear natural.

Kelile's portrayal is a good example of the author's skill at characterization in this regard. In spite of their length and repetition, his speeches are vigorous, attractive and reflect the speaker's high degree of confidence. Many who might not share Kelile's beliefs and views concerning religion and morality would still read or listen to his speeches simply because the presentation of his arguments is so appealing. However, as pointed out above, there is also a marked weakness in his characterization because, powerful as his logic and language are, they are not supported by appropriate action.

Kelile is also different from Mephistopheles in that he is initially presented in human form and does certain things which, in other Faustian versions, the hero does for himself. Doctor Faustus, for instance, sets out to apply the powers and knowledge of his studies in necromancy in order to reform nature and better adapt it to the best interests and needs of human beings. Too ambitious, but credible aims in view of his high aspirations. The same is true of Goethe's Faust, to an even greater extent. In Yekitat Maebel, this project is undertaken by Kelile, later revealed (Act III Scene III and Act V Scene III) to be the Devil in disguise, and in a spoken

rather than a dramatized form. That the Devil strives for the good and happiness of mankind is not plausible or compatible with the universal view of him as a force of confusion and destruction. Nor is this acceptable or even imaginable to the author. Kebede Mikael is simply too religious to entertain the idea of the Devil working hard to liberate human beings from death and other evils. This plan or project should have been given to Belayneh to attempt by using the power of Kelile, who here has the role of Mephistopheles. This would have made Belayneh a humanistic character rather than the purely individualistic, one-dimensional character he remains in this portrayal.

C. Argaw

The character of Argaw, although not fully developed, is obviously designed to symbolize the power of virtue, a quality which constitutes one aspect of the conflict in the play. However, Argaw disappears from the scene no sooner than we meet him. Worse still, he never returns again either in the same or altered form. His disappearance must have been deliberate on the part of the author. From Argaw's and, by extension, from Kebede Mikael's point of view, atheism, magic and dishonest materialism are diabolical practices. A God-fearing person such as Argaw must not compromise, negotiate or even socialize with evildoers who practice such devilish ideologies. He must shun them, keep them at a distance, since they are "unholy" and should not try to persuade them to his side so that he might not himself become polluted or even be

tempted. If the writer had this notion in mind when he removed Argaw early in the play, his intention harmonizes with the religious content and moralistic purpose of his work. However, the negative impact it exerts on the artistic worth of the adaptation as a whole cannot be over-emphasized.

In Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, the good and the bad angels persist in their arguments to the end, until the climactic point leading up to last moments and the horrible death of the hero. Similarly in Goethe, Mephistopheles' role as a deceiver of Faust and a challenger of God is an integral part of the dramatic conflict throughout both parts of the tragedy. We can, therefore, say of both of these versions of the Faust drama that they comment on life objectively by bringing out its good and evil sides, which always coexist and counterbalance, dominating one another alternately. Yekitat Maebel, on the other hand, fails to provide such a balanced and realistic picture of the conflicting principles in life and their often sad effects on human personality and experience. The principle cause of its failure as an artistic representation, as already noted, is Argaw's disappearance from the entire dramatic context at an early stage of the play.

To be noted, also, is that Argaw's characterization is poor in other respects, particularly in his short reply to Kelile's comparatively long and powerful speeches. Not only is Argaw's position weak, but his language is also vague and his arguments, in Act I Scene II, unconvincing. It might be suggested that just as Kelile turns out in the end to a devil in human form, so too Argaw

might well have been transformed into a disguised angel, thereby widening the scope of the dramatic conflict. Therefore, it wouldn't be overly critical to say in conclusion, that especially the role of Argaw has been treated unimaginatively and inartistically, with the result that the character lacks the symbolic value he might otherwise have possessed.

D. Kassa

Another important character who has a parallel in Marlowe and Goethe is Kassa, the servant of Belayneh. His counterpart in the aforementioned versions is Wagner. In fact, his role as a servant is the only important feature which Kassa shares with Wagner. Apart from that, we find no other similarities such as learning or studying from and associating with his master, as Wagner does in Doctor Faustus and Faust. On the contrary, Kassa plots against his master, Belayneh, and in Act V Scene III murders him and robs him of his entire property, thus becoming a wealthy man in his place. Marlowe shows Faustus peacefully transferring all of his belongings to Wagner at his death, of his own free will and initiative. As the play Yekitat Maebel (Belayneh) is essentially didactic, the writer has quite apparently focused on what he believes to be the directly ultimate result of a philosophy which denies God's existence and promotes worship of the Devil. This belief is foreshadowed in Kassa's speeches after being told by his master that it is futile to practice any religious rituals since God himself and such things as Heaven and Hell are pure fantasies and hallucinations of the foolish and uneducated (Act V Scene I). Kassa also learns from the blunt words and arrogant actions of his

master, Belayneh, that a man must not be concerned with the other world or with what may come after death but only with what he can get out of life in the present. Doing good and living a virtuous life so that one will be rewarded in Paradise is the hope of fools and laymen. Belayneh boastfully tells his servant that Kelile and he managed to acquire the wealth, position and fame they have achieved not by religious or human means, but by other means.

Ironically, Belayneh's arrogance and boastfulness, far from motivating his servant to respect and admire him better, as he had expected, lead Kassa to ponder things in a contrary and critical and way. As long as God is not there, and nature and society are the products of self-operating, eternal laws, then salvation and damnation or heavenly bliss and fiery torment are false theories, reasons Kassa. Moreover, the rich and the poor are not predestined by God to be what they are, but rather their lot in the present life, be it luxury or misery, depends mostly upon either chance, the system or the individual's principles and style of living. In short, as long as a person is not responsible primarily to God for whatever he does, and this has no effect whatever on his future after death, he should be free to do whatever pleases him rather than suffer and die without hope. Therefore, reasons Kassa, my master should by now have had enough of the material abundance, comforts and social importance he has earned by corruption and crime. So, one night, he collects a gang of robbers and breaks into his master's bedroom, murders him and takes all his possessions.

Thus, Belayneh loses his property in almost the same way as he had obtained it and also forfeits his life.

At this point, rather than coming to Belayneh's rescue, Kelile drops his disguise of human flesh and takes on a Mephistophelian form. He betrays his friend at a time of agony and doom - an element deliberately included so as to confirm the traditional belief that he who prospers with the aid of the Devil or associates with a wicked spirit, such as a magician, will ultimately be eliminated by the Devil himself. This is how the historical and the Faust-figures of legend are believed to have ended up, as repeatedly shown in the various versions of the chapbooks and puppet shows which perpetuated the story of Faust. Of course, Marlowe and Goethe improved on such purely didactic and non-artistic endings of the story. But Kebede Mikael has returned to them, which, in his case, means maintaining the socio-religious sentiments and contexts of the predominantly fanatical, orthodox system to which he himself belongs.

E. Hailu and His Family

These are the characters whom we may refer to as the direct products of the adapter's imagination, in so far as they do not have direct parallels in the source tragedies. We may also be tempted to consider them as the tragic family of the play; as objects of sympathy due to the ruin of their once warm and happy family life resulting from Belayneh's villainous and self-centered acts. Upon Hailu's arrest and sentencing to life imprisonment, his family loses its bread-winner and disintegrates, becoming

destitute. Amelmal, the wife, goes mad, at which time her older daughter and only source of income, Guenet, is forced to stop working. Guenet then looks after her insane mother, seeing to it that she doesn't hurt herself and is treated by doctors and traditional healers (Act IV Scene II).

Sitting by the side of the road, Amelmal sings a melancholy song, lamenting the misfortunes which have struck the family and herself. Her pathetic condition causes some passersby to feel sorry for her, although their help is expressed only through lip service as they are not seen doing anything for her in practical terms. Worse still, others who recognize her accuse Hailu of accumulating his wealth by unjust means, and accuse Amelmal of having been boastful and making a public show of her material possessions. Therefore, they say, God has exposed both of them, and they deserve their present plight. But their talk is nothing more than prejudiced or unfounded gossip, since it is Kelile and Belayneh who are responsible for the ruin of the family and who, on happening to overhear the gossip, dismiss the accusations as ridiculous (Act IV Scene III).

In the meantime, Hailu has languished in prison for ten years when a certain Taye, chief of the prison guards, presents his case to the administrator. He convinces the official that, in view of his decency and respectability among the inmates, this man should be released on the occasion of the King's birthday.

However, when summoned to explain his case, Hailu suggests that a chance should be given instead to another prisoner who hopes to succeed in life. Now that he is a victim of jealousy and

cruelty, aged and miserable, his family scattered, Hailu says that nothing remains for him in the world to be set free for, and he refuses the offer (Act III Scenes I and II). Later, we realize that he has died when his spirit returns to condemn Belayneh for the wickedness which brought tragic consequences to him and his household (Act III Scene V).

As stated earlier, this part of the play is not a borrowing from another source. The adapter has been particularly imaginative and manipulative in this case because the inclusion of these characters makes the play more of a tragedy, arousing the sentiments and sympathy of the audience. It powerfully demonstrates the wicked nature of Kelile and Belayneh, as well as the extent of the evil visited on the innocent victims by their poisonous philosophy and relentless cruelty.

Amelmal's mournful songs and Hailu's sad speeches are descriptive of the injustices committed and the misery inflicted by an evil-doing society, heightening in us a feeling of pity for them. But then a sort of tragic relief is effected when Kelile steps forth as an evil spirit, announces to Belayneh that he will no longer come to his rescue and that he is going to be destroyed and tormented for all the evil he has practiced (Act V Scene III). Thus, other than as a device providing a justification for Belayneh's eternal damnation, Hailu and his family suffer for no reason. We do not observe the husband, the wife or the children saying or doing anything which might shed further light on their good and bad traits. We may, therefore, say that the purpose of their inclusion in the play is chiefly didactic; to make them the

objects of injustice and to draw a contrast between guilt and innocence, thereby exposing more powerfully the wicked character of Kelile and Belayneh, the major dramatic personae of the play. Otherwise, Hailu and his family play almost no practical roles which might help bring out the different aspects of their own behavioral make-up as human beings. For this reason, they can hardly be considered true tragic characters or even effective fictional representatives of a part of society and its experience.

CHAPTER IV

Teyaki versus An Inspector Calls

Section I. The Original Source

An Inspector Calls is a highly dramatic, suspenseful and yet very economical play, written by J.B. Priestley in 1946. Unlike Romeo and Juliet and Faust, the story has no roots in myth and history. It could be described as a work of realism in which the playwright's artistry and originality are clearly reflected. However, although Priestley did not draw upon already existing sources, he could not have obtained his material out of the blue or from pure fantasy. The immediate social and human experience at large are an endless reservoir of pertinent subjects for literature and the other arts. The dramatist, unlike the historian, is not supposed to record facts in a documentary form. If he were to do so, his work would certainly be non-artistic and unappealing.

The job of a real playwright, instead, is to present a piece of life experience imaginatively and skillfully so that it will impress the audience just as an actual social event or process would. This is very true of the J.B. Priestley's play in question. There is no doubt that he carefully observed human relationships including his own, that he imagined and skillfully contrived a plot and converted it into a play with bold dashes of realism, humour, suspense, bitterness and a mark of modernity.

Section II. The Adaptation

The Amharic version of this play was written by Mengistu Lemma, the late famous poet and playwright, a few years after the outbreak of the Yekatit (February) 1974 Ethiopian revolution. Mengistu Lemma does not discuss the type or nature of his adaptation in the preface, as Kebede Mikael does. It is easy to see from a reading of his work, however, that the style of his adaptation is different from those we have seen in the previous two chapters.

He seems to have begun his adaptation by changing rather than by translating the original title in order to achieve a dramatic purpose of his own. The word "teyaki", which is the title of the Amharic version, means several different things, like inquisitor, interviewer, investigator or interrogator or even suitor or visiter. Only a reading or watching of the play will clarify which of the above roles or meanings is intended. The English title, An Inspector Calls, does not suggest such ambiguities. It appears to be a deliberate modification on the part of the adapter so as to attract attention and arouse curiosity. The word "teyaki" does not specifically or definitely refer, as the English title does, to a visit by a single person with the purpose of doing the job of inspection, investigation or interrogation. Thus, Mengistu Lemma leaves it to the reader or spectator to find out for himself whether the play is about an interview, a police investigation or the probings of an inquisitive mind.

On the whole, Teyaki may be described as a work which lies somewhere between adaptation and translation. It is an adaptation

because such important elements as the physical and social setting, Priestley's message, the names, and to some extent the language and manners of the original characters have been Ethiopianized. It is also very close to translation insofar as the order, content and nature of the questions and answers, including the ending of the play, strikingly resemble those of the original work.

Section III. Theme and Setting

The major aspects of Priestley's play which have been successfully adapted by Mengistu Lemma are, among others, his theme and setting. The locale of the plot is changed from Brumley, a provincial town in England, to Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital. The time is also shifted from the pre-World War I year of 1912 to the eventful transitional period of Yekatit 1974 which marked a new era in the history of the Ethiopian people. It was a time when dramatic social, economic and political developments were taking place in the country's history.

Similarly, Priestley chose the year 1912 which was a transitional period to the four years of the Great War and the new reversals which came in its wake. It is evident from the repeated references in both plays to war and social change that there are political intentions behind them. This is much more so in the case of the adaptation. In Teyaki, the theme of a political revolution is inseparably interrelated with the transfer of the original

setting to the 1974 Ethiopian socio-political atmosphere. In An Inspector Calls, the changes implied are political in nature but universal, rather than purely British, in scope and significance. For one thing, the English society and monarchy are not clearly or particularly brought into focus. Moreover, the threat of war and expected changes are implicitly shown to affect the world in general instead of Britain alone.

In Teyaki, however, the mention of the Emperor's portrait in the stage description suggests that both the setting and theme are based on national politics. As we read further on, the references to strikes by taxi drivers, the riots of university students, and rebellions within the military, all crucial events that cumulatively sparked off the popular uprising against the monarchy, leave us in no doubt that the major feature of the adaptation is the Ethiopian revolutionary situation. Furthermore, the fact that Teyaki concludes with the automatic fall of the Emperor's portrait and its breaking into pieces, immediately followed by the hearing of a military march, symbolizes the collapse of the feudal-bourgeois system.

The delineation of the characters also distinguishes the adaptation as a work of historical and political purport. Ato Banteyideru, a counterpart of Mr. Berling, quotes the Emperor in support of his arguments, referring to him as "His Majesty." He plainly favours the existing system together with its political, economic, social and religious features and tradition. He even goes to the extent of saying that the throne is a symbol of

national unity and prosperity, and that it cannot be shaken by the oratory of university students and the revolt of the armed forces. Therefore, he is depicted as a chief representative of the status-quo. This further signifies that the Amharic version is designed to reflect not only national political conditions but also conflicts of opinion between the younger and the older generations in the society. Because, much the same as in the original, Ato Banteyideru's views are contradicted by his young son and daughter. Melaku and Amelmal apparently share the political sentiments and outlooks of the general student population of the period who fought for political changes. However, political opinion and sympathies cannot be demarcated and compartmentalized on the basis of age. Other factors also enter the picture and influence the attitude of people collectively as well as individually. Lij Assegid (Mr. Gerald Croft), belongs to the younger generation age-wise but shares the conservative views of Ato Banteyideru (Mr. Berling) rather than the progressive ideas of Melaku and Amelmal (Eric and Sheila respectively). In this case, class interest or economic advantage takes precedence over the age factor or peer feeling.

This fact is brought out in both works, but in the source the focus is on maintaining and expanding the interest of capital at the expense of labour. In Teyaki, however, emphasis is laid on the protection and perpetuation of the feudal regime. The capital versus labour aspect of the issue is also there, but Ato Banteyideru is of the opinion that business flourishes best and the progress of the nation is well guaranteed only as long as the

feudal system, particularly the throne, is stable. It is no wonder, then, that he aspires to make his way into the ranks of the "men of blood" (the royal family) by marrying his daughter to Lij Assegid, and by doing his utmost to make sure that he receives a feudal title.

Mengistu Lemma further localizes the social setting and theme by making mention of certain aspects of religious tradition. Ato Banteyideru speaks favorably of his Father Confessor, who had been present on the occasion of his daughter's engagement celebration in order to bless the ceremony. Thus, he shows himself to be an adherent to tradition and a supporter of the church. Moreover, speaking of the racial origins of the mother of Lij Assegid, he says that she descends all the way from Jerusalem. This so-called holy city occupies an important place in the religious thought and devotion of Ethiopian Orthodox adherents. Besides, in Ethiopian tradition, there is a common belief that the ruling classes originated and descended from the Solomonic Dynasty in ancient Jerusalem. It is believed to have been transmitted through Ibnemelik, the son of the Queen of Sheba, whom she supposedly bore to King Solomon. Legend has it that she conceived him by the King during a visit to his kingdom. Therefore the father in Teyaki, unlike the one in An Inspector Calls, is portrayed as an ardent defender of the feudal-bourgeois system, together with all of its political, economic, social and religious features and interests. Mr. Berling, on the other hand, makes no mention of religion, much less of royal blood and racial background, in any of his speeches. For him, capital and industry rather than the throne, royal blood

and tradition are the objects and symbols of progress for the rich and powerful.

Thus, the adapter converts the purely capitalist setting of the original into a predominantly feudal and yet partially bourgeois Ethiopia which was then at a transitional stage of development toward capitalism. By changing the setting, he also affects the theme, although it remains fundamentally the same. The controlling idea of both versions is that a change in attitudes, way of life and the social order is indispensible and inevitable. In Teyaki, just as in the case of the setting, the theme of change implied is more Ethiopian since the collapse of the prevailing system and its replacement by another, apparently a socialist one, is strongly suggested if not plainly stated. On the other hand, although the context and setting in An Inspector Calls are British, the growth of capital Mr. Berling talks about, the threat of war which he describes as the news of some scaremongers and the Inspector's warning that men will have to learn social responsibility either by will or by force - all have universal magnitude and implication.

Section IV. Language

Besides theme and setting, the language of Teyaki has a great deal of Ethiopian colour in it. Of course, there are some instances of literal translation which hardly sound natural. But on the whole, the adapter uses a language which does not always correspond to Priestley's. One way he does this is by using proverbs and idioms which are not only local but are also absent in

the original. Moreover, the speeches of Amelmal and Melaku are characteristic of the younger generation born and bred in the towns and exposed to modern education and European fashions. It is common and fashionable for such young people to reflect Western values in what they say and do, by imitating film actors and mixing English words and phrases with their Amharic.

Another aspect of language introduced by Mengistu Lemma concerns certain statements and phrases which are typical of the Bible. This could well have been intended for a double purpose; both to localize the play and to emphasize the play's central message, with which the climax of the inquiry is finally reached. In Priestley's work, the Inspector concludes his interrogation with the sharp warning that the time will come when men will have to be taught about their responsibilities towards others in "fire, blood, and anguish." Mengistu Lemma adds to this "the gnashing of teeth," a figure derived from the Gospels and which is used in connection with the fiery judgments of the wicked. Furthermore, his Inspector (Yigletu) addresses his strong warnings with the emphatic biblical introductory phrase "Truly I say to you." Although such styles are not originally Ethiopian they have been assimilated into the language and thought patterns of Ethiopians because of church and missionary influences exerted over the centuries. The adapter, no doubt, thought it fit to use such powerful expressions, which have dominated for ages not only the language but also the sentiments of the entire society, for his own purposes. The objective of this particular aspect of language use goes beyond mere localization and decoration. It is intended to impress the necessity for and certainty of urgent social change which could have severe

consequence on those trying to resist or failing to conform to it, symbolized by the references to fire, blood and anguish, as well as by the gnashing of teeth.

Otherwise, the language employed in both works is quite similar, in that, although far from being dry and stilted, it is deliberately simplified. The language closely resembles everyday speech in informal life situations. Although the adaptation might not have presented Mengistu Lemma with the challenges and rigors of writing an original and more imaginative play, it is clear from his style of language that he has made a real effort to express, as his word choice very well does, the social class and the age group of the characters, as well as the period of time and the locale of the events.

Section V. The Characters

There are no significant variations in the type of characters between the two plays except for their names, which is needless to discuss at length. Replacing English names with Ethiopian ones is more of a mechanical than an artistic exercise. The striking resemblance between the English characters and their Ethiopian counterparts reinforces a fact about the common experience shared by people in industrial and urban societies. This is true even of people who are geographically and culturally as far apart as Ethiopians and Britons. Since the essential similarities between the two societies are inherent and evident, the play is naturally

self-adaptable. This is not to suggest, of course, that the adapter had no real work to do.

Mengistu Lemma was a poet and playwright himself, who produced works based on the Ethiopian situation. It is also known that he lived for some time in England before he adapted An Inspector Calls. Hence, he is well informed about and quite familiar with the cultures of both societies. This must have made it all the easier for him to adapt a play based on similar socio-economic conditions which he knew more or less well. His familiarity with both cultures is noticeable from his selection and inclusion of the Ethiopian counterparts for two of the original characters in particular.

Eva Smith or Daisy Renton, who the Inspector says is one and the same girl, becomes Hewane Ayane or Inanu Kidane in the Amharic version. Especially in the Ethiopian context, she is typical of her class of girls who flock from the villages to the towns and cities in search of jobs and a better life. Once they find themselves in the urban centres though they more often than not get disappointed, and their hopes, aspirations and morale is crushed. Then, they are forced to look for employment in private homes, shops, hotels or bars, or as workers in factories and other institutions. They also keep changing their names for different reasons as they move from one place to another. Because of their loneliness, they are also the victims of injustice, such as dismissal from jobs on insufficient grounds like the whims of the employer or complaints from a customer, as the play depicts. Their economic circumstances force them to degenerate morally to the extent of selling their

bodies for cheap and dehumanizing enjoyment by drunken and reckless men. It often results in unwanted pregnancies, forced marriages, early motherhood, abortions and suicides.

Hewane Ayana has had much of such bitter and frustrating experiences which, in the words of Yigletu (the Inspector) led her to decide to end her life in a horrible way. Also, the remark of the investigator that there are thousands and thousands of Hewane Ayanas or Inanu Kidanes among us is important. This means that she is not an isolated case or a queer young woman but a representative of a great many fellow victims who have grown into a large and well-defined social class. It is, therefore, no longer the problem of an individual person or family but the concern of the entire society; as Yigletu stresses to Ato Banteyideru, far from being a private matter or an individual's affair, as the husband and wife and their son-in-law to be would like to see it or would like it to be seen by others, it concerns everyone.

Hewane Ayana's misfortunes and suicide would certainly strike an Ethiopian audience as a bitter fact of life. Her plight is an epitome of most girls in her position. Clearly, Mengistu Lemma brings in aspects related to the condition of prostitutes in urban centres to make his portrayal of Hewane Ayana local and realistic, while maintaining a striking resemblance with Eva Smith, her unfortunate parallel in the original play. Thus, he is able to impress on his audience that this is not only the common fate of an ever-growing class in society but also something which concerns and

reminds them about social and personal responsibilities.

Another character with a close parallel in the Ethiopian situation is old Joe Megarty or Alderman Megarty. Mengistu Lemma introduces him by making him appear more like certain officials of the period as well as of the present who reflect his character. He nicknames him "Manyazewal", a designation given to or used for people who arrogantly abuse their authority and impose their selfish interests on others. Manyazewal's story is far from a slice of experience cut out of foreign cloth and forcibly fashioned into an Ethiopian setting. Notorious officials like Manyazewal and his English parallel, as well as scandalous acts similar to similar to theirs were, and still are, commonplace in Ethiopian political and social life. During the period in which the adaptation is set, it was so wide-spread, particularly in the capital, that it had reached its climax. Therefore, Lij Assegid's mention of this official and his revelations of the scandals he committed are plausible.

However, the other characters, especially the son and daughter, are less convincing. The way they contradict and condemn their parents is not typical, particularly of young men brought up in socially prestigious and well to do families. The custom in those days was not to close the lines of communication between parents and children. Although the situation may have varied from family to family, on the whole, parents and children hardly shared table, discussed sensitive or secret subjects, and much less so in the presence of an outsider like the Inspector. Retorting to or

criticising a father or mother, the way Amelmal and Melaku do, is quite unimaginable in the context of the period and the social setting in question.

The rebelliousness of Melaku and Amelmal may also be interpreted as relevant and appropriate, especially in the context of the historic situation the adaptation is based on. The period of a few months from the outbreak of the revolution until the overthrow of the old regime was marked by an unprecedented spirit of democracy and free political expression. Violent demonstrations shook the entire nation and people began discussing national matters eagerly and critically, in a way unimaginable before. Government officials and institutions, objects of almost absolute respect until that time became targets of public criticism for sometime. The effect of this transition period was certainly felt and reflected inside the family as well, as the clash of opinion between parents and children in Banteyideru's house clearly illustrate. The adapter may have intended to portray the mood of the time when he made the son and daughter so critical and rebellious against their parents, as are Eric and Sheila in the original Priestley play.

Similarly, Woizero Gultnesh (Mrs. Sybil Berling) might at first glance sound out-of-place and odd in her role as a chairwoman on the executive board of the Women's Welfare Association. One may argue that women in those days generally had little access to education and public life. However, it cannot be denied that certain women, because of their family background and other factors, managed to pursue higher education, did hold government

posts and some became important public figures. Moreover, there were a couple of social institutions founded to take care of women's problems and interests. Needless to say, such associations were organized and run by women who were exposed to modern education and who belonged either to the politically or economically dominant classes of society. We may therefore imagine Woizero Gultnesh to be one of the ranks of the relatively few women who had such rare opportunities. Hence, overall, the process of the inquiry, which is the core of the play and which, in Amharic, reads more like a translation than an adaptation, is lively, impressive and suspenseful in the hands of Mengistu Lemma, much as it is in the hands of J.B. Priestley, its originator.

Section VI. Structure

An Inspector Calls is a play without a plot in the classic sense of the term. We do not observe in it a chain of events as such which progresses towards a climax. However, it is not a play without conflict or structure. In fact, it is an example of a well-thought out structural piece showing brilliant handling of a commonplace experience for a serious and rich dramatic purpose.

This quality of the play and the skill of its author is also evident in the adaptation. If Mengistu Lemma is said to have translated rather than adapted this play, it is more because of the structure of his work, which is similar to the original in most respects. The parts which he added and cut out are so small in number and of so little significance that they can hardly be

considered as structural arrangements or modifications. Some of these cuts and changes, however, do seem to have reduced the effect and distorted the message of the original.

For instance, the family discussion following the departure of the Inspector is very important in terms of indicating the growing maturity of the children and the stubbornness of the parents. However much of this discussion is missing in the Amharic either in translated or adapted form. Therefore, in the Amharic version we do not see or read Banteyideru threatening Melaku to throw him out of the house after allowing him to stay only until he has paid back the money he had stolen. Nor do we hear Woizero Gultnesh proudly boasting that she is the only one of them who did not give in to the Inspector. Also excluded is Eric's statement in which he reminds his father about what he had been telling them just before the arrival of the Inspector; Berling's principle that everybody should think first in terms of himself. Eric also adds that he didn't hear his father telling the Inspector that everybody should mind his own business and that he didn't want to be told that people are responsible for one another as though they were all mixed up in a box or beehive. This sarcastic comment is important in terms of Eric's moral development and Mr. Berling's continuing superficiality. In spite of all that Eric had done to the girl he knew, he is now willing to accept responsibility for his behaviour and face the facts. He questions the validity of his father's policy of "everybody is out for himself," and challenges him as to its correctness and strength against the Inspector's opposite view

of sharing responsibilities and even guilt. Moreover, the fact that Eric calls his father's attention to what he had advised them has ironic significance in itself. No sooner has Mr. Berling, who was relaxed and pleased with himself after a hearty family dinner celebrating his daughter's engagement, finished lecturing them on the interests of capital and responsibilities to oneself and not towards others, than an unexpected visitor shocks him with the news that he is responsible for the death of a girl he had quite forgotten about. This part, important as it is, has nevertheless has been cut out of the Amharic version.

Similarly, when all except Eric are contented with themselves for having discovered the identity of the Inspector and start to behave in their customary manner, Sheila moves away as if to say that she disapproves of what they are doing, and has changed her ways. This is again indicative of the young girl's growing maturity in the course of the play and the stubborn reluctance of the older folks to learn a lesson and be able to change themselves so as to behave responsibly towards others. Sheila's moral growth is further evidenced by her refusal to take back the ring from Gerald at a time when the family is relieved and everything seems settled by the exposure of the Inspector as nothing more than the perpetrator of a hoax. She is, indeed, shown to be quite different from what she had been portrayed to be at the beginning of the play. Then, she is a spoiled child whose trivial whims and demands are granted, even her unwarranted demand for the dismissal of a shop assistant. Sheila's withdrawal to neutrality is significant as it is the moral message of the play, but this attitude is not

conveyed in the adaptation either directly or indirectly.

There are also changes which the adapter has wisely made. Mr. Berling speaks of himself as having previously been Lord Mayor and mentions that now he is a magistrate. The same thing is repeated by Sybil Berling too. Not only do these words reflect that the husband and wife are class-conscious, ambitious and successful, but they also show that they tried to threaten, or at least to impress, the Inspector with their social position.

Rather than translating these aspects, which do not exist in Ethiopian public life and political culture, the adapter uses other features which serve the same purpose. Therefore, Ato Banteyideru and Lij Assegid speak of their friendship and familiarity or relationship with the top people in government, such as the police commander, the prime minister and the Afenegus (representative or spokesman of the king). In a society where a person's importance is measured in terms of his family ties, intimacy or association and blood ties with men of means of position, such a change of feature conveys the original message and is on of the strengths of the adaptation. Of course, the alteration is cultural rather than structural, but the omissions, additions and changes are made in such a way that they do not affect the structure in any way.

Another aspect which might be considered as one of the important additions made in Teyaki is the mention of the Fourth Army Division Headquarters at the end of the play. Its

significance is obvious due to the political implications this particular headquarters had at one time. In the context of the dramatic political events which led up to the downfall of the feudal government, the Fourth Army Division Headquarters no doubt had special historic symbolic significance. It was the centre out of which the resolutions and declarations originated which not only formed the present state but also affected the life of the people as a whole. It opened a new chapter in the history of the nation. For most of the citizens, this site gave the promise of better times to come and marked the advent of a new socio-political order such as the country had never known in the thousands of years of its existence. The die-hards and those who stood to lose from the change, however, expressed shock and despair at the very mention of the place.

With this in mind, we can imagine the impact of the final scene on Ato Banteyideru and his wife, as well as on Lij Assegid. At the outset of the play they had reacted calmly, although with a certain annoyance, when they learned that an inspector recently transferred to the local police station had come to the house to question them about a suicide committed by a desperate young girl. The relief, confidence and cozy atmosphere which returns to the family after the Inspector's departure is short-lived and shattered by the announcement of a visit by a similar, if not by the same, person. The news that the second inspector is not an officer from the nearby police station, as the first inspector had represented himself to be, but comes instead from the dreaded Fourth Army Division Headquarters, is of special dramatic and symbolic purport.

It must have made a powerful impression on Ato Banteyideru that an embodiment of the changes he resists so hard and denies to be a possible reality, is soon to come knocking at his own door.

CONCLUSION

It is hardly possible to trace the origin of literary adaptation precisely to a single period of time in history. Nor can any single literary genius be credited with inventing or introducing this form of writing. It owes its present shape and level of development as a distinct discipline and genre of literature to the cumulative talent and effort of some of the great modern dramatic artists.

The first and most outstanding of these is William Shakespeare. Besides being a poet and playwright, he is also a great and masterful adapter. He constructed all of his great plots out of historical and legendary materials. His works are adapted with such remarkable insight and craftsmanship that they never read like direct replicas of their sources. The fact that they even surpass the stories on which they are based is clearly seen in the standing proof that the adaptations continue to survive and appeal to this day, while the sources have failed to endure the test of time. Two of Shakespeare's adapted plays discussed in this paper are Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth. They have been treated in Chapter II and in the appendix respectively, with regard to the changes and borrowings which Shakespeare made in the process of adaptation. It has been attempted to show briefly his skillful innovations as far as character depiction, plot construction and thematic interpretation are concerned.

Hence, Shakespeare's contributions to the art of literary adaptation are tremendous. His works laid down the foundation for

further expansion and refinement, as well as for the criticism and theoretical analysis of the genre of literary adaptation.

Other poets and dramatists who made considerable contributions to adaptation, and dealt with the same story in writing their respective Faust plays, are Christopher Marlowe and Johan Wolfgang Goethe. Both of these authors wrote a tragic masterpiece out of a popular legend. Their experiments with myth proved that non-artistic and legendary stories could be developed into grand literary themes, and mythological figures into universal, tragic heroes representative of all mankind. Goethe's Faust is of inestimable value in this regard in view of its scope and depth. The discussion in Chapter III of both Marlowe's and Goethe's version of the Faust tragedy try to bring out the important stages of development the story has passed through from history and myth to dramatic tragedy during the four hundred years of its existence as a theme of literature.

J. B. Priestley is another of the authors whose works have been selected for this research work. Although he did not adapt his play, An Inspector Calls, from another source, his work has been adapted into Amharic. But Priestley, too, may be considered a talented adapter in a different or unusual sense of the term. He showed that historical trends and typical social phenomena could be used effectively as material for realistic drama. Even though An Inspector Calls is Priestley's own creation, it is still an imitation of the objective reality which prevailed in Britain early in the twentieth century. It was a period of time during which important political, economic and industrial breakthroughs were

being made in Europe and America. Subjective and objective conditions were then ripening for the First World War which was to take place shortly afterwards. The play is based on the physical and social setting of Britain but carries universal implications. This is because the moral problem which Priestley presents manifests itself in practically all urban and industrial societies and is reflected in their literary creations.

Therefore, all the writers of the original works which have been adapted into Amharic and studied in this thesis rank high among the authors who contributed immensely towards adaptation as one genre of literature. Equally valuable and praiseworthy are the other forms of adaptation, such as West Side Story, which have been turned from stage plays into musicals and films. As has been indicated in section two of the second chapter, the adaptation in West Side Story takes place not only at the level of the medium of art but also in the nature and appeal of the original theme.

Although adaptation has a long history in the literature of many parts of the world, it is a recent development in Ethiopian fiction and drama. Many writers have put forth unrelenting efforts to acquaint the Ethiopian public with the best of world literature. The foremost of these is, no doubt, Kebede Mikael. He has translated as well as adapted a great number of European literary and documentary writings in dramatic and poetic forms. Romeo and Juliet and Yekitat Maebel (or Belayneh) constitutes only a small part of the entire volume of his translated and adapted works. His

version of Romeo and Juliet is written in imitation of Shakespeare's play, but draws upon the language and culture of the Amhara society to such an extent that it appeals to local readers or watchers as would any other story of Ethiopian origin. The nature and power of Kebede Mikael's versification adds greatly to the typically Ethiopian touches and echoes contained in the work. Although it is foreign in its origin, it is Ethiopian in its overall breadth and spirit. On the other hand, Yekitat Maebel, re-edited later as Belayneh, has been Ethiopianized in much of its plot and content, in addition to its language and general appeal. It does not correspond in its order of incidence, storyline, identity of characters and other details to any known Faust plot. These only served the author as the sources of inspiration and material for a new plot design.

Mengistu Lemma is another Ethiopian writer who adapted foreign plays to local situations. One such work of his is Teyaki, the adaptation of Priestley's An Inspector Calls. This work lies half way between adaptation and translation as it contains elements of both forms. Mengistu Lemma borrows from Priestley his order of incidence and line up of major characters but localizes the theme and setting by bringing in aspects of national and historic interest and by transforming the people in the original play into Ethiopian parallels.

On the other hand, Tsegaye Gebremedhin, another noted Ethiopian poet and playwright, tends to translate rather than adapt foreign works. His Amharic Macbeth furnishes a good example of

this. He remains faithful to Shakespeare to a great extent, down to the very small details. Judged by the standards of literary translation, his work may be described as a success. A discussion of this work is included in the appendix to this study mainly for its illustrative value as a translated work, as distinct from an adaptation. The analysis of the Amharic Macbeth in the light of translation theory has been an effort to establish that a translator and an adapter may both modify, alter, transfer or shift certain aspects of the original works, but they do so for different purposes and towards different ends.

Hence, the existing confusion regarding the activities and works in the two areas needs to be clarified. It is hoped that this thesis makes some contribution towards clarifying the prevailing misconceptions of translation and adaptation and the inter-changing of the two terms as it tries to draw some kind of a borderline between the two forms of literature. An attempt has therefore been made to draw up a theoretical framework on the basis of the results from the investigation of adapted and translated texts by cross-checking them against the original works and supplementary readings of related material. Therefore, it is hoped that the study has achieved one of its objectives by presenting a brief theoretical and practical analysis of the subject of literary adaptation.

Literary adaptation plays a considerable role in the exchanges of cultural and literary experience. It helps achieve what other forms of literature fail to do. It coordinates or puts together the imaginative powers and artistic skills of authors living in

different ages and parts of the globe towards the shaping of a common universal theme. Its value in preserving the best of the past into the present and further on into the future is not to be underestimated. It is an effective medium for the transfer from culture to culture of literary themes and the treatment of fundamentally the same human problems by drawing upon the diverse local resources of cultural communities throughout the world. This makes it possible to reveal the basic aspirations, hopes, problems and instincts which characterize and unify the human family as one large species beneath all the cultural, linguistic and other diversities which tend to divide them.

It is obvious that adaptation is the least exploited form of writing so far in Ethiopia. There is little basis for hope, at least at present, that the situation will change in the near future. On the other hand, translations of short stories and novels have, since quite recently, been increasingly forthcoming. This trend, though commendable and encouraging in itself, should be balanced with a corresponding orientation towards creative works, adaptations among them, as they call for more imaginative exercise. As literary adaptation develops, it will help broaden the scope of the Ethiopian literary experience and open the way for the utilization of local resources for the purpose of literary creation. Such fusion of foreign elements with local material, as long as manipulated with artistry and insight, will enrich and diversify, rather than pollute, Ethiopian literary culture. As already stated, the number of adapted Amharic plays is extremely

limited. This study considers only full-length and published Amharic adaptations of plays in English. The fact that these works are on the whole successful shows that the beginning is good and encouraging. Hopefully, the present one-dimensional trend towards pure translations will be reversed so that literary adaptation, which is a more creative form of writing, is given proper authorial and critical attention.

Appendix

Macbeth in Amharic

Section I. Shakespeare's Adaptation of the Macbeth Story

Before taking up a discussion of the Amharic translation of Macbeth by Tsegaye Gebremedhin, it would seem to be worth while examining briefly Shakespeare's treatment of the Macbeth story by way of reinforcing the theoretical background to the subject of literary adaptation. Like his other plays, Macbeth is not purely Shakespeare's invention. Rather, it is a derivation from several sources, incorporating historical, legendary and literary material. However, this does not in any way reduce the worth or lower the standard of Shakespeare's tragedy. Indeed, it must have increased its appeal to the people who lived during the Elizabethan period. Bernard Groom is of the opinion that Shakespeare's method of plot construction, drawing upon existing and popular sources, contributed towards the guaranteeing of an immediate, successful dramatic goal. He writes: "An audience which knows beforehand the outline of the plot is more free to enjoy the pure drama of the situations; one which is puzzled to know "what is happening" cannot be quickly responsive to the dramatist's art." 33

Groom's remarks hold true also for the Ethiopian situation where the stories of historical figures such as Tewedros and Balcha have been adapted into plays and novels. The familiarity or closeness of the heroes to the Ethiopian people has not made the

works based on their biographies any less effective or appealing. True to the comment quoted above, the knowledge the reader or theatre-goer already has about these heroes has attracted their attention, enabling them to enjoy the works better then they might a play or novel based on purely fictitious characters possessing similar heroic qualities. Such Ethiopian historical figures owe a great deal of their popularity and public sympathy mainly to the dramatic irony of their tragic situations.

The same may well be said of Macbeth as a tragic hero whose character Shakespeare re-created based on his parallels in Scottish history. His tragedy is founded chiefly on Raphael Holinshed's book of history entitled The Chronicles, which was well-known to English readers.34 It is also assumed that Shakespeare consulted certain other sources. According to Kempe, Shakespeare may have been acquainted with a ballad and a play based upon the Macbeth story. C.C. Stopes also suggests that William Stewart's Buik of the Chronicalist of Scotland, which is said to have been a long poem of over forty two thousand lines, as another possible source. More likely, however, Shakespeare is thought to have read Buchanan's original Latin edition of the history of Scotland. This assumption is highly probable because Buchanan's hero resembles Shakespeare's Macbeth more closely than does Holinshed's. In Buchanan, Macbeth is essentially a negative man: he is unfavorably portrayed as having not only unbounded ambition but also penetrating genius. He is also presented as severe and cruel in dealing with criminals. His description of Macbeth as something of a tyrant is different from

Holinshed's portrayal of his as a "valiant gentle man".

Another aspect of Macbeth's character, namely his moral scruples, also appears to have been developed on the basis of suggestions made by Buchanan rather than by Holinshed. He describes King Kenneth's guilty conscience as follows: "his soul disturbed by a consciousness of his crime, permitted him to enjoy no solid or sincere pleasure, in retirement the thoughts of his unholy deed tormented him, and in sleep, visions full of horror drove deep repose from his pillow." 35 Moreover, Buchanan reports that, as was customarily thought to happen to wicked people, King Kenneth was constantly troubled by an unconfirmed and audible voice from heaven. The story of the voice which admonished Kenneth most probably had its roots in popular legends, or, as Buchanan speculates, it may well have been the illusion of his guilt-stricken mind. Such details about the state of Macbeth's conscience after his murder of Duncan are not given in Holinshed's Chronicles. His assassination of the King is even justified by Duncan's violation or deprivation of Macbeth's legitimate right to the throne. Therefore, Macbeth in the historical account is not suggested to have felt remorse for usurping the throne by murdering the king. Shakespeare's hero is quite different from his historical counterparts as presented by Holinshed.

Leslie is another historian who is considered to be one of the probable providers of the material which inspired the tragedy of Macbeth. His contribution, which is by no means to his credit

alone, is supposed to have been his detailed account of Lady Macbeth's role as an instigator and adviser of her husband to commit the murder, and a supporter of Macbeth's own reign of terror.36

Hence, it is possible to see from the foregoing that although R. Holinshed's account of Scottish history is thought to be the major source, there are also a number of other writings which Shakespeare may have used as source material. It is to be noted that Holinshed's Chronicles itself is founded on the work of earlier writers. The existence of numerous documents bearing on the subject and the presence in popular legends of some of the dramatic elements, such as the three Wierd Sisters, point to the fact that the idea and the atmosphere of the play were not far from the experience of Shakespeare's contemporaries.

However, before we examine where Shakespeare differs from his sources and how he refashions characters and incidents in order to create dramatic effects, it is proper to have a brief look at the particular facts which he manipulates. First, we should note that he does not deal with a single story but combines two separate accounts by retaining, shifting or transferring and omitting elements and actions as it best suited his dramatic purpose. Thus, he fused together two accounts of murder: the first, Donwald's assassination of King Duff, and the second, Macbeth's slaying of King Duncan. Both stories are reported in the Chronicles. But Shakespeare alters some features of the accounts by transferring the character traits of Donwald and his wife to Macbeth and Lady

Macbeth. The following are direct borrowings from the account; the presence of Duff at the home of Donwald as his guest and his offer of gifts to the host; the wife's persuasion of her husband to commit the crime; the killing of the chamberlains whom the murderous couple had sent to bed drunk; their pretended expressions of wrath and grief at the deed; the various portents of the night surrounding the murder and the murderer's troubled conscience after the crime. The play differs on these points from the historical accounts in that the incidents are presented in a dramatic fashion rather than in a narrative style. The murder of Duff, which is carried out by four of Donwald's servants, is committed in Shakespeare upon Duncan by Macbeth himself. This change is consciously designed for dramatic reasons, with a view to making the husband and wife wholly responsible for the murder.37

Besides, as stated before, the play combines into a single plot elements obtained from stories involving at least three figures, King Duff, King Kenneth and King Duncan.

In addition to combining his sources, Shakespeare has made major alterations. This makes his work an adaptation instead of a reproduction of history. By so doing, he turned his work into a study or portrayal of human character, not a mere report of facts and events. This constitutes the main difference between literary art and historical reportage. To begin with, Shakespeare transforms his major characters by having them embody contradictory qualities. From a feeble and soft ruler in the source, Duncan in the play is changed into a symbol of gracious majesty and royal greatness. Contrary to his portrayal as a weakling in the Chronicles, he is

depicted in Shakespeare as a strong, decisive and fair character. He is quick to punish the treacherous and reward the brave and loyal, as shown in his execution of the Thane of Cawdor and the prompt promotion of Macbeth in his stead. He also bestows further favours upon Macbeth, such as honouring him by being a guest at his castle and sending presents to his wife. Hence, Macbeth at one point is forced to admit to himself and confess to his wife that it would be a heinous crime to murder such an innocent and fair king, a man who had only been kind and friendly to them.

Macbeth, on the other hand, is characterized as guilty of ingratitude and treachery, to say the least. Holinshed, however, speaks of him favorably, and reports that after coming to power he ruled successfully for ten years.

Lady Macbeth's character is likewise modified. Her prime objective in the play is to see her husband crowned King of Scotland. In the source, her driving force is to become a queen herself. Therefore, Shakespeare manages to create effective dramatic contrasts by accentuating Macbeth's moral flaws and by dignifying Duncan as a virtuous royal personage. He utilizes this contrast to project the workings of conscience. Macbeth's lack of sleep and disturbance at the sight of Banquo's ghost, as well as Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking, which are all Shakespeare's creation are all echoes of their conscience. It is not the mere shedding of blood, as A.C. Bradly explains, which concerns Macbeth so much. As an army general, he is accustomed to it to the extent of insensitivity. Lady Macbeth, too, betrays her horror of the crime

in her heart, although she is the actual force behind it. All of this cumulatively proves that the guilt feelings which drive the husband and wife almost mad develop from the realization that the act is something to be abhorred. Otherwise, the murderers would have had no reason for remorse or loss of sanity. According to critics, Shakespeare probes into the human psyche when he introduces the sleep-walking scene. Lady Macbeth's washing of her hands, as if to cleanse them of the blood of the innocent victims, is an external manifestation of the internal ravings of the subconscious mind. Thus, he penetrates deep into man's psychological make-up and gives us insights about the workings of the human and its consequences on one's mind and actions. Historical records, such as Holinshed's Chronicles do not have to comment on or analyze aspects of moral character. The Shakespearean adaptation is memorable because its artistry transcends mere narration of facts and attains universality in scope and significance.

It would be time-consuming and unnecessary to discuss all the other changes and cuts which Shakespeare wisely and skillfully made on his sources. It is also important to note that, besides rearranging and modifying existing facts, he imagined and added his own elements, such as the banquet scene, the appearance of the Ghost, and the murder and the sleep-walking scenes. Indeed, as a critic remarked, he employed Holinshed's Chronicles more as a "quarry from which to dig his material" than as an "authority to follow in detail." 38

A number of decades later, Macbeth was staged by David Garrick in a rather modified form instead of in its original, which was itself an adaptation as we have already seen. Therefore, we may describe Garrick's modification of Macbeth as the adaptation of an adaptation. Of course, Garrick did not take as many liberties with Shakespeare as the latter did with Holinshed and other writings which he is thought to have studied. In fact, the play was advertised as Shakespeare's Macbeth, not Garrick's, when it was first performed on the 7th of January, 1744. Garrick retained most acts and scenes in their original order, except for a few additions, rearrangements and omissions. His major addition is the new dying speech which he assigned to Macbeth, and which runs as follows:

Macbeth: It is done! The scene of fire will quickly close.
Ambition's I wake to darkness, guilt and horror;
I can not bear it! Let me shake it off -
That wo'not be- my soul is clogged with blood.
I cannot rise! I dare not ask for mercy-
It is too late, hell drags me down;
I sink; Oh! my soul is lost forever! Oh! 39

In Shakespeare, the hero is slain off-stage, and his death is proved by his head which Macduff cuts off and shows to Malcolm and his men. Therefore, he is not heard making a final dying speech in which he reveals his deepest feelings and real self. In Garrick's added monologue, Macbeth admits not only his ambition but also his vanity and folly. He dies realizing and acknowledging that his

ambitions for the crown were misdirected, and his hopes on the Witches' prophecies misplaced, although he does not state this in explicit terms. The newly introduced death scene brings Macbeth's tragic end much closer to that of Marlowe's Dr. Faustus. Both of them die with the realization that they have committed gross offenses and that a horrible future awaits them. However, they do not repent of their sins, at least not explicitly.

In Dr. Faustus' case, his heart and mind are set on self-aggrandizement and his conscience hardened with self-gratification, so much so that repentance proves impossible, despite strong feelings of remorse. Macbeth, on the other hand, feels the weight of his bloody deeds so strongly that he considers himself undeserving of repentance and forgiveness. His view of himself as unfit for mercy, above all else, makes Macbeth more of a tragic hero. He dies changed, and not so obstinate as before.

Hence, Garrick's dying speech is very well-imagined and an alternative form of adaptation in drama, even if it is not a marked improvement on Shakespeare's concluding scene in Macbeth.

Section II Adapted Features of the Amharic Translation of Macbeth

In the introduction to his translation of Macbeth, Tesfaye Gebremedhin acknowledges that his work is not an adaptation, since he says that it is an abridged version. However, although this play, taken as a whole, may be described as an illustration of literary translation, as we shall see later on, there are still certain elements which we might consider as the features of an adapted work.

The first two important places where he deviates from the original are the two Witch scenes. In Shakespeare, Macbeth and Banquo are met on their way back from battle with the three Weird Sisters. Since they are real women, and not ghosts or shadowy figures, there seems to have been no sufficient reason to make them appear to the army commanders in their dreams. Tsegaye, though, converts this into a dream scene. Thus, the two men order their soldiers to build a camp at a certain point on their way and then retire. As they are sleeping, both of them find themselves hearing prophesies from three witches about their future lots. Tsegaye may have chosen the sleep scene in a bid to make it plausible to his audience by using local colour. It is traditionally believed that dreams are important vehicles of telepathy. The translator may have had this traditional belief in mind when he changed Macbeth's encounter with the witches into a dream from a waking life experience.

The same thing happens when Macbeth meets the witches a second time. In the Amharic version, it takes place as he sleeps in his own chamber. Hence, the translator introduces two scenes that are absent in the original Macbeth. Although the attempt may have been to localize the events - a virtue in itself - it apparently has resulted in some problems both from the traditional or cultural and theatrical points of view. First, even though dreams are thought tc be the means of learning about one's fate, they are not believed in the society to be a channel of communication with witches or their ghosts. Most people accept dreams as a means whereby God

lets them know about particular events in their life whether they are favorable or adverse. It has to be remembered that this superstition has its roots in the Bible where we read God revealing to his servants and enemies alike what he proposes to do or what measures he will take in order to reward, punish or protect them. Nowhere do we read in the sacred book of the Devil or witches communicating messages to human beings by way of dreams. Hence, the idea of witches making revelations to a person in a dream becomes all the more alien instead of local and realistic as the author may have wished. The common practice actually is that the individual visits the witches so that they will reveal to him a secret rather than that they come when they please and frighten him in his sleep.

The attempted adaptation also creates certain practical problems of production and makes some important elements of the drama unnecessary. Obviously, dreams are difficult to perform on the stage. The only way of making them known to the reader or audience is by reporting, and not by dramatizing them, which has to be done by the dreamer himself. That pushes into the background the three Weird Sisters, Hecate, their god, whom Tsegaye renders to as Tekwar, and the apparitions. Moreover, the prophecies and equivocations about the Birnam Woods and the child born of a woman won't be as strong and effective when they are narrated as when they are actually dramatized. The speeches of the witches and their ghosts, which are significant in terms of their character are harmful to humans and their power over animals are either dropped or weakened because of the dream scenes.

Another element which Tsegaye Gebre Medhin introduces is the arrest of noblemen such as Lenox. He and a certain individual are suddenly surrounded and made to surrender by soldiers as they are discussing in an indirect way Macbeth's murder of Duncan and his corrupt rule. Later we learn from Macduff that they were executed. The translator adds these new elements perhaps in order to magnify the hero's guilt and show how tyrannical he turns out to be as a ruler. A similar addition is an attempt on the life of Macbeth by one of his pages who is instantly stabbed by a guard and finished off by Macbeth himself. The page is charged with disclosing Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking and the confessions she makes to her and Macbeth's crimes under that condition. Apparently, this is also intended to portray the hero more as a tyrant and guilty of the blood of his innocent subjects.

Besides added elements, there are omitted and shortened ones as well which, in some cases, weaken the effect of the translation rather than strengthen it. For instance, in the sleep-walking scene the doctor is dropped and changed to a male servant. In the original, a doctor is sent not to wait upon Lady Macbeth, but to treat her mental problems. However, he leaves by telling the waiting nurse that her mistress needs the forgiveness of God rather than the help of a doctor. The omission in the translation of the doctor character and the replacement by the male servant is not explicable on any logical grounds, be it dramatic or cultural.

Other omissions include the scenes where Banquo and Lady Macduff are murdered. These important incidents which further Macbeth's moral crisis and the dramatic tension are incorporated into the translation only in reported form. Similarly, the humour or wit in the conversations between Macduff and the drunken porter, and between Lady Macduff and her little boy are completely left out. Such humorous scenes are Shakespeare's effective method of creating comic relief. They could well have been translated or adapted into the Amharic version for similar dramatic effects. The scenes in England and those of the liberating English army led by the Scottish noblemen are also extremely shortened. Macduff does not learn of the slaughter of his household by Macbeth as he does from Ross in the original, but he reports it himself to Malcolm. The confrontation of young Siward with Macbeth and the slaying or death of the former as they fight is not mentioned at all. Finally, the cutting off of Macbeth's head by Macduff and its display to Malcolm and his supporters, as well as the short scene following Macbeth's defeat are also omitted.

All of these cuts, as pointed out before, are difficult to explain on the grounds of irrelevance, inconvenience, economy or the difficulty of translation. They may only be accounted for in terms of the translator's brief statement in the Introduction that he abridged his version and that the entire writing task took him only nine days. However, this is not a sufficient or legitimate justification, particularly in the translating of a literary masterpiece into a target language as remote from the original as

Amharic. The wide cultural and linguistic gaps naturally complicate the process of translating. Adaptation is both preferable and advisable, and in some cases even more fruitful than translation. However, when deliberate, undue and possibly meaningless cuts are added to the problems of language and culture, as evidenced in this translation, the impact can be destructive to the translator's effort and to the ultimate value of his adapted work. The flavour, appeal and significance which characterize the original can be entirely or partially lost in the translation as a result of the omission of important elements which may have appeared insubstantial to the translator.

This however is not to say that Tsegaye's Macbeth is entirely defective and unworthy. But it must be stressed that the shortening and omitting of certain scenes to no useful purpose can hardly be considered a useful example of the adaptation process, although such excisions cannot be described otherwise and as such have serious repercussions on his work. However, its merits as a translation are not to be underestimated. The strengths and shortcomings reflected in this work will be briefly considered in the following section, together with the controversial question of whether the work is an adapted or a translated version of Shakespeare's original play.

Section III. Tsegaye Gebremedhin's Macbeth

A Translation or an Adaptation?

Tsegaye Gebremedhin confirms that he translated Macbeth in an abridged form. Abridging a work simply means shortening it and so the word is not synonymous or equivalent to adapting. It has been indicated in the previous section that Tsegaye made a number of cuts in his version. Some comments were given on what the omissions amounted to and what such omissions implied. Although the elimination of certain aspects and characters from the original may be considered as one of the characteristic features of literary adaptation, it is by no means a determining factor in itself. Whatever cuts are made, they have to be either replaced with the adapter's new creations or adjusted to the requirements of the target audience. Here, imagination plays a greater role than direct translation.

To illustrate; among the major cuts made in Tsegaye's version, as pointed out before, are the scenes of the drunken porter and the wit of Lady Macduff's child. Although these aspects are not part of the main line of the Macbeth story, they serve an important dramatic purpose by creating comic relief in the course of the tragedy. Because of cultural peculiarities and the structural differences between the two language systems involved, literal transfer in these cases would have resulted in stilted or even nonsensical poetic language. Hence, the elimination is wisely done in view of the inability to translate the material. Localization, or to be precise, Ethiopianization rather than elimination, would have been wiser still and a mark of the imaginative qualities and

skills of Tsegaye Gebremedhin. Scenes could have been made Ethiopian by associating them with the manners and speeches of drunken men and witty-minded children commonly observed in the society. This would have raised the quality of the Amharic version of the play as the elements of wit would have served to ease the tragic tension and atmosphere, and drawing upon the cultural diversities of Ethiopian society would have enhanced the work's dramatic quality.

Many people refer to his play as an adaptation, some of them confusing or interchanging the term with translation. The problem arises from the failure to make a clear distinction between the concepts of translation and adaptation as I have attempted to do in Chapter I.

We have seen that aside from the omissions, shortenings and the addition of certain elements, there is one major way in particular in which the playwright has made an attempt to localize the play to the Ethiopian situation, and that involves the scenes concerning the appearances of the Witches. The Witches do not meet the hero as living beings, as they do in the original, but come to him in his dreams. The validity, implication and effect on the overall dramatic form and content of this alteration was commented on in the second section of this chapter. Apart from these scenes, there are no other major attempts to Ethiopianize the work. As practically all the important components of the original, its setting, theme, characters and the chain of events, are retained in the Amharic version, it is evident that the work is unmistakably a

translation. Tsegaye's unique language and style of versification make the work appear even more unusual and foreign. This is not to say that the work should necessarily have been adapted nor that an adaptation is a preferable literary form and superior to translation. It is common knowledge that there are some translations which are said to read even better than the original. The point made in this thesis is that, despite the claims that Tsegaye's Macbeth is an adaptation, a close examination of the work reveals that it is in fact a translation. The evaluation or judgement of the play with respect to its success as a translation is not within the scope of this thesis.

The Amharic version of Macbeth has been selected and included for discussion in this appendix because of three factors; 1: to expound the theory of literary adaptation by examining the background material concerning the historical and other sources of the play which Shakespeare carefully and skillfully used. It is hoped that this research will contribute to a greater understanding of the concept, method and practice of the art of literary adaptation. 2: Although the Amharic Macbeth hardly belongs to the category of adapted plays, it was thought proper and useful to indicate the value and impact of a few of the elements it contains that do fall into that domain. 3: Since one of the objectives of this study is to clear the confusion that exists between adaptation and translation in literature by establishing a distinction between the two forms, it was felt that the Amharic work in question would serve this purpose as a good illustration.

Section IV : Comparative and Contrasting Analyses of Translated and Adapted Passages

In this section, an attempt is made to substantiate the theoretical arguments so far advanced with practical criticism. To this end, examples have been selected from Tsegaye Gebremedhin's Macbeth and Kebede Mikael's Romeo and Juliet, which, in a comparative sense, represent a translation and an adaptation respectively. The references taken from the Amharic versions are analyzed in comparison or in contrast with corresponding passages from their respective Shakespearean sources.

I: The Translation vis a vis the Original

Below are short extracts taken from the corresponding sections of both the English and Amharic versions of Macbeth, followed by brief comments with particular emphasis on the content of the translated material. The first passage is Macbeth's soliloquy upon learning of Lady Macbeth's death.

A: The Original:

Macbeth: She should have died here after:
There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. Act V Scene V

B: The Translation

መክቤዝ

አረፍታም ፣ ስታም ፣ አንቀልፋም ከንገዲህ ወዲያ ነበርዱ
አማካዩ ጊዜ ሳያመች ፣ ለቆይታና ለአቆቆይ ....
የነገ ውሎ ፣ የነገ ውሉ ፣ የነገ ውሎ፣
ከቀን ወደ ቀን ይሳበል ፣ በእድሜ ንፉግ ጀርባ ታዝሎ
እስከ መጨረሻው ፣ የጊዜ ቀነ ቀጠሮ
ትላንትናን ፣ ትላንት በስትያን ፣ ለጅሎች ፣ ጥርጊያ አሳምሮ
ወደ ሞት ትቢያ ይሸኛል ፣ ዛሬ ፈጥሮ ፣ ነገ ቀብሮ
ኸረ ከተውኑ ቀሪ ፣ አንቺ ንፉግ የእድሜ ጭላንጭል
የምትንቀሳወሽ ጥላ ፣ የሰው ህይወት የሰው እድል ....
ቀሪ ፣ ከተውኑ ቀሪ
ሙያ እንደነሰው ተዋናይ
ተታትሮ ፣ ተፍጨርጭሮ ፣ ተርበትብቶ መድረኩ ላይ
ለብልጭታ ብቻ የሚታይ
ወዲያው በቅጽፈት ለመጥፋት ፣ እንደማያዘልቅ ሲሳይ
አይ የሰው ልጅ ሕይወት ጅል የተረተሽ ተረት ነሽ ፣
ከንቱ ጫጫታና ሁከት
ቋሚ ትርጉም የሌለበት

ACT V Scene III

C: Comments

This passage contains some of Shakespeare's most memorable lines. So imaginative, inspiring and philosophical are they that the passage is very often quoted, learned by heart and even used as an apt depiction of the nature of life.

It takes only a careful glance to notice that Tsegaye's rendering of this famous speech is about twice as long as the original. However, it takes a closer look to see that an effort has be made in order to remain as faithful or come as close to Shakespeare's style, word choice and ideas as possible. A comparison of the imagery and message of the speech as transferred into Amharic with those in the English passage will prove and clarify this point. The monologue in both languages is teeming with powerful and vivid metaphors. But the metaphor which carries the central idea of the entire speech is the comparison or likening of life to a "moving shadow". All the other metaphors revolve around this major one, strengthening and enlarging upon it. Some of these are the word "petty", the phrases "brief candle", " a poor player", and "a tale told by an idiot".

These five metaphors are translated and interpreted literally in the Amharic version as follows: የምትንቀላፀሽ ጥላ ፣ የአይጫ ንፃግ ፣ የአይጭ ጭላንጫለ ፣ ሙያ ያነሳው ተዋናይ ፣ /ደፋ የተረተሸ ተረት /

The concluding phrase of the speech "signifying nothing" is translated:" ቃሚ ተርጉም የሎለበት "

The fact that the same images are used in the translated text naturally means that the ideas conveyed, the message transmitted, and the effect produced are, likewise, the same. It is not

difficult to note that an almost one-to-one correspondence exists between the passages under consideration. Similarly, there is no doubt that equivalence at the level of the words, ideas, meanings and overall impression is aimed at. Exact or close similarities of the kind noticeable in these extracts are the characteristic features of a translation, thus distinguishing it from an adaptation. It must be noted that the passage in question is not an isolated case in the Amharic version, but might be taken as a representative specimen. All of the important monologues, dialogues and events of the English play are similarly translated in a literal or direct manner. This brings us, finally, to the conclusion that the Amharic Macbeth, taken as a whole, if not in its entirety, falls under the category of literary translation, rather than literary adaptation.

At this point, it seems relevant and useful to say certain things about the Amharic passage quoted above in view of the English version from which it was translated. To begin with, much of the style, message and effect of the original has been carried over into the translation. The descriptive metaphors of the candlelight and the short stay of the poor actor on the stage, which indicate the brevity of life - its disappearance no sooner than or not long after it emerges - are effectively communicated. The "strut and fret" of the poor player, which phrase is rendered as " ተታተር ፣ ተናዉር ዋር ፣ ተርበተበተ " - draws in the mind the picture of the hazardous struggle or the ups and downs that human beings, the real players in the actual world, have to undergo. And just as the performance of the player is short-lived

on the stage so too is it with human beings - their labour and efforts end up in death. The phrase "in a petty pace", which Tsegaye translates " የአጭሜ ገፋግ " literally means "stingy" or "greedy", and suggests the idea that it is too greedy, too ungenerous of life to limit the period of human existence to such a short term or age. "A tale told by an idiot" is another of the powerful metaphors used and translated. Its purpose is not to magnify or emphasize the brevity of life but the effect of its being so short, namely the sense of vanity, emptiness and lack of meaning in living one feels when contemplating the event or moment of death. Thus, not only does Tsegaye Gebremedhin transfer into his language the devices and ideas of Shakespeare but he also makes almost equally strong comments about life which approximate in detail and power those of the original play. These qualities characterize his work as a creative translation.

II The Adaptation Versus the Original

Just as above, here are two passages from parallel scenes in the English and Amharic versions of Romeo and Juliet. They have been selected from the parts of the plays where, like Macbeth, the hero is confronted with his own immanent death and the bereavement of a dearly loved wife. In Macbeth's case, the news of his wife's death is reported to him, whereas Romeo sees before his very eyes the body of his beloved, upon which sight he reaches a breaking point. Although the motives of the two heroes and the causes behind their tragic experiences are different, both of them are in a desperate, grief-stricken situation when they soliloquize.

A: The Original

Romeo: How oft when men are at the point of death
Have they been merry!
Where their keepers call
A lightning! O my love! my wife!
Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
Hath no power yet upon thy beauty.
Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there!
Act V, scene III

B) The Adaptation, (extracted from a parallel scene in the Amharic version)

ሮማዊ ይህችን ውብ አበባ ፍቅር አሰማሪ
ውሷን የማትረሳ ቃለ ኪዳን አክባሪ ፣
ትወዱ የነበረች ቁም ነገር ጨዋታ
አያሉኝ ከዘመዱ ከሰው ተለይታ
የኔ ሆደ ቢሻ ብቻዋን ተኝታ
ተመልከቱት እጇ ተመልከቱት ፊቷ
ወዟ ገና አልጠፋም ከሰራ አካሏቷ
ግንባሯን ከንፈሯን ተመልከቱት ቢቷን
ይህ አበቃቀል ተክለ ሰውነቷን
ገላዋ ያበራል በደም ተሸልሞ
ጓሊቱ ሞት የነካት አትመስልም ፈጽማ

C) Comment - These two passages may be described as two different ways of expressing the same experience because of the variations of styles, figures of speech and thoughts employed and conveyed while basic similarities exist between the events and situations dealt with. A direct transfer of expressions and ideas or close correspondence, which is characteristic of a work of translation, is not visible, even hardly noticeable in the Amharic passage. Instead it has clear marks of an effectively adapted play. So perfectly has Kebede Mikael harmonized his version of the play with local colour that it sounds quite Ethiopian and original.

In Shakespeare, Romeo draws attention to Juliet's radiant beauty which is not defeated or overpowered by the effects of death. To that end, images and phrases such as, "the honey of thy breath", "beauty's ensign is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks", "death's pale flag" are employed, none of which are directly translated into Amharic.

In the adaptation, Romeo glorifies not only Juliet's physical charms but also her moral virtues. He refers to her as the spice or decoration of love, as true to her word and as gifted with pleasant humour. None of these qualities are attributed to Juliet in Shakespeare's passage. Another point of difference is that Kebede Mikael's Romeo addresses Juliet with phrases describing her qualities of honesty and truth, among others, because she has remained faithful to her husband until death. Shakespeare's idea of Juliet's beauty being more powerful than death is put across in the adapted soliloquy, but in a different style. Kebede's Romeo speaks as if he were addressing a group of bystanders or observers

in the lonely churchyard. He invites or calls the attention of the imaginary watchers of the event to have a look at her hands and face, her entire body, which he says looks untouched or unaffected by death. However, the idea and expression in the original passage that Romeo is happy because of his reunion with Juliet even though he knows he is going to die, is not stated or suggested in the Amharic version. Moreover, this passage is not so replete in imagery as the original. The only metaphor used is "a beautiful and delicate flower" to which Juliet is compared; this image is not present in Shakespeare, in this context.

Thus, as an adapter, Kebede Mikael takes liberties with Shakespeare, taking only what suits him, omitting the alien elements and replacing them with his own figures of speech , ones replete with local texture. Such a representation of a literary work uses the original as an inspirational force, but discards it as a cliche and does not remain faithful to it in small details. Kebede Mikael's Romeo and Juliet, beside his other works, furnishes a good example of one type of literary adaptation, which has been the subject of this thesis. Equally, Tsegaye Gebremedhin's Macbeth, among his other contributions, may well be referred to as an example of literary translation which at the same time carries with it certain features of an adaptation.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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