

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN SISAY NIGUSU'S NOVELS**

**BY  
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## ABSTRACT

Many AAU undergraduate and graduate students of ILS attempted to examine the image of women characters in Amharic novels from Feminist critics' point of view. However, except one, none attempted to thoroughly deal with a single author works at different periods to find out whether a writer has followed a consistent trend or shows a variation in his portrayal of women. Besides many of the studies done on Amharic literary works based on Feminist literary criticism seem lack of depth in applying the theory.

The aim of this study is to analyze the portrayal of women characters in three selected Amharic novels written by Sisay Nigusu from a Feminist critic's point of view. The selected novels for the discussion are Girdosh (The Curtain) (1989), Yeknat Zar (literary; Obsession with Jealousy) (1996) and Rekik Ashara (Abstract Print) (2003).

The thesis has four sections. In the first section introduction to the study, statement of the problem, objective and scope of the study are included. The second part mainly embraces theoretical background to the study, which discusses Feminism as a socio political movement and feminist literary criticism, and review of related works. Basing the Feminist theoretical concept the third part analyses and compares the selected five women characters taken from the three novels. In the fourth part the finding of the study is presented.

The finding of the study indicates the image of woman is distorted in the first two novels under discussion having the image of seductress, dependent, trouble maker sex object selfish and irresponsible. In the last novel Rekik Ashara the Woman is portrayed as strong assertive, independent and problem solver. Thus it can be said that the writer has shown progress in his portrayal of women giving positive image for his woman character.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background to the Study

The concern of literary criticism is defining, categorizing and appraising of literary works based on some kind of value theories. The prominent literary criticism approaches are classified based on their concern in to four major groups. According to Krishnaswamy (2001:5) these are; reader oriented, author-oriented, context-oriented and text/language oriented approaches. Each of these approaches comprise different literary criticisms which have their own characteristics. From these one is the Feminist literary criticism, which is a branch of context-oriented approach.

Feminist literary criticism subsists to defy and ultimately to eradicate the conventions of patriarchy which accepts the dominance of men over women. Krishnaswamy (2000:74 ) by quoting Simone de Beauvoie,(1949) says, many have 'striven' to show the second position of women is 'willed' in heaven and the earth. For this reason, scholars of the field argue that feminist literary criticism has to play the role of exposing women oppression in literary works. Toril Moi in (Jefferson and David 1986:208) says; "...the task of feminist critics and theorists is to expose the way in which male dominance over females."

Thus even though there are different types of Feminist literary theories but in general it can be said that the major objective of feminist criticism is to show how women are portrayed in relation to men in the works of literature. Concerning Toril Moi in (Jefferson and David 1986:207) says "Since patriarchy has always tried to silence and repress women and women's experience, rendering them visible is clearly an important anti-patriarchal strategy"

Then the ultimate target of Feminist literary criticism is to allow Men and women to be aware of her real image So that women can struggle by themselves

for their independence. This might be the reason for Moi in (Jefferson and Robey 1986:204. to assert feminism as a political position; Donovan (1989: xiii) says;

They (the feminist critics) should enable women as readers as writers to break their culture of silence, to locate within a political spectrum, and to envisage and work toward alternatives. Moreover the study of women's literature and art is inherently empowering for women because it strengthens our identity as women and thus creates a great sense of political solidarity

Having this general target feminist literary criticism has been classified in to two different sub sections based up on their specific targets. Then according to these classification women can be seen from two different angles; 'women as writers' and 'women as reader'.

With this classification a number of studies have been done by different researchers out side Ethiopia on different literary works. Likewise in Ethiopian also, at Addis Ababa University in the Institution of Language Studies many students have been done a number of Feminist literary criticisms on English and Amharic Novels, Short stories and plays. From these most of the papers are done by undergraduate students.

According to my observation, even though much has been done on Amharic literary works by ILS undergraduate students in this area but none attempted to thoroughly deal with a single author works at different periods to find out whether a writer has followed a uniform trend or shows a variation in his portrayal of women .Besides the researches lacks depths in applying the feminist literary criticism to the extent of not expressing the theory itself. However researches done by graduate students and some undergraduate students contribute to the development of Feminist literary criticism in Ethiopian literature; but this does not bring the crucial quality and development.

The need for farther research for the development of Feminist literary criticism, specifically in Amharic literature, motivates the researcher to make this

research in Ethiopian literature specifically Amharic novels. Besides, the researcher want to investigate whether the image of women is distorted in the selected novels like many other novels studied by other researchers.

## **1.2. Objective of the Study**

The major objective of the study is to expose how women characters are portrayed in Sisay Nigus's three novels; 'Girdosh' (The Shadow) (1989), 'Yeknat Zar' (literary; obsession with Jealousy) (1996) and 'Rekik Ashara'(Abstract Print) (2003) from feminist perspective. Besides, the study has the following minor objectives.

1. To analyze the position of men characters in relation to women characters in their fictional world
2. To Classify women characters in the novels based on their independency and enslavement of patriarchy

## **1.3. Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that this study will create additional view and understanding in the study of image of women in novels. It is also expected that the study may instigate interest for subsequent and advanced study of literature from the perspective of Feminist literary criticism.

Besides since all descriptions and expositions of characters which will be analyzed in the study are made through language, which reveals the attitude of the society towards every issue, the study may possibly indicate the common attitude and beliefs of the represented society in gender issues. Thus the study can make its contribution in shifting the distorted images of women in the society.

## **1.4. Delimitation of the Study**

The research focuses on exposing the image of women characters in Sisay Nigusu's novels. And from the five novels the writer published, the research is

limited only to the three of them in which the researcher believes that it is manageable with the limited time of the study.

Besides, it should be noticed that all women characters in the selected novels are not analyzed in the study. Rather the study is limited in selected women characters, which are round and have important role in the novels.

### **1.5. Research Method**

The research is based on written materials. This includes books and research papers. The information gathered from these first hand materials is used to elaborate the analysis of the literary texts selected for the research.

The applied research method to this study is descriptive in nature. The selected novels are treated based on the written materials which focus on the theory of feminist literary criticism. Here are the procedures the researcher followed while doing the study.

- The researcher selected writers who have been writing at least in three decades. This helps the researcher to see the image of women in novels which belongs to different periods.
- After this the researcher selected a writer who brings women as a main character and who are in different age, social and educational status in his/her novels. The researcher believe that Sisay Nigusu can be taken as a model.
- After selecting Sisay the researcher read all the five novels of the writer exhaustively. Then the researcher selected three of Sisay's novels which bring women character who have a great role in the story and can be representative of the other novels women characters which are not discussed in this research.
- After general and exhaustive reading of the novels, the researcher selected suitable extracts for the analysis of the study which can validate the entire outcome of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter the concept of Feminism as a socio political movement, Feminist literary criticism which mainly embraces images of women criticism and review of related works are discussed.

#### **2.1. Feminism as a Socio-Political Movement**

Women have been considered as inferior and dependent on men. It is assumed that women are not able to stand by themselves without the protection of men. Mill (1970:16) says; "All women brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal character is the very opposite to that of men; not self will and government by self-control, but submission and yielding to the control of others".

Besides, women are expected to shape themselves in a way their society believes they should be in order to get men's protection. This assumption makes women to grow up with a dependent mentality. Concerning this Wollstonecraft in (Brody Miriam (eds), 1985:100) says;

Women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, outward obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and should they be beautiful, everything else is needless for at least twenty years of their lives.

These lead women to loose their right place in their societies. Their social, political and economic place in many societies is somewhere at the bottom corner and even darker as compared to men's position.

Then feminism emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to challenge the conventions of patriarchy. And its concern is not 'sex' rather gender. According to Toril Moi in (Jefferson and Robey 1986:209) sex is a matter of biology, being female or male. But, gender is influenced by cultural, social and psychological makeup of a society. Moi said Femininity is a "cultural construct" and assert as one is not born by being a women.

Starting from the 18<sup>th</sup> century different writers lift the problem of inequality between the sexes. Wollstonecraft in (Brody Miriam (eds), 1985) tries to discuss some of the reasons for the secondary position of women. According to her one of the reasons for women's subordination to men is divinely intended. Quoting the holy Bible she elaborates this in the following way:-

Adam says in Genesis, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man", Corinthians elaborates a little. "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man. And St Paul had said plainly, wives submit to your husbands. (31)

Another factor raised by Wollstonecraft in connection with women's inferiority to men is their physical strength. Naturally, women have less bodily strength than men. Then it is assumed that women ought to be weak and passive because they have less physical strength than men. Ferguson (1977:7) says; "Smallness and weakness are considered inferior, even in situations where size and strength are irrelevant." This tells even for physical capacity the male is acknowledged as the standard women are smaller and weaker.

Economy is also another factor for women's to be dependent on men. Since women are shaped to grow up with the dependent mentality; in their youth they are not determined to earn money by themselves rather they prepare themselves for marriage which makes them subordinate to their men. Wollstonecraft in (Brody Miriam (eds), 1985) says;

In the middle rank of life, to continue the comparison, men, in their youth, are prepared for professions and marriage is not considered as the grand feature in their lives; whilst women, on the contrary have no other scheme to sharpen their faculties. It is not business, extensive plans, or any of the excursive flights of ambition, that engross their attention, no, their thoughts are not employed in rearing such noble structures. To rise in the world, and have the liberty of running from pleasure to pleasure, they must marry advantageously, and to this object their time is scarified, and their persons often legally prostituted. (150-151).

Since the women themselves accept their secondary position, because they are forced to grow up with dependent mentality Feminists believes that to make stronger the female mentality is essential to eradicate their blind obedience.

In 1980s feminists who advanced women's liberation began to contest on particular issues which resulted in the emergence of different branches of Feminism Such as Radical, Liberal, Marxist, Eco, Black, Lesbian, Christian, and Islamic Feminism. Out of these some, which are important for the analysis, are discussed in the following subsections.

### **2.1.1. Liberal Feminism**

Liberal Feminists believed that women have been deprived of their human rights. This trend employs the personal relations between men and women as the spring board which transform to society. Wollstonecraft in (Brody Miriam (eds)1985) raises beliefs like; a wife should not let her husband to know the degree of her deep feeling or affection. According to her such kind of beliefs are designed by men not by nature to make women weaker.

This Feminism raises important issues like abortion rights, sexual pestering, and voting, reasonable health care and so on. Generally Liberal Feminists work for the abolition of institutional prejudice and the implementation of better laws. Wollstonecraft in (Brody Miriam (eds), 1985) asserts that women have to get opportunity to learn to develop mental capacity to choose their leader and considered as men as well as human being.

It is time to affect a revolution in female manners time to restore to them their lost dignity and make them as a part of the human species, labor by reforming themselves to reform the world. It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners. (132)

Thus, according to liberal feminists, first, women have to be considered and treated as equal as men since they are created equally.

### **2.1.2. Radical Feminism**

Radical Feminism has a principle which emphasizes the patriarchal roots of inequality between men and women specifically, social dominance of women by men. This branch of Feminism views patriarchy as dividing rights; constitutional rights and power crucial by gender, and as a result oppresses women and privileges men.

Concerning the base of Radical Feminism Lovenduski and Randall (1993 :7) say: "The starting point of radical feminism is sex-class analysis which asserts that gender is the fundamental division in society and the major determinant of power relation."

For a sexual revolution to carry on it requisites a truly radical social transformation. Millett says;

Without such radical change it remains impossible to eradicate those evil attendant upon these institutions which reform found most offensive' the economic disabilities of women, the double standard, prostitution, venereal disease coercive marital unions and involuntary parenthood. (1971: 157)

Unlike liberal Feminism Radical Feminism does not give attention to the existence of political and social organization. This is because it is believed that the root of women's problem is essentially tied to culture. So the best solution is to fight against the patriarchal assumption of the societies.



### **2.1.3. Marxist Feminism**

The intersection of class and gender is the point of departure for critical/ political action and analysis of Marxist Feminists. They seem to be more focused on things like how the institution of family is related to capitalisms, how women's domestic work is belittled and not considered as "real work", and basically how women are under privileged and under paid. All of these are explanations for gender oppression.

Millett in his *Sexual Politics* (1971:87) indicates, economy is the major reason for women to be dependent of men .He says; "It is important to understand that economic independence was consciously as well as unconsciously perceived to be a direct threat to male authority." Marxist Feminism struggles against poverty of the majority of women factory workers, harassed by family duties, and ridden with disease or starvation.

Barrett (1988:9) while discussing the objective of Marxist Feminism says; "Marxist Feminists have argued that Marxism must take account of women's domestic labor, their poorly paid and insecure position as wage- laborers, and the familiar ideology which contributes to their oppression."

Some Marxist Feminists base their discussion on the relationship of women to the means of production. Others use a Marxist theory to develop an analysis of women as a class.

From the above discussion it can be understood that the target of all Feminist movements is the same which is women's liberation. Their difference lies on their solution to end up the women's subordination on men, since they present different major causes for women's dependency.

## **2.2. Feminist Literary Criticism**

Feminist Criticism was intended to reveal the political objectives of Feminism. Writers and texts are assessed in harmony with to what extent they could be agreeable with feminist philosophy. This criticism plays the role of revealing women's subjugation in literary works. Toril Moi (in Jeferson and Robey (eds) 1986:204) says;

Feminist criticism, then, is a specific kind of political discourse: a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature, at least not if the latter is presented as no more than another interesting critical approach in a line with a concern for sea – imagery or metaphors of war in medieval poetry.

Feminist critics believe that literature can play the role of changing society's attitude towards women. In Literature it is Men not women who have been defined by their connection to the external world and to society, where as women have been defined in relation to men. Ferguson (1977:33) says Literature by showing the new stereotypes adds to awareness intensifying and also assists women to crush the sense of isolation, which has been one of the main tools of male domination in patriarchal culture.

Feminists assert that exposing the mechanism of patriarchy through feminist criticism helps to promote a mind shift. Rather than highlight obtainable political contravention feminist critics prefer to concentrate on what female writers can do in their future works, influence them to forget literary convention when they create their female characters and to rely on their own subjective experience. This helps them to reflect realities of women through showing the stereotypical thinking of society which denies women.

According to Donovan (1989:2) Feminist criticism has two clear and often practiced distinct subdivisions. These are the assessment of obtainable

criticism of female authors; Gyno-criticism and the analysis of the image of women as they are portrayed in male author literature.

She says Gyno-criticism is introduced in Showalter's Towards a Feminist Poetics(1979) and it refers to a criticism that constructs "a female frame work" for the assessment of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female knowledge and practice, rather than to acclimatize male models and theories.

On the other side image of women criticism concentrates on the portrayal of women in literature .The following subsection elaborates this.

### **2.2.1. Criticism of Images of Women**

Images of Women Criticism focus on how women characters are portrayed in literature. According to Donovan (1989) this approach was the earliest and the most developed form of feminist literary criticism. Donovan says; "--- literature commonly ascribes to women are formlessness, passivity, instability (hysteria), confinement (narrowness, practicality), piety, materiality, spirituality, irrationality, compliancy and incorrigibility (the shrew, the witch)."(3) This tells that women are portrayed negatively in many literary works.

Feminist Criticism deals with the causes at the back of this 'propagation' of female stereotypes and the lack of realistic women characters. Feminist critics believe that novels by male `authors are becoming more resolutely "masculine".

Concerning, Donovan (1988:5) quoting Schmidt says

Barracano Schmidt posits three reasons why particular stereotype might appear in the works of several authors over a period of time(1)The character is derivatives, the writers having used a common model;(2)The characters is a product of social conditioning and ideal or counter ideal of the prevailing values of the society; and (3)The character is a symbolic fulfillment of the writers needs a mythical being invented to give solace in an otherwise terrifying situation.

On the other hand, the idealized or "positive" female image can of course encourage women to seek their independence.

#### **2.2.1.1. Mother- Figure**

A mother in literature has dual image, negative and positive. Her positive image goes to the extent of being considered as a life giver. On the other hand she is considered as a cause of death. The Bible asserts that it is because of women human beings condemned to be mortal. Ferguson (1977:12) gives Eve and Mary of the Bible as an example: she says that Eve is the temptress who passed death into the world. But the virgin Mary, submissively acted on by the Holy Ghost, pondering in her heart the experience of her son, is the queen of Heaven, the mother of God.

Mothers' dual nature has been reflected in literature this opposite image of women is explained as follows; "Yet all human beings in their early years see their mothers as bringers of life, nurturer's source of pleasure and comfort. They soon learn that she also takes away pleasure; she says no, and they blame her for denying satisfaction no matter what her reasons may be." (12)

Literature gives disgraceful, loneliness characters to a mother. They also seen as overstrained by poverty. Besides, such negative images, mothers are seen as source of discipline and love. This maternal kind loving care has been seen as necessary taken to a child's self love and self acceptance.

In addition, Mother portrayed as destructive of her son. It is believed that she prevents her son from maturing that makes him slave of her. Her relation with her daughter is also portrayed negatively. Besides mother taken as a cause of her daughter's servitude.

Krishnaswamy while discussing a mother relation with her child says

That is way infinitive sexuality in the Freudian model is not related to physical maturity but to the infant's sexual desire to remove the father and become the partner of the mother, is the agency for producing the male-female distinction. The father is loved and hated; he represents repressiveness, privilege, power, potency, the government or the state, religion the establishment the education system, language and literature etc. The mother on the other hand is desired but resented. (2001:50)

Therefore, it can be said that, in literature mother has been defined in positive and negative way; as a "life giver" and at the same time as a "cause of death".

#### **2.2.1.2. Wife- Figure**

A wife like a mother is expected to give all the necessary cares to her child. Besides she is responsible to care her husband as a child. She is responsible to feed to clean his clothes and even sometimes she washes his feet. Ferguson (1977:17) says; "In patriarchal societies the women who willingly and happily submits to her husband and father is an ideal submissive wife."

The characteristics of the submissive wife are beauty, passivity acknowledged inferiority to the husband, complete obedience to his commands and above all willingness. It is believed that a woman has no right either to her own body or its produce: she is owned by her husband. Her children are also considered as properties of their father.

Since she is considered as such a dominating character of a wife is not acceptable. According to Ferguson (1977) Freud's "Oedipus complex" explanation on material dominance is unnatural and it leads to 'neuroses' and 'psychoses'. Ferguson expresses this early assumption about a dominating wife and its charge as such;

The dominating wife, viewed with a certain amused tolerance as a shrew in earlier centuries has in the twentieth in earlier centuries, has in the twentieth century been hated as the bitch who because of her childlike own emotional problems castrates her husband by making him feel adequate.(23)

Thus a good (perfect) wife is portrayed as passive and submissive to her man and if not she is considered as mistress.

### **2.2.1.3. Sex Object**

Passivity, which is seen as a dominant character of the ideal wife and the mother, is also major character given for 'the sex object'. Men treated women as a sex object. Women are seen as inferior and who ruin the society's conventions. Regarding this Ferguson (1977: 27) says;

Many twentieth century male authors, involved mostly in a quest for self identity, have justified men's treatment of women as sex objects to be used instead of loved on the grounds that modern women are all bitches and castrators who interfere with or deny men's search for identity.

Women have been treated like objects in male authored literary works. They have been treated as men's prey. Men needed them just only for their sexual hunger .Ferguson(1977) says sexual intercourse for woman is like a rape if her man's desire is just to satisfy himself.

Women have been valued in their society based on their usefulness to their men. For instance as Ferguson says virgins haven been a good wives and mothers.

Virgins have been valued not only because of youth, possible beauty, and freedom from venereal disease, but also because they could become wives and mothers, the legitimacy of whose children would not be questioned through their offspring property could be lawfully transferred. (14)

So women have been portrayed in literature as fulfiller of their men's sexual desire.

#### **2.2.1.4 Seductress Figure**

Women as seductresses have been portrayed as a cause of disasters. Men's fault, like sexual relation outside marriage has been given to women characters. They are considered as guilty because of their attractiveness to men. At the same time women have been admired for their ability to seduce.

Besides, women are seen when they see themselves as powerful to defeat their men through their beauty. Since they believe that in order to protect their marriage and to keep their men for themselves they have to seduce their husbands by their beauty so that they can get the protection and help of men. Ferguson (1977:30) says "A husband and wife are to remain lovers the prime responsibility for the necessary attractiveness being the woman's. He may acquire a pot belly and still be desirable, while she must retain her adolescent dimension." Thus women have to always keep their look with whatever man they are with because this will help them to avoid their husbands' extra marital relationship.

#### **2.2.1.5. The Liberated Women**

Writers have started to see woman positively. Authors begin to reconstruct the stereotypical image of woman. The liberated women unlike the previous woman are free and independent of their husband. They have equal right with men. They are portrayed as everything is possible to her which is possible to men.

Donovan (1989:20) says "a literary work should provide role-models, instill a positive sense of feminine identity by portraying women who are "self-actualization, whose identities are not dependent on men."

The liberated women's life style at home and outside is changed. They would no more be servant or slave of their husband and children. So in literatures such image of women have to be reversed and there by contribute for fighting the

patriarchal culture of the societies. Thus such kind of image according to Ferguson has an enormous benefit.

Literature, by reflecting the new stereotypes contributes to consciousness raising and help women to overcome the sense of isolation, which has been one of the main instrument of their oppression in patriarch; society.(32-33)

The above discussion justifies that all feminist literary critics believe that the image of women in most male authored literary works are distorted. The women characters are presented as a sex object, the wife submissive and the mothers as destructives of their sons and daughters. Then the critics believe that applying this literary criticism in male authored literature brings the necessary change; reconstructing images of women. This thesis also using the feminist literary criticism tries to analyze the women characters in the selected novels.

### **2.3. Review of Related Researches**

A number of researches which deal with image of women in literature have been conducted by under and post graduate students of AAU. Many of these researches focus on Amharic and English literary works. And a few have taken literary works which presents in other language of Ethiopia like Oromifa. All the researches focus on feminist literary criticism and are not genera specific. They take novels, p!ays short story and films. Besides some researches take proverbs to apply feminist literary criticism. Since this research focuses on applying the feminist literary criticism; images of women in literature on selected Amharic novels, it gives much focus on reviewing researches done on novels based on the Feminist Criticism

Mekonen Zegeye's (2001) study looks at image of women and plot structure in the first four novels of Fikremarkos Desta namely Behind the Buska, Evan gadi, The love of the Zersis and Achame.

Mekonen in his findings indicates that some women in the selected novels depicted as victims of the cultures of their societies and others are portrayed as strong and liberated. According to his findings the women who are strong and liberated are mostly educated one. These women unlike the uneducated ones have a right to decide in every aspect of their life. According to him the liberated women in the novels are brave, perseverant and ready to tackle problems. On the other hand the women who are not depicted as liberated are seen in the novels while they mourn for not getting proper responses from their male partners. Since Mekonen tries to see two broad and distinct literary elements, plot structure and image of women in four novels, his assessment has a crisis of lack of depth.

Tsegaye Gezahegn (2003) focuses on analyzing the major characters in Yeknat zar written by Sisay Nigusus. In this analysis Teagaye tries to show how Semayneh and Hiwot are portyed in the novel. And for this Tsegaye discusse the concept of characterization in fiction in the theoretical part of the study. Tsegaye's findings tell that the women character Hiwot is portrayed as a disastrous, liberal and wise character. According to Tsegaye Hiwot forced to lead a depressed life because her husband is jealous of her. Since Tsegaye does not see the women character in the novel from feminist perspective he does not show how one can see Hiwote as a women portrayed by male author. Tsegaye uses phrase like, easy going, fun loving and naïve to express Hiwot "positively" in his findings.

Yihenew Melese's study (2004) deals with the image of women on selected two Amharic novels namely Toby by Afework Gebre Yesus and Endewotach Kerech by Asseffa Gebre Mariam. Yihenew in his study tries to investigate the patriarchal assumptions reflected in the novels and if any positive images the novels attribute to females.

Yihenew's finding indicates that, patriarchy is reflected in the two novels through the narrators comment and characterization of the female characters. Beside Yihenew asserts that in the two novels the women themselves belived as though they are inherently weak. According to him women in the two novels are presented as conspirators, and cheaters. He says they deceive their family, motherland and race at large. They prostitute to ruin themselves and others. women are seen in the two novels when they led people in a wrong way.

Contrary to the negative image of women, Yienenew's findings tell that, there are some positive images of women in the novels . From the positive images given for women in the novels Yiehnew mention characters live sympathy, trustworthy and savior. For all these investigation Yiehnew presents a theoretical framework focuses on 'Patriarchal Assumption' and 'Glorification of women' in literature by making the base feminist criticism.

Zewde Tadesse (2004) examines the image of women in two oromo novels names Kussaa Gaddo and Dhaamsa Abbaa written by Gadisa Biru. Zewde's analysis shows that the women's image in the two novels are distorted. According to him the women have no rights to decide even in their own bodies. The women in the two novels have no right to choose their life partners to decide in every detail of their life. To the contrary men have the right to decide not only in their life but also in their women's life. According to Zewede's his research is the first to be conducted in Ormifa novels

Mekonnen Fekadu (2005) focuses on a comparative analysis of the image of women as depicted by African women writers from Black Feminist perspective. For his study Mekonnen selected three novels and a book of collected short stories. These are Efuru by Flora Nwapa So Long a Letter by Mariama Ba, Quasa by Tsehay Melaku and a short story. The collector of Treasures by Bessie Head.

Mekonen's findings tell that image of black women in the selected literary works is almost the same. He concludes his research saying all characters in the stories live in backward tribal images where they devote their lives to childbearing and food preparation for their families. These women, according to his findings are exposed to the common practices for their village which is polygamy. Finally the researcher based on his findings express his beviess that black women writers must have a common agenda one of which is deconstructing the stereotyped images of African women.

Biniam Yakob (2005) examines the image of women in collected Kambatta proverbs. Biniam classified the collected proverbs according the theme the proverbs have. His classification clearly shows that women have second position in Kembata society. From the classification he made some of them are; proverbs showing women's inferior status in social public spheres, proverbs describing women's foolishness proverbs which describes women as aimless thoughtless and hardly keep secrets can be mentioned. After giving analysis for the selected proverbs Biniam asserts that women have a negative image in Kambatta proverbs.

Mulualem Denbegna (2006) examines aspects of feminism in Amadis's . The Concubine and The Great Ponds and Emecheta's Second class Citizen. The researcher tries to identify and analyze feminist and post structural elements in the selected novels.

Mulualem's findings tell that women in the selected novels are portrayed as strongest wisest and devoted characters as compared to male characters. And Mulualem say that in this way the writers deconstruct the dominate masculine discourses. Mulualem give a brief theoretical concept of feminism as well as Post structuralism separately and feminist narrative as post structuralism narrative in order to come with such of findings.

Gebereslasi's Libweled Tark, Hirue Woldesellasi's Yelib Hassab, Ennanu Agonafri's setegna Adar and Balu Girma's Kadnas Bashager.

Tekle's findings tell that women in the selecting novels are portrayed negatively. And those who portrayed positively are portrayed for spiritual didactical or other thematic purposes. From the negative images given to women weakness, dependency, being sex objects, irrationality and being sensual lovers can be mentioned. According Tekle's findings even though the writers glorified the women characters as intelligent and physically strong but they depicted women as their ultimate ambition is marriage and they are seen while they become loyal and obedient to their men in their marriage and ultimately selfless mothers.

As this review of related researches shows many of the researchers assert that image of women in lots of literary works have been distorted. Some researcher raise some character as a positive image of women which actually are not positive, indicates that the researches have lack of depth in actualizing the authentic sense of feminism. For this Tsegaye Gezahegn finds can be taken as an example. From the eleven researchers reviewed two of them which are done on African novel unlike other findings find out that women in African novels have positive images.

This paper is different from the previous ones in that it focuses on the image of women characters in three novels published in three decades by an Ethiopian writer. Thus the study shows whether the image of women in three decades is different or the same presented by a single male writer comparing the women characters in the novel.

## CHAPTER THREE

### CHARACTER ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. Girdosh (The Curtain)

Girdosh, Sisay Nigusu's second Novel was published in 1989 focusing on marriage issues. Wondafrash and Tsigereda, the couple, are the major characters who are portrayed to reflect issues of a chaotic marriage. There are also some round characters who are included in the novel in support of magnifying the marriage problems of the major characters. From these Rosa, Tiwsit and Ermiyas are the major ones. The story shows when Rosa and Tiwsit become the cause for the devastation of the marriage till Erimyas saved it. Thus the three women characters; Tsigereda, Rosa, and Tiwsit are discussed from feminist perspective in the subsections following the synopsis of the story.

##### 3.1.1. Synopsis of the Story

Wondafrash and Tsigereda had a peaceful marriage for about eight years in the story, having two lovely kids. Both of them contribute to the betterment of their family. After eight years of happy life, a problem happened which leads their marriage to devastation.

Wondafrash starts an affair with a woman called Rosa after their sudden meeting on a road while she was very sad of her x-boy friend. In the beginning of their relation Wondafrash thought that his affair with Rosa could not affect his marriage. But, after he spends sometime with her he starts to love and spend more time with her especially at night.

Then, things began to change at home. Tsigereda started asking her husband how and why he becomes careless of his family. While she was in the dark, she heard a rumor that her husband is going out with another lady. Tsigereda



Ermiyas, a friend of Wondafrash discuss the on going problem with Wondafrash and Tsigereda discretely. And he understands that Wondafrash did not want to lose his marriage. At same time he did not want to hurt Rosa saying 'Good bye' while she is in love with him and hurted so much by her x- boy friend. Ermiyas convinces his friend to let Rosa's case for him.

Ermiyas asks Rosa to scarify her love not only for Wondafrash's marriage but also for the sake of the two kids who will have a miserable life by loosing one of their parents. Rosa, since she knows that Wondafrash could not be happy with her loosing his marriage she accepted what Erimas says. Finally convincing the couple Erimyas succeeded in rebuilding the marriage.

### 3.1.2. Tsigereda's Compatibility

The narrator exposed Tsigereda to the reader in the first page of the novel when she is waiting for her husband in the middle of the night with hot anger guessing her husband is making love with another lady at that moment. The first description of Tsigereda tells that she is an 'ideal' or 'perfect' wife who leads her marriage with out any disagreement for eight years. The characters which made Tsigereda, look a good wife and help her to lead a happy marriage are presented as follows;

ጽጌረዳ ለባሏ ብቻ ሳይሆን ለመንደርተኛውና ለመስሪያ ቤት ባልደረቦቿ ጭምት ትሁት አስተዋይ ገርና አሳቢ ነች። እንዲሁም የመስሪያ ቤቷ ሰዎች «ቅድስት ጽጌረዳ» እያሉ ነው የሚተሯት። (6)

Tsigereda is meek, humble, sympathetic, and kind not only to her neighborhood but also to her co-workers. Actually her co-workers call her by her nick name "Holy angel Tsigereda".

From the above expression it is understood that to be called or being a perfect women or wife requires meekness. A meek person is quiet, calm and always ready to do what other people want without expressing his/her own opinion. Tsigereda did the same thing.

The perfect wife Tsigereda blames herself for her husband's mistake. She thinks that women are fully responsible for the success of their marriage. She condemns her patience.

Since Tsigereda was not the cause for Wondafrash's affair with another lady there was nothing Tsigereda can do even if she did her best. Then what did Tsigereda feel about this?

Wondafrash spent the night outside. Tsigereda believes that he will divorce her and marry Rosa. This leads her to commit irresponsible action. She tells everything about her husband to her eight years old son. In her dialogue with her son Tsigereda shows as she is a submissive till she has no right to be a mother for her own children if her husband does not let her be.

ሮዛ ማን ናት?

አዲሱ ሚስቱ ናታ - - ለእናንተ አዲስ እናት ሊያመጣላችሁ ነው» (9)

« who is Rosa?»

“His new wife !..... He wants to bring a new mother for you and your sister. »

Then it seen, when Tsigereda regretting for telling the sorrowful news to her son.

Every body around Tsigereda and Wondafrash heard that their marriage is in danger. And every one started to pity Tsigereda . If a woman loses her marriage what else remain for her in this world. The narrator says **ድንጋይ አይን ቢኖረው ለጽጌረዳ ያለቅሳል:: (19)** “Even a stone would have cried for Tsegereda had it had eyes.” Since she lost her marriage.

Tsigereda herself thinks the same way. She feels that there is nothing left for her after loosing her marriage. The narrator expresses her feeling of loosing her marriage as follows.

በእጆቿ የተጨፈነት አይኖች ዓለምን አጨልመው ተመለከቱ - - - እናም ደግሞ ለእሷ የጨለመው ዓለም ለሮዛ ብርሃን ሲፈነጥቅላት የጨፈነችው ዓይኗ አሳያት (19).

She covered her eyes with her hands and begins to imagine the dark world. Her covered eyes showed her darkened world giving Rosa the shiny future.

According to Tsigereda's understanding it is marriage, having Wonderfrash, which makes the world black and white for the two women.

The submissive wife Tsigereda did not continue showing to be as respectful and patient for her husband after hearing his deceitfulness from his own words.

የዘመናት ሩህሩህነትና ታጋሽነቷ በአንድ ምሽት ከላይዋ ላይ በርሮ እንደጠፋ ሁሉ ልጆቿን ገፈታትራ ባልዋን ልትጋተረው ተነሳች (29)

As if her long lived meekness and patience has all gone in a night she stood up pushing her kids to fight her husband.

It was not resisting her husband what makes Tsigereda 'saint'. Loosing her patience and ready to resist her husband makes Tsigereda to be seen as a beast even by her own husband

ዘጠኝ አመት ሙሉ አብረው ሲኖሩ አይቷት የማያውቅ የተደበቀ የቤት ውስጥ ነብር ሆና ታየችው (29)

Her husband feels that she has changed to a tiger' he had never seen her acting as such in their nine years of marriage.

Fear of loosing her marriage and expressing her attitude are also the factors that made Tsigereda to be seen contrary to 'saint'.

Tsigereda herself thinks the same way. She feels that there is nothing left for her after loosing her marriage. The narrator expresses her feeling of loosing her marriage as follows.

በእጆቿ የተጨፈነት አይኖች ዓለምን አጨለመው ተመለከቱ - - - እናም ደግሞ ለእሷ የጨለመው ዓለም ለርዝ ብርሃን ሲፈነጥቅላት የጨፈነችው ዓይኗ አሳያት (19).

She covered her eyes with her hands and begins to imagine the dark world. Her covered eyes showed her darkened world giving Rosa the shiny future.

According to Tsigereda's understanding it is marriage, having Wonderfrash, which makes the world black and white for the two women.

The submissive wife Tsigereda did not continue showing to be as respectful and patient for her husband after hearing his deceitfulness from his own words.

የዘመናት ሩህሩህነትና ታጋሽነቷ በአንድ ምሽት ከላይዋ ላይ በርሮ እንደጠፋ ሁሉ ልጆቿን ገፈታትራ ባልዋን ልትጋተረው ተነሳች (29)

As if her long lived meekness and patience has all gone in a night she stood up pushing her kids to fight her husband.

It was not resisting her husband what makes Tsigereda 'saint'. Loosing her patience and ready to resist her husband makes Tsigereda to be seen as a beast even by her own husband

ዘጠኝ አመት ሙሉ አብረው ሲኖሩ አይቷት የማያውቅ የተደበቀ የቤት ውስጥ ነብር ሆና ታየችው (29)

Her husband feels that she has changed to a tiger' he had never seen her acting as such in their nine years of marriage.

Fear of loosing her marriage and expressing her attitude are also the factors that made Tsigereda to be seen contrary to 'saint'.

It was not saint Tsigereda but the aggressive woman who left her home and went to her parents. Her father was very angry of Wondafresh's actions and gives Tsigereda support. Tsigereda feels proud of her father.

After spending some days in her parents house Tsigereda discusses the problem with her mother. Her mother tells her own experience about men /husbands/ and convinces her to be a "Submissive wife".

According to her a wife should not act only as a wife since she is at the same time a mother. And as a mother she has to look things from the kids benefit not hers'. So even if her husband makes a mistake and hurt her she has to accept with patience and live for her children's sake.

Tsigereda's mother has experience of such kind of situation and because she accepted her elder's advice 'to be submissive wife' for her children sake, she was able to save her family. It seems that the women themselves could not break the submissive mind of a wife and protect it to live long.

Finally it is seen when Tsigereda returns to her home after she receives Wonderfresh's letter wearing her old clothes which she wore in her wedding time. This symbolically represents that Tsigereda returns to her home with the previous personality; meekness and patience. Now she becomes again "Saint Tsigereda", the perfect and the ideal one by being a meek woman.

In recapitulation it can be said that Tsigereda is basically portrayed as "a meek woman". And her meekness is related to not resisting her husband's action not to lose her marriage. She is portrayed as a woman who believes marriage is everything. So that losing marriage is losing everything. She is portrayed as passive. With all this her passivity, meekness and quietness', makes her to be taken as an ideal wife.

### 3.1.3 Rosa : The Seductress and Emotional Lover

Rosa believes that she is created for nothing but for love. And this love is not what she can make it by herself rather it is something which she receives from men. This indicates that for the character Rosa, It is love/ men, who /which makes her have a good life. She is dependent on men. Here is what she says to Wondafresh when she knows they could no longer be lovers.

ለፍቅር ነው የተፈጠርኩት። (:268)

I am created for love

Rosa is portrayed as seductress who leads a marriage to destruction. From the beginning Wondafresh tells her he is a married man and has two kids. «ማስትና ሁለት ልጆች እንዳሉት ቀድሞውንም አልደበቃትም» (p:14) He doesn't hide her he is married and has two kids.

But his marriage was not considered as an obstacle by Rose who has started an affair. Since she does not want him for marriage, they agreed to manage and see his marriage and their relation differently. Even if she does not want him for marriage it is seen when she tries to upset his wife Tsigereda in order to spoil his marriage. The first major disagreement between Tsigereda and Wondefrash held after he spent the night outside with Rosa. And it was Rosa who seduced Wondafrash to stay out.

እስከምሽቱ አምስት ሰዓት ድረስ «ቤቴ እሄዳለሁ» እለ ሲፎክር ማምሽቱ ትዝ ይለዋል። ከዚያ በኋላ ነው ሮዛ መጠጡን በላይ በላ እየቀዳች የፍቅር መልክት የሚያስተላልፍ ለስላሳ ጣቶቿ አንገቱን እያሻሸች ራሱን ስቶ እንዲደር ያደርገችው (23) could remember until it was five pm while saying he should leave for his house by that time. But she was giving him alcohol one after another glass till he lost his mind; while massaging his neck to seduce him.

After he spent the night with Rosa the narrator describes Rosa's feeling as follows;

ውጭ በማደሩ የወንዳፍራሽ ሚስት ምንኛ እንደምትቃጠል ስለምታውቅ ነው ሮዛ አንጅቷ ቅቤ የጠጣው (13)

Rosa was delighted when she thinks how Wondafrash's staying out could make his wife jealous and angry.

Rosa becomes very happy when Tsigereda feel bad. Rosa's target is to make Tsigereda angry. And unconsciously she started competing Tsigereda. Even if she does not want to marry him at the beginning of their relation but it is seen when she become jealous of Tsigereda and wants to know for whom Wondefrash gives priority. Wondefrash gives the following answer; when she nags him to know his love for her and for his wife.

እወድሻለሁ:: እንደምወድሽ ደጋግሜ ነግራሻለሁ:: ስለምወድሽም ነው ሚስቴን ቤት ውጥ አስቀምጬ ከአንቺ ጋር የምባልገው ( 15)

I love you. I told you several times that I love you. That is exactly the reason why I am adultrng living my wife at home behind. Living this messed up life.

In this expression Wondafrash tells Rosa their relation is wrong using the expression "adultrng". And he also tells her that leaving his wife at home alone is wrong. This answer makes Rosa very sad and she cried. She also understands that she is considered as <አባልጊ> "mistress".

አሃ ከእኔ ጋር የምትባልገው! አባልጊህ እኔ ነኝ! - - » (15)

"Aha! Messing up with me? Do I mess up your life?...Yes I do! I really do."

Tsigereda also believes that Rosa's fault is much worse than Wondafrash's mistake ሀሳቧን አስባ የጥፋቱን ደረጃ ከወንዳፍራህ ይልቅ በሮዛ ላይ ከፍ ካደረገች በኋላ ነው ልታያት የፈለገችው (21) "She wants to see Rosa after thinking it is her which has to take all the blame, not Wondafrash."

Other people around them also condemn Rosa for Tsigereda's marriage distraction.

### 3.1.4. Tiwsit: - A Trouble Maker Woman

Tiwsit, a friend of the main character Tsigereda is portrayed as selfish, liar, adulteress, irresponsible, seductress, talkative and as evil as the devil. From these her seductive and pimpy characters are glorified.

Tiwsit and Tsigereda shares same office and this give them an opportunity to discuss and share many ideas .Even if the two women discuss many issues Tsigereda is not willing to discuss on opposite sex relationships. This is because they have totally contrasting understanding and beliefs concerning the issue.

For Tiwsit divorcing and changing men is easy. "ባል መፍታት ወንድ መቀያየር ለትውስት ቀላል ነገር ነው (21). "For Tiwsit going with different men is normal." To the contrary for Tsigereda it is evil. "ፍቅር ሳይኖር ለእልህ ብቻ ከሌላ ወንድ ጋር የመውጣቱ ሀሳብ ዘገነናት» (21) "Even the thought of going out with men with out love is terrifying for her"

Besides Twist has a character of exaggerating things and gossiping. The narrator described her talkativeness in the following way ወሬውን ለማራባት እንኳ ትውስት ትበቃለች (45)) "Tiwsit by herself is good enough to take this rumor all over the place." Because of these Tsigereda does not want to discuss personal issues.

But after Tiwist know that Wondafrash is having an affair and has the opportunity to know about the lady (Rosa), Tsigereda becomes willing to discuss the issue with Tiwsit. Using this chance it is seen when Tiwsit tries to get some advantage.

One of the bosses in the company wants Tsigereda to go out with him. Tsigereda condemns the idea since she is married and believes that a married woman should not sleep around. But Tiwsit starts to convince Tsigereda to go out with the man. This is because the bosses promised her to give a promotion in exchange of convincing Tsigereda.

To make her dream come true Tiwsit did many things without thinking and caring about the consequences. First she tells Tsigereda that Ato Kibret is in love with her. When she sees that Tsigereda is not attracted by Ato Kibret she starts to create stories about the man, which she believes can make Tsigereda to feel sorry about him. And she is successful on this.

ሳታስበው የአቶ ክብረት ታሪክ ሳባት በመጠኑም ቢሆን ከእሷ ታሪክ ጋር ተመሳሳይነት እንደሚኖረው አድርጋ ገምታ ይሆናል ስለሚስታቸው ሌላ ባል ማግባት ሰማች። አቶ ክብረትስ ሌላ ሚስት አግብተዋል ወይስ ብቻቸውን ነው የሚኖሩት (49)

Unconsciously she is taken by Ato Kibret's story this might be because she thinks that they have common experiences. She heard that his wife had married another man. What about Ato Kiberet? Is he married or lonely?

Tsigereda starts to think about Ato Kiberet, which is Tiwsit target, because of the fabricated story. Even if Tsigereda feel sorry for Ato Kibret she was not interested to sleep with him. This brought another assignment for Tiwsit.

Tiwsit changes her strategy and starts to convince Tsigereda she has to go with another men to prove to her husband that she is still attractive.

ቆንጆ መልክ አለሽ ከፈለግሽው ሰው ጋር መውታት ትችላለሽ። አቶ ባል ግን ትዕግስት ስታሳይው ይህን ሁሉ ማድረግ ያቃተሽ ይመስለዋል። ይንቅሻል። ቆንጆ ነፃ ሁሉ አይታየውም ከሌላ ወንድ ጋር መውጣት ስትጀምሪ ነው እንደገና ዓይኑን ገልጦ ቁጅናሽን የሚያየው። አትሞኝ ጽግዬ ስንቷ ጎማዳ ተአምር ትሰራለች።« (86)

You are beautiful you can go with any man you like. But the so called husband will substitute your patience with inability. He will look you down. He can not see your beauty. But, it is when you start to begin seeing other men that he will open his eyes and see your beauty. Do not be fool you will win men by men.

Tsigereda gives an assignment to Tiwsit to check whether Rosa is pregnant or not. She tells Tiwsit that if it is so she will look into her proposal saying like this “አሁን ያወራነው እውነት ከሆነማ መቼስ.”(113) “If what we talked is true...”

Twisit, because she thinks that if Rosa is pregnant Tsigereda will leave Wondafresh and go out with Ato Kibret , she lied to her friend. She told Tsigereda that she heard from a reliable source that Rosa is pregnant giving her the following advice.

አየሽ ጽጌረዳ ባለቤትሽ ሮዛን ቢወዳት ነው እንጂ ባይወዳት ኖሮ እስከታረግዝ ድረስ ዝም ብሎ አይጠብቅም ነበር። ወንዶችን መቸ አጣጧቸው! እንኳን ሳይወዱ እየወደዱም ሴት ካረዘችባቸው አይንሽ ላፈር ብለው ዞር ነው የሚሉት። ባልሽ ለዚች ልጅ ልቡ ጠፍቶላታል ማለት ነው። አበስከ! አይ ወንዶች! ይገርሙኛል እኮ ልባቸው አንዲት ቆንጆ ላይ ከሸፈተ ስንት አመት የደከሙበትን ኅጅ በአንዴ ርግፍ ነው! - - - (111)

You see Tsigereda! If your husband was not in love with Rosa he would not let her have a baby. I know men! Let alone the woman they do not love they do not hesitate to reject the woman they love if she become pregnant. But your husband must be crazy of this woman. Oh! These stopped men! They surprises me . They will destroy their family they built for years in a day for just one pretty woman

Besides telling Rosa is pregnant, in this dialogue it can be seen how Tiwsit tries to convince Tsigereda. All this is to get her promotion. Tsigereda left her home the same day she heard about Rosa's pregnancy. Twist never blames herself of laying her friend for her own advantage. After all these, unfortunately, Tsigereda was not willing to go out with Ato Kibret.

Besides her unsuccessfulness in getting the promotion, it is seen in the story when Tiwsit is punished for her wrong doing by the character Ermiyas.

Ermiyas, who is a painter, after investigating the whole truth about Tiwsit he draws her picture which reflects her story and characteristic. Tiwsit could not be normal after she saw her own picture which Ermiyas had painted giving her a look of devil.

Her picture is described by Ermiyas as follows.

እንደምታይው መሀላቸው ተቀምጠሽ የተሳልሽው ደግሞ አንቺው ነሽ ግንባርሽ ላይ የሳልኩት ጥቁር ነገር ጠባሳ ነው። ግራ እጁሽ ላይ ያለውን ጠባሳ ነው ግንባርሽ ላይ ያመጣሁት። ሁሉም ሰው ብርቀት ማየት እንደችል። ቀንዱ ባልሽን የወጋሽበት ሲሆን ጥፍሮችሽ ደግሞ በሌሎች ትዳር ውስጥ ገብተሽ የምትቧጭራባቸው ናቸው (252)

As you look it is you who had sited between them. The mark I painted on your forehead is a scar which is on your left hand. This is to make it visible for everyone. The horn is that you used to attack your husband and son and your nails are that you used to scratch the others marriage.

Tiwsit is hurt so much seeing this picture. She becomes totally a different person. She felt ashamed of her self. And finally it is seen when she becomes unconscious and begs her fiance Dejene to save her by killing her bad behaviors. This is expressed in a symbolic way as follows

ውደደኝ ደጅኔ ውደደኝ! - - - ቀንዱን ንቀልልኝ! - - - ጥፍሮቼን ቁረጥልኝ! - -  
- ጠባሳውን አጥፋልኝ! - - - ደጃ - - - ቀንዱን ንቀልልኝ (282)

Love me Dejene! Love me! Take out my horn...! Cut my nails...!  
Remove my scar..! Deju...take out my horn.

The woman character Tiwsit is portrayed as evil and Ermiyas is the one who reminds and criticizes her character. She is also portrayed as weak and dependent of men to solve the entire problem she has. She begs Dejene to remove her horn, nail and scar which symbolizes her evil characters.

Tiwsit is also portrayed as a seductress woman. Every action of her is connected with initiating sexual desire. The writer dominantly uses phrases like; sprinkled her dress, shakes her hip, mocking men to express her actions in front of men.

One day Ermiyas came to Tigrida's office in order to spy Tiwist on Tigrida's marriage issue. This incident creates an opportunity to Tiwsit to talk to

Ermiyas is not the only person in the story who sees Tiwist as a sex object. All men around her except Dejene use her sexually.

በአለባበስም በአነጋገርም በሰውነት ቅርጽ አጠባበቅም መስሪያ ቤት ውስጥ ጎላ ብላ ስለምትታይ ብዙ ወንዶች ይከጅሏታል። ብዙዎች በስርቆሽ አውጥተዋታል። ጊዜው ይርዘም እንጂ ዘገየም አንዴ ደርሳዋለች ታዲያ ጊዜው ውስጥ አይሰሩም ስራ ሲሰራት ወንዱ ሁሉ የሚያነጣጥረው ወደ ዳሌዋ ነው እንጂ ለቁም ነገር የሚያስባት የለም።

Many men cast their eyes upon her because she exceeds all her co-workers in the way she dress up, in her manner of speech, in the way she keeps up her body shape. She sleep out with many of them. Sometimes back Zagay also had her once. Many of them have no interest for a lasting relationship with her. They all look for their lustful gratification.

Tiwsit had sex with many of them not because she selected them. It is because they suspected her. The men uses her for their sexual satisfaction. Unfortunately Twisit feels proud to be asked by different men not seeing that she is taken as a sex object. -«ወንድ ሲጠይቃት ልቧ ይከራራል ለሴትነቷ ትልቅ ግምት ትሰጠዋለች» (52) “She feels proud whenever a man asks her. When this happens she gives great value for being a woman”.

In conclusion, the dominant images given for the three women can be taken as negative from the feminist critic’s point of view. Meekness, seductressness, adulteressness, being dependent, being a sex object, being a liar, being an emotional lover are all stereotypic images of women. In all the three characters cases, men are there to solve their problem and to do what they are portrayed as they can not do.

It is Ermiyas who makes Rosa to come up with the right decision and stops her relation with Wondaferash. Again it is Ermiyas who shows Tiwsits’ weakness and evilness for herself and punishes her. Tiwsit needs another help from another man /Dejene/ to straighten up her weakness. And it is Wondafrash who makes the world black and white for Tsigereda.

### **3.2. Yeknat Zar (literary; Obsession with Jealousy)**

Sisay Nigusu's third novel, *Yeknat Zar*, was published in 1996. The central issue of the novel is jealousy. The protagonist Semayneh is extremely jealous of his wife Hiwot. In the story two women characters, including Hiwot are seen playing important roles. These two major characters are discussed from feminist critics' point of view in the subsections after the synopsis of the story.

#### **3.2.1. Synopsis of the Story**

Hiwot, a twenty two years old, very attractive and beautiful young lady lives with her aunt Weyzero Sirashebizu. The young lady lost her biological parents and her brother in an accident when she was a little girl. Since she was four Hiwot lived with her aunt Weyzero Sirashebizu taking her as her real mother. The barren woman Sirashbizu also treats Hiwot as her own child. Every body around them knows that Hiwot who calls Sirashbizu 'Emayi' or 'mom' is her child.

Hiwot spends her fulltime helping her aunt in her bar. From the customers they had they were many who came to that bar because of the presence of the beautiful young lady, Hiwot. One day one of their customers Semayneh came and gives Hiwot unexpected and disrespectful choice. Semayneh tells her that he decided to marry or kill her. This is because a fortune teller tells him that Hiwot is his luck and he can be richer only if he has Hiwot. If he loses Hiwot he will lose his wealth too.

Hiwot discusses the issue with her aunt and accepted the marriage proposal considering Semayneh's wealth even if she is not interested in him. Semayneh spends a lot of money for the luxuries wedding in Hilton Hotel. He believes that the virgin, beautiful lady Hiwot deserves much more than he spent. But, unfortunately, Hiwot was not virgin.

Semeyneh was very angry when he knows that Hiwot is not virgin because her aunt told him that she was never gone out with men. He starts mistreating his wife at the same night he married her. He insulted her calling her a 'whore' and spat on her. He tells her he spent his money unfairly for her so that he has a right to do whatever he likes.

Semayneh is very jealous of his wife. It is very hard for him to go any where with her and see men letting their eyes on her. One day they went to a tailor and Semayneh was not able to ignore the tailor's touch of Hiwot's body even if it is just for the sake of knowing her size. Semayneh stops the tailor and insulted him. Everybody around them laughed at Semayneh for his foolish response.

Semayneh becomes very angry of Hiwot that she brought him in such kind of place. While they were in the car going back home street boys come and beg money from Hiwot by appreciating her beauty. Their way of appreciation was funny and Hiwot laughed but Semayneh kicked her as though she laughed at him. Due to this Hiwot lost her teeth.

Hiwot tells her aunt she is being treated like a prisoner in Semayneh's house. And she asks her to help her to separate from him. Her aunt does not accept her complain. Rather she tries to convince her that everything will be alright when she gives birth. Hiwot starts hating living with Semeyneh and shows her disrespect for him and his family who are not fair to her except Semeyneh's youngest brother Medmdemya. Seeing this Semayneh feared he is going to loose her.

Semeyneh made Gorfu, his younger brother and his mother spy Hiwot to check whether she has any contact with anybody except her mother. Hiwot's life becomes horrible. She decided to escape from the house but there is no place for her to hide since her aunt does not accept her.

Hiwot started contacting her X-boy friend Henok, who lives in America using Medmedmy's postal address. She begs him to take her away from the country. In the mean time she escaped from the house and hide her self in a Hotel taking her expensive ornaments.

Semeyneh lost his mind when he finds out that Hiwot escaped. He believes that if he looses Hiwot he will lose everything. He goes to her mother and threatens her to bring Hiwot. Wyzero Sirash tries to cool Semeyneh down because he is almost getting mad. She feels sorry and tells him that what the fortune teller told him is not true. She explain for him that she is the one who arranges the fortune teller to tell him that Hiwot is his luck because she wanted him to marry Hiwot. Semeyneh shots her when he heard the story and he himself is also killed by a policeman when he tries to escape.

Hiwot also received a letter from her X-boy friend and finds out that he had committed a suicide. While she was crying Medmedemya tells her that her aunt is in the Hospital. Finally Hiwot's aunt died after she met Hiwot and asks excuse for what she has done.

### 3.2.2. Hiwot: A Submissive Wife

Hiwot is portrayed as weak and dependent. In the binging of the story it is seen when a rich man called Semeyneh comes to her and gives her unexpected and a disgraceful choice. Semayneh tells her

ላገባሽ ወይም ልገድልሽ ወስኛለሁ ከሁለቱ አንዱን ምረጭ! (3)

“I decided to marry or kill you. Choose one!”

Hiwot responded to this unpleasant question which totally ignores her right to live and to choose her man, in a submissive way saying; ምን አይነት ምርጫ ነው ጋሼ ስማይነህ «አለች ላለመሳቅ እየታገለች መኖርና መደሰት ሲቻል የሞትን ምርጫ ምን አመጣው» (4) “Fighting with her simile she says what kind of choose is it



Semayneh? Why do you bring a choice of death while it is possible to live and be happy.”

Hiwot does not tell him that he has no right to kill or to decide to marry her without her willingness. When he forces her to give him an answer instead she says; ትንሽ ጊዜ ስጠኝና ከእናቱ ጋር ብመክርበት ደስ ይለናል።«አሰኝው በማግባባት ቅጻጹና አስተያየት። (28) “I would be happy if you give me some time to discuss the issue with my mother” she said in a begging tone.

Hiwot entreats Semeyneh. Besides she can not decide by herself on this very personal issue. She needed her aunt’s help.

After this Hiwot discussed the issue with her aunt. In her discussion with her she is also not seen strongly challenging her aunt’s idea which contradicts her interest. Thus, even if Hiwot has three main reasons including his age which doubles her, not to marry him but her aunt convinces her by telling how rich Semeyneh is .

Hiwot’s submissiveness also continued after she started living with Semayneh. When Semayneh finds that Hiwot is not virgin in their first night, he insulted her and spit on her. He called her a whore saying ድሮውንፖ የሽርመጣ ልጅ ሽርመጣ ነው (28) “It is given that a whores’ daughter is also a whore.”

Hiwot responds to his insult and disrespectful action pleadingly. The action of Hiwot is stated in the novel as such የሕይወት የልመና አስተያየት የሰማይነህን ልብ ሊያራራው አልቻለም(28). “But the solicit of Hiwot does not soften Semayneh’s heart.”

Besides not defending herself it is seen when Hiwot gives full right for Semeyneh showing him her complete submissiveness like this;

ነገ ጠዋት ወፍ ሳይንጫጫ ንዝዘን ጠቅልላሽ ሀፍረትሽን እንደትናነብሽ ወደ እናትሽ ቤት ትመለሻታለሽ

«አሺ»

«ደግሞ የትም አትሄጅትም»

«አሺ»

“Tomorrow early in the morning you will go back to your mother’s home taking your properties along with your shame.”

“Alright”

“No! You will never go

“Alright”

It is Semeyneh who decided to marry her. From the beginning he did not ask her willingness, he come and say; ‘I decided’. And now he also shows he has a full right to return Hiwot to her home or to let her live with him. Hiwot as the dialogue indicates gave all the right to him. She is ready to accept whatever he decides.

Semeyneh thinks that he had bought her. So he believes that Hiwot should shape her behavior in the way he wants she should be. like as such;

እንደኛ ነገር ይህን ሳቅሽን ማስወገድ አለብሽ። ሁለተኛ ነገር ሌሎች እንዲያዩሽ ሆነሽ መቅረብ የለብሽም ልታይ ልታይ ማለት የለብሽም። - - - አሁን ባል አግብተሻል። በቃ! ሰዎች እንዲያዩሽ ሆነሽ የምትቀርቡበት ምክንያት የለም ይገባሻል ህየወት?!። «ገባኝ እዳመጥኩ ነው።» (p:27)

“First you have to avoid your smile, second you have to make yourself invisible. ... Now you are married. Stop! You have no reason to make yourself attractive, do you understand Hiwot?!” “ I do understand am listening.”

Hiwot is agreed to change her behavior in a way Semeyneh wanted. This is because she fears that Semayneh might divorce her. And if he divorces her, her value will decrease since she will be a divorcee.

ከሰማይነህ ጋር ተጣልታ ብትወጣ በእርግጥም «ፈት» መባሏንና ምርጫዋን ወይም ተፈላጊነቷን ማጥበቡን ስታስብ እዚህ ከእሱው ጋር እንደጠባይ ተቻችሎ የመኖር ፍላጎት ስሜቷን ይጎትተዋል (p:50)

When she thinks that she will be called a divorcee and lose all her value if she gets separated with Semayneh, her preference of living with Semayneh over weighs her feeling.

Hiwot tries to be a good wife by living submissively. But her husband did not stop mistreating her. Besides his insult and mistreating Semayneh starts beating her. Like in a moment after she left the tailor's shop. When Hiwot's tailor touches her body even if it is for the sake of knowing her size Semayneh become jealous and quarrel with him. While he was in this feeling in their way back home in their car Hiwot laughed because of the street boy's way of appreciating her beauty Semayneh hit her.

ሳቋን ከመጨረሷ በፊት የሰማይነህ ቡጢ መንገጭላዎ ላይ ሲያርፍ ተስማት ቡጢው ወዲው ጥርሷን አስከደናት። የተመታችበትን ቦታ በእጇ ይዛ አንገቷን አቀረቀረች። (45)

Before she even finishes laughing she felt Semayneh's shot on her chick, the shot forced her to close her mouth. She put her head down holding her chick.

Due to this Hiwot lost her teeth but she does not take any action by herself instead she begs her aunt to take her out from Semeyneh's house. Her aunt was not willing to do so.

Hiwot felt that she has no choice except to become a prostitute since her aunt does not accept her if she leave Semeyneh.

የት ነው መሸሻዬ? - - - ቡና ቤት ውስጥ ሽርመጥና?! - - - አሁን ያለው ክፈት ቦታ እሱ ብቻ ይመስለኛል። (86)

where shall I retreat?... being a prostitute in a bar? That is the only place which I think is open.

She thought living submissively would help her to have a good life. But she didn't not get a good life. And now she is thinking of prostitution as solution for her problem.

Her dependent mentality could not allow her to do anything by herself to solve her problem. She starts thinking about Henok, her X- boy friend so that he can free her from Semenyeh.

ሄኖክ የሚባል የልጅነት ጓ-ጓደኛዬ ነበር። ቅድም ስለእውነተኛ ፍቅር ስታወራ በእምሮዬ የመጣው እሱ ነው። ፍቅርን ትኩሳት የማውቀው በእሱ ነው። አሁን ያለው ውጭ ሀገር ስለሆነ በአድራሻው ልጽፍለት አስቤለሁ። ምናልባት እሱ መሸሻዬ ይሆነኝ ይሆናል። ማን ያውቃል? - - - (87)

Henok is my childhood boy friend. when you explained to me about true love earlier, he was the one who popped up in my mind, I enjoyed a pationate love with him. Now he is abroad. I have decided to write him with his address. In case he has a place for, me who knows!!!

Hiwot wishes Henok will save her from Semayneh. She writes him everything that had happened to her since they stopped writing each other. Her letter starts with the following sentence.

ሄንዬ! ዛሬ ይህን ደብዳቤ የምጽፍልህ እስር ቤት ውስጥ ሆኜ ነው ያውም ጭለማ ክፍል ውስጥ! - - - የታስርኩበትን የብረት ሰንሰለት ሰባብሬ ለመውጣት ያለኸኝ ተስፋ አንተ ብቻ ነው። (103)

“Heni I am writing this letter from prison, from a dark room! You are my only hope that will help me break shackles that imprisoned me.”

Hiwot believes except Henok’s help she cannot fight her problems. This shows her disability to solve her own problem. She believes that it is man (Henok) who can put her out of the darkness. Even if Hiwot hopes that Henok will solve her problem he writes her that he is not able to help her. When Hiwot finds out that Henok will no longer solve her problem she says the following desperately.

እኔ ምንም አይነት ተስፋ አይታየኝም። ከፊቴ የተጋረደው ጨለማ ነው ሁሉም ነገር ጨለማ ሆኖብኛል ሃጢያተኝነት ይሰማኛል (268)

I have given up hope. Only darkness covered me. Every thing is dark I feel guilty.

Her hope was to be rich through men. Her desire was to have love. Since she loses her love and her source of wealth what else is left for her? Only 'darkness'.

Finally Hiwot says; የዓለምን ጭካኔ መሸሻ ብቸኛ ቦታ ገዳም ሆኖ አግኝቶታለሁ።። ገዳም መግባት ይሻለኛል። (269) "I found that a monastery is the only place for me to retreat from the cruel world. It is better from me to be a monk." She feels that she is not able to challenge life she preferred to run away as usual.

In conclusion, Hiwot can be expressed as weak, dependant, submissive, not capable of resisting a challenging life and a woman who takes marriage as a "grand feature" in her life. She does not know to say 'no' for many things which are disrespectful for her.

### **3.3. Rekik Ashara (Abstract Print)**

Rekik Ashara is a novel by Sisay Nigusu written in 2003. This novel deals about a strong women's aspiration to build a moral college. The woman character is judged from feminist perspective in the subsection next to the synopsis of the story.

#### **3.3.1. Synopsis of the Story**

Hilina Tadese came to Addis Ababa from a very rural area because of her uncle in order to start her education. Both in Elementary and high school Hilina was an outstanding student which leads her to have an excellent grade in her ESLCE. Hilina got a scholarship to continue her higher education in Russia.

After she receives her first degree Hilina goes to other countries. She lives in England and America for almost twelve years. When she was abroad she was depressed by the belief that money possessions and physical comforts are more important than spiritual values in life. She feels that human beings are

changed to a machinery. Unfortunately Addis Ababa was no different. Materialism had taken over spirituality.

Hilina realizes that this obsession of money and ignoring human values is leading the society to corruption. She observed that it is difficult to get anything done with out corruption. This initiated her to install a moral collage. But it was not easy to do so.

Awhile Hilina opens a cultural shop. A man who sees her in her shop comes and tells her that if she competes in the national beauty contest she will win. At first Hilina does not accept him since she is thirty three. But the man does not give up and convinced her.

Hilina participated in the national beauty contest and become 'Miss Ethiopia' of the year. Using her name she decides to open a moral college. Hilina believes that people can balance materialism and spiritualism in there day to day life if and only if they have a good understanding of moral values.

At first no one supported her idea of establishing a moral college. Everybody around tells her that she could not be profitable in such kind of business. Hilina does not let any one to stop her even if she actually has shortage of money to build the college.

In the mean time a wealthy man who sees her picture in different newspapers and magazines falls in love with her and comes to ask her to merry him. In the first day of their meeting the man promises to give the necessary amount of money for her plan. Hilina does not accept him. This is because she does not understand his source of wealth and at the same time she does not believe that he is mentally mature to have a real love. So she says to him 'you are not matured'.

Atenafseged becomes very crazy about her. The more she tells him that she is not interested in him he becomes more and more obsessed with her. And he realizes that money alone can not make him happy. One day Hilina asks him what the source of his wealth is. He confesses all his illegal activities which he has never tell to any one. He also tells her that he does such illegal things because he lost his father's wealth by unfair and illegal people so he started a blind and immoral revenge.

Hilina felt sorry for him. And she tells him that his action could not make him happy. Instead of revenge protecting and saving others who are innocent and are hurt like him would have brought him joy.

Atenafseged becomes the first to give a hand for Hilina. He washes his body by a holy water promising no to collect money by hurting other people and his country. Following Atenafseged many others who had been with him in his illegal 'Mercury business' changed themselves. Finally the story ended when Hilina accepts his marriage proposal after shaping him in a way she wanted and established the college.

### **3.3.2. Hilina: The Liberated Woman**

Hilina is portrayed as independent strong and assertive woman. This woman knows to say 'no' when ever it is necessary. She does not let any one to suppress her dignity and belief. Hilina never thinks that things which are possible for others would be impossible for her.

When Hilina returns to her homeland after spending more than fifteen years in different countries, she realized that there is a moral crisis which she believes is the striking problem of the nation. Hilina decided to do something that can solve the problem. She planed to establish a moral collage and started her preparation.

The thirty three year old, educated and beautiful woman Hilina Tadese participated in the national beauty contest and becomes 'Miss Ethiopia' of the year. Hilina believes that her new name 'Miss Ethiopia' would help her to install the college.

ቀዳሚ ዓለማዋ የሞራል ኮሌጅ አቋቁማ የሞራል እመቤት መሆን ነው። ይህ ሀሳብ ወደ ሀገሯ ከተመለሰችና የመንፈሳዊ ሀብተና ወድቀት እየታዘበች ከመጣች ጀምሮ በአእምሮዋ ተጠነሰሰ ቢሆንም ደፍራ እንድትጀምር የገፋፋት ቁንጅና ውድድር አሸናፊነቷ ነው። በዚህ ምክንያት ያገኘችው እና ታዋቂነት ዘላቂ ዓለማዋን በማስፈጸም እንደሚረዳት አመነችበት። (31)

Her major goal is to be a queen of morality by installing the first moral college. This idea comes to her after she got back to her country and saw the depreciated spiritual wealth. However she find the strength to start after she win the beauty contest. She believes that the publicity she got from the contest will help her to accomplish her goal.

Hilina believes that her success being 'Miss Ethiopia' will lead her to another success. Her independent mentality allows her to use her own name to fulfill her plan. She does not go anywhere.

Even if Hilina devotes herself to her plan no one encouraged her to do this job. This is because they do not believe that she would be successful. The following conversation held between Hilina and her auncl Mekbeeb shows this;

«ይህን የተበላሽ አለም እኛ መለወጥ የምንችል ይመስልሻል?!

አነጋገሩ ወደ ተስፋ መቁረጥ የሚያመራ የችልታ ጎዞ ሆነ ስለተስማት የህሊና ስሜት ከውስጥ እየተቆጣ መጣ።

ለምን አንችልም?! - -

ማህተመ ጋንዲን ወይም ኢየሱስ ክርስቶስን መሆን ሚቻል መስልሻል?

«ለምን አንችልም?! - - እነሱም እንደ እኛ ስጋ የለበሱ ፍጡራን ነበሩ። ዓለምን ከጥፋት ለማዳን ስጋዊ ፍላጎታቸውን ለመንፈሳዊ ዕምነታቸው አንበርክከው አልፈዋል። ምድራችን መጠሪያችን እንጂ መጥፊያችን እንዳትሆን እያንዳንዳችን ትንሽ ትንሽ ከስጋችን እየቆረጥን ለነፍሳችን ግብር መስጠት ይኖርብናል። ( 95)

“Do you think we can change this spoiled or bad world?”

Hilina felt hopeless by the tone of his voice and got hurt inside,

"Why not?"

"Do you think it is possible to be Mahatma Gandhi or Jesus Christ?"

"Why not? They were flesh and blood creature just like we are; they passed putting their individual interest behind their belief. To make our world worth a name we have to scarify our comfort for the thought"

It is seen when Hilina resists her uncle's idea till he believes what she is saying is true and possible. Finally Mekbebe say «ሂሱን ተቀብያለሁ» ( 97) "I am convinced."  
This indicates that, Hilina is a strong woman who can challenge any idea which contradicts her. Besides it shows how smart she is in order to convince other people.

Hilina does not want to give attention for other things before she attains her goal. When her mother and father ask her why she is not married yet she says- - -

አንድ ትልቅ ዓላማ አለኝ አላማዬ መስመር እስኪይዝልኝ ድረስ እቆያለሁ። ( 31).

"I have a dream and I will wait till it comes true"

For Hilina's parents there is nothing as important as marriage and have kids and they tried to convince her to do so. She does not accept them since she is not convinced by them.

Besides her parents it is seen when her uncle Mekbebe tries to challenge her in to the issue of marriage as such

እኔ ሀብረተሰባዊ ለውጥ አመጣለሁ ብዬ እንዳላለፍኩት ዘመን አንቺም የሞራል ተሀድሶ አመጣለሁ ብለሽ ባክነሽ እንዳትቀሪ ዓላማ ዓላማ ስትይ ለፍሬና ለዘር እንዳትቀሪ ያሳስበኛል።

I am worried that you will waste your life trying to bring a moral renaissance like I did trying to bring a social change.

Hilina does not accept his idea. And she refuses this in a strong way; - - አንተ ለእኔ ያለህ ርቅርታ ስጋትና ፍርሀት ታወቀኛል። ለዚህ ምላሽ ለመስጠት ብዬ ግን ከአቅጣጫዬ ውጪ አልሄድም። (203) "I know the love and the feeling you have for me .But I don't want do anything that I didn't plan to please you."

Hilina does not reject others idea without reasoning. She has always a reason for whatever she believes and does. Hilina express her reason of not accepting Mekbebe's idea in the following way;

ብዙ ጊዜ አንዳችን ለሌላችን ፍቅር ስንል እንሸነፍና እንልፈሰፈሳለን። በዚህም ምክንት ከዓላማችን ተዘናግተን ወይም አቅጣጫ ስተን ተራውን ኑሮ መስመር እንቀላቀላለን። መብላት መጠጣት መተኛት መነሳት! - - - እና ከሁሉም በላይ ምንም ነገር ላለመገፋጥ መፍራት ግባችን ሆኗል። ፍርሀት ደማም ከሞት ኤድንም ለእኔ ትልቁ ሞት ከመስመር መጥቶ በይሉንታ አቅጣጫን ስቶ መሞት ነው።

Most of the time we fall for the love we had for each other. Because of this we miss the right way of our life .we eat drink sleep wake....we fear to face everything .Fear does not save from death. For me dying ashamed of peoples gossip is the worst.

Hilina reasoned her decision for Mekbebe and shows she cares for others but she does not rejects his idea in an aggressive way. Rather, since she is capable of reasoning she influenced him.

Hilina is not willing to accept anything which can be an obstacle to her goal. Even if she is working with confidence there is something which she lacks for the establishment of the moral college.

Hilina does not have enough money. For this reason it is seen when Mekbebe tries to convince her not to say 'no' to the rich man's proposal. If this is not possible her uncle wants her to make the relationship smooth so that she can be able to use his money.

However Hilina does not hesitate to tell Atenafsegd that she is not interested not fearing to loose his money even if she knows that without money she can not fulfill her dream. When he asks her for marriage she tells him.

ገና ነህ አጥናፍሰገድ! ገና ለፍቅር አልደረሰክም እጅህን አልተጠብክም ገላህን አልተልቀሰክም ነፍስህን አላጸዳህም እጅህ ውስጥ ጉድፍ አለ። አካላትህ ላይ ዕድፍ አለ። (186)

You are not ready Atenafsegd, you are not matured, you did not wash your hand, you did not shower, you did not clean your soul, there is still dirt in your hand and your body.

Hilina tells Atenafsegd what she believes about him is true even if all she says is negative which might offend him. After this Mekbeb asked her what she told Atenafsegd and she says «ልነግረው የሚገባኝን ነግራዋለሁ። ቅያሜን ፈርቼ ወደ ኋላ ማለት አልችልም። (187).”I told him what I have too.I do not want to retreat fearing he will be disappointed.”

Hilina shows how strong she is in her believe. Nothing makes Hilina weak. She rejects Atenafsegd’s question because she does not believe that he is her type. She does not accept the rich man’s marriage proposal. Then what is Hilina’s attitude towards marriage.

The thirty three years old woman Hilina does not think that marriage is a primary thing for her even though her parents tried to convince her that there is nothing more important than marriage and having kids. The following dialogue held between Hilina and her parents shows this

«አንድ ትልቅ ዓላማ አለኝ። ዓላማዬ መስመር እስኪይዝልኝ ድረስ እቆያለሁ።  
«ልጅ ከመውለድ --- ዘር ከመተካት የበለጠ ምን ዓላማ ይኖራል ልጅ?» (31)

I have a dream and I will wait till it comes true  
What kind of dream can be as important as giving birth?

For Hilina the primary thing is success in her goal which is establishing a moral college. Thus ignoring her parent's idea she continues her hard work to fulfill her dream.

Besides giving a less important place for her own marriage Hilina believes that she should not accept marriage proposal, even after her success of opening the college just because somebody loves and chooses her. she says; «የምፈልገውን ባል የምመርጠው እኔ ራሴ ነኝ።» (10) 'I am the one who will choose my man'

The rich man Atenafseged after he invites her a dinner with her uncle he asked her to visit his home. Hilina accepted this and visited his home. While Atenafseged shows her his bedroom suddenly he closed the door and tries to rape her. Hilina was read to resist him;

እየተቅሰሰሰሰ ቀረባት። ሲቀርባት ሸሸችው መቅሰሰሰሰን አላመነችውም አዘናግቶ ሊደፍራት ይሆናል። ለማንኛውም በዮጋ ትምህርቷ መሰረት መንፈሳዊ ዝግጅት አደረገች። አዕምሮዋን ሰበሰበች። ውስጣዊ ሀይሏን ጨምቃ የፊቷ ገጽታ ላይ አስነበበች። የአካል ግዝፈትን በአዕምሮ ብስለት ለመፋለም ተዘጋጀች። (183)

He approached her with a needy eye .When he approaches she retreated. She does not trust his moves, may be he is going to rape her. She got herself ready using her yoga lesson. She concentrated .Her power was reflected on her face .she got ready to fight his huge body with her sharp brain.

Hilina was not frightened. She believes that her mental strength is more powerful than his physical strength. And what she believes was true. Without any fighting she stops him.

Atenafseged tries to win Hilina by promising to share his wealth. But she was not willing to give herself for money. For Hilina money is something she can make by herself and love or marriage is totally different from what Atenafseged tells her;

ወርቅ ላጥፍልሽ በአልማዝ ላንቆጠቁጥሽ በዕንቁ ላስጌጥሽ ዝግጁ ነን። የምትፈልገውን ሁሉ ጠይቁኝ። ላማላልሽ ሙሉ ፈቃደኛ ነን።» «ፍቅር ይህ ሁሉ አጀብ አያስፈልገው (184)

“Can I give you gold? Make you shine with a diamond? I am ready to ornament you even with a Perl. Ask me what ever you like. I will give you anything.”

“But love does not need all these materials.”

Hilina rejects Atenafsegeds wealth even if it is important for her achievement of her goal. Instead, the influential woman Hilina, teaches him that money can not buy love or a real woman. Atenafseged confess this in the following way;

«ገንዘብ የማይገዛው ነገር እንዳለ ወኩት አሁን ነው ገንዘብ ፍቅርን አይገዛም። ገና በመጀመሪያ መምህሩ ይህን ነገርን ነበር። አሁን አረጋገጥኩ!» (217)

Now I understand that there are things money can not buy. Money can not buy love. From the beginning the teacher told me so.

Atenafseged starts thinking differently after he become a disciple of Hilina. He totally changes in the way Hilina wants him.

Hilina after she shaped Atenafseged in her own way, accepted his marriage proposal and tells him

«ከንግዲህ አታጣኝም የኔው ነህ አሁን ለፍቅር ደርሰሁሁ። ራስህን መጠየቅ ጀምረህል።» (270)

You will never loose me. You are mine now. You become matured enough to love .You started asking yourself.

In conclusion Hilina is portrayed as a woman who devoted herself to solve a striking problem of a nation. Even if no one believes that she will be successful it is seen when this influential woman shows her strength through changing many people around her. This woman never gave up she always has a reason to do something and devotes her self to succeed. She won by overcoming all her challenging obstacles.

### **3.4. A Comparative Analysis of the Female Characters in the Novels**

The five women characters who are discussed in the previous subsections of the chapter share many characteristics as they are portrayed by a single male writer. At the same time since the women characters are taken from three novels published in three decades they also have difference which can be taken as a progress seeing from feminist perspective. The similarities and difference of the characters are presented in the following subsections.

#### **3.4.1. The Women's Capacity of Solving their Problem**

In the stories it is seen when the five women characters face different problems. In the first novel, Gerdosh Tsegereda's problem was a marriage problem. Even though Tsegereda was capable to lead her marriage for eight years without a problem by being a submissive wife, but when a problem happened in their home she was not capable to solve it.

Even if Tsegereda does not want to lose her marriage when she heard the fabricated story by her friend she left her home. Tsegereda was not portrayed to doubt what her friend Twisit told her even if she knows her very well. She was not given the wisdom and patience to find the truth and there by discusses the problem with her husband. She is pictured as a hot tempered woman. Who retreats from her problem. Weak to solve her own mess.

It is seen in the novel Ermiyas a male character saving Tsegereda from her devastation. He was given all the ability to solve the problems and take the necessary measures. On the contrary Tsegereda is weak who was unable to solve her problem.

In the same novel Gerdosh Rosa another female character is presented depressed with her unplanned pregnancy. She was rejected by her X-boy friend. She is seen undecided whether to abort or keep the baby.. Then comes

Wondafrash the male protagonist to relieve her. With his support she aborted the baby.

Besides even if she knows that wondafrash is married and his wife with their two kids is in problem because of her she was not able to look into her mess and solve it.

Like wise we see Erimyas helping Rosa to clear her mess she created in Wodafrashe's home. Rosa is pictured not capable of solving her problems.

If we look at the other character Tiwsit in the novel we observe the same thing. She is portrayed as not capable of solving her problem neither conscious of it. In the story it is seen when Ermiyas shows to her all her behavioral problems. And after that Tiwsit begs her fiancé to take her out of the mess she is in. This shows her disability of solving her problem by herself.

Coming to the second novel Yeknat Zar, The protagonist Hiwot is portrayed in the same way with like previous women characters lacking the capability of solving personal problems. Hiwot is seen affected by an abusive husband but she is not allowed to challenge him. She seen begging others to help her out.

Hiwot faces a problem after getting married her husband Semayneh. But it is not seen when she struggles by herself to solve her problem. She begs her aunt to take her out off her problem. When she knows that her aunt is not willing to do so she started dreaming her x-boy friend, Henok, to break her shackles of her imprisonment. In stead of challenging and solving her problem Hiwot prefers to retreat from it. Finally she brought the idea of being a nun retreating the world's challenge since she is not capable of solving her problems.

In the third novel *Rekik Ashara* (Abstract Print) it is seen when Hilina solves her problem by herself. It was very hard to establish the first moral collage for the ordinary woman Hilina. But this does not stop Hilina from her goal. Having the target of using the name beauty queen Hilina participate in the national beauty contest and fortunately she wins.

After having the name 'Miss Ethiopia' things were easier for Hilina. But there was another problem Hilina finds no one including her uncle Mekbebe who supports her idea of establishing a moral college. But Hilina was able to challenge and convince every body around her. Whenever she faces a problem Hilina has a solution.

Thus the writer has actually showed a progress in portraying women as solution makers. Even if all the women characters in the first two novels are seen as disabled to solve their problems the last character in *Rekik Ashara* (Abstract print) is portrayed as a perfect solution maker.

#### **3.4.2. The Women's Attitude towards Marriage**

The first woman character Tsegerda is a married woman who has two kids. This woman is portrayed as a wife who believes that marriage for a woman is everything. When she thinks that she can lose her marriage everything becomes dark.

Rosa was very much delighted guessing Wondafrash would probably marry her. The moment she realizes that he will not do so she becomes very sad thinking that she could not have a happy life without marriage.

Unlike the two women Tiwsit does not believe that marriage for a woman is essential since she can go out with any one she likes. The writer presents such beliefs of Tiwsit in a negative way. It seems that marriage for Tiwsit is necessarily only for sexual satisfaction.

Hiwot, in the second novel like Tsegerda and Rosa believes marriage for woman is a fundamental thing. Besides for Hiwot marriage is a source of wealth. According to Hiwot women have to protect their beauty in order to increase their value in the eyes of men. It seems that the writer does not show any improvement in portrayal of women in relation to their attitude towards marriage in this novel too.

Contrary to the previous women Hilina in 'Rekik Ashara' is presented as a woman who has some other important dream which can bring a solution for striking problem of a nation rather than marriage. She is portrayed or defined in relation to society not in relation to just men. Unlike her parents Hilina believes that women should not relate themselves to marriage only. They should have to focus and contribute some for the betterment of society like men do. Hilina can be taken as an example of a character portrayed in a 'positive' manner. Unlike the previous women characters Hilina is independent.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION

In this study an attempt has been made to examine the image of women characters in the selected three novels by Sisay Nigusu, is distorted or not seeing them from Feminist critics point of view. The three novels published in three decades 1989-2003 reflects both positive and negative image of women. From my discussion it can be generalized that the dominant image of women in the first two novels is negative followed by positive image in *Rekik Ashara*.

The three women in *Gerdosh* (1981) are portrayed as; submissive, trouble maker and seductress. Tsegereda Wondafrashe's wife is portrayed as a humble and meek woman who leads her marriage without obstacle for eight years. This woman is called "Saint Tsegereda" because of her humbleness and meekness. She is presented as an ideal wife because she does not challenge or resist her husband. But the ideal woman Tsegereda was not able to challenge her marriage problem. Even if she thinks that life for her is dark with out marriage but she was not able to save it using her own wisdom. It is seen when she retreats from her problem till a male character saves her marriage from distraction. Thus it is possible to say this woman character is portrayed as dependent on the men characters. Her happiness is hugely dependent on her husband and her problem caused by women characters was only solved through men characters.

The other woman character Rosa is portrayed as seductress followed by emotional lover. This woman is condemned and called 'bitch' by many characters around her for taking Wondafrash from his wife and becoming a cause for the distraction of his family. Besides this woman character is unable to see the mess caused by her in Wondafrash's family. It is Erimiyas who makes her conscious and uncovers her blindness. Finally, it seen when Rosa

takes the right decision with the help of Eririyas. This shows how the woman character is portrayed as dependent and disabled.

Tiwsit is portrayed as irresponsible, adulteress, dependent on men and selfish character. In the story it is seen when this woman becomes the cause of distraction. Tiwsit is the cause of the distraction of the happiest marriage of her friend. This is because she is a liar and a selfish one who always runs after her advantages. Many of the characters given for Tiwsit are related with adultery. Tiwsit tries to seduce Ermiyas who has no sexual interest in her. For Tiwsit going out with different men is a victory. Whenever men ask her for sex she feels proud of herself. After all her messes a male character was there to show and to make her conscious of her bad characters. Finally it is seen when Tiwsit begs her fiancé to take her out of the darkness she is in.

All the three women characters in the story are presented as dependent and unable to solve their problem. It is through men that all the three women characters get happiness. Again it is through men the women characters can solve their problems. As the dialogue of Tsegereda taken for the analysis (29) indicates life for woman become dark if their relation with their men is bad and if not the reverse is true.

Coming to the second novel Yekinat Zar Hiwot is portrayed as a woman who can not strongly refuse others ideas which denies her freedom. She believes that women's value depends on their usefulness or attractiveness to men. Because she is portrayed as such Hiwot has no confidence to divorce Semayneh since being a divorcee devalues her. In the story Hiwot is seen when she accepts her husband in a submissive way. She is portrayed as a woman who needs men's protection in order to solve her problems. Hiwot can be taken as a submissive wife. Thus it can be said that the writer reflects the stereotypical image of woman in his this novel like the previous one.

Unlike the two novels the writer shows a dramatic change in his last novel. Hilina in this novel is portrayed as a solution maker of her problem and have a strong dream to solve a problem of her nation. Hilina unlike the previous women is portrayed as a woman who does not relate her success and failure with her relation to men. She believes a woman should have to have a chance to select her man.

In conclusion the image of women characters in the first two novels; Girdosh and Yeknat Zar is distorted. The writer gives a stereotypical image for his women characters; submissive, adultery, being a liar, being dependent, being an emotional lover and a sex object. Contrary to these negative images of woman the writer presents a very strong, independent, assertive and solution maker woman in his last novel. He shows a radical change in his portrayal of women characters.

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## DECLARATION

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

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