

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**SOCIAL ISSUES IN SELECTED
AMHARIC CHILDREN'S PLAYS:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

BY RAHMETU BEYENE

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

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AMHARIC CHILDREN'S PLAYS:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

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TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

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BY RAHMETU BEYENE GEBREMESKEL

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Pronunciation key

In this *Thesis*, I have used the following transcription of Amharic words for those less frequently used ones.

VOWELS

አ/አ	a as in mat
ኡ	u as in hook
ኢ	i as in hill
ኤ	e as in elephant
እ	l as in indigo
ኦ	o as in toy ጠ

CONSONANTS

ሽ	sh as in shut
ቸ	ch as in church
ቀ	q as in "qeld"
ኘ	n~/ gn as in agegne
ገ	g as in gut
ጠ	t~ as in t~erepeza
ጨ	C~ as in C~erqos
ፀ/ጸ	ts as in Tsedal
ጸ	p~ as in P~eraklitos
ገፍ	z~ as in measure

Abstract

My thesis is a critical analysis of social issues with particular reference to selected children's plays written in Amharic by different playwrights. I try to deal with the following issues:

First, I would like to stress that before this study, there was no substantial research on children's theatre play scripts. This seems to me because of the little regard given to this field of study as an area of investigation by those responsible for directing graduate researches. But Dereje Melaku had touched on the themes of some of the play scripts in the course of making a survey of *children's literature in Amharic*. There are also undergraduate theses in the Department of Theatrical arts, which contain a brief description of the play scripts in Amharic. My study; however, differs from these researches in objective, depth, and scope.

Second, there was no substantial survey on the development of children' theatre and their problems in Ethiopia previously although their theatre is worthy of investigation – as worthy as any branch of theatre, theatre activity, or aspect of theatrical production. It goes without saying that such a survey is necessary, both in order to place children's theatre playwrights and their play script works in context, and to facilitate and motivate the study of Ethiopian children theatre in general. Chapter two of this study attempts to survey the state of children's theatre in the world and in Ethiopia.

Third, Ethiopian children theatre has received little attention as part of Ethiopian literature by the critics of Ethiopian and African Literature in general. Some foreign writers have attributed this fact to difficulties of language. Moreover, translation is an area that has not yet developed in Ethiopia. However, an encouraging attempt is made by one of the playwrights though his work is not yet published – Ato Ayalneh Mulatu Abeje, who has started to write or translate his works in to English and Russian languages. Nevertheless, my opinion is that the translation of the works of some of or all of Ethiopian children theatre play scripts in to English or other languages would not be enough unless it is accompanied by a parallel development of criticism by Ethiopians, without which a complete grasp of the works may not be possible. I hope that this study will motivate Ethiopian researchers to do further research and to help a non Ethiopian reader to see these play scripts in the context of their social, economic, political, psychological and cultural history.

Fourth, I feel that a research into a critical analysis of social issues with particular reference to selected children's plays written in Amharic by different playwrights would be a relevant social document because art itself can be considered as one of the relevant, and authentic social documents of their period that existed in human history. Furthermore, I believe that children theatre in Ethiopia did not get proper attention from the concerned scholars and other related bodies whereas all the future generation may profit directly or indirectly from its proper functioning.

Fifth, my study will also attempt to briefly present the background of Modern-Aristotelian Children's Theatre in Ethiopia.

To summarize, before a critical analysis of social issues with particular reference to selected children's plays written in Amharic by different playwrights, I have tried to pinpoint some problems of children that dramatists generally deal with. Consequently, my study assumes that literature has a social function and children's theatre can be a social document through which we can study Ethiopian children in different social contexts. Drama, as one of the genres of literature, is an entity that can vividly describe the social reality of Ethiopian children as playwrights use it to explore social and emotional problems that children may experience in their society. In doing so, I intend to show that children's drama has a social function. Playwrights of children's theatre play an important role in society by pinpointing the problems that concerned bodies in Ethiopia may not have been aware of.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Statement of the Problem

My attempt to analyze critically social issues with particular reference to selected children's plays written in Amharic by different playwrights was inspired and motivated by the following reasons:

First, my children's and the other children's potential to imitate elders or others, and the complex viewpoints of theatre professionals and theoreticians about children's theatre stimulated me.

To be specific, I am the father of four. One weekend, I saw my second daughter, who is a seventh grade student then, performing the role of a woman who is highly intoxicated. She was surrounded by her younger brother, two sisters - one elder and the other younger to her, and three other children from the neighborhood. While she was acting, I stood behind a wall and observed carefully. In her play she said:

"ማነው ላባታችሁ ብቻ የፈቀደው ጠጥቶ መስከርን፤

ጥሩት ያውላችሁ እኔም አሳየዋለሁ ከውጪ ማደርን።

ምነው ባሸናበት ባለኝ በገላዬ

አባታችሁ ከከዳኝ የመጀመሪያዬ።

ህሊናውን ስቶ ግትቻ ቢያረገኝ

አሮጌ ቁና ሆኜ ከውድማ ገባሁኝ

ማነሽ ባለተራ

ሎሚ ተራተራ..."

Translation:

"Who permitted only your Dad to drink and to be intoxicated?"

Call him for me so that I show him too what passing the night outside means.

With me, what if others can play,

'Widowed, my love has gone away.

Being unconscious, he has thrown me-outside,

As an old basket, I am in the field being used.

Ladies! Whose turn is it?

'Lemons'- turn by turn, turn! ..."

My lovely daughter was then twelve years old. Her performance spoke much more to me and/or to her friends than her speech. Her dialogue, dramatic discourse with the spectators and power of imagination to imitate the character, to copy what she said, how she said it, and to understand why she acted as she did and what her action meant, were very spectacular and artistic for me.

In fact, her dramatic performance as I observed covered the functions of all producers' job: stage director, an actor, a producer, a stage technician, and a costumer to bring her play to life and to catch the attention of her friends/ playmates fully.

In general, this type of performance is a usual trend of my children and/or other children. Their performance reflects the richness of their experiences, in dealing with social, political, psychological, economic, and multicultural and gender issues/themes, which are the day-to-day phenomenal situations/events, in their life. Their ability to act out the conflicts between the real and the ideal, and their exploration of the quest for spiritual liberty and self-fulfillment is very high and exciting. And being deeply touched by my daughter's enigmatic discourse and spectacular performance, I started to think about the following: families; societies; countries...different governments and non governments' impact on children's development and on their drama, which was/is/will be played everywhere on the globe including its traditional values, messages to the children and youth, and the like. Children are found among the people to listen, watch, learn and remember to replay or imitate the roles later to others and to shoulder

more responsibilities as they grow up. Then being puzzled by her poetic speech and artistic performance, I asked my caricaturist to disclose, demystify, and decode her mysterious, descriptive play asking her, “Child what do you mean when you say”:

- ❖ "Who permitted or allowed only your dad to be drunk"?
- ❖ Call him for me so that I show him too what passing the night outside means?
- ❖ "With me, what if others can play"?
- ❖ ““Widowed, my love has gone away"?"
- ❖ "Being unconscious, he has thrown me-out side"?
- ❖ "As an old basket, I am in the field being used"?
- ❖ "Ladies! Whose turn is it?"
- ❖ “**Lemons**’ –turn by turn, turn ...”?

Listening to my questions, she laughed/ giggled at me and said:

“አባ ይህ የእናንተ ነው - የአዎቂዎች ቁዋንቁዋ እና የእለት ተእለት ድርጊት ታውቀው የለ፤ ግን እናንተ አዎቂዎች አትመዝኑትም። እናንተ የምትወዱት ወጣትና ዘመናዊዎችን።”

Translation:

“Father this is yours - elders’ language and day-to-day deed you know, but you elders do not weigh it. You like the young and modern ones. She continued:

“ተማሪ ቤት እንደሚሉት፤ መጤመጤውን ነው የምትወዱት አይደል?”

Translation:

As it is said in the schools, “You like the modern/ foreign, is it not?”

Furthermore, she asked me:

“አባ የምትለው ሐሳብሽን አላገኘሁም ነው፤ የእኔን ነጥብ፤ ... መልእክቴን?” በመቀጠልም እንዲህ አለችኝ። እንደምታው እነዚህ ድኅ ሳዝቦች-የመንደሩ፤ የከተማው እና የመዳናው ሴቶች እና ወንዶች አስቸጋሪ ሕይወት ነው ያላቸው።”

Translation:

"Dad, you mean, you didn't get my idea, get my point ... Message?" Then she continued, "As you see, these poor people - ladies and gentle-men in the villages/in towns/ cities have a difficult life. (Moreover, they are careless, irresponsible, indifferent families, husbands and wives. They live a disorderly life in the easiest hell. They are like vagabonds, vagrants, rascals, scoundrels, and unrighteous shrewd towards child raising). The parenthesis is mine. Further, she added:

“አባ እነዚያ/ እነዚህ በእኔ እድሜ ያሉ ልጆችን አስተውለህል በአዲስ አበባ መንገዶች ላይ ሲለምኑ ወይም እንደ ውሻ ምግባቸውን ከእያ ቆሻሻ መጣያ ገንዳ ውስጥ ሲለቃቅሙ?”

ግን እኔ በትክክል አላውቅ ይሆናል ለምን ወላጆቻቸው እንዲህ እንዲያደርጉ በእያ መንገዱ እንደሚለቁዋቸው። እናም በማስከተል እንዲህ አለች። ወላጆቻቸው ጆሎች ናቸው። ... ነገር ግን ኑሮ ካሉት መቃብር ይሞቃል፤ ካሉት በታች፤ ከሞቱት በላይ ሆነው ምን ያድርጉት፤ በጣም ደሆኑ ስለሆኑና ሌላ አማራጭ ስለሌላቸው/ሰላልታያቸው የመቃብር ስፍራን እንኩዋን እንደ ጥሩ መኖሪያቸው ነው። እነዚህ የውሻ የበቶች። ከሞቱት በላይ ከቆሙት /መሐል ማንነታቸው የማይታወቅ/ በታች ሆነው ምን ያድርጉት?”

Translation:

“Dad, have you observed those children of my age begging in the streets of Addis Ababa and/ or looking for their food from the garbage bins on the pavements of the roads like dogs? But I may not know correctly why their parents are leaving them in the streets to do so. She further added: their parents are tomfools Nevertheless, since they are so poor and have no other choices, even the church/grave yards (tombs) are good to live in for them, these under-dogs, who are better than the dead ones and no who among the alive ones”

Because she was engrossed with the social problems, she looked into my eyes, and then stared up into the sky moving her lips, hands and fingers as though there was somebody who listens and responds to her questions, prayers, complaints from the universe - the sky above. As I comprehended from her situation, she talked to her Almighty God, the Guide, the Light, Love, and Compassion, looking for his blessings and hoping for a better future.

Second, I found the topic, children's theatre in Ethiopia, an area that is little explored, and appealing. We-Ethiopians do not consider our children as people and help them with theatrical experiences. Moreover, to probe into the issue - Ethiopian children as well as children's drama did not receive due attention even at higher institution level. This is to say, little attention has been given by all concerned bodies to Ethiopian children's experience with theatre, which enriches them spiritually and culturally, helping them to grow into mature adults.

As far as I am concerned, children are not only the audience of the future theatres but they also are whole people who will shoulder future responsibilities and should have access to the same type of arts as other people, regardless of their age, race, religion, social status, gender, because if we are unaware of how culture affects us, then we are building trade and investment particularly and the nation generally on sand, not on rock. In other words, the scientific – technological revolution, the impact of globalization are changing not only the psychological make up of adults but also that of the children as well.

To put it in a nutshell, Peter Slade and Brian Way (Slade, 1958, 270) stressed the developmental aspect of drama/ theatre and how it could be used to increase awareness, self- expressions and creativity of children as follows: "*Drama and play are seen as natural to children and believed to help the child develop through stages to maturity.*" On the other hand, (Way, 1967, 274) was concerned with realizing the potential of the individual, "the individuality of individuals". Consequently, from her performance and from the instances quoted above, I may say the movement and trends that children see in society are often their first inspiration as theatre is a reflection of life and Contemporary theatre is also a reflection of contemporary life. So, strengthening its development and spreading it in the country means helping the proper growth and development of the child – the new generation in Ethiopia particularly.

1.2. Objective of the Study

Critically analyzing the problems of Ethiopian children with specific reference to selected Amharic play scripts, I will try to show how important is the proper functioning of children's theatre in a multicultural country like Ethiopia. To strengthen my argument, I quote Heath Cote

(1984:56): "The value of drama/theatre as an educational tool consists in fostering or nurturing the social, intellectual and linguistic development of the child."

In a like manner, my aim in conducting this study is to show the educational, artistic, social, cultural significance of children's theatre, which also plays an important role in producing future citizens, who possess an all rounded personality, love their country, and respect other people, and their parents. In brief, this study aims to addresses the following questions:

1. Tries to explore critically the recurrent Ethiopian children's social problems with specific reference to selected Amharic plays in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia.
2. Aims to examine the significance and impact of children's drama/theatre in reaching the audiences in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia.
3. Attempts to show the roles of children's theatre to bring about a sustainable, an all round economic, social, cultural, psychological and political developments in a multicultural country like Ethiopia.
4. Tries to inject certain insights in the perspectives of future researchers who might study children's theatre like other genres of literature.
5. Aims to initiate and inspire the political researchers, leaders and concerned citizens of Ethiopia, so that they desire to bring vital theatre arts into the lives of children and youth of the country - to strengthen, revitalize and spread standards of present children and youth drama/ theatre programs in Addis Ababa/The Federal States of Ethiopia.
6. Tries to conduct a general survey of the development of this genre during the years since its establishment in Ethiopia.
7. Attempts to show the contributions of previous researchers related to children's theatre in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Studying children's problems with specific reference to selected children's plays written in Amharic means knowing, recognizing, considering the values and the great stores of this literary genre in bringing up a well developed, all round child in Ethiopia. This experience may also contribute a great deal in the attempt to bring about sustainable, all round economic, social, cultural, psychological and political developments in a multicultural country like Ethiopia. As we all know the child' is the man, who shoulders tomorrow's nation wide responsibilities. That is to say, looking into the children's social problems with specific reference to selected Amharic plays, exploring the roles and places of children's theatre in the development of the child's cognitive, social, moral, educational growth, paves the way for the enrichment of the experiences of the young generation.

Based on my personal teaching experience in some high schools and colleges here in the country, my personal life experiences in the then so called brotherly-sisterly socialist countries; my current knowledge about the roles of children's literature and theatre and the critical analysis of Ethiopian children's problems with particular reference to some selected children's plays, I will try to pinpoint Ethiopian children's problems and the significant roles that can be played by children's theatre/drama in solving these problems. Moreover, I use this study to make recommendations for future inclusion of children's theatre/drama in Ethiopian elementary schools and higher institutions' curricula. This study may also help to assist teachers, playwrights, and society in general to understand, appreciate, and use this literary genre to educate children. I may also compel educators and parents to see and value children's theatre in Ethiopia as an important cultural heritage. As children's theatre can help to transmit knowledge, expand children's imagination, and stimulate their personal development, it can also foster their critical development. Moreover, this study may serve as a stepping stone for future research.

1.4. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study mainly focuses on a critical analysis of seven randomly selected children's plays written in Amharic, which deal with social problems experienced by Ethiopian children in a chronological sequence. The children characters in the plays represent universal children.

Consequently, the social, physical and psychological problems they face may not necessarily apply to Ethiopian children alone. The study limits itself to the major problems the Ethiopian children face as represented through the child fictional characters. The study assumes that the Ethiopian children who watch the plays educate themselves through the experiences of child fictional characters.

The data I collected are from the Children and Youth Theatre and from Alexander S. Pushkin's Theatre or "Kendil Bete-Tewnet" in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia. The primary sources of data for this thesis are seven children's theatre play scripts selected out of about one hundred twenty five plays I found in the lists of the plays staged in the theatres. My sources of the play scripts are the minutes of script selection for staging in the children and youth theatre organization and from individual sources. The criteria I used to select these seven scripts for this thesis depend on:

- Their frequency at which the plays have been at the stage of the theatres,
- The availability of the full play scripts in the theatres' documentation,
- The playwrights' profile and their contribution to the theatre's development,
- Originality of the scripts,
- The issues they concentrate on or the subject matter used in these plays,
- Universality of the subject matter they used,
- And their contributions or their place in the history of Ethiopian Children's Theatres.

Although the number of staged play scripts at the theatre is enormous, they are only records of titles played at the stages of the theatres and they are records on play script reception form from the playwrights. That is to say, there is a serious documentation problem in both theatres, in the related institutions' libraries and institute of Ethiopian studies. It is also beyond the scope of this thesis to consider children's theatre from other theatre halls in Addis Ababa, and/or other Ethiopian regions and Ethiopian languages because of the following reasons:

- ✚ Lack of proper documentation of the relevant information in the theatres in Addis Ababa particularly and in Ethiopia at large.
- ✚ Lack of published children's theatre plays.
- ✚ Moreover, I am self-sponsored and working in a private institution, so time and financial constraints compel me to limit the scope of my study.
- ✚ Furthermore, as the theatres in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia are profit-oriented; the writers do not want to be chastised and criticized, and are not willing to share resources. So, I have preferred to narrow down the scope of my study as stated above.

The scope of my research covers the period when the first children's theatre play scripts in Amharic was written by Teklehawariat Teklemariam (Waye) in 1920 (1912 E.C) to the present - 2006 (1999 E.C.).

I experienced a number of problems which are peculiar to this type of study in a developing African country like Ethiopia where the genre is foreign/ non-native. Some of the major problems are the following:

- ❖ The first problem I encountered is determining the age groups who frequent the theatres. All children, youth and adults go into the same theatre for a show at a time. Therefore, like all the playwrights, theatre experts, directors, technical managers, actors and others who are related to the work of determining and preparing appropriate texts and scenes/stages, I have also experienced a similar problem during my observation of the theatres and my readings of these scripts.
- ❖ The second problem is lack of proper documentation of copies of these play scripts in the theatres, in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies' Library (IESL) and other libraries of Addis Ababa. Besides, almost all the scripts which I collected from both theatres are incomplete.
- ❖ And the third problem is lack of publication of these play scripts. Almost all the play scripts are not yet published. It was very difficult/ totally impossible to trace many of the play scripts in the theatres, in IESL and other libraries of Addis Ababa.
- ❖ On top of these, the absence of some of the playwrights and the people who had participated in the performance of the play aggravated the problems. However, I have

made an attempt to help the improvements of the documentation of these play scripts and the play scripts to come, by consulting the people concerned in both theatres and The Institute of Ethiopian Studies' Library (IESL) in person and in writing comments on how to improve their documentations, during my encounter with them for this research work.

Furthermore, my benchmark for considering the materials as children's theatre play scripts mainly depends on the playwrights' remarks conveyed either on the title pages or in the prefaces of their works and from the different sources in the theatres. Nevertheless, these criteria do not necessarily mean that all the playwrights' works format and contents are properly designed to fit the psychological and intellectual levels of children of Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia.

Generally, as most play scripts are not collected and catalogued in any of the places mentioned earlier, I had to take the pains of looking for them from individuals and from the stores of the dead files in the children theatres where they were shockingly thrown. Just to give an example, I was allowed to search for the play scripts from the dead files of the children's theatre at Arat Kilo, and I was able to find only seven incomplete play scripts out of one hundred and seventeen staged at the centre, which are listed in the minutes of script selection form only. Besides, I have experienced a similar problem of documentation in the other theatre too. From the second centre, out of twenty eight play scripts I borrowed in a hard cover, I found only four children play scripts, of which only one play is complete. Although I would like to appreciate the effectiveness of Ato Ayalneh Mulat's personal documentation compared to the other ones, which is under this study, a great deal has to be done at "Kendil Bete-Tewunet," his brain child theatre centre too, so that its documentation and the organization of the overall theatre centre can be strengthened, restructured and revitalized. In spite of all these facts, I would like to stress that he has plenty works of different literary genres, which are worth documenting as a national heritage and for local and foreign researchers' consumption at a central place like The Institute of Ethiopian Studies' Library (IESL) and at the respective theatre centres accordingly.

1.5. Methodology

In my study, I used the descriptive and critical approaches of research to examine children's social problems as reflected in the plays. The children characters' social problems in the selected

plays are identified and critically analyzed in the third chapter of this work. Close reading and the contextual approach are used to analyze critically the selected plays. The plays are analyzed in relation to their socio – historical contexts and my own schematic knowledge of children’s experiences in Ethiopia and abroad. The close textual method of analysis is combined with extra – textual information that I gathered from my own experience and my interaction with children.

To put it in a nutshell, first background of the study is given/ stated and a review of related literature is made accordingly. Second, the children’s plays I identified from Addis Ababa Theatres that are written in Amharic are classified into periods as before and during the EPRDF’s Time/particularly as before and after 1989 E. C. *Third*, the necessary primary sources: informal observations, contacts/interviews and questionnaire are made with the bodies concerned of the theatre centers, and secondary sources are also assessed accordingly to get more background and detailed information on the roles and problems of children and youth theatres in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia, and the play scripts from the list of the classification I made during my pilot study, are selected accordingly for the topic of my thesis. Moreover, Bradburn and Sudman (1976:12-13) underlined, “... *no data collection method is superior to other methods for all types of threatening questions. If one accepts the results at face value, each of the data gathering methods is best under certain conditions.*” Fourth, all the selected play scripts are read and categorized thematically. Fifth, close textual analyses of the themes are made based on selected play scripts. Besides, the Children’s Theatres scenes are seen frequently to see the roles they play in educating children and youth and to observe how children’s social problems are faced and addressed practically on the stages to bring about an all round development of the child particularly and the country at large. Furthermore, attempts are also made to contact the officials concerned to discuss the existing problems in the theatre centres and to find the solution to revitalize, to strengthen, and spread the genre in the country together and to examine the identified recurring themes of the theatres.

1.6. Organization of the Thesis

My research work has four chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction, the statement of the problem, significance of the study, objectives of the study, delimitation and scope of the study, methodology and approaches used in the study are briefly discussed. The second chapter

of my thesis presents a review of the related literature. And it attempts to see what Children's Theatre is, to give a bird's eye view of children's theatre in the world, to assess Children's Theatre in Ethiopia before and after the present régime, to examine the previous studies related to Children's Theatre in Ethiopia written in Amharic and to give a bird's eye view of children's problems reflected in plays. The third chapter attempts to make a critical analysis of Ethiopian Children's problems with specific reference to the selected Amharic plays. And finally, the fourth chapter gives the conclusions and recommendations for future actions.

The bibliography displays the primary and secondary sources of the research and tries to give full playwrights' lists of children's plays from 1920 to 2006 chronologically as they were staged. The sources are categorized into main primary sources of information like research papers conducted in the area. It indicates the names of the playwrights/ translators, directors, the titles, the dates and places of publication of the plays as it is stated in the tables.

Nevertheless, my research work does not analyze and judge in detail any particular play script for its major focus is on social problems of children in Ethiopia as reflected in selected, representative play scripts that are written in Amharic. Moreover, the assessment is conducted by dividing the periods into two based on the stages of development reached in Children's Theatres in Ethiopia as stated above.

In brief, attempts are made to give a brief summary of relevant points of my research so that the bodies concerned can see and discuss the existing problems in the theatre centres and to find the solution, to revitalize, to strengthen, and to spread the genre in the country together and join hands to create linkages with the diasporas and the international children's theatre organizations for its improvements.

CHAPTER TWO:

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. What is Children's Theatre?

Children's Theatre or Theatre for Young Audiences is a formal theatre performance of a largely predetermined theatrical art work by living actors in the presence of children audiences/young people. Ideally the performers should be skilled actors and the production should be overseen by skilled and trained directors and technical staff. Its story line can be drawn from history, literature for children, folk and fairy tales or real life issues important to children/young people.

When most people think of children's theatre/Theatre for Young Audiences, they think of fairy tales, presented with lots of bright colors and peppy music, but while such entertainment has a place in the field, Children's Theatre/ TYA can be much more. Contemporary playwrights are becoming ever more aware that children/ the young can handle-indeed should handle-sophisticated ideas and serious issues. Children's plays or plays for young audiences are being written today that challenge children/ young audiences both by their subject matter and by their theatricality. This is because children/ the young live in an increasingly complex world, and their real concerns deserve to be addressed by real, active child/ young protagonists, who make things happen, and address the conflict of the story directly empowering children/ young audiences although certainly there are important stories that do not have them at the centre. This is to say that if you give children nothing but shit/ something rubbish, they will come to love shit/ something rubbish. I take this to mean in part that in the absence of anything deeper, children will latch onto whatever they can get in the way of entertainment.

Furthermore, although different scholars give their own definition for this term, I would prefer the following definition because of its comprehensiveness. I quote:

The term "children's theatre" may be a misnomer, for it encapsulates a spectrum of Western and non-Western lively arts including theatre, music, dance, mime, mask-work, puppetry, acrobatics and storytelling. Moreover, many children's productions, performed

by trained professionals, rival Broadway extravaganzas aimed at adults. Perhaps children's theatre ought to be called "Spectacle for all Ages/ Family Theatre/ Children and Youth Theatre," since it exercises everyone's imaginations, familiarizing the performers/ viewers with foreign cultures, building respect for people from all walks of life, relaxing audiences, relieving their stress, and sending them back to the daily grind enriched and renewed. At its very best, children's theatre empowers and educates even as it exhilarates and entertains.

<<http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/v42/n30/diamond.html>>

This is to say that they are thought to be half the length of adult presentations, and children's shows have story lines and characterizations that are often sketched impressionistically, yet with an incision that adds to their poignancy. As it is stated in the literatures of most developed countries, children's theatre is in the non-profit theatre world, a nonspecific, global term indicating the general field of theatre as applied to children, and its quality of entertainment is uniformly high there. Under all circumstances, it affirms life and attempts to promote community and harmony.

According to my personal experience in the former USSR and from my readings from the same internet sources, theatre companies in these developed countries are expected to justify the funding they receive, the artists often create songs, plays, and movement pieces that deliberately tackle issues relevant to childhood. This means, theatre companies are careful to blend educational elements into the diversion with the knowledge that the joy and wonder of live movement, melody and dialogue must outweigh didacticism although fun is still on their bottom lines. Here, sometimes the wit operates on two levels, appealing to grown-ups but going over the heads of children. Even when boys and girls do not understand the sly references and subtle Monty Pythonesque jokes as the Europeans say, they do appreciate the fact that moms, dads and older relatives are enjoying themselves as much as they are. This adds to the child's fun and makes the occasion a bonding experience, a special child-centered event that emphasizes and elevates the value of the "pint-sized" members of their society. Moreover, and incidentally, parents laugh at pitfalls and silly antics just as readily as youngsters do. It means, the limitations

of the stage keep theatre artists searching constantly for innovative ways to express ideas and conflict.

Accordingly, children and youth theatre is an old phenomenon in the western and eastern worlds, a twentieth century movement that encompasses a form of theatre designed for all audiences ranging from early childhood (5 years of age) to late adolescences (17 years of age) particularly, and all age groups generally. And since at a certain age, a child no longer wishes to be called a child, theater for young audiences is becoming an increasingly popular substitute for the traditional appellation. In other words, it is recognized that the term is used in a variety of academic, literary, and bibliographic contexts; the use of more specific terms such as those which follow should be encouraged for situations where exactness of meaning is important.

According to my reading from different sources, observations of the theatres, my informal discussions with the directors, technical managers and other related professionals and from human experiences, theatre for children indicates theatrical events specifically designed to be performed for young persons typically of elementary school age, five to twelve years of age. Theatre for youth indicates theatrical events specifically designed to be performed for young persons typically of junior high school age, 13 to 15/17 years of age. *Theatre for Young Audience*, on the other hand, is a term encompassing theatre for children and theater for youth, the distinction being the age range of the intended audiences. Even though adults frequently attend *Theatre for Young Audiences*, either as teachers accompanying classes, as parents with their kids, or merely interested patrons/consumers, the focus of the performance remains on the young people in the audience. In other words, *Theatre for Young Audiences* consists of the performance of a largely predetermined theatrical art work by living actors in the presence of an audience of young people, either children or youth as defined above. It embraces the following characteristics:

- ✦ The performance may be based on written scripts of traditional form, or adapted, devised, or developed improvisationally by directors, directors and actors in a cooperative effort, or by actors working in ensemble.

- ✦ The dramatic material of the performance may be a single story line designed to engage the full empathetic commitment of the audience in a succession of events, or it may be a series of shorter, separate, or thematically related stories or sketches.
- ✦ Preferably highly skilled adult actors are engaged in the performance, with especially talented child actors in child roles.
- ✦ The full spectrum of theatrical arts and crafts may be called upon to enhance the actors' performance: costumes, make-up, scenery, lighting, props, sound, and special effects. However, many successful performances may make only a minimal use of these elements of production.
- ✦ The audience may be configured in any configuration utilizing a variety of spaces described by any number of theatrical forms, from proscenium to open field. Since all theatre strives for communication among all parties, an intellectual and emotional participation by an audience is essential. Participation may be extended to limited direct physical and vocal involvement from their seats.

Another kind of theatre for young audiences consisting of the presentation of specially written, adapted or devised drama with an established story line constructed to include limited and structured opportunities for active involvement by all or part of the audience is *Participation Theatre*. Participation may range from simple verbal responses to an active role in the outcome of the drama. In the participation segments, adult actors function as creative drama leaders, guiding the audience and the seating configuration is dependent on the kind and degree of participation expected from the audience. While such theatrical events can be constructed for any age child or youth, they are at present, most usually performed for children five to eight years old in the developed world. Consequently, a strict control over audiences' age grouping and special leadership training for the adult actors are advisable for success in future attempts here in Ethiopia too. On the other hand, *Theatre by Children and Youth* is a particular variant of theatre for young audiences in which the performers are children and/ or teenagers rather than adults. The teenagers have been well schooled by a director in their primary task of bringing the dramatic material to life for the audience. Organizations engaged in theatre by children and youth ordinarily plan their production to focus on audiences of children younger than the performers and interested adults. In the developed countries, they generally do not use people below 8th grade level to perform

scripted roles in participation theatre because of the demands of effective creative drama leadership.

Other frequently encountered terms are *Theater for Young, for Young Spectators, Children and Youth: Youth Theatre, Young People's Theatre, Junior Theater, and Recreational Drama*- the last is the term describing performances by children. Whatever its designation, this is a form of theatre in which living actors present a performance which has been especially prepared for a young audience.

In my work; however, *Children's Theatre, Theatre for Young Audiences, Theatre for Children and Youth (Children and Youth Theatre) and their variants* will be used interchangeably, simply for a variety of expression and because of what it is in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia and in the world generally.

As in the scholarly story that I do not remember the right source goes on, once the old moon asked a question three young adventurers: "Where are you going and what do you want?" Today the whole world seems to be asking and answering the same question by saying: "We are searching for creativity in men's minds" that is:

- ✚ A mysterious search, closely akin to the search for life,
- ✚ The seeking and finding of which hold an unknown future,
- ✚ Creative thinking should be constructive motivated by men who care for follow men – children and youth,
- ✚ When one asks what a creative performance is like, we think at once of great artists, great scientists, and great statesmen, great leaders in philosophy, religion and education
- ✚ We know that creativity occurs in science, in arts, and in all human endeavors.
- ✚ We know that there is potential creativity in every human being.

In other words, the theatre/ arts may serve to bring complicated ideas and feelings to the child or youngster for his/ her exploration, in ways which are direct and meaningful to him/ her. This is to say, *the theatre/ art* being closely related to life itself, the theatre often has a comprehensible

immediacy in impressing ideas and feelings about human beings, which help the child to thrive: prosper, succeed, and grow strong and healthy. And I believe that young people deserve the chance to be challenged artistically and that by overcoming these situational challenges they will begin to discover the vast realm of possibilities and opportunities that are open to them such as: expressing themselves through a dramatic medium, working with professional actors, directors and technicians, taking responsibility for themselves as individuals and as members of a team, and getting experiences in areas other than those provided through education.

In brief, according to my personal readings and observations from different media sources, nowadays in the developed world, professors of physics, electrical engineering, microbiology, biochemistry, and other subjects have joined the visiting artists participating in workshops, highlighting channels through which the arts intersect with curricular concerns, and ways that studies inform and depend on the arts and vice versa. Therefore, if children's theatre teaches us anything, it demonstrates the interconnectedness of life and the need for playtime in everyone's schedule. This on the other hand forces everyone to be cooperative to strengthen and spread children's theatre into every corner of the country so that mutual trust and respect can be cultivated among the future generations of Ethiopia.

2.2. A Bird's Eye View of Children's Theatre in the World

According to different literatures and my own personal experience, the *Children's Theatre* in the western and eastern world serves children and young adults by providing them educational and entertaining program being one major part of the nations' respective scenes. Throughout the past century, the theatre has provided programs not only for audiences and participants at the theatres but also for the audiences and participants of radio, television, film, and video programs, as each became a special interest. It has gained world wide approval as a model genre of theatres by and for children/ young people. Just to give brief, general, background information about this theatre:

In the United States, Children's Theatre's history is relatively brief. It began to grow as a respectable branch of theatre in the early 1900's. However, in other countries such as China and Russia, Theatre for Young Audiences (or TYA) has been tremendously

respected and an integral part of performing arts for those countries, among others. In countries such as these, only the best actors and actresses would be allowed to act for children. I assume that this is due primarily to the respect that these countries hold for the minds and intellects of children. And regardless, the fact remains that all performers for children know that they (the children) will be perfectly candid and frank with regard to their responses to a particular performance. Therefore, only the most honest, most genuine, and truthful, and best performances will satisfy and be beneficial to an audience of children.

<<http://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/theater/tya/history.html>>

This is to say that unlike Africans in particular and most developing nations of the world in general, both the western and eastern worlds had knowledge about the importance of children's theatre to bring about an all rounded, sustainable children's personality development since long generally. In other words, a dramatic play's strong impact on children's cognitive and social development, its potential to provide children with opportunities to learn, to express their feelings and to become sensitive to the values of others was understood by these people and a great deal has been done for its expansion in their respective nations.

As in the internet source from: <[htt://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/theatre/tya/chorpy\(nutour\).html](http://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/theatre/tya/chorpy(nutour).html)>, about children's theatre, let us see in brief some of the most influential scholars on the field of Theatre for Young Audiences /TYA/ throughout the 20th century, who were bringer of joy not only to the child of the western and eastern world, but also to child of the developing world:

2.2.1. Famous Children's Theatre Playwright – Charlotte B. Ch. (1884, 1975)

Charlotte B. Chorpenning made tremendous contributions to Children's Theatre. Shortly after her husband died, she decided that she wanted to write plays for children. She was 60 then. She began working as the artistic director for the Goodman Theatre in Chicago where she stayed for 21 years. All the while, she was writing plays. In the time from when she began writing, until the day she died with a play in the works in her typewriter (literally), she managed to double the mid-century repertoire for children's plays by herself.

She typically adapted well known titles such as *Little Red Riding Hood*, or *The Emperor's New Clothes* to name a couple. This was primarily based on the premise that children would desire to go and see plays the title of which they recognize. This was the trend in TYA for quite some time, but has more recently veered away from that concept, and many more original works are being written. But Chorpenning saw a universal quality in fairy tales and tended to adapt quite a few of them. In fairy tales, she saw the archetypal issues of growing up, and if children could identify with a character, or characters, in a play, then they would have more interest in the play. This concept is quite true and followed /imitated even today. There is even a children's literary award given to playwrights called the Charlotte B. Chorpenning Award.

2.2.2. A Great Diplomat and a Man of Style in the Field of Children's Theatre- Aurand Harris, (1914, 1996)

Aurand Harris is a man who has written a tremendous body of contrasting plays for young audiences. He continually explored new and different styles, including a vaudevillian show (*The Tobey Show*), a melodrama story (*Rags to Riches*), or even what he called his "death show," *The Arkansas Bear*, which tells the story of a young girl coping with the loss of a family member. Of course, he tells it with the perfect amount of humor, sensitivity, and emotion for adults to cry at, and children to learn from. He sometimes adapted traditional stories such as *Pocohantas* or well known stories such as *The Magician's Nephew*, and often created original works such as *Monkey Magic*, *Pin balls*, or his most recent and final play, *The Orphan Train*.

Aurand Harris's accomplishments are many. In the 70's, he received an award that was established in Charlotte Chorpening's name after she passed away. It was established as an award to recognize playwrights who have written a body of plays that lift up the field of children's theatre. Surprisingly, though, he did not just win this award once, because later, in the 80's, he was given the award *again!* He is the only playwright to win the Charlotte Chorpening award twice.

In the 80's, Aurand went to China on the heels of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* production, (the first ever American playwright to direct a play in China), at the request of the Shanghai Children's Art Theatre, (the oldest children's theatre in China -- a mere 40 years old at

the time), and the funding of The Children's Theatre Foundation of America. Aurand directed the first ever production of an American children's play in China. The play, *Rags to Riches*, was translated into Chinese and performed by Chinese actors. Of course, the Chinese Government did require some "changes" in the script to accommodate for the political and economic differences between the two countries, but nonetheless, Aurand would become not only a bringer of joy to American children, but now, to children around the world. The Children's Theatre World lost a great friend, playwright, and human being in the spring of 1996, when Aurand Harris passed away at the age of 82. His plays though will live on forever as he is the most prolific children's playwright in the United States.

In brief, this is to say that unlike Africa and the most developing nations of the world, children's theatre in the western and eastern world has shown great progress in all aspects of its development in breadth and depth since 1900. Moreover, it has been assisted by different governmental and non-governmental grants for scholarships, playwritings, publications, theatre festivals, international exchanges, studies, conferences and symposiums, publications, crisis management assistance, medallions, and performance and lectures as it is considered to be a non profit organization by these nations. Besides, Ethiopian scholars and citizens concerned of Ethiopia have a great deal to learn from these experiences and to make proper world-wide professional attachments for the betterment of children's theatres.

2.3. Children's Theatre in Ethiopia until 1989

Although an appropriate and permanent children and youth theatre centre with the goal of serving children was not established in Ethiopia until 1989, there were favorable conditions which helped to create partial awareness of theatre elements among urban and school children and youth of Ethiopia long ago. And almost all the plays were shown to children and adult audiences in different places such as, hotels, schools, theatre halls for adults and at different public meeting places. According to Banham (2004:195): "Modern drama was brought to Ethiopia by an Amhara nobleman...., who was unusually well-travelled and who lived for many years in Russia, France, and England until he returned home somewhere in 1912."

This is to say, when one searches to see how Children and Youth Theater started in Addis Ababa/Ethiopia, one observes and learns how the Aristotelian theatre was introduced to Ethiopia by Tekelehawariat Tekelemariam (Waye), in the early 20th century (1912 E.C.). He had modern schooling abroad which helped him to sense the situation of theatre in the country then and to rewrite his own verse folk tale-Fibula: Yawreoch Commedia (Fable: The Comedy of Animals), which was a satire based on the Fables of La Fontaine, into the first original Amharic play for adult audiences, which was performed at Terrace Hotel some where in 1922. The motives/ goals of this writing was to fight against the poor governance of the time, to educate children through dramatic means unlike those elderly subordinates of the aristocracy/ the royal family; and to share his experience abroad with Ethiopians who did not differentiate between theatre and a collective performance of "Asmaries", those who played on "Atamo, Masinko, Kirar", and traditional singers, and dancers (jiggers) as he stated in his play script mentioned earlier.

He tried to teach Prince Iyassu, who was chosen by Emperor Menilik as a child heir to the throne and who was remembered for his playboy manner and inordinate sexual appetite as stated by Tekelehawariat in his playscript "Yeawrewoch Teret" in 1921 (1913 E.C.). Moreover, Ato Aboneh Ashagre's unpublished lecture notes "Children's Theatre in Ethiopia" (2006:2) and other relevant studies on the history of Ethiopian theatre, confirm the fact. Although the audiences of "Yeawrewoch Teret" were adults and the aristocracy's interpretation of the performance of this play did not favour the author, the play's strong effect on the audience, the simplicity of the form and the content of the play with its animal characters, who were children, and the simplicity of other dramatic elements in it favored it to be categorized as children's play of European style and to be the first of its kind in the history of Ethiopian theatre.

However, though children's theatre was introduced in the early 20th century to Ethiopia, it did not get a fertile ground to develop in the country because of the aristocracy's poor perception of it. There was no continuous attempt made then to spread children's theatre as an art in the country and to influence the young generation by creating favorable situations so that they begin to discover and see the vast realm of possibilities and opportunities that were opened/ created for them through it.

But thanks to the Ethiopian expatriate teaching staff, broadcasters and campaigners like Yoftahe Nigussie, Melaku Begosew, Sinidu Gebru, and Romanwork Kassahun, who had exposure to theatre abroad and who played a significant role in staging the Amharic versions of European drama at their respective schools for students and for urban dwellers of the country on school and other special meeting days, mostly at the end of each academic year. Its basic elements have been known to the generations since then. To strengthen my argument, I quote from *A History of Theatre in Africa* by Banham (2004, 196): “...*This development has been crucial to the growth of Ethiopian drama, which has been seen as an import from Europe and predominantly literary form utterly divorced from the music and dance traditions of the people.... This drama has been mediated through an Ethiopian sensibility from its beginning in a way that was not possible in colonized African nations.*”

In other words, the translation and refinements of the translated pieces were done by both Ethiopian students and teachers at schools. To strengthen this fact, Ato Debebe Seifu (1982:3) stated in his studies that Yoftahe Nigussie and Melaku Begosew, who were Amharic language teachers then and who engaged in the refinement of students’ translations and staging of them, later became the pioneers of Ethiopian theatre using their practical, acquired knowledge in the schools. Ato Debebe further explained that their talent of drama production assisted and inspired some Ethiopian school children and teachers to familiarize themselves with theatre arts and eventually become part of it in their school life time.

Furthermore, Ato Aboneh Ashagrie (1988: 5-6) in his studies and in his lecture note on *Children’s Theatre in Ethiopia*(3) stated that the advent of the Italian aggression on Ethiopia during the Second World War was the other factor that encouraged the involvement of children in theatre activities. He further stressed that Yoftahe and Melaku had continuously produced agitation plays with child actors to enhance the feeling of Ethiopian national patriotism within the public on the eve of the war. Besides, he added that after the Ethiopian victory over the Italian Fascism, Yoftahe continued to produce plays with child actors at schools and courts for the nobility and aristocracy. This idea can be further strengthened by the following quotation from Banham (197): “... *So up until the 1960s comedy was identified with popular theatre and tragedy or serious drama with the court and the educated elite.*”

In contrast to the preceding feudal regime, Emperor Haile Sellasie-the Jamaican/ Caribbean Messiah, encouraged child actors with gifts after attending their performances on his birth day and coronation day as stated by the Ministry of Information's report about Development (1965:362). It further stated that the emperor even went to the extent of instructing his grand children to show religious plays to the royal family on Christmas days. It was stressed that this was because of the awareness he got about the values of theatre while he was in England on exile during the war.

Furthermore, favorable conditions for children to have an easy access to plays were created by notable Ethiopian playwrights' publications of full length plays in the middle of the 20th century. This in turn also motivated Boy Scout clubs and Orthodox Christian Association members in schools to be engaged in drama activities with the intention of raising funds for their clubs and associations. With that objective, the concept and taste of the art has been disseminated to a considerable number of Ethiopian children although it did not become strong and spread all over Ethiopia as it was expected because of the impact of church writing and King-Hailesilassie. This can be further supported by the following quotation from Banham (198): "... Haile Selassie was an autocrat par excellence. He personally censored many publications and performances and ensured that for many years nothing would emerge which was in any way critical of his authority."

According to Ato Aboneh Ashagrie's lecture note (3-4): the other notable condition was the establishment of The Theatre Arts Department at Addis Ababa University in 1978 which created the most favorable condition for introducing children and youth theatre in Ethiopia in its proper form and content (*though it didn't help much for its proper development and expansion in Ethiopia*). The parentheses are mine. In relation to the opening of the Department, an experimental children's play was produced in 1980 by the theatre arts students, which was directed by Dr. Peter Harrop, and shown at St. Mary's Elementary School. The Ministry of Culture's attention was drawn towards promoting this form of art because of the production's effectiveness and a cultural agreement was signed between Ethiopia and Federal Democratic Germany then. In addition, the first professional children's play that marked the turning point in the history of Ethiopian children's theatre was *Gobezie*, which was translated from German

children play script, and by the German theatre director who came to Addis Ababa in 1983 after the cultural agreement was signed between the two nations.

Ato Aboneh further stressed that he himself had witnessed the quality of *Gobezie's* production even though it was beyond the capacity of the children audiences' imagination and comprehension. He also underlined that the didactic nature of *Gobezie* had superseded its artistic value and made it more appealing to adult audiences than to children's mentality. Moreover, he emphasized, the Brechtian approach of the stages and the elevated concept of class struggles in the story of the play had minimized the entertaining effect of the play.

In spite of all the elevated production of *Gobezie*, which was performed at the Ras Theatre, the National Theatre and Addis Ababa City Theatre Hall, it had shared and offered a significant experience and taught the techniques of children's theatre to the artists' of the theatre - participant dramatists who contribute to the feeling of national self-sufficiency says Ato Aboneh. He further added that this was witnessed further in "*Tsedal*" Altayework Zeleke's translation of a Bulgarian Children play into Amharic, two years later, which was shown at the Hager Fikir Theatre. Altayework was an assistant of the German director then, who produced something that fitted the emotions of Ethiopian audiences because of his knowledge of the psychology and environments of children.

From Ato Aboneh, we also come to know Allishu Mume's, play translated from a Bulgarian play. It was entitled "*Yeteraraw Nefas*," and was staged at the Ras Theatre in 1985 G.C. The reception of this play by children audience was positive, unlike "*Gobeze*". The adventurous dramatic actions of a boy and the wind characters in the play had generated suspense and surprise in them. And then, we find Gedlu Assegidew's two German Children plays; translated: "*Tinchel inna Jart*" and "*Arat Musikegnoch*," which were performed at the National Theatre in 1985G.C. Productions of these plays were enhanced by physical actions, going to the extent of narrowing the performers – audiences' gap by means of child audiences' participation in the theatrical action. Both plays were educative to child audiences. The former being a moralist play, warns them against the consequences of negligence, while the latter advocates the reward of hard work and excellence.

Three years later (1988 G.C.), Hilemariam Seifu came up with his own original, Ethiopian play script being the first Ethiopian author of Children's well-made play with four beast characters entitled "*Anbessie*," which was shown at the National Theatre. This is considered to be a new event in the history of Ethiopian Children Theatre. Nevertheless, the play was overambitious in trying to reach its audiences didactically by cramming jealousy, wickedness, laziness and diligence as its minor themes.

Then, for the next three years children's drama reverted to translated works though we find Hailemariam's original work "*Doyo*" in 1988, which was shown at the Hagar Fikir Theatre. The translated works were Gedilu's two German plays: *Jeemy* (1987), which was performed at the National Theatre and *Gobezu Libs Sefi*" (1988), which was shown at the Hager Fikir Theatre. And Alemayehu Gebrehiwot's "*Felashaw*" (1987), which was shown at the National Theatre and Teshome Birhanu's "*Dimtu Beketema*" (1987), which was shown at the National Theatre. And it is considered to be unique in that it introduced Muslim characters – a sign of multiculturalism in children's performances for the first time.

It appeared that a major development in Ethiopian Children's Theatre occurred in the middle of 1989 with the decisions of The Ministry of Culture that opened a permanent art centre for children and youth at Arat Kilo in the former Young Men Christian Association /YMCA/ Campus with a motto of "The Best for Children". But it did not get proper support and attention from the bodies concerned since then. In spite of all the problems it encounters, there are qualitative changes and the centre seems to reach the professional levels. Miilion Tsegab was the first appointed acting manager of the centre then.

To put it in a nutshell, the following are the lists of children's plays in Amharic that were staged in different places in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia from 1924 to 1989 G.C. or from 1916 to 1981 E. C.

Table 1 Play Scripts from Children and Youth Theatre (1924 – 1989)

I.No	Title of the Play	Playwright's Name	Translator's Name	Director's Name	Staged in/at	Year E.C.
1	Yewurewoch Comedia / The Comedy of Animals	Lafontaine Fable	Teklehawariat Teklemariam/ Waye		Terrace Hotel	1916
2	Gobeze			Hunsclier	Ras, Addis Ababa National, Children and Youth Theatres	1975
3	Tsedal/ Brightness	Alfonso Sostre	Alteyework Zeleke	Alishu Mume	Ras Theatre	1976
4	Jartinna Tinchel/ Porcupine and The Hare		Gedilu Asagidew	Peter Inzkat	National Theatre	1977
5	Yeteraraw Nefas/ The Wind of the Mountai	Nadya Trenda Filova	Alishu Mume	Alishu Mume	Ras Theatre	1977
6	Anbese	Haylemariam Seifu		Kibebew Megersa	National Theatre	1978
7	Aratu Muzikegnoch/ The Four Musicians	Peter Inzkat	Gedilu Asagidew	Peter Inzkat	Hagerb Fikir Theatre	1979
8	Timy	Boris Aprilov	Gedilu Asagidew	Wolfgang Austberg	National Theatre	1979
9	Falafawa/ The Philosopher	Clary Boico	Alemayehu G/hiwot	Getnet Eniyew	National Theatre	1980
10	Gobezu Libs Sefi/ The Brave Tailor	Wolfgang Austberg	Gedilu Asagidew	Adis Hizkias	National Theatre	1981
11	Doyo	Hailemariam Sefu		Altayework Zeleke	Ras Theatre	1981
12	Dimtu Beketema	Teshome Birhanu		Abeba Kebede	National Theatre	1981
13	Yezinabua Emebet/ Mistress of Rain	Iva Mariyana	Millyon Tsegab	Adis Hizkias	Children and Youth Theatre	1982
14	Kurana Kebero or Yegenfo Terara	Alemayehu G/hiwot		Adis Hizkias	Children and Youth Theatre	1981
15	Tota Abamela	Ephrem Bekele		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1981
16	Doyo	Hailemariam Seifu		Asfaw Atsimat Ass. D. Tesfu Birhane	Children and Youth Theatre	1981
17	Yegenfo Terara	Alemayehu G/hiwot		Mosisa Kedija	Children and Youth Theatre	1981

2.4. Children's Theatre in Ethiopia since 1989

In the 1980s, not only governmental but also private art/ theatre centres became the phenomenal results of the government system. For the sake of convenience, I will assess only the two theatre centres for children namely, "Kendil Bete-Tewunet" from private sectors and Children and Youth Theatre centre from the government sector.

2.4.1. "Kendil"/ Candle Bete-Tewunet

"Kendil"/ Candle Theater, is the first private theater that started its performance legally in June 1993 G.C. receiving its license from the Bureau of Trade, Industry and Tourism as "*Andebet*" (Eloquence) Literary Club. The Amharic word "*Kendil*" is derived from the Geez language and it means "candle". In due course of time staging various literary works in line with its objectives, it headed for full development in quality and perspective and as it had earned recognition and admiration from the society, it was elevated from a literary forum to the status of a theater house. As a result, it was named Candle Theater, which was a great leap from "*Andebet*" Art Club to Candle Theater.

On its establishment, the aims and objectives of this theater were as follows:

1. To reduce the tense atmosphere created by crowded audiences in the government theater houses.
2. To create a forum where young literary professionals can express their talents;
3. To serve as a bridge between senior and junior (young) artists;
4. To produce original and mature artistic works free from any kind of domination;
5. To establish the first exemplary private theater house.

Candle Theater has performed on stage, television and radio plays dealing with children, street dwellers and harmful traditional practices. It has produced various video films for several governmental and non-governmental organizations. The organizer and general manager of this theater is **Ayalneh Mulatu Abeje**, a well known poet, (translator), playwright and Ambassador for Peace. Ayalneh has been writing and staging many plays in various theater houses, for instance, on the stages of: Kendil, National, Hager Fikir, Addis Ababa Municipality Hall and Ras Theaters and on the Ethiopian television and radio for almost three decades touching all walks of life. It has also been performing children's theatre every Saturday and Sunday mornings although this program is not that popular and well-organized. It has staged not more than ten children's plays since its establishment out of which I have obtained the copies of four play scripts.

Moreover, as Ambassador of Ethiopian theatres, Ayalneh's brain child-"Kendil" Theatre has staged several plays abroad, to mention some, *Mother of Twins*, (Moscow-Russia); *Our Struggle*, (Lagos, Havana); *Child of Poverty* (London, Edinburgh); *Adey Flower*, (Europe, Latin America). Besides, Candle Theater has also published research studies, poetry and books on drama. And now, it is making good progress in the rented hall from the Russian Center for Science and Culture at "Kendil Bete-tewunet".

In addition to presenting various plays for all walks of life on a regular basis, literary events such as poetry recital, book reviews and panel discussions are also conducted every month. In spite of all this flourishing, grand and paradigmatic progresses, Candle Theater has been facing many challenges and obstacles in coming this far without any assistance from the citizens and / or from the government of Ethiopia.

To summarize, nowadays, literary organizations are coming forward in every way possible in Ethiopia, contributing to the development of the arts and the preservation of culture. Consequently, moral and material assistance is needed for the success of their creative work. Much endeavor is required to enhance artistic works which should be rated on equal standards with those of other African countries.

As we all may guess and/ or know, the arts have flourished in the world not only because of government support but also because of the assistance and support of professional artists who manage private organizations. Each country's wealthy citizens, non-governmental organizations and art promoters assist them materially as well as morally. Therefore, all concerned citizens of our country should realize that to do so means a great contribution to the success of private artistic endeavors directly or indirectly playing a great role to bring about a significant development in Ethiopia particularly and in Africa/ the world generally. Thus, all of us should work hard towards promoting art for the cultural, moral and spiritual enrichment of the members of our generation and to lay down a good foundation for the coming generation too.

On the following page, there is a list of children's plays in Amharic that were staged in different places in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia from 1990 to January, 2007 G.C. or from 1982 to January, 1999 E. C.

Table 2 Play scripts from “Kendil Bete-Tewunet” (1990 – 2006)

I. No	Title of the Play	Playwright's Name	Translator's Name	Directors Name	Staged in/at	Year <i>E.C.</i>
1	Chilat`na Dono	Ayalneh Mulat		Ayalneh Mulat	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1990
2	Aboy Simma	Ayalneh Mulat		Ayalneh Mulat	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1990*
3	Mare`ena Mamite	Ayalneh Mulat		Ayalneh Mulat	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1990*
4	Lem`in Yiskubignal	Ayalneh Mulat		Hibist Asfaw	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1995*
5	Seytanina Zebegna/ Asheker	Ayalneh Mulat		Ayalneh Mulat	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1995*
6	Yebahir Awurie	Ayalneh Mulat		Ayalneh Mulat	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1996**
7	Tininishochu Fetariwoch	Ayalneh Mulat		Ayalneh Mulat	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1996**
8	Fistula	Ayalneh Mulat		Ayalneh Mulat	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1997**
9	Berariwa Ahiya	Ayalneh Mulat		Ashenafi Mahlet Solomon Fetene	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1997**
10	Aba Mero	Ayalneh Mulat		Ashenafi Mahlet	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1997**
11	Ye`aytoch Nigist	Ayalneh Mulat		Actors Actresses	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1997**
12	Ye`irgib Qelebet	Ayalneh Mulat		Solomon Fetene	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1998**
13	Lenege Tesfawoch	Ayalneh Mulat		Ayalneh Mulat	Kendil Bete-tewunet	1998**
14	Endet Temarku	Ayalneh Mulat		Ayalneh Mulat	Kendil Bete-tewunet	*
15	Qeld Anawuqim Egna	Ayalneh Mulat		Ayalneh Mulat	Kendil Bete-tewunet	*

* Play script's copy is incomplete.

** Didn't get the copy of the play scripts.

2.4.2. Arat Kilo's Children and Youth Theatre

According to Ato Aboneh's lecture note (5-6) the Children and Youth Theatre centre did not function for almost a year from 1989 to 1990 because of lack of manpower, budget and political reasons. It started its production with "*Yezinabua Emebet* (1990)", a joint translation by Gedilu Assegidew and Million Tsegabe from a German play, which created a reverse effect on the stage. That is to say, the German theatre expert who had brought with him all the make-ups, tools and costumes, round and light effects for the production made the play complicated for the Ethiopian children audience. Ato Aboneh further discusses, in the same year, Alemayehu Gebrehiwot's "*Yegenfo Terara* (1990 G. C.)" which was directed by Addis Hizkias, who was a major character in the above-mentioned play and learned a great deal from its shortcomings and created a better Ethiopian context for the children audience. And then Aboneh elaborates further, as we find Hailemariam Seifu's "*Yeinkulal Wofcho* (1991)," which was directed by Mossisa Kejela though it did not last long on the stage because of the political and social unrest that existed in Addis Ababa at the climax of the armed struggle between EPRDF and the Dergue Forces.

In brief, although the number of plays staged in this period is large, still the substance/ quality and the theatre organization of children and youth plays have inherent problems. According to my personal observation, formal and informal interactions with the workers of the theatre, although the foundation day of children and youth theatre was a notable herald in the history of Ethiopian children's theatre and the qualitative performances had increased, it experienced various problems that hinder its expansion, proper functioning, and development. These require concerned citizens' and the government's urgent attention to revitalize and amend the situation for better future. Some of the major and critical problems the theatre organization has been facing are as follow:

- ❖ The theatre's mission should be clearly stated so that it enables the creation of positive images and ways of theatre experiences to educate, challenge and inspire not only children and young people but also adults.
- ❖ Moreover, efforts are not geared to creating centers of excellence in Ethiopia that can serve as models for African Theatre.

- ❖ According to my personal observation and readings, although most of the works at the centers seem artistic in that they are imaginative, exciting and new; they are not at the forefront of the field. They do not cross the boundaries of age in terms of style, or content, or both. The artists lack professional skills and parents and the Ethiopian Government also do not seem to believe that young people have as rich an emotional life as adults. Moreover, performances at the centre seem to have limited experience and their joys and heartaches, victories and defeats are not seem to be felt with as much power and passion as adults' theatre. In creating a theatre for children and youth, artists did not seem to try to explore themes that express as much of that rich, complex life as they can and then distill it into a theatrical form that is accessible to all. Moreover the theatre has the following critical problems that seeks concerned citizens attention:
- ❖ The theatre has no proper building and its auditorium is also too small in size.
- ❖ The number of seats in it is too small to accommodate more than 250 spectators at a time.
- ❖ Its floor is leveled and hinders proper vision for those who sit at the back rows.
- ❖ The audiences' interaction and intimacy with actors is affected by the size and poor design of its stage, which is very small for the actors to perform movements like running, jumping, falling, etc and to accommodate all the stage equipments and musical instruments.
- ❖ Its hall is not comfortable and lacks proper ventilation system for children to sit and attend/ witness all the performances on the stage attentively.
- ❖ Moreover, it has no proper acoustic system, dressing rooms for the actors, rooms for the sound and light effect technicians, and proper instruments for the technicians to create the appropriate atmosphere for each scene in the theatre. Thus, it is very difficult for actors to perform and the audience to listen to music and to see other programs.
- ❖ Besides, it has no proper and enough rooms for administrative, technical support staff and for the customers; that is, it has no proper rooms for studios, workshops, offices, documentations/archives, storage, entertainment rooms like cafeteria, toilets, resting/ waiting rooms, play grounds, parking...pass times like swimming pools, reading rooms, indoor games for waiting time, etc.

- ❖ It seems to have no link with the Diasporas and other theatres in the world in order to share and exchange experience. Moreover, its publicity appear to be very poor, may be because of its public relations/ corporate communications weak links and so on.
- ❖ It does not have proper studio/workshop tools and office machines, which simplify the tasks of the administrative and technical staff.
- ❖ The number of the actors and the remuneration for both the actors and the playwrights does not encourage production of works of good quality for both age groups (children and youth) of audiences of the theatre under study. Moreover, the remuneration for child actors is very discouraging and it does not go with the conventions of UN.

In brief, I believe that the following can be considered as a benchmark to see this theatre critically and accordingly to improve its situations jointly.

First, the Mission of the Children's and Youth Theatre Company should be restated so that it helps to create marvelous theatre experiences that educate, challenge and inspire not only children and young people but also adults.

Second, its Vision should be set so that it works to seek to be an African/international model for excellence in theatre. The staff of the theatre should strive to lead in the creation of new work for young people, in theatre training and generating initiatives for using theatre in education and community development. To strengthen my argument, I quote David S. Craig the Canadian Theatre director:

Henrik Ibsen said that when you write you sit in judgment on your soul. Roseneath Theatre produces plays that strive to grapple with the complexities of life and then present them in a form which is simple but not simplistic. The audience grows because it sits in judgment on the lives and actions of the characters. As the Greeks knew, this process is actually a profound act of citizenship. It strengthens and challenges our perceived morality. It grays and laughs at the strident colors of fascism. It encourages compassion for our shared humanity. Our contribution to this process as theatre artists is to try, with the resources at our disposal, to create productions where every second of stage time supports a goal. We try to make each play connected to itself and the world.

<<http://www.roseneath.ca.About.vision.asp>>

Moreover, the Children and Youth Theatre Company should not create only an urban cultural center for young people and families, where theatre is the centerpiece, out of which emerge programs and activities celebrating diverse art forms, but it should also produce ideas and cultures that are for all walks of life all over the Globe. The power of theatre should be utilized to open discussion, touch hearts and question accepted notions. Their mission should be to create and produce small/large cast, high quality theatre for youth and family audiences of every nature at large. They should produce popular theatre that has artistic, personal, and social integrity using all the resources at their disposal for the largest possible audience.

Third; as in the same internet source, its values should also be believed to revolve around:

- Being committed to school touring in collaboration with other theatres with a large casting so that they reach the wider community.
- Being representative of all.

Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA), in the form of the school tour, should be the most democratic form of theatre as the children and youth in the schools audience represent the Ethiopian society in general, not just the cultural elite or those who live close to theatres. In this context, creating popular theatre is neither an artistic nor a business decision, it is a must. No special skill or experience, intelligence or aesthetics should be a prerequisite to the appreciation of their plays. At the same time, their work should strive to be more and more sophisticated. Moreover, when adults see their, so-called, “children’s shows” they should comment on the multiple layers of meaning they have experienced and enjoyed during the show.

- Being artistic in nature.

Their work should be artistic in that it is imaginative, exciting and new. It should be at the forefront of their field. It should push the boundaries of age in terms of style or content or both. It should be in the form of:

- Feast – not fast food,
- Simple – not simplistic,
- Involve the audience – don’t distract them,

- Emotionally powerful – not superficial,
- Play up, don't play down.

According to my own experience, these are the artistic touchstones, guiding principles and tremendous challenges of creating theatre for children and young audiences/ spectacle for all ages/ family theatre.

- The productions' Personal qualities must be the playwright and/or the artistic team.

In other words, *Children's Theatre and Theatre for Young Audiences* should be artist driven rather than pedagogical, commercial or bound to any theatrical style. They shouldn't serve the curriculum, although they should strongly encourage educators to use their plays to create learning opportunities. They shouldn't be puppet theaters, clown theatres, mime theatres, issue theatres, commedia theatres, story telling theatres or physical theatres but they should delight in these forms and use all of them in the creation of specific plays. That is to say, there should be a company that seeks to reveal, through the theatrical imagination, the shades and colors, the tempests and calms, the humor and the suffering of our personal lives - Ethiopians. The theatre companies to come should limit this pursuit of the personal in one way only since the people they serve are not only children and youth but also adults. Therefore,

- The concerns of theatre programming must be central to theatre programming choices as young people embody complex realities, imagination and possibility.
- Young people have the power to know the world and to transform it.
- The mentoring of young people is a key responsibility of The Children and Youth Theatre Company.
- Being part of a larger world, their theatre has the responsibility of illuminating connections, building bridges, and celebrating diverse cultures.
- It should encourage the power of imagination and critical thinking in the young generations.

- Valuing and/ or providing Artists the tools to achieve excellence and realize their vision should be a must.
- Collaborative pursuit of the artistic vision is essential.

The Children and Youth Theatre Company staff should do their best work when all are involved as collaborators in the pursuit of this vision. As a result of which:

- It should be an attentive steward of the resources available to them/ artists.
- It should embrace the fundamental attributes of young people: curiosity, risk taking, candor/ truthfulness and imagination.
- The creation of original Ethiopian dramatic literature for young people and their families is essential. Its goal, over time, should be to become the African Theatre of Theatres for Young Audiences.
- It should be committed to producing the works collaboratively with other Federal States theatres for children and other walks of life that are supposed to come up.
- Moreover, it should aim at creating productions of the highest quality.

Although, there is obviously no formula for achieving quality in theatre art; time is a key element. Time for the playwright to create, time for him or her to test their ideas with a director and actors, time for designers and composers to develop their contribution as the project grows and time for actors to enact/ inhabit their roles with confidence and commitment. They have to make this choice artistically because I think quality work has the greatest impact on our audience. They should also make this choice from a business perspective because only works of the highest quality can compete in the international arena which is an important part of their dissemination in this competitive world. They can ensure quality by hiring the best talent available in the field/ market.

- It should seek to reveal what is personal to the children and the youth though they fully live in the world of diversity and complexity.
- The artists' intention should not be to cut corners given the resources at their disposal.

In other words, they better postpone a production rather than present something they feel is not ready in a theatrical sense, integration means that all the pieces of the puzzle - story, character, performance, design, music and direction should fit together as an aesthetic whole. In an artistic sense, integration should be to mean that the play/production answers all the questions that any member of the creative team can pose. In other words, integrity means the play satisfies the audience members, whoever they may be, on one or more levels.

- It should use all the resources at the theatres/ artists disposal for everyone and they must want everyone to see their play/production.

This is to say, next to creation and production, dissemination should be their most important core activity. They should recognize that original Ethiopian theatre, plays that are not adaptations of familiar titles, plays that use innovative forms and theatrical devices, require constant promotion. In this regard, they should be very entrepreneurial in using the resources they have to create a local, national and international market that is unsurpassed for a company of their size. Moreover, their success should be measured by the theatres and presenters where they have performed.

In other words, the theatre has many problems that require proper attention from the concerned bodies in order to function effectively and to spread its performances throughout the country. Moreover, the responsibility to promote children and youth theater/art rests on the Federal and Regional Governments of Ethiopia because:

- Private investors do not consider this area worth investing on because of lack of awareness,
- And those who know about it more may lack the initiative and/ or the capital to start with.
- Besides, the FDRE Government has signed the UN convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, which requires more efforts to bring about dramatic changes in Ethiopia.

Moreover, Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world and is mainly preoccupied with fighting against poverty. This is to say, although the attitude of the Federal and Regional Governments towards children and the young is now changing, they seem to have financial

constraints and seem also to give priority to other development endeavors during budget allocation. These seem what prohibit both the Federal and Regional Governments to implement their desired goals in this respect. Nevertheless, in my opinion, the question should be:

- Are Children and Youth related Development Endeavors secondary in nature?
- Do we really need to separate such attempts from poverty reduction efforts?

In other words, the theatre should get proper technical and financial support so that it flourishes in order to contribute to children's all rounded personality development. Besides, as far as I am concerned and as per the convention of all human beings, Child means every human being below the age of 18 years and who is going to shoulder all the responsibilities of tomorrow's Ethiopia/ World. And *Article 4 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which was signed on January, 1991, states that "*with regard to economic, social, and cultural rights, states parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation.*"

Here, the question to be asked is, does the Ethiopian Government pay the necessary attention to this convention and/ or to develop a strong *economic, social, and cultural* bonds among the children of Ethiopia/ the world. If it is particularly to this genre's development, definitely, the answer is not seen much progress although there are some practicalities observed at the theatre center at art kilo and in the different TV and radio programs for children. Further more, in Articles 29. 1(a) and 17 (b), it reads as follows:

"29.1. States parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: (a) the development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.

And 17.b. Encourage international cooperation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources."

Accordingly, it is necessary that all concerned with children's proper development – governmental and nongovernmental organizations, professionals, cultural and educational bureaus of the Regional Administrations, The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Capacity Building, UN Agencies, The National Council of Ethiopian Millennium Celebration Office of the National Secretariat, and others should look for a mechanism of getting financial resources required to encourage, revitalize and spread children and youth theater/arts in Ethiopia for the millennium and afterwards. I look forward to seeing the full swing development of children and youth theatre and literature in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia.

Furthermore, during my encounter with different officials for my research, I came to know that only in Addis Ababa City, there are more than 514 non-governmental organizations, of which 180 work with a motto to alleviate/minimize children and mother/ women related problems. And these non-governmental organizations have nearly 2 billion Birr of registered capital although they may have their own priorities. But I feel that these can also be explored as a resource area for the centers under this studies' revitalization program accordingly. Here, one may also look into the roles of higher institutions and/ or professionals altogether in the spreading and strengthening of what we have and adapt what the Globe has.

In brief, the children and youth theatre in Addis Ababa has four appointed managers since its establishment. But I feel that although they had their own considerable contribution to the development of the genre, they all were not very influential in coordinating efforts to revitalize, develop and spread the genre in Addis Ababa Ethiopia particularly and/or to create links with the diasporas and with the world generally. The persons involved included: Ato Million Tsegabe, the first appointee as an acting manager for four years. Ato Mossisa Kejela and Ato Kesete Abireha were the second and the third appointees respectively, both served for a shorter period of time comparing to the first and the fourth appointees. W/ro Azeb Kebede Aregawi, the fourth appointee, has been serving the theatre since May 2003 up to the present time. Moreover, although the centre did not function properly for almost two years from 1991 to 1993 because of lack of manpower, budget and political reasons in the country, afterwards about **sixty** plays were performed for wider audiences. This is a great accomplishment in spite of poor quality/ substance of the play scripts, documentation and other related problems that were manifested in the theatres.

The following are the lists of children's plays in Amharic that were staged by this theatre in different places in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia from 1982 to 1999 E. C.

Table 3. Play scripts from Children and Youth Theatre (1990 – 2007)

Table 3 Children's Theatre Play scripts from Children and Youth Theatre (1990 – January, 2007 G.C.)						
I. No	Title of the Play	Playwright's Name	Translator's Name	Directors Name	Staged in/at	Year In E.C.
18	Yezinabua Emebet	Harnold Iva Mariyana	Million Tsegazeab and Gedlu Asegidew	German Expert	Children and Youth Theatre	1982
19	Yehager Fikir	Hirut Tasew H/meskel		Hirut Tasew H/meskel	Children and Youth theatre	1982
20	Yaenkula Wefcho	Mary Francis	Hailemariam Seifu	Abeba Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1983
21	Melekotie	Aboneh Ashagrie		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1986
22	Tota Abamela	Efrem Bekele		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1986 FST
23	Melekote	Aboneh Ashagrie		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1986
24	Bilicho	Tesfaye Bekele		Asfaw Atsimat	Children and Youth Theatre	1986 P
25	Fitina Jerba	Abreham Nigusie		Tesfaye Bekele	Children and Youth Theatre	1986
26	Gunkul	Asfaw atsimat		-Azeb Kebede -Mosisa Kejela	Children and Youth Theatre	1986
27	Abebayehush	Asfaw atsimat		Asfaw atsimat	Children and Youth Theatre	1986
28	Hod Amlaku	Tesfaye Bekele		Asfaw atsimat	Children and Youth Theatre	1987
29	Huletu Wondimmamachoch	Bastiv K Patric	Mosisa Kejela	Abebe Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1987
30	Yegela Turufat				Children and Youth Theatre	1987
31	Abagugu	Aboneh Ashagrie		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1987

Table 3 continued

I. No	Title of the Play	Playwright's Name	Translator's Name	Directors Name	Staged in/at	Year in E.C.
32	Chachut	Mosisa Kejela		Biniam H/Silasie	Children and Youth Theatre	1987
33	Timi	Boris	Gedilu Asegidew	Asfaw atsimat	Children and Youth Theatre	1988
34	Newut	Motuma Asfaw		Mosisa Kejela	Children and Youth Theatre	1988
35	Argite	Asfaw Atsimat		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1988
36	Tenkolu	Asfaw Atsimat		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1988
37	Maruf	Steve Fitz Patrick	Mosisa Kejela	Asfaw Atsimat	Children and Youth Theatre	1989
38	Mithategnaw Babur	Children and Youth Theatre		Mosisa Kejela	Children and Youth Theatre	1989P
39	Wuroenna Doroytu	Tesfaye Bekele		Tesfu Birhane	Children and Youth Theatre	1989
40	Chamaw	Solomon Tadesse		Asfaw Atsimat	Children and Youth Theatre	1989
41	Yetesfa Ken		Asfaw Atsimat	Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1989P
42	Raj	Asfaw Atsimat		Mosisa Kejela	Children and Youth Theatre	1989
43	Gunkul	Asfaw Atsimat		Azeb Kebede Mosisa Kejela	Children and Youth Theatre	1989 FST
44	Mestengido	Asfaw Atsimat		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1990
45	Robot	Asfaw Atsimat		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1990
46	Tafach Firie	Solomon Tadesse		Tesfu Birhane	Children and Youth Theatre	1990
47	Zaki	Chalachew Achamyelah		Biniam H/Silasie	Children and Youth Theatre	1990
48	Fikir Betenatel	Asfaw Atsimat		Biniam H/Silasie Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1990

Table 3 continued

I. No	Title of the Play	Playwright's Name	Translator's Name	Directors Name	Staged in/at	Year E.C.
49	Biltabiltoch	Asfaw Atsimat		Solomon Tadesse	Children and Youth Theatre	1991
50	Sibsebaw	Melese Woldu		Tesfu Birhane	Children and Youth Theatre	1991
51	Yekebero Bahtawi	Derese Belayneh		Asfaw Atsimat	Children and Youth Theatre	1991
52	Yebekel Jiraf	The Actors		Azeb Kebede Solomon Tadesse	Children and Youth Theatre	1991
53	Adagnu	Derese Belayneh		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1991
54	Dinsir	Fanuel Dinberu		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1991
55	Lidet	Million G/T/H.		Melesse Woldu	Children and Youth Theatre	1991
56	Difo Dabo				Children and Youth Theatre	1991P
57	Shukar			Almaz Limenih	Children and Youth Theatre	1991
58	Melekote			Meleses Woldu Solomon Mengiste	Children and Youth Theatre	1993 FST
59	Bale Digriw Tota	Atikilt Nega		Million G/T/H. Lishan Sibihat	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
60	Birkiyewa Doro	Solomon Mengiste		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
61	Yeinkulal Wofcho	H/Mariam Seifu		Behailu Deriso Aster Bedane	Children and Youth Theatre	1993

Table 3 continued

I. No	Title of the Play	Playwright's Name	Translator's Name	Directors Name	Staged in/at	Year <i>E.C.</i>
62	Mechal Bejonia	Solomon Mengiste		The Actors	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
63	Aba Genna	Behailu Derso		The Actors	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
64	Tinishu Libs Sefi			Winland	Children and Youth Theatre	1993P
65	Awud Amet	Solomon Mengiste		The Actors	Children and Youth Theatre	1993P
66	Ergiman	Solomon Mengiste		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
67	Mewacho	Behailu Derso		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
68	Mignot	Azeb Kebede		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
69	Akibrot	Azeb Kebede		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
70	Kelemu	Solomon Mengiste		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
71	Yebiduru Mezez	Behailu Derso		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
72	Wotimed	Andualem Kassahun		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
73	Tinishua Tuari	Azeb Kebede		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1993
74	Kodakoda	Melkamu Alemayehu		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
75	Yeawudamet Kiloch	Solomon Mengiste		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994P
76	Sidetegnaw Nebir	Behailu Derso		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
77	Melekote	Aboneh Ashagrie		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994 FST

Table 3 continued

I. No	Title of the Play	Playwright's Name	Translator's Name	Directors Name	Staged in/at	Year <i>E.C.</i>
78	Yeberehaw Hakim	Solomon Mengistie		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
79	Chaweta	Melaku Zewdie		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
80	Enismama	Melaku Zewdie		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
81	Erdata	Azeb Kebede		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
82	Erigib	Andualem Kassahun		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
83	Yebuchi Fird	Solomon Mengistie		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
84	Achberbariw	Tiegist Kebede		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
85	Kiy'yir	Behailu Derso		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
86	Chombe	Million G/T/H.		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
87	Kuas Chewata	Behailu Derso		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
88	Senefu Temari	Behailu Derso		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
89	Mela Godel	Dawit H/Silasio		Aynalem Deferesu	Children and Youth Theatre	1994
90	Yemar Betemengist	Miki Tesfaye		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1995
91	Yechereka Nigist	Solomon Mengiste		Biniam H/Silasio	Children and Youth Theatre	1995
92	Tota Aba Mela	Efrem Bekele			Children and Youth Theatre	1995 in FST

Table 3 continued

I. No	Title of the Play	Playwright's Name	Translator's Name	Directors Name	Staged in/at	Year <i>E.C.</i>
93	Hod Amilaku	Tesfaye Bekele		Solomon Mengiste	Children and Youth Theatre	1995 in FST
94	Workama Assa	Yohanes Tesfaye		Andualem Kassahun Kidist Sisay	Children and Youth Theatre	1995
95	Doyo	Hailemariam Seifu		Anteneh Feleke	Children and Youth Theatre	1995
96	Yedukef Lij	Solomon Mengiste		Melese Wldu Aster Bedane	Children and Youth Theatre	1995
97	Aba Gugu	Aboneh Ashagrie		Dawit H/S Astawushign Benega	Children and Youth Theatre	1996 FST
98	Mistirawi Satin	Behailu Derso		Solomon Mengiste	Children and Youth Theatre	1996
99	Hilimegnaw	Eskindir		Melese Woldu	Children and Youth Theatre	1996
100	Tenkolu	Asfaw Atsimiat		The Actors	Children and Youth Theatre	1996 FST
101	Yeliul Serg	Behailu Deriso		Melkamu Alemayehu	Children and Youth Theatre	1996
102	Medihin	Nbiyou Tekalign		Biniam H/S. Anteneh Feleke	Children and Youth Theatre	1996
103	Dochona Kuncho	Astawushign Benega		Almaz Limenih	Children and Youth Theatre	1997

Table 3 continued

I. No	Title of the Play	Playwright's Name	Translator's Name	Directors Name	Staged in/at	Year E.C.
104	Yetefachiw Lielt	Solomon Mengiste		Tigist Kebede Astawushign Benega	Children and Youth Theatre	1997
105	Majira	Solomon Mengiste		Masresha G/M.	Children and Youth Theatre	1997
106	Atikiltegnaw	Masresha G/M.		Fikiru Kassa	Children and Youth Theatre	1997
107	Yaltenebebew Metsihaf	Solomon Mengiste		The Actors	Children and Youth Theatre	1997
108	Yemaywores Limid	Fikiru Kassa		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1997
109	Yefirafirie Mender	Solomon Mengiste		Daniel Eshetu Milion G/T/H.	Children and Youth Theatre	1998
110	Yetesheleme-chiwa Kitel	Behailu Derso		Hirut Kiros	Children and Youth Theatre	1998
111	Yeteraraw Shifta	Solomon Mengiste		Behailu Derso	Children and Youth Theatre	1998
112	Meliektegnaw	Behailu Derso		Dawit H/S.	Children and Youth Theatre	1998
113	Yezihon Gudguad	Mesfin Mekonnen		Mesfin Mekonnen	Children and Youth Theatre	1998
114	Shamiraku	Behailu Deriso		Dawit H/S.	Children and Youth Theatre	1998
115	Engidaw Sewuye	Behailu Derso		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1999
116	Enecheguara	Miky Tesfaye		Azeb Kebede	Children and Youth Theatre	1999
117	Yekolo Temari	Solomon Mengiste			Children and Youth Theatre	1999

2.5. A Review of Previous Studies Related to Children's Theatre in

Ethiopia

The only research work at MA and above levels that assesses children's theatre in Ethiopia is Dereje Melaku's MA thesis, which was written in November 1994. It is entitled "*The States of Children's Literature in Amharic*", which briefly looks into Children's Drama in Amharic as a subtopic. In my opinion, although children's theatre is worthy of investigation – as worthy as any branch of theatre, theatre activity, aspect of theatrical production, or as a genre of literatures, those academicians who are responsible for directing graduate research did not give attention to it or if they have, they ascribe almost no academic validity to it. I will give a brief account of the contribution of Dereje's work.

First, he clearly stated who children are in his overview of the Theories of Children's Literature in the first chapter. Second, he clearly stated the background and state of children's written literature in Amharic in Ethiopia in his second chapter. Here, he gives a general picture of written books for children or informative books, which belong to the period of the Ethiopian Revolution or Derg Regime that are original or translated. They are folktales, informative in nature of their organization. They were published here in Ethiopia or abroad in the former USSR-Russia during the Ethiopian Revolution. Third, he also gives a brief overview of children's drama in Amharic that was staged until 1986. And he also cites a list of sixteen play script titles from Gobeze to (Tota) Abamala including their year of performance, playwright's or translator's name, places where they were staged, and the director of the respective play.

And he includes a brief evaluation of the trends of publishing children's books and plays and brief information on the themes of six play scripts, which are *Gobeze*, *Tsedal*, *Jartinna Tinchel*, *Yeteraraw Nefas*, *Anbese* and *Doyo*. Furthermore, according to my comprehension, he states that unlike Amharic children's books, children's drama was not developed then. He also stresses that there are more translation works than original one in both genres in Ethiopia. To be specific, out of eighty six books written then fifty three were translated ones and almost all were meant to be textbooks or supplementary materials; and out of sixteen plays staged then ten were translated ones and there were no dramatic play scripts published to be read and to be played by children

who were not part of that play at the theatre. Besides, almost all were didactic. They deal with social issues. That is to say, they deal with serious social issues and are not meant for entertainment and adventure. Moreover, these were also dominated by Aesop and La Fontaine's Fables. He also divides the time into four periods (1916 – 1928, 1934 – 1940, 1950s – 1966, and 1966 – 1983 E.C. based on publication dates of these books and the stage of development reached at each period.

I could see that, although the publication of these books has shown a remarkable progress in style of writing, structure, content and genre, Dereje feels that very little development has been noticed in children's drama from 1920 to 1994. He seems also disappointed by Ethiopian people's lack of awareness of the value of children's drama. Besides, he seems to believe that drama does contribute not only to children's cognitive and social development but also it provides children with opportunities to learn to express their feelings and become sensitive to the values of others. Further more, according to him, there should also be, publishing agencies of children's books. Besides, he seems to support the idea that states: Writers, critics of children's books and teachers should receive some training on the nature and significance of children's literature and drama. He stresses that reading centers for children should also be opened up. He also suggests that the publishers and the training centers should receive support from the government and non-government organizations so that these genres can flourish in Ethiopia.

2.6. A Bird's Eye View of Children's Problems Reflected in Most children's

Plays in Ethiopia

According to my readings of the play scripts, personal experiences and observations, *Children's Theatre in Ethiopia* deals with serious social issues and their plays are not primarily meant for entertainment and adventure but for educating and to expose the social evils among the society. As social development is the process by which children develop role-taking skills, learn to comprehend the motivations and consequences of behaviors, and come to understand human relationships in the social world, Ethiopian playwrights for children's theatre seem to give more emphasis for it as a tool to pass their perceptions and the likes to the new generations. Here, as

the major markers in a child's social development include the ability to see perspectives other than one's own, make moral judgments, and demonstrate a command of basic social skills, children's interactions with family, peers, school, community networks, media and art centers - all play an important role in the development of interpersonal skills and social competence.

Nevertheless, according to my understanding, with the introduction of new wave of innovation in mass media throughout the twentieth century—film, radio, television—debates on the effects of new technology have recurred, especially with regard to the effect on young people. Each new media technology brought with it a great promise for social and educational benefits and great concern for children's exposure to inappropriate and harmful contents.

Moreover, great promise and great concerns about the effect of computer technology on children's development and well-being has been ushered in a new era of mass media for both most urban and some rural town children in Ethiopia nowadays. Although we do not find scientific researches on this issue in Ethiopia and Ethiopians tend to see these issues as being new, similar promises and concerns have accompanied each new wave of media technology throughout the past century because of those few elites' influence on the mass then and nowadays.

With the introduction of each of these technologies, proponents touted the educational benefits for children, while opponents voiced fears about exposure to inappropriate commercial, sexual, and violent content. In other words, exposure to inappropriate content like advertising, sex, and violence are concerns that have been raised with each wave of new technology. This is to say, with the advent of new media, such concerns have been renewed and heightened because of the level of interactivity possible for the young generation when “playing computer games” and using the communication features of the “Internet” at the school net programs and/or at the so called Tele Centers in both most urban and some rural towns of Ethiopia nowadays. The increased level of interactivity now possible with computer games and with the communication features of the Internet has heightened both the promise of greatly enriched learning and the concerns related to increased risk of harm. As children's interest, understanding, and use of media messages develops, so do their cognitive and logical thinking abilities, but children's learning may also be affected by the extent of interactivity involved in an experience with media process. That is to say, although interactivity is a natural element of face-to-face conversation, it is also an

element of communication via media. Because new media involve much greater potential for interactivity compared with earlier media and they also hold more promise for enriched learning experiences.

Remedies focused on parents as the gatekeepers for safeguarding children from potential harm may not be sufficient. Therefore, in addition to the support being provided for parents at schools and various groups' collaborative effort to improve the quality of media content for children, the roles of art/ theatre is also invaluable in this regard. Moreover, there are theatres that call for a leap of imagination on the part of both performer and spectators; their commitment of faith in the impossible makes possible the transformation of the everyday and ordinary into the unusual and extra-ordinary because of the advancement reached in exploiting these technological achievements. Without being in any way pontifical or overtly educational, the performing arts teach us all to take stock of our existence and to appreciate circumstances that we often take for granted.

Furthermore, to help ensure that this latest wave of media technology is developed in ways that best serve the needs of children, further research is needed to examine the effects of children's media use, especially in out-of-school environments, and to help inform the creation of better-quality content. In addition, efforts to improve content must address the structure of the media industry and the larger institutional arrangements that have given rise to the media culture in Ethiopia. To change the content of media, the underlying economic incentives for producing media should be addressed accordingly. To this end, new partnerships between academics, content providers, and government are needed to create new incentives for developing higher-quality media. The society must also be challenged to create cultural products that are entertaining as well as educationally beneficial. If we produce the very best content possible, perhaps we can move closer to harnessing the potential of new media to enhance children's emotional and cognitive lives in wonderful new ways.

In brief, the social issues of children's theatre in Ethiopia revolve around striving to detoxify the toxic or evil, social environments, and to strengthen the health and well-being of children and youth most frequently. The most recurrent evil, social environments that have been seen by the playwrights are much interrelated with the following social issues:

1. *Poverty* - starvation, homelessness, instability, insecurity in the streets, lack of trust, respect, and commitment at home, lack of access to different resources and opportunities, etc, are worsened/prevalent among the children and youth of Ethiopia today and their direct or indirect impact on their development is being seen much these days. Scarcity of clean water, unsanitary environment and the lack of child care facilities compound the problems. The number of deprived/disadvantaged children is growing. Urbanization and natural and man-made disasters have created increasing numbers of orphans, abandoned children, the physically and mentally disabled, juvenile delinquents and young prostitutes. The effects of poverty are particularly harsh on women and children. Both these groups suffer from social and political marginalization, malnutrition, poor health, and lack of opportunities to gain an education and earn a living. Although, there is lack of reliable data, there is an abundance of empirical evidence which points to excessive hardships that are being experienced by Ethiopian children and women as a result of social, cultural, economic, and psychological pressures. In other words, the magnitude of Children and Women in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CWEDC) is particularly not hard to quantify.

2. *Harmful Traditional Practices* - young girls are abducted on behalf of a would-be bridegroom who is unable to afford the traditional bride price and so resorts instead – with tacit consent from community leaders -- to abduction and often rape, after which the girl's parents often view immediate marriage as the only honorable outcome. Further schooling becomes impossible. Fear of such abduction, along with cultural barriers to girls' education and the practice of keeping girls at home to provide household help are the primary causes of low enrolment of girls in the rural Ethiopian schools.

3. *Jealousy, wickedness/evil, sluggishness/slowness, naughtiness/ill-disciplined ness* ... , which are highly tied with their day-to-day endeavors/activities or accomplishments, for instance, regarding domestic violence and gender influences:

- Most children of Ethiopia witness some form of domestic violence at home. Men who frequently assault their wives also frequently abuse their children,
- Most female high school students are physically and/or sexually abused/ill-treated by a dating partner.... They are hit or beaten and/ or raped by their boyfriends....

4. *Child Labor* – there are various forms of exploitation and abuse driven by poverty, lack of education and global economic and political situations in which the rights of a child are nonexistent, and he or she is systematically exploited and exposed to dangers through a variety of activities for the profit or other gains of adults.
5. *Juvenile Delinquency* - This is an epidemic of youth/teenage violence. According to my personal observation, this antisocial tendency is becoming a hardened criminal in Ethiopia these days. And it is manifesting itself in: running away, destroying property, uncontrollability, forcible rape/ early sexual activity, robbery/stealing, murder, aggravated assault, drug use/ addictions, gang membership, becoming alcoholic/ underage drinking, fighting, truancy/absenteeism, and heavy exposure to media violence.... And all these have their roots in early childhood. In other words this is to say that all nations long for peace. Leaders negotiate for it. Armies fight for it. Many pray for it. Yet it remains more elusive than ever. This is to say today's children who are tomorrow's responsible citizens should be the centre of our future development; everything should take them into consideration to bring about an all rounded sustainable and peaceful development in the world.
6. *Drugs, alcohol and chewing chat* or abuse are known much by the Ethiopian children and youth and violence is heard here and there among the teenage bullies in many parts of the community in today's schools and out side schools. Children growing up in the chaos, neglect, and violence of a stealthy environment experience stress and trauma that significantly affect their overall safety and health, including their behavioral, emotional, and mental functioning. They may often exhibit low self-esteem, a sense of shame, and poor social skills. Consequences may include emotional and mental health problems, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school absenteeism and failure, isolation, and poor peer relations. Without effective intervention, many will imitate their parents and caretakers when they themselves become adults, engaging in criminal or violent behavior, and inappropriate conduct. Moreover, many children who live in such homes may also exhibit attachment disorder, which occurs when parents or caretakers fail to respond to their basic needs or do so unpredictably.

7. *HIV/AIDS* became known as the cause of death. We notice orphanage increments in Ethiopia nowadays. These are children who have no family and more vulnerable part of the society unless assisted properly that may become dynamite in the future.
8. *Television Programs* contain elements that are obscene and indecency causing much harm to children's development these days.
9. *IT (Information Technology)* linked the world as fast as an eye wink for good or bad nowadays.
10. *Family and Political Instability* is worsened today in the country and became a serious problem hindering children's development. Despite improvement of alimentation quality in the country and, in general, expectation for year 2007 is good, latest happenings underline that children are vulnerable to internal political tension and are permanently exposed to maltreatment and war. Regarding the border and internal political problems, the imminence of war seriously compromises children's development and survival, for which consequences of an armed conflict would be catastrophic.
11. *Constructions* covered all passtime spaces in the city and the beauty of the jungles in the vicinities and the countryside is destroyed, and their negative impact on children's development is observed. Moreover, regimentation of their leisure time is stifling their initiative to develop different play skills....
12. *Schooling* caused much *discrimination* among the children of the well-to-dos and the mass as extremely as it could today.

These toxic social environments in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia is more dangerous for children and youth today than it was when I was growing up in the countryside some twenty or so years back. And to detoxify these social environments, enhance and strengthen the health and well- being of children and youth and to revitalize and to spread children and youth theatre in the country - in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia - only joint efforts can help to alleviate these problems. Consequently, the mere act of living in our society to day is becoming dangerous to the well-being of children and youth because of these socially toxic environments.

As one can see it, in the past years, there is a deterioration of the quality of social life, which has profound implications for children and youth whose personality, temperament, and life experience make them vulnerable. This social deterioration is related to the nature of the

economic system and/ or the political system and poor governance in Ethiopia particularly and in the world generally. It is also related to the increasing nastiness of the culture and global impact in which children and youth today live. The focus needs to be on education, where we – Ethiopians can act together to prevent problems that will only be compounded in the future. Now is the time to take advantage of the window of opportunity, *Children Theatre*, as an option to reach the children, youth and adults of the country and ameliorate this situation before it spirals out of control.

It is not by coincidence that *Children's Theatres* are currently being opened in many parts of our restless and hard – pressed world. It is above all because theatre, as no other art, reverberates with the immediacy of life. Each child's and youth's life is influenced by daily experiences in his home, school, community, nation, world, and each child's life likewise influences these. And the social issues addressed in these play scripts often try to respond to the children's psychological needs, give them learning opportunities of the good/ the bad of human achievements. And they help children to get entertainment through which their aesthetic appreciations increase. And finally these issues help them to become future adult audiences, who can find and hold what is admirable in the human race. And most of the issues can be seen in the daily experiences in the children's home, school, community, nation, world, and each child's life likewise influences these social issues. More over, adults of the world look and work hopefully to alleviate the problems of children and youth, for they hold the promise of the future. Now let us analyze critically these social issues with particular reference to the selected children's plays written in Amharic by different playwrights.

CHAPTER THREE:

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL ISSUES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO SELECTED CHILDREN'S PLAYS WRITTEN IN AMHARIC

As I have attempted to pinpoint in this paper, most educational literatures of the world demonstrate that dramatic play has a strong impact on children's cognitive and social development. It also provides children with opportunities to learn how to express their feelings and become sensitive to the values of others. In this regard, theatrical expression – both oral and written language – is also a medium through which teachers may understand and interpret children's thoughts. Furthermore, since drama has become an important method of understanding others and our own lives, children need to learn to appreciate, interpret, and evaluate it though theatre education has been missing from Ethiopian school curricula.

Furthermore, the Ethiopian culture today seems to pay no attention to children and their social problems. And it does not seem to give the right place to children, who have always been with us, and to give the proper consideration to their problems. There are varieties among our problems that children face. Some children come from happy homes where they are loved and cherished and others come from homes torn by tension where they are not loved, neglected and/ or disabled by their parents or caretakers.

The play scripts, which have been staged since the early 20th century, seem to reflect some of these differences among children of the Ethiopian nation. Moreover, these play scripts also reflect the conflict and controversy in our society regarding moral standards and life styles. Many of the old/ past values are being ignored or forgotten so are the values of contemporary Ethiopia. This is because children who watch different television programs and different electronic media communications are familiar with the mores and the conflicts of the rest of the world, as well as with those of their own country. On the other hand, we have children and parents who do not know what learning/ going to school means. Moreover, there are those who have never heard of theatre/drama as an art.

My research paper deals with the critical analysis of seven representative play scripts which are chosen based on the following criteria of script selection:

- ✓ the scripts' frequency at the stages of the theatres,
- ✓ originality of the scripts,
- ✓ The playwrights' profile and their contribution to the theatre's development,
- ✓ the availability of the play scripts,
- ✓ The issues they concentrate on.
- ✓ And the contribution and/ or the place of these play scripts in the history of Ethiopian children's theatre.

The play scripts selected for this thesis are the following respectively:

- **1 & 2. "Melkotie and Aba Gugu"** both by Ato Aboneh Ashagrie and they are the first and the fourth most frequently staged plays.
- **3. "Tota Abamela"** by *Ato Ephrem Bekele*,
- **4. "Hod Amlaku"** by Ato Tesfaye Bekele,
- **5. "Doyo"** by Ato Hilemariam Seifu,
- **6. "Tenkolu"** by Ato Asfaw Atsimiat.
- **7. Chilat`ena Dono** by Ato Ayalneh Mulatu.

These play scripts are representative of all staged plays in the theatres because of the issues they focus on and they are timeless and universal. The playwright is the same as that of the magician in setting himself/herself a goal. That is to say, their aim is to penetrate to the secret, beating heart of life; and by touching it, marvelously to transmute one set of circumstances to another. Their methods are the same. Instinctively he/she senses that words, stages, body languages and/ or actions are inherently magical, and that by setting one with another in his/her scripts, he/she may formulate the language which is his/her spell. These features are present in the seven play scripts I have selected for my thesis. Below is given a critical analysis of these plays.

3.1. CHILD LABOUR IN MELEKOTIE/ THE DOVE

Accordingly, this play script is the first of the plays for children, which was staged three times on the stage of *Children and Youth Theatre at Arat Kilo* dealing with this social issue of the Ethiopian child/ globe. It was written by Ato Aboneh Ashagrie in 1994 G.C. and prepared for the stage by Azeb Kebede in the same year. Solomon Mengiste and Meles Woldu prepared it together for the stages of 2001 and 2002 G.C. It has four characters: the *dove/“Melekotie”* _ represents righteousness/ goodness, the *Lion/“Anbessa”* _ represents physically powerful pегle /commanding characters, the *wolf/“Tekula”* _ represents evil/wickedness, and a *fig tree/“Warka”* _ represents educator/ teacher characters. In general, the play script reveals that all the impositions, evil, cruelty, poor governances, hypocrisy and all bad manners will be eliminated and changed by justice, righteousness, good deeds and the so called “democratic system”.

To be specific, the social problem that the playwright attempts to show is that children and the underdogs are forced to accomplish big tasks, which are beyond their physical, mental, moral abilities and knowledge, and which block their access to education. I quote from the dialogue between the dove and the wolf, the lion and these two animals of the play respectively:

ተኩላ (በቁጣ) ... ቁርስ የማታቀርቢበት ምክንያተ ምንድነው? ...

እርግብ ጌታው ተኩላ! እርስዎ የሚበሉት ስጋ። ያውም ከአቅሜ በላይ የሆነ እንሰሳ ስጋ። እንዴት ብዬ አድኜ ላምጣልዎ? የዛፍ ፍሬ እንኩዋን የሚመገቡ ቢሆን ኖሮ ከአያ ዋንዛ ስር የዋንዛ ፍሬ አለቅምልዎ ነበር። ግፋ ቢል ላቀርብልዎት የምችለው ትላትል ብቻ ነው። አቅሜ የሚፈቅደው። ... ከፈለጉ የእጅ ውሃ ላምጣልዎ፤ የምችለውን።

(ኩኩ መለኮቴ፤ 1998፤2-3)

Translation:

Wolf: (reproachfully/scoldingly)... Why don't you serve me a breakfast?

Dove: Lord Wolf, You are carnivorous. You prey bigger animals than I do. How can I prey and feed you the flesh of those animals which are stronger and bigger than me? If you were to eat fruits, I would collect and bring them to you from the sheds of the fig tree. ... If you forced me, I can provide you worms, which is within my capacity. ... If you want, let me bring you water to your fingers/ hands. That's what I can do for you. ...

(Kuku Melekote, 2006, 2-3)

From this and from the rest of the story, we understand that how the powerful 'pagle' compel the weak ones to accomplish dangerous tasks, which are not compatible with their physical and mental abilities. Furthermore, we can witness the same in the following quote, a dialogue between the wolf and the dove:

ተኩላ በይ ዋንዛው ላይ ውጪ። እርግቦች ወዲህ አየመጡ መሆናቸውን

ተመልክተሽ ንገሪኝ።

እርግብ አንዴት ብዬ ጌታው ተኩላ። በምኔ በርሬ። ክንፌን ሰብረውብኛል አላልከትም?

(ኩኩ መለኮቴ፣ 7)

Translation:

Wolf: climb up the tree, watch and tell me whether the doves are coming towards us.

Dove: How can I, Lord Wolf? I don't have wings, as I have told you, they have broken my wings.

(Kuku M., 7)

Besides, even the more powerful ones do not understand the problems of the poor/ the weak or they do not want to comprehend them. I quote from the same source:

አንበሳ (ያገሳል በጨኸት።) እኔ ፊት መነታርኩን አቁሙ። ይልቅ ለሁለታችሁ የተለያዩ ነገር እንድትፈፀሙ ትእዛዝ ልሰጣችሁ ነው። ለእግራ ሁለት አይነት የሚያማምሩ ጫማዎች እፈልጋለሁ።

እርግብ ጫማ ምንድነው የደኑ ጌታ?

(ኩኩ መለኮቴ፣ 15-16)

Translation:

Lion: ... (Roars loud) Do not nag in front of me! Instead, I am going to give you two different things to accomplish. I need two beautiful shoes for my legs to be made by you dove and wolf.

Dove: What is shoes, Lord of the forest? ...

(Kuku M, 15-16)

This shows that one of the problems depicted in the play is child labor. Child labor in real life is characterized by exploitation of the child as the conversation between the dove and the lion shows. They are forced to work for elders for profit or for their family. They are considered as incomplete adults. I quote from the dialogue among the characters listed in the play:

አንበሳ: ዛፍ ሊገዳን? ይታያል!

እርግብ ... (ተኩላን) እኔ በዚህ አልስማማም። አሁን ጥርስህ ስለደለደሙ ነው ጨዋ የመሰልከው። ጥርስህ ሲበቅልልህ ልብላችሁ ማለትህ አይቀርም።

ተኩላ እና ማን ሊገግሥ ነው? አንቺ ዘውድ ልትደፈሩ?

ዋንዛ በገዛ ፍላጎት ዘውድ መድፋት ድሮ ቀረ።

ተደራሲ (በጨኸት።) እርግብ! እርግብ! እርግብ!

(ኩኩ መለኮቴ፣ 45 — 50)

Translation:

Lion: Tree harming us? Will/Shall be seen! ...

Dove: ... (To the Wolf) I do not agree with this. You seem peaceful because of your teeth.
Now, your teeth are dull, but when your teeth grew anew, you may say: "I eat you".

Wolf: Who is going to be coroneted – to be King? Are you going to take the crown?

The Tree: No more self election – self coronation. It is no more experienced.

Spectators: (Shouting.) The Dove! The Dove! The Dove! ...

In spite of all these disapproval/ disrespect, mismanagements and selfishness seen from the Wolf and the Lion, at last the dove is elected by all the dwellers of the forest democratically to be the governor of the forest thanks to *The Tree* - educator/ teacher character's support.

In brief, this also happens in a real life situation by powerful overthrow of the old regime, or by the intervention of powerful nations and/ or by the support of the United Nation Forces. Besides, it is difficult to define child labor since the terms "*child*" and "*labor*" both resist universal definition because of cultural and social differences from one country to another. ILO (International Labor Office) has specified the concept through its – Minimum Age convention 1973 – Where it encourages member states to set a minimum age that is not less than the completion age for compulsory schooling, or in any case not less than 15 years. In this regard, although the most harmful forms of child labor are on the decline, child labor in an agrarian country like Ethiopia persists and may be even more difficult to eradicate. Ethiopia may have one of the highest rates of child labor in the world. But, if one defines child labor only as dangerous work by children, then the proportion of child labor is low in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, if one considers child labor to be any activity that detracts from children's normal development, then you have a high incidence of child labor in rural and urban Ethiopia. In other words, child labor ranges from four-year-olds tied to rug looms to keep them from running away, to seventeen-year-olds helping out on the family farm. In some cases, a child's work can be helpful to him or her and to the family; working and earning can be a positive experience in a child's growing up. This

depends largely on the age of the child, the conditions in which the child works, and whether work prevents the child from going to school.

According to the internet source <www.embassy.org.nz/encycl/c2encyc.htm>:

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has estimated that 250 million children between the ages of five and fourteen work in developing countries—at least 120 million on a full time basis. Sixty-one percent of these are in Asia, 32 percent are in Africa, and 7 percent are in Latin America. Most working children in rural areas are found in agriculture; many children work as domestics; urban children work in trade and services, with fewer in manufacturing and construction. Of those, almost three-quarters (171 million) work in hazardous situations or conditions, such as working in mines, working with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture or working with dangerous machinery. They are everywhere but invisible, toiling as domestic servants in homes, laboring behind the walls of workshops, hidden from view in plantations. Millions of girls work as domestic servants and unpaid household help and are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Millions of others work under horrific circumstances. They may be trafficked (1.2 million), forced into debt bondage or other forms of slavery (5.7 million), into prostitution and pornography (1.8 million), into participating in armed conflict (0.3 million) or other illicit activities (0.6 million). However, the vast majority of child laborers – 70 per cent or more – work in agriculture.

Consequently, considering what today children will become in the future and according to Ato Aboneh's effort to teach about the issue in Ethiopia, a lot is to be done by supporting organizations that are raising awareness, and providing direct help to individual children to minimize or eradicate this social problem for a brighter, hopeful future of Ethiopia. Generally speaking, although there is no universally accepted definition of "child labor", it is a work for children or employment of children under the age of physical maturity in jobs requiring long hours that harms them or exploits them in some way (physically, mentally, morally, or by blocking access to education), which requires world wide cooperation to eradicate or minimize.

3.2. CLASS DISCRIMINATION IN TOTA ABAMELA/ THE WISE APE

This play script is the second of the plays for children, which was staged twice on the stage of *Children and Youth Theatre at Arat Kilo* dealing with the issue of class inequality and its impact on children's development. It was written by *Ephraim Bekele* in 1989 G.C. and prepared for the stage by *Azeb Kebede* in 1994 and by *Solomon Mengiste* in 2003 G.C. respectively. This play has three scenes, which deal with three uninterrupted early morning animals' friendly conversations about different social issues of their life encounters. It has some where eight animal characters of which the five are central: the ape, the elephant, the hippo, the fox and the hyena. The dominant theme of the play revolves around mental maturity and ability to understand. According to this play, these two cognitive abilities are better than physical maturity to solve real life problems. I quote partly from the dialogue among the three wild animals at the place of their appointment for the fight with the undermined *Ape*:

ጦጣ፤ ሰውነቴ ትንሽ ቢሆን አንጎሌ ምን ያህል ግዙፍ እንደሆነ አሳያቸዋለሁ።

ዝሆን፤ መቼም እብደት ነው! ወፈፍ አድርጎህ ነው እንጂ በጤናህ አይደለም።

ጉማሬ፤ የምፋለመው ከዝሆን ጋር ቢሆን ኖሮ እንዴት ጥሩ ነበር።

ጦጣ፡ ... / ከመድረኩ መሐል ቆሞ የተዘረጋውን ሀረግ በመያዝ ወደ ግራና ወደቀኝ ያወዛውዛል/ ወዲያው ሀረጉ ይወጠራል። ... የጠርሙስ ስባሪ ይዞ ... የተወጠረውን ሀረግ ሁለት ቦታ ይቆርጠዋል። ከመድረኩ በስተግራና በስተቀኝ ከፍተኛ የመውደቅና የስቃይ ድምፅ ይሰማል።/ ...

(ጦጣ አባመላ፤ 26 — 28)

Translation:

Ape: ... Although my physique is very small, I will show them how powerful my brain is. ...

Elephant: ... This must be madness! You do not seem healthy! You are out off your mind! ...

Hippo: ... If I were to fight with the Elephant, how good it would be. ...

Ape: ... / standing at the center of the scene, he moves the tether to the left and to the right side of him. The tether tightens. ... Having a broken piece of a bottle ... he cuts the tether in to two. Something falling and a painful noise are heard to the left and the right of the scene.
(The Wise Ape, 26 – 28)

Here, although the ape appears to be physically very small, it is seen tricking and defeating the hippo and the elephant, which are stronger, muscularly compared with him.

Some of the social problems in this play script are related to children's problems in real life. To be more specific, the kids of the ape, the elephant, and the hippo are friendly though there seem to be negative impacts on their relationships from their parents' side. This is so because of the hippo's and the elephant's parents poor perception about themselves. I quote from the dialogues, which take place between the hippo and the ape's kid/ son and the elephant and his son respectively:

1. ጉማሬ መጫወቻ የሣጣህ ... የኔ የታላቁ የጉማሬ ልጅ ከማንም ደቃቃ ጠጣ ጋር የሚያንዛርጥበት ግዜ የለውም። እንደ እኔ እንደ አባቱ ታላቅ ጉማሬ ለመሆን ዋና ነው መማር ያለበት! ... ገባህ የኔ ቁጫጭ?! ...

Translation:

Hippo: May you be with out playing tools/objects... Being high and great hippo's son, my son, he has no time to fart with such a skinny ape. To be like me, as his father – the great hippo, he has to learn swimming! Do you understand my dear ant?! ...

(Tota A. 1999, 2)

2. ዝሆን የታላቁ ዝሆን የእኔ ልጅ ሆነህ፤ ይህንን የመሰለ ኩንቢ፣ ይህንን የመሰለ ቁመና

ይዘህ ከማንም ምናምንቴ ጋር እየተራገጥህ አታሰድብኝ። ...

Translation:

Elephant Being my son, the great elephant’s son, and having such beautiful trunk and height; don’t expose me to people who abuse me playing/ gambling with nobody’s gobbledygook/mumbo jumbo/nonsense. ...

(Tota A., 9)

From these dialogues, we learn that both fathers look down on other wild animals but they both have high regards and values for themselves. The hippo’s kid is shown to be foolish, unwise and ugly. The elephant’s kid on the other hand is depicted as very ambitious, easily annoyed, and easy going, and a person who takes things for granted all the time. I quote an instance from the dialogue between the hyena and the ape’s kid about these animals:

የጦጣ ልጅ የአያ ጉማሬ ልጅ ከቀስ አይቶ ስለማያውቅ ለእናቱ ሊያሳያቸው ይዞብኝ ሄደ።
... የአያ ዝሆን ልጅ ፀሀይን ከተሰቀለችበት ሰማይ ላይ አውርዶ በኪሱ ከቶ ወደቤቱ ሊወስዳት ያምረዋል። ...

(ጦጣ አባመላ፣1)

Translation:

The Ape’s Kid: ... Since the hippo’s kid do not know what a ball is, he took my ball to show to his mother.... And the elephant’s kid wanted to pull down the sun from the sky and to put it in his purse so that he could take it to his house....

(Tota A., 1)

On the contrary, the ape’s kid and his father are depicted as wise, farsighted, and friendly to all the animals and to themselves. I quote some from their friendly, family discussions.

የጦጣ ልጅ ግጥሚያችሁን ማልመለከት?

ጦጣ የአዋቂ ጠብ የአዋቂ ነው አልኩህ።

(ጦጣ አባመላ፣ 24)

Translation:

Ape’s kid: With out seeing your fight?

The Ape: Elder’s fight is for elders, I told you.

(Tota A., 24)

From this, we learn that in spite of their friendship, the Ape keeps some secrets from his son because of his age and he does not want to put his son in a stressful situation, which is logical and wise. ...

In short, their three fathers are depicted unfriendly, and unkind to each other and unwise too. The hippo’s and the elephant’s fathers are made to pretend as if they were giant, great, bossy or king-like physically, but mentally unwise, mindless, and easily tricked. The ape’s father on the other hand is human like, all knowing, wise, full of wisdom and witty, which made him to be the smartest of the three or all the animals in the forest. I quote from the dialogue between the ape and the hippo on the day of their fight:

ጉማሬ /የሀረጉን ጫፍ ይዞ በስተግራ ይገባል/ እሺ! ይሁን! ግን በሁዋላ አንተን አያድርገኝ!

ጦጣ ለሱ አትጨነቅ! ... /በደስታ ጮቤ እየረገጠ/ ገቡ! ገቡ! ሁለት ጉልበታዎች ከወጥመዴ ገቡ! ሁለት ድንጋይ እራሶች ከወጥመዴ ስተት ብለው ገቡ! ...

(ጦጣ አባመላ፣ 28)

Translation:

Hippo /Holding the tip of the tether/rope, enters the left side of the forest/ Ok! Let it be! But later, I do not want to be in your shoes!

The Ape Don't worry about it! /Jigging happily, the ape said they have entered; they are in my trap the two controlling/ powerful. The two stone heads have been trapped.

(Tota A., 28)

This is the climax of the play where all the animals learned a great deal from the ape's wisdom and the (three) children are now free to play and to have friends as they like and accordingly without any social/ class discrimination.

The other two characters are the fox and the hyena. The first is depicted as a go-between and catalyst that facilitates the conflict among the animals of the forest. I quote from the dialogue between the hyena and the ape's kid:

ጅብ ... ለመሆኑ ያቺን ቀበሮ የምትባል ጉደኛ ከነጋ አይተሀታል?!

የጦጣ ልጅ አላየሁዋትም! ... ትናንት ማታ ግን የአያ ዝሆን ቤት እንዳመሸች ጓደኛዬ

ነግሮኛል።

(ጦጣ አባመላ፤ 2)

Translation:

Hyena ... Anyway have you seen the so called strange fox since morning?!

The ape's kid: Never seen! ... But as my friend told me, she was at the mighty elephant's house yesterday night

(Tota A, 2)

According to the whole story, Fox is seen to be two-faced/ double-dealing all the time and the go-between among the animals. But the hyena is drawn as a fool, a coward, who takes all the orders of the strong, powerful animals, unwise, less far-sighted animals of the forest. I quote some from the dialogue among the hyena, the elephant and the fox:

ጅብ ጂረ ግድ የለም! ... ልሂድ ጌታ ዝሆን?

ዝሆን አዎ! ሂድ! ጥፋ ከፊቴ!

ቀበሮ /ጅብ ሲወጣ ከሁዋላው እያየው/ ፑ! ሸንካላ! አባቴ ይሙት ቦቅቡዋቃ ነው።

....

(ጦጣ አባመላ፤ 7)

Translation:

Hyena: ... Never mind! May I go Lord Elephant?

Elephant: ... Yes! Go! Away from my sight!

Fox: ... /When the hyena left, seeing behind him she said/ oops! Crippled! ... I swear in my father's name, he is a coward! ...

(Tota A., 7)

Here, even the fox confirms that he is more pusillanimous/ faint-hearted than the rest of the animals in the forest.

The major theme of the play revolves around the idea that intelligence and mental alertness are more important than physical strength. The protagonist character, the ape, which looks so small physically, is seen giving a lesson to all the animals of the forest; tricking, cunning and winning over the elephant and the hippo, which are huge physically and muscular. ... Besides, the play is full of proverbs, figurative speeches,

which add spice to the content that impresses and entertains the audience though the literary details may not be understood by children.

This is to say that the play's themes revolve around social and moral issues of the social animal, man. The animal characters in the play are the representatives of human beings in real life. The play seems generally to attack gossip, disrespect, arrogance, contempt, undermining, lying, hypocrisy, flattery, insult/ rudeness, rumors. Moreover, the play is rather didactic in nature and the language is elevated. There are full of difficult words and proverbs in it. The social issues in the play are ambitiousness, boastfulness, the impact of social status, poor governance, justice or courtship problems, forcefulness, religion and superstition, humanitarianism, guilt, abuse, homelessness, and so on ...

In brief, the major Ethiopian children's social problems as depicted in this play are the following:

- Children are not allowed to play with their peer groups/ playmates as they like,
- They have no proper places and tools to play with too.
- Besides, in almost all Ethiopian families, children are not allowed to have a family discussion, instead they are taken as immature being/ incomplete adults, who should take all the orders and burdens from the elders or their parents as in the case of the elephant's and hippo's kids in the play.
- Nevertheless, there are some families, who allow their children to choose for themselves and to learn from their day-to-day life experiences like the ape's kid in the script.
- Moreover, they don't have family guidance and support. They do not even have the opportunity to know about their environment and life in general. We can see the hippo's kid's failure to know what a ball looks like. And the elephant's kid doesn't know what

the sun is and he is greedy. He wants to own privately things that are naturally given to all. The following instance reveals this.

አንቺ ውቡዋ ፀሀይ ሰማዩን ተራምደሽ

የኔ ብቻ ብትሆኚ ከጋራው ላይ ወርደሽ?!

ለማንም ሳላላይ ሽፍንፍን አድርጌሽ

በኪሴ ከትቼሽ ወደ ቤት ወስደሽ

ድብቅ ድብቅ ድብቅ ድብቅ-ብቅ አድርጌሽ

(ጦጣ አባመላ፣ 1)

Translation:

You beautiful sun walk on the sky so that you descend towards me to become mine only. And I take you home putting in my purse and hide you there from the sight of others.

From this verse, we learn that kids become more ambitious and self-centered when they do not have adequate knowledge of their surroundings and environments. In addition to this, although Ethiopian children are born in a beautiful, wealthy country with all diverse natural resources, they are unable to use them wisely. They also have unrealistic expectations. They also get easily frustrated. ... This, we learn through out the story. To quote one:

መጋረጃው ሲገለጥ ጥቅጥቅ ያለ ደን ይታያል። ደኑ መሀል ለመሀል ሰፊ ገላጣ ቦታ አለው።
ከደኑ በስተጀርባ ዳርዳሩ በቁጤማ የተሸፈነ ሀይቅ ይታያል። ሀይቁ በማለዳ ጮራ ደምቁዋለ።
ከመድረኩ በስተ ግራ ገባ ብሎ ከሚገኘው ገላጣ ሥፍራ አንድ ትልቅ ዛፍ የታያል። ይህው ዛፍ የጦጣ ቤቴሰብ መኖሪያ ነው። ዛፉ ላይ የጦጣ ልጅ የተንጠለጠለ ቢሆንም አታይም። ዛፉ ሥር

ጅብ ተኝቶ እንቅልፍ ወስዶታል። የመድረኩ መብራት ሲበራ ... ጣፋጭ ጣእም ያለው የአንድ ህፃን ግለ-ዜማ በድምፅ ማጉያ ይታያል።

(ጠጣ አባ መላ፣ 1)

Translation:

As the curtain is opened, a thick forest is seen. In the centre of it, there is a wide field. Behind the forest, there is a lake, the shore of which is covered by reeds. The lake is very beautiful in the rays of the morning sun. To the left of the stage, there is a big tree somewhere in the middle of that field, which is the home of the ape family and other wild animals like the hyena. Although the ape's kid is hanging on the branches of the tree, it is not visible. Under the tree, the hyena lays asleep. When the stage light is on ... a kid's melodious song through the loud speaker is heard.

Here, as it is depicted in almost all the play scripts, Ethiopia is the paradise of the planet earth, the land of wilderness and virginity but her children appear to be weak in using its resources profitably and timely. Moreover, they do not seem to take over/ inherit the good qualities of working cultures of the previous generations. Nevertheless, the over all situations in the country seem to be favorable for living or good for mutual continuation. Let us see this from the following instance from the play:

የጠጣ ልጅ / ወደ አባቱ እየሮጠ/ አባዬ! አባዬ! ...

ጠጣ / አመልካች ጣቱን አፉ ላይ አድርጎ/ ኡስ! ኡስ! የአዋቂ ጠብ የአዋቂ! የአዋቂ እርቅም የአዋቂ ነው ልጅ!

የጉማሬ ልጅ / ወደ አባቱ እየሮጠ/ አባባ! አባባ! ምን ሆንክ?

ጉማሬ ምንም አልሆንኩም! በል አሁን ከጉዋደኞችህ ጋር እንደልብህ ተጫወት!

የዝሆን ልጅ / ወደ አባቱ እየተጠጋ/ አባዬ! አባባ! ምን ነካህ?

ዝሆን ትንሽ እንቅፋት መትቶኝ ነው! በል ልጄ ከዛሬ ጀምሮ ከጉዋደኞችህ ጋር በፍቅር ተጫወቱ! ማንኛችሁም ከማናችሁም አትበልጡም! ...

(ጦጣ አባ መላ፣ 30)

Translation:

The Ape's Kid: /Running towards his father/ Father! Father! Father! ...

Ape: /putting his pointing finger on his mouth or lips/ Silent! Silent! Silent!

Silent! Elders' fight is elders! Elders peace is elders' my son!

The Hippo's Son: /Running towards his father/ Father! Father! What happened to you?

Hippo: Nothing happened to me! Now, play with your friends as you wish!

The Elephant's Kid: /walking closer to his dad/ Father! Father! Father! What happen to you?

Elephant: Little inconvenience on my way! From now on my son, play with all your friends peacefully and lovingly/ affectionately.

(The Wise Ape, 30)

From this, we may learn that in spite of all the conflicts that exist among the tribes in Ethiopia, Ethiopians are tolerant to such social problems since long and they know what mutual trust and respect mean for the survival of their generation/ offspring.

The script also contains moral lessons, which reveal the reward of being tolerant and admitting one's failures in spite of all seemingly negative impacts that result from one's defeat. The new generation has a great deal to learn from the strong and weak sides of the old generation. We have learned that at last, the children were free to play and to be together in spite of all their families' social, political, and cultural differences. Furthermore, as it was seen earlier, children

were hindered from developing play skills by their respective parents. That means, they seem stripped off their natural creativity by structured activities and hi-tech toys in the city of Addis Ababa and even in the regional towns. Their innate play skills are lost as parents pay for them to attend classes and clubs or buy televisions and video game machines for their bedrooms. Even at school, they are told what games to play in sports lessons and sometimes even in the playground. But the regimentation of their leisure time is stifling their initiative. Nevertheless, some structuring of plays can be helpful now and then to get children going or help children who have difficulty playing. But this should not go too far.

To summarize, there are explicit and implicit children's problems in the given script, which are related to the script writing and real to Ethiopian children. To be specific, as societies expand and become more complex, economic power will often replace physical power as the defender of the class status quo, so that the following will establish one's class much more so than physical power: occupation, education and qualifications, income, personal, household and per capita wealth or net worth including the ownership of land, property, means of production. In the play, we have seen the apes' possession of modern instruments and their use being well trained and skilful.

3.3. SELFISHNESS IN “HOD AMLAKU”/GLUTTONOUS

Although there are some non-religious philosophies that hold a positive view of selfishness, usually on the basis that it isn't what the common usage refers to, and that the identification of *'promotion of the self'* with *'evil'* is an unhealthy practice that actually devalues some *good* qualities such as productivity or the taking of personal responsibility. One view is that since one need to act in a mainly self-interested way in order to advance in life, doing so should not be regarded as wrong, or labeled as harmful or inappropriate. Yet greed and selfishness' are concepts much maligned in our society. Now, let us see how we can think of these terms, under the general heading "SELF INTEREST" OR “SELFISHNESS” in “HOD AMLAKU”/ GLUTTONOUS, by illustrating it with quotes.

HOD AMLAKU"/**GLUTTONOUS** is the third play script of children and youth theatre, which was staged twice on the stage of Children and Youth Theatre at Arat Kilo. It was written by Tesfaye Bekele and prepared for the stage by Asfaw Atsimeat in 1995 and by Solomon Mengiste in 2003 G.C. This play has many short scenes – about twelve in numbers that deal with uninterrupted trickster scenes. It has five animal characters: a human being, two domestic animals – donkeys and two wild animals, a fox and a hyena. The dominant themes revolve around keeping one's promise, honestly and being content with what one has and to use it wisely.

On the other hand, the playwright tries to stress the negative outcome of those children who are undermined, neglected and not cared for during their childhood or not cared for/looked after properly by their parents and/ or by their respective societies. I quote from the conversation between the fox and the hyena:

ጅብ ... በረሀብ ልሞት አይደል? ...

ቀበሮ እንዴ ምን ማለትህ ነው አያ ጅብ! ሁለት ምን የሚያካክሉ ጎረምሣ ልጆች እያሉህ?

ጅብ ተይ! ተይ ቀበሮ! የእነሱን ስም አታንሺብኝ! ...

(ሆድ አምላኩ፣ 1987፣2)

Translation:

Hyena: ... I am dying of hunger...

Fox ... What! What do you mean dear hyena? You have such strong young sons!

Hyena: Don't mention it! Don't mention it Fox! Don't mention their names in my presence!

(Hod`amlaku, 1995, 2)

This happened because the father hyena acted selfishly when he got preys. He used to eat alone and gave only little leftovers to his kids while they were so young. That is why they left him alone during his old age so that now he is dying of hunger.

To be specific, the setting is in the wilderness. It is in the forest where one feels more lonesome. In this context, socialization is very poor. Instead, one wants to build ones muscles in order to resist all the challenges of survival games. But, that is the source of failure to all. I quote:

ቦታው ጥቅጥቅ ባሉ ደኖች የተሸፈነ ጫካ ነው። ከርቀት የተራራ ጫፎች፣ ከባሻገሩ የምሽት ጀምበር በደመና ተሸፍና ትታያለች። ደመናው ዝናብ በያረግዝም አልፎ አልፎ እያፋዋጩ የሚነፍሰው ሀይለኛ ንፋስ ዝናቡን ለማባረር ፍልሚያ የያዘ ይመስላል። ... ቀበሮ በሰማችው ድምጽ መብላቱን አቁዋርጣ ... ትብላ የነበረውን ሥጋ በፍጥነት አንስታ ከጎሬዋ ትገባለች። ...

(ሆድአምላኩ፣ 1)

Translation:

The place is covered by thick forest/jungle. From distance, the mountains'/ hills' pick and far from the universe the setting sun behind the cloud can be seen. Although the cloudy weather seems rainy, the hissing high wind that often blows seems stand by fighter, which chases away the rain. The fox stopped eating because of the sound it heard. She took the meat she was eating and hurried towards its hole. ...

(Hod Amlaku, 1)

From this, we learn that animals in the jungle are fighting for their survival and always they are suspicious and watchful of their surroundings. This is to say that those best adapted to particular conditions will succeed in the long run, as in the prevailing view in popular and scientific literature is that humans and animals are genetically driven to compete for survival, thus making all social interaction inherently selfish. Nevertheless, the nicest prevails, not just the selfish. I quote further from the dialogue among the two competing selfish wild beasts and the social animal, man:

ጅብ አንቺ አይደለሽ ያሳየሽኝ /አስዋ ነች አልፈልግም ስላት በግድ ይዘን ካልበላናቸው

ያለችኝ።/

ቀበሮ ማ /አኔ? ኸረ ይኼ ምን አይነቱ ውሸታም ነው!/
ደጅኔ አሁን ያልጠየቁዋችሁን አትቀጣጥሩ! ... መጀመሪያውኑ አርፋችሁ አትቀመጡም ነበር!

ደጅኔ አሁን ያልጠየቁዋችሁን አትቀጣጥሩ! ... መጀመሪያውኑ አርፋችሁ አትቀመጡም ነበር!

(ሆድአምላኩ፣ 28)

Translation:

Hyena: It is you showed me! While I said no, it is her who said let us catch and eat them.

Fox: Who? Me! What an untruthful is this!

Dejene: Now, do not speak what I didn't ask you. It was better for you not to involve in others business at first.

(Hod Amlaku, 28)

From this, character Dejene's stand in the play, we learn that the saying *niciest prevails, not just the selfish* is applicable to this context. I quote further from the dialogue between Buli and Dejene:

ቡሊ ... /ዱሊች/ መሄድ ካልቻለ የግድ እሱን መጠበቅ አለብን እንዴ?

ደጅኔ አዎና! ታዲያ ጥለነው ልንሄድ ነው?

(ሆድአምላኩ፣ 6)

Translation:

Buli /Dulech/ If Dulech can not go, are we supposed to waite for him?

Dejene Yes! Do you think we have to go with out him?

(Hod Amlaku, 6)

This is to say that as we are social animals, we derive pleasure from a positive social interaction. It is part of our brain chemistry. To add more:

ቡሊ ደጀንዬ ለምን አንገድላቸውም? (ጅብና ቀበሮዋን ማለትዋ ነው።)

ደጀኔ ደግሞ እነዚህን ገድለን ሃጢአት እንግባ እንዴ?

(ሆድአምላኩ፣ 28)

Translation:

Buli “Dji!” Why do not we kill them? /She mean the hyena and the fox/

Dejene Again killing these are we supposed to be sinful?

(Hod Amlaku, 28)

Here, we learn that far from being inherently violent, humans demonstrate a natural abhorrence of violence and conflict. This is to say, although one will tend to act selfishly for one's own self-protection naturally, in a world where one mainly encounters others doing the same and there is no guarantee in advance that others in the world will not act selfishly, an individual might prefer to act unselfishly unlike the wild beasts anyway. In other words, the two wild beasts in the play lost their well trapped/ hunted preys (the two donkeys and the boy in the play) because of their greed or selfishness. I quote from the dialogue between the Fox and the Hyena:

ቀበሮ /እየተንፋዋቀቀች ወጥታ/ ... እንዳትሰቁት ራሱ ነው ሊበላችሁ የነበረው። ...

ጅብ ... እሺ! ለወደፊቱ አርፎ እቀመጣለሁ! የዛሬን ብቻ ይቅርታ አድርጉልኝ።

ቀበሮ ዝም አትሉትም! እንዳትምሩት!

(ሆድአምላኩ፣ 28)

Translation:

Fox /crawling by her seat came out/ ... Do not leave him! He himself was to eat you.

Jib ... Ok! In the future, I will sit with out disturbing other, excuse me only for today.

Fox Ignore him! Do not forgive him!

(Hod Amlaku, 28)

From this and from the whole play, we understand that how selfishly act makes one defenseless and more vulnerable.

To summarize, in spite of all the above story/ play, renaming 'selfishness' as 'self interest' is playing with semantics and while that is important in itself the really important thing is to recognize that people to act from, and in accordance with, their own personal values and perceptions. The decisions they make reflect these values and perceptions. When you understand this you are able to gain a clearer insight into people's behavior including your own. Ironically, understanding that people act with regard to their own values, toward that which they consider to be good for themselves enables you have far more empathy with others than if you approached them with the assumption that they were being altruistic and selfless. It also allows you to spot confidence tricksters much more readily! As in the professional saying goes "*Beware Greeks bearing gifts*" is an old phrase which warns that people do not act out of altruism/ selflessness, and to beware those who wish you to believe that they do. Furthermore, children may learn from this play that selfishness is mankind's fundamental defect. Selfish means: self-centered, self-serving, self-important and it is at the root of every problem. I quote: (GNB: JAMES 3:16) *Where there is jealousy and selfishness, there is also disorder and every kind of evil.* Accordingly, I may say that every selfish person is potentially your enemy. Giving is the opposite of acting selfishly and Divine love is the opposite of selfishness. From the play and from my own life experience, I would like to stress that no other "*religion*" teaches to put others first, to love your enemies. Christianity is the only one that teaches you can be totally changed and become a person with a new nature. Besides, we are products of a corrupt culture that teaches selfishness. All sin is selfish. No one ever sins for someone else -- we do it for selfish reasons.

3.4. JEALOUSY IN ABA GUGU/MASKED CHARACTER

First, let us look at what the word “*Jealousy*” means. As in most literature of the world state: Jealousy is the powerful complex of emotions experienced at the loss, real or imagined, of something or someone you believe is yours, whereas envy concerns what you don’t have and would like to possess. For instance, *Othello* is filled with jealousy at the thought of losing *Desdemona*: Iago is consumed with envy of Othello’s prestige. Because jealous lovers tell multiple stories about those who arouse their jealousy and because the emotion is so corrosive jealousy is a common theme in literature and art.

As in my readings for the course prose fiction from internet sources: <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jealousy>>, the word stems from the French *jalousie*, formed from *jaloux* (*jealous*), and further from Low Latin *zelosus* (*full of zeal*), and from the Greek word for “ardour, zeal” (*with a root connoting "to boil, ferment"; or "yeast"*).

In brief, *Jealousy* is a familiar experience in human relationships. *Jealousy* typically refers to the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that occur when a person believes a valued relationship is being threatened by a rival. This rival may have no knowledge of threatening the relationship. Now, let us have a look at how it is dealt with in the given play.

This play script is the fourth play, which was staged two times on the stage of Children and Youth Theatre at Arat Kilo. It is Ato Aboneh Ashagrie’s second play script that was staged frequently at the children and youth theatre center. It was written by him in 1994 G.C. and prepared for the stage by Azebe Kebede assisted by Biniam H/Silasie in the same year. Dawit H/silasie and Astawshign Benega prepared it together for the stages of 2004 G.C. It has seven characters: the **heroine-Wubit** represents good thinkers, righteousness/ goodness, the anti heroine-the jealous, ugly princess represents the ruling class/commanding characters, the corrupt, and the assistant of the heroine-“**Sirikrke**” represents the educator/ teacher characters, who fight for the truth. The wild beast, which secretly works for the heroine and her assistant - The **tiger-“Nebro”** is the masked character/ “**Sirikrke**,” who add suspense to the readers/ audience. **Bustina** represents a twelve years old pompous, sluggish, mannerless character. The ugly

princess's servant-“Likemekuas,” represents one dimensional/inexperienced, puppet like character. The followers of the princess are flat characters.

To put it in a nutshell, although the play depicts two antagonistic characters mainly: the good thinker and envious/jealous characters, “The song”, which is sung by the heroine, is seen forcing the anti- heroine and her followers back into their own traps and making them think twice about their own bad deeds. I quote:

ውቢት (ታንጎራጉራለች።)

... ልዕልትስ ቆንጆ ናት አይደለች በረሮ፣

በቀለም ያማረች እንደ ብራቢሮ፣

ልዕልት በውበትዋ ሰውን አሳብዳ

ስሜንም ወሳስዳ ከብቴንም ወሳስዳ

እንጨት አሸክማ እከተማ ሰድዳ

የመንደር ልጅ ሁሉ በረሃብ ተጎዳ።

አጃቢ (በአድናቆት።) ኸረ እንዴት ታምራለች።

ልዕልት (ወደ ተደራሲ።) ... ከኔና ከድንብላል (ውቢት) ማን ይበልጣል? (ዝምታ።) ...

ውቢት አላችሁ? ...

ስርቅርቄ (ለተደራሲ በሹክሹክታ።) ይህ ነገር ቅናት አይመስላችሁም ወፎች? ደግሞ የሚጎዳው ራስን ነው?

(አባ ጉጉ፣ 14-16)

Translation:

Wubit/ The Beautiful: The princess is not a cockroach, she is beautiful and full of colors like the butterfly. (Artificially decorated)... She made every one mad because of her beauty, and she has taken my name and my herds and made us carry woods to the town. Besides, because of her, all the children of the village are starving.

Follower: (with admiration) Oh God! How beautiful she is!

Princess: (to the audience) ... who is beautiful, “Dinbilal”/Beauty or me? (Silence) Did you say Wubit? ...

Sirkrike: (To the audience in whisper) Is it not jealousy birds? ... It harms the self? ...

(Aba Gugu, 14-16)

In other words, the play depicts that all the impositions, wickedness, poor governances, hypocrisy and all bad manners like oppressing the poor will end up in punishment and will be overcome by justice, righteousness, good deeds of good thinkers. I quote:

አባጉጉ (ወደ ተደራሲው እያየ።) በሉ ከእንግዲህ ቀናተኛና ምቀኛ አንሆንም በሉ።

አጃቢ (በህብረት ወደ ተደራሲው ዞረው።) ከእንግዲህ ቀናተኛ፣ ምቀኛ አንሆንም።

አባጉጉ ውብነትን ይቅርታ ጠይቁ።

ልእላት ዋሽንትኤል፣ የነብር ጌታ! የጉራዛ ጌታ! ከእንግዲህ አልቀናም። ሀብቴንና ንብረቴን ሁሉ ለውብነት አወርግታለሁ።

ሊቀመከቶስ እኔም።

ቡስጢና እኔም። ...

(አባጉጉ፣ 51-52)

Translatio:

Aba Gugu (Looking at the audience) say from now on we are not going to be jealous and envious.

Followers (Together, facing the audience) from now on we are not going to be jealous and envious.

Aba Gugu Ask excuse from Wubit!

Princess ‘Washintiel’, the Lord of the tiger! The Lord of ‘Gureza’! From now on, I will not be jealous. I will leave my wealth and belongings to Wubit.

Likemekuas Me too.

Bustina Me too.

(Aba Gugu, 51-52)

This confirms what is stated earlier. Moreover, more specifically, the play depicts hard working children like “Wubit” and “Sirikrike,” who are efficient in their school work and in assisting their parents at home and even taming wild beasts like tigers. And it also depicts clearly the weak, inefficient, arrogant children like “Bustina.” I quote from the dialogue among these three children characters:

ስርቅርቄ ነብሮ ሂድ፣ ወደ ጫካህ ሂድ! (ውቢት ትደነግጣለች። ነብሩ እየገረመማት ይወጣል።) ምንኛ የታደልሽ ነሽ ውቢት! ምነው እንደአንቺ ጥሩ ድምጽ ቢኖረኝ እንዴት ድምፅሽ ሊያምር ቻለ ውቢት? ... የኔ በልምምድ ነው ያማረልኝ። ...

ውቢት ...የኔም ደምፅ ደገና የሆነው በልምምድ ሳይሆን ይቀራል? ...

ስርቅርቄ ... ለወደፊት ሳይሆን አንቺን ነው የማገባው።

ውቢት እኔ በትምህርት ጎበዝ የሆነ ነው የማገባው። ...

ስርቅርቄ ... እና ታዲያ?

ወቢት... ትምህርት አታጠናም። በትምህርት ጎበዝ አይደለህም።

ስርቅርቄ (ይደነግጣል።) ወቢት እንዳለፈው አመት ሰነፍ የሆነኩ ይመስልሻል? ማታ ማታ ማጥናት ጀምራያለሁ።

ቡስጢና አንተ ፈሪ! ወቢት ሚስቴ መሆንዎን እያወቅህ አብረህ ትዘፍናለህ?

ወቢት አንተ! ባለፈ ነገር አትናገር። እኔ እንዳንተ ያለ አላገባም! ቡስጢና ለምን ትረብሻለህ?

ስርቅርቄ ተወኝ እባክህ ቡስጢና። በጉልበትህ አምላክ። እኔ ጠብ አልፈልግም፣ ተወኝ እባክህ።
...

ወቢት ተከላከል ስርቅርቄ። እንዳትወድቅ ተከላከል። (ስርቅርቄ የቡስጢናን እግር አፈፍ አድርጎ ይጥለዋል። ወቢት ትስቃለች። ከላዩ ተቀምጦ ይደቁሰውና ብድግ ይላል።)
...

(አባጉጉ፣ 1 - 8)

Translation:

Sirikrike: Tiger go! Go to the forest! Wubit will be frightened. (The tiger leaves looking at her with contempt.) What a lucky person you are Wubit! I wish I had a good voice like yours! How did your voice become so nice? ... Mine became so nice because of the regular practice I had.

Wubit: My voice became nice may be because of the regular practice I had too.

Sirikrike: When I grow up, in the future, I will marry you.

Wubit: I will marry a clever student.

Sirikrike: What do you mean then?

Wubit: You don't study. You are not clever.

Sirikrike: (became scared) Do you think I am as weak as I was in the previous year. I have started studying during the night.

Bustina: You coward! Are you dancing with Wubit knowing that she is my wife?

Wubit: You! Don't speak taboo! I don't marry the one like you. Bustina why do you disturb?

Sirikrike: Leave me please, leave me alone Bustina. In the name of the God who gives you strength. I don't need fighting. Leave me, please.

Wubit: Defend Sirikrike. Don't fail, defend! (Sirikrike pulled Bustina's leg and knocked him. Wubit laughed. Sitting over him, Sirikrike kicked Bustina and stood up.)

(Abagugu, 1- 8)

From these, we comprehend that children are able to sense what is good and bad. And they favor the good all the time. Moreover, there are children who are idealist and prefer to die for the truth than for material welfare. I quote from the dialogue between Bustina and Wubit:

ቡስቲና ስናድግ እኔን የምታገቡ ከሆነ እጅሽን እፈታለሁ። ...መጥም ርቦሻል፣ ቆይ
እሰጥሻለሁ። ...

ወብት ለሆዴ ብዬ? እውነተኛ ሆኜ ሁሉም ቢቀርብኝ ይሻላል።

(አባጉጉ፣ 26 - 27)

Translation:

Bustina: If you marry me when we grew up, I will untie your hands. ... You are starved. Wait, I will give you some thing to eat. ...

Wubit: ... for my stomach's sake? It is better for me to be honest and die for it than being an untruthful/fraudulent person and having material rewards.

(Aba Gugu, 26-27)

According to my understanding of the whole play, being honest **like Wubit** helps to restore youthful energy and vitality, eliminate chronic stress, boost immune function, gives more power and strength to accomplish better in ones future endeavors as in the wise saying, *Truth is the Voice of Nature and of Time* ... it is the startling/ incredible monitor within us-Humans. ... To add more quotes:

ሊቀመኩዋስ ዋሽንትኤል /አባጉጉ/ ሆይ ማረን። የልዕልቲቱ ቅናት ነው ለዚህን

ያበቃን።

አባጉጉ ቅናት ፍቅርን ያጠፋል። ሰውነትን ይጎዳል። ያከሳል። አስቀያሚ ያደረጋል። ለዘሀ ነው

አንቺ አስቀያሚ የሆንሻው።

ልዕልት እግዚአብሔር ዋሽንትኤል ማረን!

ቡስጢና እኔንም ማረኝ!

አጃቢ (በሀብረት ወደ ተደራሲው ዞረው።) ከእንግዲህ ቀናተኛ፣ ምቀኛ አንሆንም።

(አባጉጉ፣ 50 -55)

Translation:

Like-Mequwase: “Washinte-el/ Aba Gugu, please forgive us. It is the jealousy of the princess that resulted us this.

Aba Gugu: Jealousy erases love. It affects the body. It skins. It makes ugly. That is why you became ugly.

In the name of the Almighty! Please, forgive us!

Bustina: For give me too.

Followers: (together, facing the audience) from now on, we are not going to be jealousy, envy.

(Aba Gugu, 50-55)

In brief, from this quote and from the whole play, we learn that the playwright's effort is to show how jealousy is dangerous to one's life. If everybody is jealous of everybody else, then out of jealousy we create such hell, and out of jealousy we become very mean. Comparison is a very foolish attitude, because each person is unique and incomparable. Once this understanding settles in everyone, jealousy disappears. Each is unique and incomparable. We are just ourselves: nobody has ever been like us, and nobody will ever be like us. And we need not be like anybody else, either. We know our interiority, and only we know it, nobody else. And we know everybody's exterior, and their exterior people have made beautiful. Exteriors are showpieces and they are very deceptive.

3.5. TOLERANCE IN DOYO/ THE BRAVE BOY

Just to see what the word "Tolerance" or 'Broad/ Open-mindedness' means from internet source: <http://www.tolerance.org/about/tolerance.html>. *First, the word "Tolerance" is surely imperfect, yet the English language offers no single word that embraces the broad range of skills we need to live together peacefully. For example, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. used the Greek term "agape" to describe a universal love that "discovers the neighbor in every man it meets." The various disciplines concerned with human behavior have also offered a variety of adjectives: "pro-social," "democratic," "affiliative." Second, as in most literatures of the day, "Tolerance" is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. Tolerance is harmony in difference. We view tolerance as a way of thinking and feeling — but most importantly, of acting — that gives us peace in our individuality, respect for those unlike us, the wisdom to discern humane values and the courage to act upon them.*

Moreover, interethnic conflicts, human rights violation, intolerance, nationalism and racism are, together with low eco-environmental awareness, the main threats to stability of the present world. Globalization and growing multiculturalism in nation state societies bring these issues to the

attention of many policy makers as well as ordinary people. Teachers may play a very progressive role in the process of combating intolerance and racism and can articulate the bottom-up policies for social change. In short, let us have a look at how the playwright and educator, Haile-Mariam Seifu, dealt with this social issue in his play.

This play is the fifth play script, which has been staged frequently on the stages of children and youth theatre. It was written by Ato Hailemariam Sefu in 1987 G.C. and prepared for the stages of 1995 and 2003 G.C. by Ato Asfaw Atsimeat and Ato Anteneh Feleke respectively. The story in the script revolves around a major theme that reveals the bad impact of a day's mistake and taking revenge within a family. It advocates tolerance and unity and condemns revenge.

It has six characters, the major being "Doyo,"- a boy who is eleven years old and "Totit"- a kid ape. Zebonch and Birke are Doyo's father and mother respectively. Buchi - the dog and Wuro- the cat are the family pets.

One of the major children social problems depicted in this play is taking revenge and preparing oneself to take actions in accordance with it. Here, we see how the ape's kid prepares itself to retaliate the major character Doyo, who has broken its leg accidentally. I quote:

ጦጢ. /ለተመልካች በሽ-ክሽ-ክታ/ ምን እንደምወድ ታውቃለህ? አንዳንዴ ተንኮል መስራት ደስ ይለኛል። የምስራውም እኔን የሚያናድደኝን ... እ ... የሚጎዳኝን ማንንም ቢሆን አበላጭቼ ገደል ለመክተት ነው። እንዲሞት ለማድረግ። /እያሳየች/ ይህ ዶዮ ነው። የእሱን ጉድ ከዚህ በሁዋላ ትሰሙታለህ። ...

(ዶዮ፣ 1979፣ 1)

Translation:

The Ape: /to the audience/ ... Do you know what I like? Sometimes, I like to do evil things. I do this to avenge against someone that disturbs me ... Ok ...just to pull it to its death bed - to the cliff so that it dies. /pointing at/ this is Doyo. You will hear about his bad deeds from now on.

(Doyo, 1987, 1)

From this quote and from my comprehension of the whole play, I learned that, children take vengeance/retaliation against someone whom they don't like and who disturbs them. As in the Amharic saying: “የሚያድግ ልጅ አይመርዝህ፣ ያረጀ ሽማግሌ/ሰው አይርገምህ።” Translated: Don't be a scapegoat or in the evil eye of a growing person and don't be cursed by an elderly person. They both have the power to hurt you because the young person has the time to do so and the old has the skill/experience how to trap and take revenge. Nonetheless, if you by mistake come across such incidences, you have to take a corrective measure as early as possible. Otherwise, the damage will be unbearable. I quote:

ዶዮ ጦጢን ተንኮል እንድትሰራ ያደረግሁዋት እኔ ነኝ።

ዘቦንች እንዴት?

ዶዮ አንድ ቀን ኮክ ልትበላ ዛፍ ላይ ወጥታ አገኘሁዋት። ከዚያም /የታሰረ እግሩዋን እያሳየ/ እግሩዋን ስብር አደረግሁዋት።

ብርቁ ውይ! በሞትኩት ጎድተህታላ። ያሻሽዋታል።

ዶዮ በጣም ነው ያዘንኩት። እጅግ በጣም።

(ዶዮ፣ 38)

Translation:

Doyo: I made the ape to be evil/wicked.

Zebonch: How?

Doyo: One day I found it on the cock tree. Then/pointing at its broken leg/ I broke its leg.

Birke: Oh my God! You have troubled it much.

Doyo I felt very sorry for it. Extremely sorry. ...

(Doyo, 38)

From this quote and from the whole script, we learn that forgiveness helps to win one's opponent, in spite of all the efforts made to hurt each other. Forgiveness is the moment to moment experience of peace and understanding that occurs when an injured party's suffering is reduced as they transform their grievance against an offending party. This transformation takes place through learning to take less personal offense, attribute less blame to the offender and, by greater understanding, see the personal and interpersonal harm that occurs as the natural consequence of unresolved anger and hurt. It is the mental, emotional and/or spiritual process of ceasing to feel resentment or anger against another person for a perceived offence, difference or mistake, or ceasing to demand punishment or restitution. Just to add more quotes:

ቡቺ ደግሞ ለዚች ነው ይህንን ያህል የምታሰበው?

ዶዮ አዎ! በጣም አዝኛለሁ። ምክንያቱም እኔ እግሩዋን ባልሰብራት ኖሮ እሱዋ በኔ ላይ ተንኮል አትሰራም ነበር። ሁለተኛ አልመታሽም።

ጦጦ እኔም ከእንግዲህ ተንኮል አልሰራም።

(ዶዮ፣ 38)

Translated:

Buchi: Is it for this no who that you worry so much?

Doyo Yes, I worried/ felt sorry so much because if I did not break its leg, it did not harm me. (To the ape) I never beat you again.

The Ape: I do not do any bad things again.

(Doyo, 38)

From this dialogue and from the whole play, we learn how forgiveness is the noblest revenge to give a good lesson to those who are wicked ones. In other words, *Tolerance* is a learned attribute, a virtue, which requires honest effort on the part of every person. It takes time to develop real tolerance, and it also takes commitment.

One of the most important issues that we all face in life is the question of forgiveness. It is important because, whatever our reputation in moral matters, we will never be free of the need of receiving forgiveness from God and from one another, and also of giving it to one another. We often think of forgiveness as something that someone who has done us wrong must ask of us. There is always another way of looking at something like the ape and Doyo did in this play. My

thoughts on forgiveness suggest that you focus on offering forgiveness to the person who has wronged you. Not to forgive them is like taking poison (continuing to suffer for what they did or didn't do to you) and expecting them to die!

To put it in a nut shell, as a “*Museum*” is a place, which serves *all* extending the reaches, innovative resources from all walks of life to all walks of life of the world, so is *Tolerance*, as a key of wisdom to co-exist in this ever shrinking, global and complex world. In brief, this is the over all lesson that the children learn from the play *Doyo* by Hailemariam Seifu. The instinct of sociability is natural in man, and it is this instinct that allows us to socialize with others in an agreeable and harmonious way. Words like patience, respect, equality, differences, will, knowledge, education, and culture may come to our mind and we may think that they are all in the concept ‘Tolerance’; they are all indispensable. Sometimes, people believe that their ideas, customs, behaviors and education are correct and think that all the other people must be equal to them. Sometimes, we believe that we are right. We haven't learned yet to respect the differences between the humans, we do not respect to the right of the other people, which is the peace for our co-existence. I think that this just explains what Tolerance means. If we want our world to be better, we must be tolerant in our relationships between persons, countries and cultures; we must know our differences and accept them with respect and always remember that my freedom finishes where your rights begin as the right saying of the prominent scholars of our time.

3.6. CHEATING IN TENKOLU/ IMMODEST

To start with, the word “*Cheating*” as in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:

- Is defined as an act of deception, fraud, trickery, imposture, or imposition. Cheating characteristically is employed to create an unfair advantage, usually in one's own interest, and often at the expense of others.
- It implies the breaking of rules. The term "*cheating*" is less applicable to the breaking of laws, as illegal activities are referred to by specific legal terminology such as fraud or corruption.
- It is a primordial economic act: getting more for less often used when referring to marital infidelity.

- Cheating is when a person misleads, deceives, or acts dishonestly on purpose. For kids, cheating may happen at school, at home, or while playing a sport.
- It involves the playing of only three kings in a card game whilst pretending that it was four as most card players say.
- Cheating is considered immoral by most, and may face stiff punishment if discovered, although some faculties indicate that they are reluctant to take action against suspected cheaters. In colleges guided by an honor code, cheating could result in expulsion. Academic honor codes appear to reduce cheating; nonetheless, it remains quite common among students.

Now, let us share what the playwright has depicted in his play regarding cheating.

“Tenkolu” is the sixth play script, which is staged frequently on the stages of children and youth theatre. It was written by Ato Asfaw Atsimeat in 1996 G.C. and prepared for the stages of the same year by W/ro Azeb Kebede. And the team of actors and actresses in the theatre prepared it for the stages of 2004. The story of the script revolves around a major character Tariku who is a bigheaded boy of thirteen years of age. It is a didactic play, which teaches through entertainment and magnifies the mistakes of the major character. And this makes this script somehow unique from the remaining six under study.

All in all, it has six characters: Tihitina – Tarikus younger sister, who is eleven and modest. Ato Admasie their father, who is in his fifties. Tigist is Tihitina’s friend -a girl of thirteen years of age, and the cleverest of the children characters. And she is a masked character, who tries to give a good lesson to the child characters. Adanech is the family’s servant, who is a polite and humble character. There is also a boy of eleven years of age, who is part of the audiences and the one who gives a good lesson to Tariku, the arrogant, self-centered and naughty character.

The main children’s social problems described in this play are jealousy, being a fan of foreign culture, weak, and cheating, arrogance, copycat/imitator of others, untruthfulness, gluttony and wickedness/evilness. I quote details related to these traits respectively from the given play script:

1. ታሪኩ የትህትናን ማጥናት በቁጭት አይን ይመለከትና አነስተኛ ወንበር ላይ ወደ ተቀመጠው ቴፕ ራመድ ብሎ ይከፍተዋል። ያስጮኸዋል። ትህትና ትደነግጣለች።...

(ተንኮሎ፣ 1988፣ 1)

Translation:

Seeing his sister, Thitina, studying her lesson, Tariku, walks towards the tape player on the small chair and opens it loud to disturb her. She is frightened. ...

(Tenkolu, 1996, 1)

In this instance, we can see the impact of jealousy on Tariku, who is frustrated

2. አዳኝ ... ያበድክ ነው የመሰለኝ ... ይኼ ዳንስ የምትሉት ነገር ምን የሚሉት የሰይጣን ሥራ ነው? ... ምንአለበት ይህንን ዳንስ የሚሉትን ነገር ትተህ በትምህርትህ እንደሰዋ ጎበዝ ብትሆን? ... (ተንኮሎ፣ 2)

Translation:

Adanech: ... I thought you became mad. This thing you call dance? Dance! What a devilish thing/act it is! ... What if you stop this dance and become clever like her, your sister.

(Tenkolu, 2)

Some children of Tariku’s age are bored with school work. They prefer to have fun. Other children have a strong sense of responsibility and give priority to their studies.

3. ታሪኩ ... ጥናት እምቢ ሲለኝ ምን ላርግ? ... /ቆይ እንዲያውም ደብተሩዋን ደብቄ የምትሆነውን አያለሁ። ደብተሩዋን ይወስድና ይደብቃል።/ ...

(ተንኮሎ፣ 2)

Translation:

Tariku: ... What can I do if it becomes difficult for me to study? ... /Wait, I will hide her exercise books and see what she can do? He takes her exercise books and hides them. /

(Tenkolu, 2)

From this and from my own experience as a student and instructor at schools, I may say cheating can be on a test, stealing someone else's property or idea for a project , copying a book report off the *Internet* and/ or someone else's words or work and turning it in/ saying as if it is his or hers original work/ idea.

4. አዳነች ... ታላቅ ወንድሙዋ ነው እንጂ ሰፈሩን ሲያምስ የሚውለው። ...

(ተንኮሉ፣ 11)

Translation:

Adanech: ... It is her elder brother who roams in the village, who disturbs the village.

5. ታሪኩ ... ከእንግሊዘኛ ሙዚቃ ጥሩ ዜማ ብኮርጅ ይሻላል አየደል? ...

(ተንኮሉ፣ 16)

Translation:

Tariku: ... What if I copy the good melody/rhythm from the English music? ...

(Tenkolu, 16)

6. ታሪኩ ...በቃ ግጥም ፅፈን እንደገና ዜማ እኔ አወጣሁኝና በቃ ጥሩ ዜማ ሆነልኝ።

(ተንኮሉ፣ 18)

Translation:

Tariku: (to hi father) ... We came from the school and ... that's all! We wrote poetry. Again I found the melody for the poem and it became a good song.

(Tenkolu, 18)

7. ታሪኩ /ወዲያው አባታቸው እንደወጡ መቱን ላጥላጥ አድርጎ በፍጥነት ይጎርሰዋል። ... ትህትና ግን ሰስት ቦታ እኩል ቆረጠችው። አቶ አድማሴም መጡ። ...

(ተንኮሉ፣ 20)

Translation:

Tariku: / as their father leaves the room for them/ immediately he skins the banana and eats it voraciously. ... But his sister Tihitina divided her share, the banana, into three pieces. Then, their father returned. ...

(Tenkolu, 20)

8. ትህትና እሺ። /ትወጣለች። ብሮቹን ቦርሳዋ ውስጥ ይክታል። ...

ታሪኩ ገና ምኑን አይታ ... ሌባ ነው የማሰኛት። ...

(ተንኮሉ፣ 21)

Translation:

Tihitina: ... Saying OK! She leaves the room for him. He puts the money into her bag...

Tariku: She didn't see yet. ... She will be called thief because of my deeds.

(Tenkolu, 21)

From all these quotes above, and from the whole play, we learn that some children are naughty, wicked, and evil-minded and try to take advantage of others. The play writer has tried his best to teach such children through entertainment and by amplifying their weak points. Moreover, some

kids cheat because they're busy or lazy and they want to get good grades without spending the time studying. Other kids might feel like they can't pass the test without cheating although cheating is not a good practice or idea in any walk of life. To add more quotes:

ልጅ ታሪኩ ራሱ እንዴት እንደወሰደ ሊያሳየን ይችላል። ታሪኩ ይቅርታ

እንዲደረግልህ ከፈለግህ እንዴት እንደወሰድክ አሳየን።

አድማሴ አልፈህምም በል።

ታሪኩ አልፈህምም።

ልጅ በሉ ይቅር ተባባሉ።

(ተንኮሉ፣ 25 — 26)

Translation:

Son: Tariku himself can show us how he took. Tariku, if you want to be excused, show us how you took it. (The money)

Admassie: (Tariku's father) Say, I do not do it.

Tariku: I do not do it.

Son: Forgive him now!

(Tenkolu, 25 – 26)

From this, we learn that the playwright's attempt to teach weak children to be good citizen through his characters in the play is successful.

Generally speaking, a common venue for cheating is in education settings, where it takes a number of forms. Cheating on tests (or other school based work) may include the sharing of information among test takers or the use of covert notes or crib sheets. Obtaining the questions or

answers to a test ahead of time is another form of cheating. On essay assignments or term papers cheating often takes the form of plagiarism. Another phenomenon of contract cheating has been observed, where students have work completed on their behalf. Internet plagiarism is a growing concern. Some schools subscribe to services which help them detect this type of cheating. Most colleges have written policies defining and punishing plagiarism/those who use it. Some students feel that teachers cheat as well by assigning arbitrary marks for assignments and not returning them.

3.7. ABDUCTION IN CHILAT'ENA DONO/THE SOOT AND DONO THE VAGABOND

To begin with, although, *Abduction* has different meanings, I will stick to the following meaning from *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia* for my thesis. It means *kidnapping*, as a near synonym in criminal law, but particularly in cases involving a woman or child. It is a social problem of national, international or terrestrial/ planetary in nature. Accordingly, let us see how Ato Ayalneh has depicted it in his play to address one of the social problems of children and or the youth.

The play is a Musical Drama/ play script and it was produced by one of the prominent figures in Ethiopian arts-Ato Ayalneh Mulatu Abeje in 1998 G.C. and prepared for the stage by him in the same year. It was staged frequently in Kendil Bete-Tewunet and as a Radio and TV drama here in the country. It has nine scenes, which are accompanied by the traditional dance and music of the nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. It is one of the play scripts that deal with multicultural issues. Although its major theme revolves around abduction/kidnapping as one of the harmful traditions, which is mainly female children's problem, it also depicts some other social problems that are related with conflicts, war, power, corruption, gender... in the states of Ethiopia.

To be specific, it has four major characters: the girl/"Lijitua"_ represents righteousness/ goodness, freedom, her brother/"Dono"_ represents catalysts, go-between, shy and wicked characters, her brother's friend/"Chilat – soot, a kind of black spot on a snow white surface"_ represents evil/wickedness, lawlessness, powerful male dominance, male characters and her mother/"the old"_ represents powerlessness, justice, educator/ teacher characters. Besides, it has

about five team/collective flat characters; such as, three judges, who are puppets of the powerful, best persons for the bride and the groom, witnesses of the illegal marriage, those who are liars, guests of each scenes, and chorus who are more of reasonable/ realistic characters in their attempts. I quote for the latter team/collective flat characters:

ኮረስ እናት ዝም ብለሽ አትታለይ መጀመሪያ ሐቁን ለይ።....

(ጨላት እና ዶኖ/የአያልነህ ሙሉቱ ባለ አንድ ገቢር ተውኔቶች፣1990፣6/ ከ 1964 እስከ 1994፣261)

ኮረስ ማህፀንሽ የተኛንበት ... አንድ ነው ልዩም የለበት።

(ጨላት እና ዶኖ/የአያልነህ ሙሉቱ ባለ አንድ ገቢር ተውኔቶች፣1990፣16/ ከ 1964 እስከ 1994፣271)

Translation:

Chorus: Don't be fooled simply, Mother! First authenticate the truth!

(Chilat and Dono, 6 ...)

Chorus: Your womb where we laid ... is the same with no difference!

(Chilat and Dono, 16)

That is to say, it is a quest to know from where did this entire social, cultural, economic, psychological, and political ... differences come from?

To be specific, the major social issue of the play is abduction, which is a very serious social problem for Ethiopian female children next to poverty. I quote from the play:

... ታሪኩ አንዲት በእናቷ ቤት በስርአት ስላደገች ልጅ ነው። የልጅትዋ ወንድም ዶኖ ለብዙ ጊዜ ህገ-ወጥ ሆኖ እናትና እህቱን የሚያስቸግር ጎረምሳ ነው። ጉዋደኛው ጭላት እህቱን ለጋብቻ ጠይቆ በከለከሉት እናትዬዋ ላይ ሸፍቶ ለረጅም ዘመን ጫካ የቆየ ቦለድ ነው። ጭላት ከወንድሙዋ ከዶኖ ጋር ባደረገው የቆየ የውስ ለውስ ስምምነት መሰረት በቅርቡ ልጅትዋ ተጠልፋለች።

Translation:

... The story is the story of a girl well brought up. Her brother, Dono, is a vagabond, rascal who all the time disturbs her and their mother. His friend, “Chilat”- a bully, is the one who asked up for the hands of Dono’s sister, but Dono’s mother did not consent. Because of this, Chilat became outlaw/bandit for long and ambushed this family. According to “Chilat’s” long standing underground agreement with “Dono”, the girl is already kidnapped

(Ayalneh Mulatu Abeje. One Act Plays from 1972 to 2002, 254)

From this, from my critical reading of the script, and from my personal first hand experiences, I would like to stress that abduction is the custom/normal practice of the people, which has been illegally supported traditionally and flourish among the society and has hindered the children’s and youth’s proper growth and development.

The play script depicts that this harmful tradition, the impositions, wickedness, poor governances, hypocrisy and all bad manners will be overcome and changed by justice, righteousness, good deeds, peaceful round table negotiations, struggle and democratic system although they appear to triumph/prevail at the beginning. I extend my quotes from the dialogue between the girl and her old mother:

የትህትና እናት: ... ከእንግዲህ አያስፈራሽም ... ማንም ከእኔ አይለይሽም ... ከጉያዬ አያወጣሽም ... (ወደ ጭላትና ሌሎች እየተመለከተች) እሱዋን ፈላጊ ባልካለ ... በፍቅርዋ የተቃጠለ። ያፈቀራትም ... የወደዳትም ... ከእኔ ነጥሎ አይወስዳትም። ከእንግዲህ ከእሱዋ ጋብቻ ... በእኔ ቤት ጥላ ስር ብቻ። ስትል ሁሉም እሽ. ብለው እጅ ይነሳሉ ... ዶኖና ጭላት በእናትና ልጅ እግር ላይ እንደተደፉ ሲቀሩ ሌሎች አንገታቸውን ቀና አድርገው ከአጠገቡ ይቆማሉ።

(የአያልነህ ሙላቱ ባለ አንድ ገቢር ተውኔቶች፣270)

Translation:

Tihitina's Mother: ... From now on, no fear-provoking ... No one will separate you from me ...
No one will take you from my arms (looking towards "Chilat" and others) when she said: if there is any husband who wants to marry her ... burned by her love.Who lovesadores ... can't separate and take her away from me. From now on, her marriage will take place under my roof. Hearing this all bowed with acceptance and said Ok! ... "Dono" and "Chilat" remained at the mother's and daughter's feet while the rest rose and stood up by their sides.

(Ayalneh Mulatu Abeje. *One Act Plays*, 270)

To put the long story short, from this and from the rest of the story in the play, one learns that though harmful traditional practices like abduction and rape are cultural practices in some regions of Ethiopia, there is a hope of improving this situation through continuous awareness creation and nation wide struggle. Here, although our heroine is not raped, typically, the girl who is abducted by a group of young men will be raped by the man who wants to marry her-either someone she knows, or a total stranger. Then elders from the man's village will ask the family of the girl to agree to the marriage; the family often consents because a girl who has lost her virginity would be socially unacceptable for marriage with another man. Sometimes the abductor keeps the girl in a hiding place until she is pregnant, by which time the family again feels it has no option but to agree to the marriage. But now days there are changes in Ethiopia because of the feminist movement in the country, which is represented by Tihitina's and her mother's resistance to the old tradition and their political support from the Government of Ethiopia. This is the over all lesson that the playwright wanted to pass to the new generation today.

CHAPTER FOUR:

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

An attempt has been made to show the possible causes of social evils for Ethiopian children as reflected in the selected plays. Besides, efforts were exerted to show the relationship between children's development and the impact of children's theatre on their proper growth and development. The arguments made in this study are meant to divert and change the misconception of Ethiopians about who children are and about what the role of children's theatre is in children's proper growth and development.

My critical analysis of the plays shows that the playwrights under study have contributed a great deal to exposing the social evils which affect children's all rounded personality development. In addition to it, these playwrights, the instructors in the Department of Theatrical Arts in the University of Addis Ababa, the actors and actresses of the two theatres under this study and the other playwright whose works were not included under this study have all played their role as citizens to educate all and to introduce and expand this genre as an art among Ethiopians. Although my study could not be exhaustive, the efforts made to expose children's problems and to show the role of children theatre in alleviating these social problems are believed to initiate the citizens concerned to work for the improvements of children's and their theatre's situations in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the theoretical information throughout the pages of this work and the critical analysis to show the social evils that affect children's development are hoped to mirror and validate the focus made to elucidate the subject matter and the over all findings of the research work.

Altogether, I believe to have added a part in paving the way for mature researches on this genre and in showing the relation between children's development and the roles and impact of children's theatre on their proper growth and development and in exposing the social evils affecting children's all rounded development.

My contributions as a researcher are that:

- I have brought forward the undermined genre for advanced research.
- I have tried to add the awareness of future researcher who would like to study this area in a more extensive and advanced manner.

Moreover, I would like to appreciate those playwrights and actors who have played their roles in educating the generations without proper guidance and support from the concerned bodies. In my opinion, the effort exerted by the University of Addis Ababa, its academic and administrative staff is worth acknowledging unlike the other governmental and private sector institutions.

Furthermore, although man was born free, he is in chains everywhere. Children's social problems are complex socio-political phenomena, which are extremely difficult to combat easily. Children are an integral part of society and they should be regarded as sources of hope and inspiration for future.

Their problems have also socio-economic causes peculiar to every society, which must be addressed if a long-term solution is to be found. Their problems are the result of poverty, over-population, and lack of adequate educational facilities, rural-urban economic gap and income inequalities. Therefore, adopting a comprehensive approach is vital to solve these problems and the role of the art/theatre in this regard is invaluable. Besides, it seems to me that the essential task of our era is learning how to deal with conflicts at personal, familial, communal and global levels creatively, compassionately, and non-violently. And one of the goals of children's and youth theatre and/ or the art is to create an environment in which children, youth, and adults/ elders working together with professionals in dance, music, and theatre begin to define and establish for themselves a new culture of peace. Here, children and young people like the elders will be equally seen and heard by all who participate in the art and/or by all the audiences.

Furthermore, children and youth manifest most clearly the human capacity to adapt even to the harshest conditions in life. Consequently, observing and encouraging them in natural process of development should be an effective first step in bringing about positive change for our communities, our society and our planet, particularly as the levels of conflict increase in each. They should be encouraged to play the central role in establishing a culture of peace, which is the most demanding activity of the human heart, mind, body and soul today and in the future. And children and youth should be viewed as the primary motivating force behind, personal, political

and economic decision making. In other words, to eliminate these mentioned and unmentioned children's problems particularly and social ills-problems of all walks of life generally, adequate and active participation of the people of different walks of life is highly essential. This is to say, as conflict is at the heart of theatrical expression, providing equal training to children and the youth like the elders in drama, dance and music means strengthening the forms of communication best suited to the exploration of conflict and peace in human relationships. Besides, if children are seen as peacemakers by us-elders then peace will be possible for which theatre is powerful. In this regard, developing presentations based on stories from the lives of the children and youth means working theatrically on the opportunities to experience peace by creating peace. And engaging them in positive and affirming ways means enabling them to be seen and heard as well as enabling them to experience and display the common notion that theatre is a healing art, which creates, addresses, and encourages healthy community.

As David S. Craig, Artistic Director of Canadian Theatre said: "We believe that the performing arts are one of the great civilizing forces of our age. Thus children should be exposed to a wide variety of arts experiences as often as possible, throughout their formation and that children are not only the audiences of the future but the passionate, energetic and hungry audiences of the present."

<<http://www.roseneath.ca/>>

However, unlike the case of the western and eastern worlds, we Ethiopians particularly and African generally are not lucky to exercise this in our nation due to different historical facts. That is to say, although theatre/ art is above all an excellent learning method for all children, young and adult people, combining fun and entertainment with a means for developing confidence, memory, self-discipline and self-esteem and for enhancing their social and personal development, it did not get proper attention even by the government side of our particular country.

Considering the selected play scripts' setting, I may say that the playwrights also confirm my point of view. Almost all of them have chosen the wilderness for their plays' setting to depict the predicament of art in Ethiopia particularly and in Africa generally.

Because of which, as a concerned citizen, I would like to call the attention of theatre experts, directors, technical managers, playwrights, actors, participants curriculum designers, policy makers, and institutions heads, instructors, governmental and non governmental organizations, UN agencies, philanthropists, embassies, spiritual leaders, concerned citizens, and artists to contribute towards the healthy intellectual, emotional development of children. Efforts should be made to revitalize children's theatre in Addis Ababa/Ethiopia particularly and in Africa/ the world generally to widen its scope. And I would further call their attention to the fact that they should help spread theater for children throughout Ethiopia/Africa so that the gap between children living in various parts of Ethiopia/ Africa can be narrowed down and the social problems of children solved.

In other words, as each of us wants our children and the youth to do more than just strive for survival, more than just struggle through those toxic, evil social environmental influences of the world such as changing school conditions of the Globe, poverty, barrage of nastiness, violence that poisons the ways our children and youth think and feel everyday - all the risk factors that weigh on our children and youth, we also want them to thrive: prosper, succeed, and grow strong and healthy. Other wise, children and youth are like sponges; they soak up what is around them and then release it when squeezed. This is to say, we will harvest what we have sown today. Therefore, before we sow, we have to take all the necessary measures for the seed to grow and develop properly and bear fruit, which will satisfy our needs.

I believe that young people deserve the chance to be challenged artistically and that by overcoming these situational challenges they will begin to discover the vast realm of possibilities and opportunities that are open to them such as: expressing themselves through a dramatic medium, working with professional actors, directors and technicians, taking responsibility for themselves as individuals and as members of a team, and getting experiences in areas other than that provided through education. Moreover, we have seen role models: brave individuals organizing their neighbors, city youth and others to find ways, to communicate strong, positive values to children and youth, values that are backed up with commitment of the most precious gift - time together in constructive activities, to take back the streets of Addis and other towns of the Federal States to be clean and green. In a like manner, an instance of such effort is reflected in the selected play scripts that the playwrights and art professionals contributed to the alienated

children and youth of Ethiopia to build a supportive community for them - one that provides safe and affordable children and youth cares. And let us try to see the professionals' effort in bringing about socially supportive communities, and assess their attempts to throw backs to an earlier time when neighborhoods and towns did really offer a kinder and gentler Ethiopia which provided norms of gentleness and good manners.

Children should be encouraged to create characters and environments for classroom dramatizations, to record the dialogue and improvisations, and to construct/ write play scripts by planning, recording, and creating improvisations based on personal experience, heritage, imagination, literature, and history. In addition, improvisation/ creativeness, often applied to strengthen social studies concepts, has been found to be effective in building relationships between teachers and students.

Children should be encouraged to discuss characters and situations in drama within socio-cultural contexts, analyze drama on their lives, and explore how social concepts such as cooperation and communication apply in theatre and their lives. In this way, students may discover how dramatic context can be incorporated in art forms such as literature, visual arts, music, and dance as a vehicle to develop thought and language.

4.2. Recommendations

Considering all the social problems of Ethiopian children and being part of it, and to help them to be connected with the world today, I would like to recommend the following very strongly. In my opinion, like those playwrights and theatre artists in the two theatre centers under this study, and the Department of Theatrical Arts at A. A. U., all concerned citizens and professionals should work together so that we would be able:

- ➔ To see improved/ upgraded and strengthened standards of present children and youth drama/ theater programs in Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia.
- ➔ To catalyze the introduction of children and youth drama/ theater training program at colleges and universities of Ethiopia and to motivate and consult colleges and universities professionals so that they take action, which will strengthen the cultural and creative life of our nation and it becomes more accessible to every child.
- ➔ To make children and youth theatre a significant segment of Ethiopian theatre scene for children and youth of Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia who constitute more than half the population of the city/the country.
- ➔ To encourage the playwrights of children's theatre to produce plays those entertains and educate children and to write play scripts which create/ describe child characters who are dynamic, and possess not only stereotype children's traits, but also characters who are unique in their behavior, actions and thoughts.
- ➔ To help and encourage script writers to meet the challenges of Competitiveness (film, television, and other electronic innovations), as the audiences' sharing experiences become part of a group's common bound at theatre halls.
- ➔ To initiate the publication and proper documentation of children and youth drama/ theater play scripts for future use and to initiate the establishment of links with the world/ global children and youth theaters and the diasporas to get more support and sharing of experience.
- ➔ To create a platform for local and foreign children who reside in Addis Ababa/Ethiopia/ Africa to come together and share their culture, life experiences.... As such attempt might help to narrow down the varied social, political, psychological and economic differences. It may also help the ever shrinking African/the world to bring

about peaceful co-existence, mutual trust and respect among races, places, tribes, religions... (Nationalities and countries).

➤ To make children and youth theatre one of the platforms where by children from different family statuses, and children's organization/ groups/ clubs / schools spend time together to discuss/ debate on their concerns and find solutions, build networks, make friends and much more.

➤ To initiate the creation of the platform for all who are concerned with Ethiopia's future citizens so that they come together and find solutions to eliminate/detoxify the toxic environments and to help the theater workers, theatre clubs, professionals meet to discuss problems, exchange ideas, direct attention to the immediate problems in the field, stimulate an interest on the part of non governmental organizations, professionals, etc.

➤ To make children and youth theatre a significant segment of *World Fit for Children Global Movement Campaign*, which help them to be connected and make common thread of everything that is happening on their issues, taking an initiative with the goal and vision of joining hands and minds of children and adults to create the aspired planet – a World Fit for Children and to ensure it remains that way in the coming millenniums.

➤ To make children and youth theatre a significant segment of *SCREAM – Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media*, which is an ILO Education and Social Mobilization initiative that relies heavily on youth empowerment and child participation and which recognizes that young people have an important role to play in raising awareness and exerting their influence in their communities in order to bring about social changes.

➤ To initiate grant and subsidiary from governmental agencies, UN Agencies, non-governmental organizations, philanthropists, foundations, corporations, endowments, art agencies, etc. so that to strengthen and subside expenses at the children's theatres.

➤ To organize :yearly fund raising activities, play writing contests, award giving for national prominent figures in the area and for the superior script writers or play writers, children and youth theatre foundation, children and youth theatre board establishment, etc.

- To respond to the children and youth psychological needs, learning opportunities, and help them to get entertainment through to become not only future adult audiences but also whole people who have access to the same quality of the arts as other people regardless of their age so that they can find and hold what is admirable in the human race. Here, as art/ theatre help to educate children on various matters concerning their life, it also satisfies their curiosity and develop their imagination.
- To assist the attempts of theatre/ the arts for children and youth to bring about all rounded sustainable development, peace and democracy and to enable it to serve as a platform to bring about a peaceful coexistence in Ethiopia. As the arts, including music, dance, visual arts, creative writing, poetry and theatre, are effective means for expanding young people's comprehension of a topic and providing them with powerful tools for self-expression by delving into their creative and emotional spheres through an active learning methodology so that this help the children/ youth move beyond the purely academic/intellectual spheres and into the creative and emotional depths of individual potential.
- To initiate theatre professionals, development agents and village communities into the practice of theatre for concretization and mobilization of all the generations so that they work as hand and glove for our better future. Here, it is to say that theatre itself is development and its roles are personal and social or community development. Consequently, *theatre people* would learn about trends in development funding, model projects and translation of ideas in to grant language and development professionals could experience theatre, appreciate its value, and understand why it does not easily lend itself to quantitative assessment.
- To enable the Ethiopian/ African authorities to evaluate Children Theatre's potential as a means of development agents.
- To contribute to the search for new methodologies in the practice of children's theatre for integrated rural development.
- To assess the effectiveness of these methodology, both in its immediate feasibility and long term impact.

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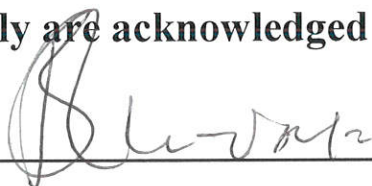
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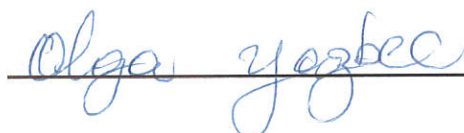
Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and all the primary and secondary source materials used for this research work directly or indirectly are acknowledged duly and accordingly.



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This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as university advisor.



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