

**A Feminist Interpretation of the Plays
of Amhara Regional State Television Programme**

By

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Abstract

Gender stereotyping is a cross cultural phenomenon prevalent across borders. The nature and the negative impact of such stereotyping are pronounced in poorest countries of the world like Ethiopia where education and access to media for females is deficient. The preponderance of such stereotyping in the region becomes the reason which compels the researcher to engage in studying the contribution of the Amhara region's Television drama in this regard.

This study, thus, which primarily focuses on investigating the extent of the reflection of gender stereotyping and the degree of females resistance to such stereotyping, also tries to assess the significance of the plays in abolishing this stereotyping.

To this effect, the researcher has employed a purposive sampling technique to select some plays which could better show cultural roles of sexes. In this respect, from the total of 102 plays transmitted in 1997 and 1998EC, the researcher had to confine himself to the study of only five plays.

The result of this study shows the availability of dramas which addresses the most important problems of femininity like early marriage and consideration of marriage as a reward for a female. However important raising these issues in the plays is for feminists, the plays are not up to the expectations of feminists because the portrayal of characters couldn't show the expected transformation.

From the plays, it is also observed that the television dramas are only rhythmic with the contemporary society in representing the role and representation of both sexes. However, feminists, in this regard, believe that the absolute reflection of a patriarchal society in a television play is only a contribution to producing a new patriarchal generation. Thus, the plays of the television programme in focus, in this project, shall act on creating a reasonably new environment with regard to the role and representation of sexes, to bring about a change in the actual patriarchal society.

In the sense of bringing the change in the plays and thereby the targeted audience, this study, therefore, intends to suggest some solutions. The researcher believes that both the agency and the drama producing companies including authors have to be aware of transforming the nature of plays in response to feminists aim of creating a new world free from females' oppression.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. background of the study

The issue of gender equality is now becoming a common language of the contemporary world. The efforts, with regard to encouraging women to build up their self assertion, have been focused at present. Literature, like other media reflects this reality. Literature which can be used as a tool to teach, persuade and change the attitude of people can be presented in different media. This can be done through drama, theatre, film, books or any other form. However, the audiovisual form of presentation would allow the audience to use two senses- audio and vision.

Television is one medium which fulfils the interest of many people of the contemporary world by entertaining and enriching information. Television drama (play) is believed to be the most important tool through which some important cultural upgrading or reformation can be achieved through the broad sense of entertainment. In support of this, Thornham and Pulvis (2005) forwarded that television drama has the potential to shape individual and societal traits.

Television, which is different from written medium of communication, does not require an educated audience. In countries like Ethiopia where the literacy rate especially in the rural areas is insignificant, the use of television broad cast as a means of addressing the public problems would be of paramount importance. Hence, improving the content of the plays transmitted in the television programmes could bring about the desired objective with regard to gender since femininity is a curse especially in the under educated group of the society.

In the traditional society of Ethiopia, the practice of culture is still putting its significant impact on the livelihood of the people at large. A study by NCTPE (2003) revealed that there are five major traditional practices in the country where three are much common in Amhara Region. These are: Female genital mutilation, early marriage and violence against women. All these practices suppress women in the patriarchal society. It is these gender related cultural practices that are focused in this study.

The following quotation by Warhol and Herndl in *Feminism* will help to understand two important concepts of concern in this work. One is the fact that women are under the pressure of men with a kind of stereotypically established patriarchal system. The other is the broadly accepted concern of feminists to uncover this unconsciously endorsed ideology.

Feminist critics generally agree that the oppression of women is a fact of life, that gender leaves its traces in literary texts and on literary history, and that feminist literary criticism plays a worthwhile part in struggle to end oppression in the world outside the text.

Hence, Feminism, which examines the social, cultural and political aspects of literary works focusing on the role, position and influence of women in the society, will be a tool for examining the plays broadcasted on the television program of Amhara regional state. In doing so, how women are portrayed (i.e. their role) and their representation and men's impact on them and the plays reaction to patriarchal programming will be the focus of analysis.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In a society where the rule of patriarchy is not put aside as insignificant, its influence on the theme of literature (particularly drama) will be an undeniable fact, for an author is not creating with inspiration, but reflecting the actual world in an artistic manner. Thus, it is not unusual to see Amhara TV drama which reflects the dependency, submissiveness, and lesser consideration of females on socio-economic as well as political scenarios. It is also the researcher's broad observation that females are portrayed as victims of the patriarchal system, whether this is subconsciously put or clearly understood by the victims. Abduction and forced marriages can be examples. Therefore, with this problem in focus, the researcher will try to investigate the portrayal of women in the selected plays broadcasted by Amhara TV based on the framework of feminist criticism.

1.3. Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the depiction of women in ARSTV plays in light of the concept of feminism. With this purpose in mind, the research will have the following as its objectives.

- Identifying the role of females in the family or in the community at large.
- Investigating whether female characters are resistant or submissive to the imposed patriarchal rules.
- Uncovering the patriarchally founded actions of male characters as evidence to the ideology's impact on females
- Suggesting measures to combat oppression of women with respect to the content of the drama broadcasted from the point of view of gender.
- Investigating how far the plays address the actual problems females face due to oppression under patriarchy.

1.4. Scope of the Study

This study is limited to ARSTVP plays that have been broadcasted in 1997 and 1998EC. It is also intended to see the nature of those plays only with regard to their concern to the portrayal of women.

1.5. Study Questions

The researcher in the process of conducting the research would try to answer the following questions which could serve to meet the objectives mentioned.

- > What do the plays reveal about women in the existing societal ideology?
- > How do the plays depict the political, economic, or social roles of women?
- > How do the plays react to patriarchal ideology? Are they favoring, or criticizing or are they unaware of the problems women's face in the patriarchal system?

1.6. Significance of the Study

The issue of gender is the burning issue of the day. Studying females' problems, in this regard, will be the most important move in the process of alleviating their problems. In this respect, the role of literature in reflecting women in the Ethiopian context would be a vital source to reveal wrong views about women in society. It is the researcher's belief that this study will put its share, in this regard.

Analyzing the content of the plays from the feminist perspective, will help to uncover the problems the Ethiopian women face under patriarchal ideology.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

The problem of accessing the plays' scripts and all the required plays in a conducive environment has to be mentioned as an obstacle for the completeness of this research. Hence, any flaws in this regard are acknowledged.

1.8. Organization of the Study

This paper consists of five chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction part that includes: objective of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, scope of the study and important questions to be raised in the study process. The next chapter deals with the revision of previously done research findings and issues raised by scholars in the research area. The third chapter discusses the methodology that will be used in this research. The fourth chapter is the part which presents the analysis of the selected plays and the last chapter reveals the summary of the findings, its conclusion and the suggested recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As a summary of what this section of the thesis is going to talk about, here is what Creswell (2003:33) forwards about literature review:

A literature review of a proposal or a research study means locating and summarizing the studies about the topic_often these summaries are research studies (because you are conducting a research study), but they may also include conceptual articles or thought pieces that provide framework for thinking about the topics.

2.1 A Brief Historical Background on Amhara Mass Media Agency

Ethiopian Television which is the only television station in Ethiopia has passed thirty five years in its broad casting service. It continued to be the only station until now though there were unsuccessful attempts of establishing a private television station by Dejasmach Daniel Abebe and yemisrach Voice Service at the time of Emperor Haileselassie.

ETV which was limited in its broad cast coverage strengthened its service provision through the establishment of Sululta Satellite Station. It also increased its quality through the introduction of colour television at the time of the revolution.

The station which only transmits programmes only from the capital in a centralized system began to transmit finished programmes which are produced by the regions like the Amhara Region. It is this new introduction in the EPRDF regime that makes the transmission plays which are produced by Amhara Region possible. This will undoubtedly

pave the way to reflect the region's socio-cultural values and thereby criticize and shape the unwanted socio-cultural practices.

The Amhara Mass Media Agency which has passed through different reformations since its establishment in 1985EC is now functioning in three Medias: television, radio and Press. The television broadcast which is an interest in this case has started its transmission since 1992EC for only a thirty minutes stay in a week.

The television program that has started with a half an hour transmission is now increased its duration of transmission to three hours. Dramas which were/ and are flesh and blood of the TV programme have been important tools to aware the public about the sociopolitical and cultural values of the region.

The history of modern drama is traced back to the time of Zewditu and the first drama was performed in 1913 at tourist hotel. The title of the play was 'Ye Awrewoch komcdia Mesalekia' (Aboneh Ashagrie: a paper presented in the ILS annual seminar held at AAU). These modern dramas which have begun in this way have become part of the Amhara TV programme a little after its inauguration though there were inconsistencies upon transmission. The dramas were transmitted under three headings. Initially, it was 'Mudea Kin' latter it became 'Engocha' and finally, until now, it is 'Mestawit'.

Although there was inconsistency of transmission of the plays at the early stage of the broadcast, the years 1997 and 1998EC were remarkably entertaining a relatively regular transmission of the plays. On the contrary 1999EC became a year devoid of dramas in its totality.

2.2. An Over View of Gender Issue in Ethiopia

Yideneku Mitiku in her Senior Essay entitled 'Woman of Ethiopia Before and After the Revolution' remarks that the women of the feudal regime are the most oppressed. She says that they were victims of the double oppression_ one is because the feudalism through class oppression together with her class brothers and the other is because of her gender by the culture.

In the feudal Ethiopia where the basis of living was agriculture, land ownership was the basis of economic strength and power. Women of this time, who were not owners of land, were thus powerless. This absence of economic strength together with the negligible educational background made women of the time, in their totality, not even to realize the males' oppression. Therefore, in this period, there was no as such a resistance or an organized movement which addresses women's patriarchal oppression. Hence, times hitherto this period can be considered as males' time in Ethiopia where women were not even aware of their unfair treatment by their male counter parts. At this time a little consciousness of gender can be mentioned, but it was only limited to a few females of the bourgeoisie group who were educated and were accessible to media.

Together with global women's movement and a world wide consciousness about gender, Ethiopia has accepted a United Nations document regarding gender equality. It became incorporated in an orderly manner in the Ethiopian constitution in the Derg regime (Yideneku, 1987EC).

In the time of the revolution there appeared new ways of women's organizations which are worth mentioning whenever the issue of gender in Ethiopia is raised. One of the giant organizations is Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's association, REWA. Even though the organizations

have strong political agenda, their contribution in creating educated and participatory women in Ethiopia is a worth mentioning point.

REWA is the first Women's association in Ethiopian women's history to incorporate women down to the kebele level to make a change in the socio-political and economic scenarios. Therefore, though the extent of success of REWA to bring about zero oppression of women is researchable, its contribution in this regard is undeniably magnificent.

As different global organizations give a focus on gender and as this becomes the issue of the contemporary politicians, the degree of emphasis given to gender equality in Ethiopia has increased starting from the reign of emperor Haileselassie hitherto. Thus, now-a-days, there is Ministry of Women's Affairs. This is a good evidence to imagine the extent of recognition given to gender stereotyping and the need of combating this stereotyping.

In conclusion, it is possible to say that the issue of gender is given a better attention than before. However, if this has to be interpreted in terms of prevalence of gender equality, a great deal of work is still ahead to be done. To this effect, the literary person has to put his/her share by improving the literary productions through a strong critical analysis of the literary works. This thesis is part of that effort.

2.3. Definition of Feminism

In the following paragraphs, some definitions of feminism(s) are forwarded to highlight the different views on feminism.

To put the definition of feminism in simple term, it is paying special attention to women. However, the fact that gender is interwoven with ideology and ideology in turn is a factor of many variables makes the

study of feminism, apparently, complex. In this regard, Tyson (1999) states that due to the different points of view in looking into the problems of women, some feminists call their field in its plural form (i.e. feminisms).

Belsay and Moore (1997) and Pope (2002) contend that feminism is political in its nature because politics is related to power, power of domination between genders in this case. Feminism, according to Pope, (2002), is "a politically motivated movement dedicated to personal and social change." In this definition, it is not clear which sex is the active participant of the movement and it is also not clear to which group change and the movement is needed. This is deliberately done to show that the participation in bringing about a change is inclusive of both sexes and so is the change. Thus, both sexes need an ideological change and that change needs their collaborative participation.

Jane Miller as quoted in Thornham and Purvis (2005: 111) defines feminism in a militant and strong manner. She says: "the purpose of feminism as I see is to disturb, irrevocably, the steady male gaze and the unquestioning male possession of the structures of economic and cultural power." This definition is related to literary productions that are visual (like TV dramas or films). Though the visibility of the concept of male gaze in films or dramas depends on the culture of the people from which those productions originated, it will have relevance to the analysis of selected plays in this thesis.

Krishnaswamy, Verghese and Mishra (2001) put feminism as "an attempt to formulate the issues and find a solution to gender problems." Thus, feminists will have to engage in a two-fold task: to discover the kind of gender problems and to participate actively in the combat against patriarchy's programming.

2.4. Historical Background of Feminism

The existence of problems of gender can be traced back to the beginning of life, in biblical terms, which attests the belief that Eve is created from a rib of Adam. This, according to Krishnaswamy et al. (2001), explains the different positions the two sexes have been given. They again mentioned Aristotle (384-322BC) as evidence to reflect the period's gender outlook by quoting Aristotle who says, "the female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities", "we should look up on the female state, as it were, a deformity, one which owns in ordinary course of nature."

Although females have long been victims of gender bias, an organized and systematized form of their movement is only half a century old. Krishnaswamy et al. (2001), Belsey and Moore (1997) and Pope (2007) state that feminism was started by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949), which shows the political and philosophical history of women as the institutionalized other, relative to the dominant notions of the male self. It emerged in 1960s where women continued to claim their right to self autonomy and determination. The history of the feminist movement can be categorized in to two major movements: first wave feminist and second wave feminism.

2.4.1. First Wave Feminism

Women's movement had of course been undergoing in the first decades of the twentieth century, in the period which is know as the first wave feminism. Feminist writers from Olive Schreiver to Simone de Beauvoir were writing articles, with the themes of women's material differences from men (Humm, 1992).

Virginia Woolf is a prominent figure in demanding women's financial independence through their employment and domestic parity with men. Of course Woolf's fundamental contribution to feminism is her strong

belief that gender attribution is a societal construct which began early in the patriarchal family and thus can be challenged and changed (Humm, 1992).

In this period, women won legal advances and public emancipation and, therefore, women's rights as wives and mothers and divorce and property laws were raised as crucial issues. Besides, women underscored the importance of equal access to education.

2.4.2. Second Wave Feminism

The second wave feminism gave a special attention to reproduction, experience and difference (Humm, 1992). Production, a focus earlier, has been substituted by reproduction. Feminists argue that it is reproduction which pulled back women from production. Reproductive rights, thus, become the core concern of second wave feminists.

Both first and second wave feminists believe that women's oppression is related to sexuality. The former, however, like other political theories has concerns with the state in asserting legal, educational and economic equal rights for women. The latter, on other hand, focuses on internalizing women's problems and their solution in dealing with reproduction politics for they believe that the personal is political. Media images of women which is the concern in this paper was the central concern of second wave feminism of the 1960s and 70s (Thronham and Purvis 2005).

Humm, 1992:11), summarizes the goals of the two feminist movements discussed above saying,

The movement from a First Wave Feminism which is principally concerned with equalities, to a second wave

feminism which uses women's differences to oppose the 'legalities' of a patriarchal world, is a radical and visionary formation. In the first moment women are objects, sometimes victims of mistaken social knowledge. In the second moment, women are challenging that knowledge from the strength of their own experience.

Julia Kristeva, as quoted in Humm (1992), Belsey and Moore (1997) and rephrased in Krishnaswamy et al. (2001) divides the historical and political phases of feminism into three categories. Therefore, for Kristeva, the two waves of feminism do not fully represent the historical background of feminism.

The first category of feminism identified by Kristeva is liberal feminism which has been attributed to masculine time. This demands equal access to symbolic order (political and professional equality with women). These feminists believe in reform, not revolt. The second which is after the students' movement of 1968 is radical/cultural feminism. This is females' time where they rejected male symbolic order in the name of difference. Activities of this phase of feminism were dedicated to creating a separate and radical women's culture. Women stressed that they are different and superior to men. In terms of theater, it tries to find or create new forms that go against traditional (male) constructs of theatre and create separate female forms. Their aim, according to Ruthven (1984), is to break the andocentric hegemony which conflicts with the women's internal feeling of reality and the reality outside.

The last one which Kristeva herself holds as a position, is demassification, a rejection of the dichotomy between masculine and feminine as metaphysical.

2.5. Feminism

In discussing feminism, contemporary feminist theorists distinguished between sex and gender as a starting point. They contend that gender is how one acts based on the expectations of the constructs of a society. It is a culturally shaped group of attributes and behaviors given to distinguishing feminine and masculine: differences of dress, social role, expectations, etc. Sex, however, refers to our biological differences: which determine human beings as female or male: differences of chromosomes, genitals or hormones (Humm, (1992; Pope, 2002).

Gender which is a way of centrally endorsed assignment of characteristics to both sexes is thus the business of feminists. Though, by virtue of its nature, culture is different in different places, races, religious groups, the similarity of its impact on women (females) makes it uniformly identifiable. This paves the way for feminists (both male and female) to stand together in fighting against the prevailing male domination.

In the process of extinguishing these gender differences, feminists should first uncover the unconsciously internalized ideological attachments of gender (Warhol and Hernd, 1991). Thus, ideology as it is an important concept also plays a pivotal role in feminism. Ideology, in broad terms, is a generally accepted kind of belief system which influences every society. The meaning of ideology often seems transparent or natural to people, but it actually serves the interest of dominant power structures.

Thornham and Purvis (2005:113) explain ideology and its feminist importance as follows:

If ideology is the process of making the world *mean*, so that we live our lives and construct our identities within the frameworks it provides, and if those frameworks operate through representations then it is clear that a key concern for feminist criticism must be with ideologies of femininity and the representations through which they circulate.

Ideology as presumed by Ruthven (1984), is a system of assumptions which operate in a society but never articulated fully. Like any other ideology, she added, sexist ideology (which is commonly termed as patriarchal ideology) or the ideology of male dominance, operates by repressing or displacing sexual contradiction. For example, sexual contradiction in working place can either be suppressed by the ideology of 'equal opportunity' or displaced by considering domestic works (for women). She said that a literary critic then has to figure out traces of ideologies which shape the literature and to point to the discrepancies between what a work intends to say and what a careful reading of it reveals.

The ideology, which is a concern for feminism, is termed patriarchal ideology. It refers to the norms and values that privileges males by promoting traditional gender roles. Every culturally endowed behavioral manifestation to the human population (male and female) is being considered as natural because of the long standing instigation with patriarchal ideologies. Humm (2002) clearly stated this as "we were all born female or male; but each of us learns to be feminine or masculine according to our experience of the prevailing social norms."

Feminists, in this regard, believe that feminism is not the question of deciding what a woman is by nature. It is rather a question of examining what a woman is assumed to be in a society or culture; how these assumptions come about and whose interest they serve. Consequently,

they argue that women should get more opportunities. They shouldn't serve patriarchal interests. Furthermore, male domination should be subverted.

Traditional gender roles, as has been constructed by phallogentric order, cast men as rational, strong, protective, decisive, and born to arts and education. But it casts women as emotional, weak, nurturing, submissive and born to sciences and engineering. These roles have been considered as reasons for gender inequalities. Thus, conventionally, leadership roles and decision making positions, engaging in higher wage jobs and those which need mathematical knowledge or logical reasoning have long been reserved only for the masculine (Tyson, 1999:85).

Feminists like Ruthven (1984) and Tyson (1999) believe that the roles of females as prescribed in a patriarchal society are not natural. Tyson (1999) said it is natural to give birth or conceive for a woman. However, those biological differences couldn't effect male dominance over female because there is no scientific evidence which claims males to be more intelligent, more logical, more courageous or better leaders biologically. Therefore, feminists argue that the difference is the result of cultural programming the violence of which considers one to be unnatural.

Women could not do highly paid jobs, and don't involve in political agendas because of the submissiveness and indeterminacy attached to their behavior. Generally, those who are denied the educational and occupational means of acquiring economic, political and social power by culture are deemed to be dominated by their male counterparts economically, politically and socially (Tyson, 1999).

Until recently men had unconditional conjugal rights to their wives' body, limiting women's civil rights. Women were denied individual

citizenship and free access to education and employment. These and other legal basis which are patriarchally inspired (the mere interest of men) affected women's personality (Lister, 1997). It is this fact which made Ruthven (1984) to write the following: "The feminist project is to end domination." Quoting Andrea Dworkin, Ruthven again stated (Ruthven, 1984:6):

In order to do this, we will have to destroy the structure of culture as we know it, its art, its churches, its laws its nuclear families based on father-right and nation states; all of the images, institutions, customs and habits which define women as worthless and invisible victims

Regarding some practical instances of patriarchal programming, Pope (2002) confirmed that both sexes are designed in a certain fashion, for example, to speak and write in a stereotypically coded way. In conversation, men talk longer and often about sports and politics, share more and compete with one another; whereas females talk quietly and more properly (often about children and relationships) and they support one another. In terms of gender, men like war stories or pornography, whereas women like romances and perhaps domestic soap opera. These interests are by no means biologically stimulated but culturally motivated or perhaps internalized. As it is said, these stereotyping may be unrealistic to certain historical periods and cultures.

Depending on their response to patriarchal ordering, women have been judged as 'good' or 'bad'. Those who are abided by the predetermined patriarchal female roles (i.e. those who are submissive, tolerate familial abuse, wait patiently for men's rescue, consider marriage as the final reward, modest, self-sacrificing, happy with serving the family) are termed as 'good girl'. However, those who are forward in sexual behaviors or polyandrous or generally violent of patriarchal sexual norms are termed as 'bad girls' (Tyson, 1999).

2.6. Patriarchy and Language

The finger prints of patriarchal culture are again observed in the day to day language use. Pope (2002) believes that language is a common place to explore the way women and men are constructed in different discourses. Tyson (1999) also discusses sexually connotated words like slut and stud which reflect a repressive attitude towards females' sexuality.

What Pope (2002) said regarding patriarchy's impact on language can be detected in Amharic language in the Ethiopian context. He said males are addressed as Mr. (Ato in Amharic), a substitute for master throughout their lives, whether married or not. Females, however, are addressed as Miss ('Woizerit' in Amharic) if she is not yet married and Mrs' ('Woizero' in Amharic) when she gets married. This is patriarchal for the title is biased on determining the unmarried (available) or married (unavailable) state of the sexes.

Imbalances between masculine and feminine terms are prevalent in English as in many languages, Pope (2002) asserted that in common ways the masculine one is the privileged (considered as normal, unmarked or positive), while the equivalent feminine term is abnormal, marked and often negatively loaded. Examples in this regard can be: mankind (not women kind), chairman (madam chairman), wizard (witch), master (mistress) governor (governess) dog (bitch) etc.

Similarly, the sexist bias is also observed in syntactic arrangement of items. For example, the ordering of male and female, Mr. and Mrs., he or she feels natural to use. The reverse of this ordering could be felt odd. We often, however, address as ladies and gentleman. This is again another blue print of patriarchy which asserts the projection of the masculine viewpoint.

In discourses, for example, in conversations women often use more hedging (it's a kind of/sort of cold). They become extremely polite (would you please ...) or they add on tag questions (we'll stay, shall we?) and they answer questions in a quizzical manner (Question: when shall we meet? Answer: around eight o'clock.)

2.7. Feminism and Literature

Under this heading two points are addressed. The first one is women as writers (authors) and the other is women's representation in literary works. Male dominated ideology has greatly affected women both as writers and in their unfair depiction in literary production. Before the feminist revolution in the 1960s female's literary production has for long been denied the chance to be included in the literary cannon, despite the magnificent popularity. In support of this Tyson (1999) said: forgetting the case of race; it is daring to say that women were unfairly taken out of the domain. In an attempt to skip this barrier, some works were published with a pseudonym (pen) names. For example Emily Bronte used Ellis Bell as her name in 1847. Ruthven (1984) in relation to women's writing said that the absence of their work from literary history is an evidence for the presence of significant patriarchal conspiracy.

However, with the advent of feminism, female writings started to flourish. The works were focusing on disturbing and rewriting the western established relations between men and women. Evans (1997:107) addressed this situation as:

Any one not rereading the works of feminist authors of the early 1970s can have no doubt that the project of these works was both to re-think and to re-construct the social world in radically different ways. Patriarchy was to be defined and over thrown and women were to assume a measure of hither to unknown power and autonomy.



As to women's representation, women heroines, in contrast to men heroes, were absent even in the nineteenth century for the culturally constructed womanhood was an obstacle for the portrayed patriarchal society. But works especially after 1970 reveal the development of a female Bildungsroman. Yet female bildungsroman remains in the bedroom. This is to negotiate with the social realities. In a more concise way, Ruthven (1984) concluded that it becomes traditional for a hero to succeed and a heroine, if she is lucky merely to survive in a narrative discourse. In short, it is public that male writers under (misrepresent) women (Pope, 2002).

2.8. Feminist Criticism

In the previous sections, it has been discussed that literature as a product of cultural heritage represents the woman as she is comfortably accepted by the male dominated society. If this repression or oppression of women and its reflection of literature is an accepted truth, an attempt of changing this scenario especially in the literary discourse will basically be the task of feminist critics.

Feminist criticism, according to Belsey and Moore (1997:104), "is a specific kind of political discourse: a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism." Politicizing feminist criticism is to indicate its concern of power relations between genders, the concept of 'personal is political'. Thus viable feminist criticism and theory has to touch upon the social, institutional and personal power relationships between the male and female.

Giving weight to the ideological influence of patriarchy in literature, Tyson (1999) advises feminist critics to see literary works 'against the grain' of the texts apparent intention. She contends that patriarchal literatures are not aware of the sexist ideology they are loaded with.

Feminist literary critics approach a literary work from the point of view of its influence on women in socio-cultural, political and economic discourses. Thus feminists' focus is on the marginalization of women, lesser consideration of women's contribution in 'manly' areas and male monopoly in socio economic and political powers. Their final target is to lead the world to a new scenario where zero oppression of females is guaranteed.

Regarding the methodology it uses, feminist criticism does not have its unique framework of criticism. This has been a debatable issue for feminists. It is a trend which uses a number of discursive strategies, like Marxist, psychoanalytic, structuralist, deconstructionist theories to render visible the hitherto invisible components of patriarchy. In this regard, Ruthven (1984:25), quoting Annis V. Pratt, put the other side of an inclusive nature of feminist criticism as follows: "lining a single best methodolatroly is not only dysfunctional but also an attribute of patriarchy." Here I think she wants to analogically indicate monopoly and/ or dominance.

In support of this grounded fact, Toril Moi in Belsey and Moore (1997:105) stated that feminists are pluralistic in their approach the same way as the socialist. Feminists use any approach to meet their final target. A key word, she added, in this sense is 'appropriation' in the sense of adaptation.

Tyson (1999:93) warned that feminists' have to be aware of the patriarchal nature of the literary theories like Marxism and psychoanalysis even though they adapt them for their own purpose of exposing the embedded patriarchal ideology. In other words, the prior target of the aforementioned literary theories should be to increase our understanding of women's experience both in the past and present and

to promote our appreciation of women's value in the world. In the strict sense, they have to help annihilate patriarchy.

2.9. Feminist Critics' Views on a Literary Work

In this section some important points, which can be used as tools to expose the sexist agenda of a literary work, are dealt with. They are discussed as they can be found in Tyson (1999: 101-102) and Pope (2002:123-124). These issues can be guidelines which will help a reader (critic) to describe the roles and representations of men/women in the literary works under study.

Pope (2002) focuses on the kinds of male and female characters represented in the literary texts; the portrayal of a family and the responsibilities attached to gender both in and out side home. He also advises critics to critically observe if there are gendered ways of speaking, dressing and behaving. On top of these, he also wants to emphasize the outlooks of different institutions such as religion, commercial, legal, medical or military on gender(i.e. if there is a biased treatment of sexes).

Tyson (1999) on the other hand, wants to emphasize the portrayal of the impact of patriarchal ideology in the society depicted (socially, psychologically, economically or politically). She, therefore, wants to see if there exists a relationship between portrayal of characters and the prevailed gender issues of the period the novel is produced. To this end, she also focuses on unfolding the contribution of the literary work in judging the gender issues it raised (whether it reinforces or undermines patriarchal ideology).

Moreover, Tyson (1999) also wants to stress the availability of sisterhood as a way of resisting male supremacy or as a means of improving

women's situation in the economic, political, social or psychological aspects. Thus, collaborative effort to a better end is tempted to be explored in the literary work as per its availability.

2.10. Television Drama and Feminism

The inclusion of this section becomes significant because much of what has been discussed was basically focusing only on written literature. Television drama, in this respect, will at least have two fold benefits for this particular research. The first is its nature of liveliness. This can be a better way to understand the contemporary gender outlook, as Thornham and Purvis (2005) quoting William (1990) witnessed, Drama, via television is built in to the Rhymes of every day life. The other is its visual nature which could help better represent the actual setting.

Drama, in a broad sense, according to Cuddon (1991) is "any work meant to be performed on a stage by actors. A more particular meaning is a serious play not necessarily a tragedy." Abrhams (1981) put drama as "the literary form designed for the theater, in which actors take the role of characters, perform the indicated action and utter the written dialogue." So it can be said that drama is a written play which is meant to educate the public or boost some positive cultural values. A drama out of this domain thus has to get remedy.

Underpinning the above position in Slote (1964) it reads: "in drama, therefore, literature expresses the ideal society in contra position to the actual society and the future society in antagonism with the present society."

Thornham and Pulvis (2005) citing Hall discussed television drama as "constructing, mediating and framing" people's individual and societal identity. Thus, from the above statements it is easy to construe two salient merits of television drama. The first, as it has been said before is

its liveliness to reflect the updated cultural ideology_ society's dominant cultural values with which this paper is benefited through the plays' reflection of patriarchy. The second is the play's power to design better future society (unbiased society.)

The following quotation from Thornham and Pulvis (2005:6) can strengthen the arguments for the stand taken regarding the salient quality of television drama broadcasts. It reads:

Television broadcast is endowed with a nature of nowness. Television characters Ellis argues' tend to become familial figures loved, or excused with a tolerance that is quite remarkable. We, as viewers, 'inside', isolated but connected in our domesticity, look out at the world through them, but they are assumed to be like us: they have shared values and they are organized in familial and pseudo familial groupings.

The fundamental problems of these television plays, however, was the disadvantage of this lively nature in relation to gender stereotyping. Sue Thornham in Jackson and Jones (1998) and Humm (1992) witnessed that the media is dominated by traditional stereotyped women. This, added Thornham, affects children during their socialization time. In this regard, feminists' presumption is dramas should not merely reflect the reality as it is. They believe that the concerned personalities have to shape it in such a way as to deconstruct patriarchal programming.

As to the problem of representation of women in media, Newbold, Boyd_barrett and Van den Bulck (2002) quoting Gay Tuchman (1978) forwarded that women were under represented or marginalized, sexualized, commodified and trivialized. They were portrayed as inferior to men. Similarly, Thornham and Pulvis (2005), quoting Mulvey (1984:14) argue that the women in films are the women as constructed to meet patriarchal culture enabling men to live out fantasies." Women

are subjects of gaze, their bodies eroticized and often fragmented for spectators (men's) pleasure.

Women's representation in films, as objects to be fantasized with by their male counterparts, not to the reality of her life, is different from their representation on television drama. Because the assumed audience for television drama is a family group whose gender and familial; roles are already constructed. But in films the audience is a voyeur spectator who is usually male. This is the reason why the camera eye in the later case is male.

2.11. A Brief Review of Previous Related Researches

In the process of assuring the originality of this research work, the researcher has gone through different researches conducted in Addis Ababa University. In the MA thesis written by Mekonnen Zegeye, entitled "Images of women and plot structure in the first four novels of Fikremarkos Desta" (June, 2001), Mekonnen has divided the female characters in the novels into two categories: women portrayed as victims of the culture and those who are depicted as 'strong' or liberated' women.

Apart from the critical analysis of women's portrayal, Mekonnen has tried to investigate previous researches related to women. He reckoned Fekade Azeze's (1982 E.C.) seminar presentation which addressed the necessity of knowing the status of women in the society before examining their fictional depiction. Zerihun Assfaw's (1988 E.C.) study on "images of women in the short stories written between 1949-1985 E.C." uncovers the fact that female characters are portrayed stereotypically.

Mekonnen has also listed some senior essays written on women characters. He concluded that Askal Lema's (1978 E.C.) "Images of feudal

women characters in seven novels” reveals the boastful, cruel and greedy behavior of female characters.” On the other hand, Yeshe Taddess’s (1978E.C.)” Images of women in five plays,” reflects the feeble, emotional and shallow nature of females. The works by Teferi Melese (1978E.c.) “ Images of women in three plays of Ayalneh Mulat” and Jemanesh Solomon(1980E.C.)” Images of young girls in five plays” came up with findings that are similar with Yeshe Taddesse’s (1978E.C.)

Alem Bayleyegne (1984E.C.) “Images of women in the works of three authoresses”, Mulumebet Zenebe’s (1988E.c.) “Comparative analysis of women writers” and Mulualen Denbegna’s (2006E.C.) MA thesis on “aspects of feminism in Amadi’s The concubine and The great Ponds and Emechata’s Second Class Citizen: A post Structuralist Approach” are some of the research works which brought a new insight into the portrayal of female characters. All the three studies unfold the positive depiction of female characters.

The MA thesis by Yihenew Melese entitled ” A Feminist reading of ‘Tobya’ and ‘Endewotach Kerech’ and Teshome Egere’s work entitled “The portrayal of women in Dhabaa’s selected Afan oromo prose fiction” are again worth mentioning. These two researches which focus on domestic literature concluded that the portrayal of females in the literatures of their interest inculcates both groups of women: those who strongly resist patriarchal domination and others who are under the influence of patriarchal ideology. Conclusions of Yemisirach Binalfew (1996E.C.) and Metamu Friew (1995E.C.) are similar to the above two except that the focus of research in the case of these two researchers is on African literatures.

Two other research works of relevance are done on different genres. One is done by Tigist Defaru (2006E.C.). Tigist has demonstrated how females are portrayed in two domestic films: ‘Kezkaza Wolafen’ and ‘Semayawi Feres’. She concluded that female actresses were portrayed as sacrificing, objects of male gaze and dependents. The other was done by

Fitsum Asmerom (2006E.C.). Fitsum's work is not of much relevance to this research with regard to the subject he raised except the similarity in the genre.

Mekonnen Fekadu's (2005E.C.) MA thesis entitled "Images of women in the fiction of selected women writers: A comparative black feminist study" seems to focus on studying the objective of black women authoresses. To this end, he has rated the portrayal of women in the works into five major states: as victims of gender and class oppression, as mothers, as rebellious and non conformists, as custodians of cultural values and tradition and as figures of female solidarity and upholders of family relation. In conclusion, he said, "It seems that black women writers have a common agenda _ to deconstruct the stereotyped image of women and fight against several forms of oppression that women still suffer in Africa."

Although the above works are related to females' portrayal in different works, none of these deal with females' portrayal in Amhara Regional TV drama. There fore, the researcher feels that this study is a new paradigm which could bring content analysis of Amhara Regional State Television plays with concern of feminism ideology.



CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study aims at exploring the gender roles and its subsequent negative impact on females in the plays of the television programmes of Amhara Mass Media Agency. To this end, the researcher intends to approach the plays hermeneutically. Hermeneutics, according to Robson (1993:196), is “an art and science of interpretation.” He believed that hermeneutics which is a kind of qualitative research methodology brings the researcher as an active participant of the research.

In light of the purpose of this research, the researcher, thus, would consider the basic notions of feminism as a guiding principle to explicate the plays salient but invisible feature (gender issue). Among some others, the following are what the researcher considered crucial while analytically observing the plays from feminism point of view.

- The role of females (or males) in the plays
- Females’ representation: social, economic, and political.
- Females’ reaction to the patriarchal programming.
- The play’s reaction to patriarchy.
- Patriarchally founded actions of males in relation to the ideology’s impact on females.
- Sisterhood as a means of resisting patriarchy.

3.1. Sampling Technique

The present study which is meant to be conducted in the plays of the television programmes of Amhara Mass Media Agency aims to focus on recent plays transmitted in five years period (from mid 1995EC to mid 2000 EC). However due to the inaccessibility of the plays, the researcher

is compelled to restrict the study only to two years transmission of the plays.

The two years from which the sample plays are selected are 1997EC and 1998EC. Within these two years, the television programme has managed to transmit around 102 plays which have an average of eleven minutes duration on the air. From the total of 102 plays, 80 plays were broadcasted in 1998EC and the rest 22 in 1997EC.

The focus on the recent plays has a twofold benefit. The first is the novelty used in reflecting the contemporary society. These plays which are up to date make any attempt, which aims to improve their value, worth rewarding. Secondly, any comments or suggestions that will be made after the completion of this research will not be left without value. This is to say that if those comments and suggestions are those of the 1994EC or before that and if the then plays existing flaws have already been improved in the plays thereby, talking about the issue would simply be vainly. Thus, the recentness of the plays will avoid this fear.

With regard to the sampling technique, the researcher has implemented a non probability sampling technique which is called as purposive or judgmental sampling. This sampling technique, though limits the generalizability of the research findings, is worth implementing to satisfy the need of this particular research. This is so because any type of probability sampling would result in samples of absolutely no relevance to this research.

Purposive or judgmental sampling, according to, Babbie (1998), Cohen and Manion (1994) and Robson (1993), is a technique in which the researcher selects the sample based on his/her judgment on typicality or interest. Thus, in this research, plays which reflect gender issues are of interest to be selected as a sample. However, to judge the substantiality of the plays, with respect to their gender agenda, the researcher has

gone through with critically observing all targeted plays. In the end, plays which have relatively dense gender elements are the focus of this research.

On top of this basic parameter of selection, the researcher takes the production companies, the year of transmission, and the setting of the plays in to consideration. This is with the thought that those variables will potentially affect the content of the plays (in relation to gender) and thus determine the sample. Besides, the number of plays transmitted in a year is considered to determine the number of sample plays to be selected in that year.

To this effect, two plays are selected from 1997EC which were produced by Africa and Zewge Theatre and Promotion Enterprise and another three plays are selected from 1998EC which were produced by Beminabu Promotion and Advertising Private Limited Company.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE PLAYS

4.1 Analysis of “Meseret”

4.1.1. Synopsis of “Meseret”

In the play there are five characters. Meseret is a young lady, a wife of Gashaw Mektie. She has one brother called Eyayew. The other two characters of the play are the parents of Meseret and eyayew.

The title of the play is ‘Meseret’ which is named after one of the female characters. The play was transmitted on 20-01-98 E.C and it stayed for twelve minutes in the air. It was created by a male author named Teshome Shiferaw under the production of Beminabu Promotion and Advertizing P.L.C.

The story is about a poor teenage girl who is given to a man for marriage only with her parents consent. In the story the father of the teenage girl (Meseret) was the one who used all his power to let Meseret marry. Regardless of her husband’s refusal, the mother of Meseret decided to tell the marriage to her son (Eyeyew) who is a professional living in an urban area.

The son who heard about the story tried to persuade his father about the danger of giving the little girl’s hand in marriage. Unsuccessful in his trial, Eyayew went to Meseret’s husband home for another attempt.

Then, Eyayew told Gashaw Mektie about his plan of taking his sister, Mesert, who is living her premarital time with him, for education. Despite his efforts to convince Gashaw Mektie (the bridegroom), Meseret’s brother could not be successful.

At the end of the story, Eyayew who failed to convince both his father and her 'husband' devised a strategy to take his sister out of the jaws of the patriarchal 'bridegroom' without the man's knowledge. Finally, he became successful in saving Meseret from becoming his second sister to suffer from the agony of early marriage.

4.1.2. Roles of Characters

In this section, the role of characters both males and females is analyzed. In this respect, the social, economic or political activities of both are investigated as per its availability and in accordance with its relevance to the subject of discussion (i.e. feminism).

To start with, the social role of males and females seems to be constructed according to the patriarchal set up they have been living with. In support of this argument, it is possible to consider a number of instances. The paragraph below will try to ascertain this opinion.

When we see the relations a husband and a wife have in the play, it is clear that the husband is well respected by his wife, but the return she gets from her husband is frustrating due to immorality. This situation can be observed both in the parents of Meseret and her relation with Gashaw Meketie (the bride groom).

Both of female characters (the mother and her daughter) address their husbands through a term of address which shows respect. Such kind of addressing is commonly used in the culture either for an old person or for a socially recognized personality (in knowledge status or in handling different social matters). Here are two extracts which show how the mother and her daughter address their husbands in a respectful way.

ምን ይላሉ እኚህ?

What kind of talk is it?

ይምጡ እስኪ ይዩት።

Come and see it, please

Although it is difficult to find an equivalent translation of the extracts, it can be seen how respectfully the females address their patriarchal male counter parts. The spirit behind the respectful address can be because of either the age difference they have or the status males deemed to enjoy. Either of these are constructs of the patriarchal culture which serve the interest of the masculine.

Another important parameter in assessing patriarchal impacts is the decision making roles the two genders play. Some literature related to gender issues in Ethiopia and particularly in Amhara Region reveal that in most instances the lion share of decisions in a family is made by male even with out the knowledge of the wife (DHS, 2005). This fact is fundamentally the product of patriarchal ideology which made the male benefit through ruling his familial world (nuclear family).

Decision-making roles of the characters in the present play can be observed in two ways. The first is by showing how males (especially husbands) are sole decision makers and the other is by revealing the females' (wives') submissive or obedient nature. The following dialogue is taken to assert this fact. Meseret's parents said the following while they were discussing the preparation of the marriage ceremony and the necessity of telling this situation to their son.

ባል በይ ሂጂና አንዳንድ ነገር አዘጋጁ።

Go and prepare some other things

ሚስት ታዲያ እያየውን ነግራው ልሂድ እንጂ።

I shall be telling Eyayew before I go

ባል ምን ብለሽ ነው የምትነግረው?

What are you going to tell him?

ሚስት

እህትህ ልታገባ ነው ብዬ።

I will tell him that his sister is going to marry.

ባል

ተይ እሱ እንደሆነ ንግግር ያበዛል። ሲነግሩሽ አትሰሚም። (በቁጣ ድምፅ)

Don't! as we know, he will talk much.

(in an angry tone)

ሚስት

ምን ይላሉ እኚህ። ችግር ሲገጥመን ብቻ ነው የምናዋየው።

What kind of talk is it? Is it only when we are in trouble that we consult him?

From the above extract, it is clear that the husband is the powerful person to make a decision. In the play, it can be seen that the husband is talking with his wife. He does not seem to be willing to give her an opportunity to express her opinions though the issue concerns her daughter.

In this dialogue, though it can be clear that their son was in the end aware of the situation which is presumed to be due to his mother's information, the impact of patriarchal rule is clear. This can be evidenced from the tone and the 'do this' dictatorial speech of the husband and the low voiced speech of the wife.

The last part of his speech which is presented as a kind of rhetorical question basically reflects the fact that what the husband says is right. Here is what he said:

“ ሲነግሩሽ አትሰሚም ”

Don't you hear when you are told?

In the utterance above, it could be inferred the unnaturalness of not understanding what a husband may say. This is a typical reflection of male domination in a patriarchal society.

In the above dialogue the husband said to his wife which says,

“በይ ሂጂና አንዳንድ ነገር አዘጋጁ።”

Go and prepare some things.

is a section of the play which shows females' engagement in doing house chores. Thus, it implies that the domestic work, which is not reproductive, is the duty of the women. This division of labour which is the construct of patriarchy aggravates women's dependence on their male counterparts.

Another part of the play which shows the power of a husband over his wife is exemplified by the relation which we can observe between the 'bridegroom' and Meseret. In this relationship, it is understood that early marriage in Ethiopia can be a worth mentioning factor for the sustained husbands' domination over their wife's. The rationale behind this is that when a little girl is forced to live her childhood with the man (her husband) who is older and more mature (both physically and mentally) than her, she will gradually develop the knowledge of how she can live with her 'husband'. So, this together with the naturalized patriarchal ideology outside her home would make the wife more submissive and less resistant to males' oppression.

The above domination of a husband over the wife who is premature for marriage which, I think, would make up the behaviour of wives can be implied from the little girl's absolute obedience to the 'bridegroom'. In the play, Meseret expected permission from her husband even to greet her own brother. The following is the question taken from the husband's speech when he orders her to stop kissing her brother. It reads.

በቃ...በቃ...ግቢ!...ግቢ!

Enough---enough--- get in to the house!--- get in!

In relation to the aforementioned opinion, regarding the impact of a husband over his wife in shaping her personality trait, the following

quotation from Meseret's utterance in the play can be a good citation. She said

“እንዳታናግረው ብሎኛል”

“He told me not to speak to you”.

This can tell how influential a husband is on his wife in an early marriage. This young lady who considers every word of her husband as ‘God’s word’ will in the end internalize it and live with her husband without any complaint.

Another most salient feature which reflects the deep rooted patriarchal construction can be detected from what Gashaw said to the little girl’s brother. Here is the extract from the dialogue.

Eyayew ቆይ አንተ ምንድን ነህ?

Give me a break. What are you to her?

ባል ጋሻው መክቴ አባላለሁ። መክቴ አገር ያወቀው ፀሀይ የሞቀው።

I am Gashaw Meketie. Meketie that every single creature knows very well.

From the response of Gashaw it can be understood that the most important thing to identify oneself is not the maternal line but something related to the paternal figure. This shows a long lasting accreditation of the society to male supremacy. This can be related to the assignment of a family name which scholars like Pope (2002) judge as the finger print of patriarchy.

In studying women’s reaction to the patriarchal programming in the play there is no much to be talked about. The only place where a woman is seen not opposing but holding a different opinion concerning an issue is when Meseret’s mother decided to tell her son about the marriage. This single instance in which a female opposes her male counterpart is not with the intention of resisting the patriarchal role but with an interest to

tell Eyayew about the marriage. In relation to this, Meseret, is by no means expected to oppose the patriarchal programming because of her immaturity to scrutinize between good and bad.

4.1.3. The Play's Reaction to Patriarchy

Generally speaking, the play has raised an important issue in relation to the prevailing unfair treatment of women (females) by the culture. When we see the play's reaction to patriarchal ideology, it can be inferred that the play has a feminist stand which could put its share to alleviate the unfair treatment of the female by the male. This is merely because of the unsuccessfulness of the early marriage of Meseret.

Besides the father of Meseret who was brought up in a patriarchal culture and wished to perpetuate the practice of suppressing women, eventually, repents from his past deed. This father, who exposed his first daughter to fistula problem, which was the result of early marriage, promised not to make such a mistake again. Therefore, this man who could represent all fathers in the real world can be a good sign for the coming of a world which will be a better place for women.

However, this play lacks portrayal of female characters in contradiction to the patriarchal women. In this respect, the play needs to incorporate female characters who can decide, celebrate financial freedom and resist men's oppressive role.

4.2. Analysis of 'ፊር' /Six Month'

4.2.1. Synopsis of 'ፊር' /Six Month'

In this play there are five characters. Three of them are female friends, namely Fire, Biruktawit and Martha. Fire is the strong character who

aims to subvert her friends' patriarchal outlook regarding marriage. The rest two are males. One of them is a rich person.

The title of the play is 'ፊ ወር' which equivalently means 'six month'. It is created by a female author called Zinash Getnet. It was broadcasted on 4-09-98 E.C. for a period of 9:57 minutes. The play is produced by Beminaabu promotion and advertizing P.L.C.

The play is based on an unhealthy relation ship between a rich man and a woman. The rich man was beating Biruktawit every day deliberately to get her out of his home on her own free will. However, regardless of the beatings, Bruktawit keeps on living with him until for about six months. She preferred to live with him because she intends to claim property right or palimony after six months.

One of Bruktawit's friends who was sick due to every day beating used to nag Bruktawit to stop going to his house. This strong female character used to tell her friends the fact that marriage is not a means to secure financial freedom for a women.

At the end of the story, Bruktawit come to her friends seriously beaten, very different from the other days. This instance made the two weak female figures, Bruktawit and Martha, realize their wrong attitude to marriage and they began to join hands to combat females' oppression.

4.2.2. Role and Representation of Characters

In discussing the role of females and males in the play, it is first important to talk about the setting. The setting of this play is located in an urban area. Therefore, the nature of patriarchal social structure will be in some way different from that of the previous play which is performed in a rural setting.

The difference in the role of sexes in this play basically lies on economic difference. In this, as it is mentioned in the synopsis there are three female characters. The first is a strong female figure called Fire, the second is a patriarchally structured character called Martha and the last one is the victim of the brutality of a masculine figure called Biruktawit. In the following paragraphs, I will try to take extracts from the play to discuss the resistance female figures in the play are showing towards to patriarchal programming.

In 'six month' there is a clear line between males and females in their economic strength. All of the three female characters are economically weak and they are trying to win bread. The other two male characters, on the other hand, don't seem to bother about economic problems. One of them is a rich person who had a car and a house.

The economic disparity between males and females in the play can be associated with what feminists are saying about males' monopoly over economic, social and political power (scenarios). Tyson (1999) explained that the prevalence of such economic difference is inevitable in a patriarchal world because women are denied the educational and occupational means of acquiring those powers. Of course, three of the female characters are not educated enough and they also don't have a good occupational status and hence it can be said that they become poor because of the cultural influence that prohibits them to get the means to an end.

The patriarchal programming does not leave the female characters as economically dependent, but it also makes them think that marriage is the best reward for them. This is because they were induced to think that they are incapable to secure their financial freedom which otherwise can be possible through marriage. Here is an extract one of the female characters, Martha, said to Fire.

ማርታ: ያች አብራን ትማር የነበረችው ማህሌት፣ ቆንጂያዋ፣ ምን የመሰለ ቱጃር አግብታ የመን ይዟት ገባ። አንች እኛ እኮ ፈዘናል። በእናትሽ የት ሄዳ ነው ያገኘችው? አይ እድል!

Do you remember Mahlet, our classmate, the beautiful one? She married a very rich man and he took her to Yemen. You know what, we are getting dormant. For your mother's sake, where did she find him? What a luck!

In the above extract it is easy to understand that Martha is sick and tired of being poor. It also indicates that males are economically powerful, a patriarchal construct. Moreover, it reflects her heightened interest of marrying a rich man to raise her economic status, for she was made to think by the culture that only marriage could fulfill women's financial problem.

Another female character, who like Martha, is highly influenced by patriarchal ideology gives a deaf ear to any kind of thinking that considers marriage as a wrong way of securing financial freedom. Bruktawit who is seriously victimized by the patriarchal male character don't give up going to her 'husband's' home though the beating was getting harsh day after day. Here are two extracts uttered by Martha when she saw Bruktawit's face.

ማርታ: እኛ እንደዚህ እንደሮቦት እየወላለቀ ሲመታት ዝም ነው ማለት ያለብን?

Are we going to keep silent seeing her torn like a Robot?

ወይኔ ዛሬ ደግሞ ጭራህ ገነጣጥሏታል።

Oh my God! Today's is special. He has almost destroyed her

Biruktawit whose situation has been described in the above extracts, does not want to think that she is a divorce. She considers marriage as a final target of any woman. She was even worried about her engagement which took place after long time. For Biruktawit, it seems that marriage is a single best reward a female should get. This reflects a deep rooted patriarchal influence. Here is what she said to Fire and Martha when Fire asked her why she was taking marriage as an alternative.

ብሩክታዊት፡ እናንተ ደግሞ የሰው ችግር አይገባችሁም። እኔ በእናታችሁ እድሜያንም አስቡት። አርፎ ስድስት ወራን ልሙላ እንጂ
You guys don't understand human's problem.
For your mothers' sake, think of my age?
Let me complete my six months.

Biruktawit was frustrated that her boy friend would send her. To avoid this, she consulted to a lawyer to see if there is a legal room to claim that she is his wife. Here is what she said to her friends regarding the legality of being a wife to a man:

ስድስት ወር ከሞላኝ የህግ ሚስቱ ነኝ። ሠማኒያ አንኳን ባይፈርሞልኝም፤ ስለዚህ ነው አልወጣም የምለው።
I can claim that I am his legal wife after six month even if he doesn't sign on a legal document; that is why I will refuse to get out of the house.

It looks that Bruktawit wanted to be a legal wife of the man regardless of his feelings towards her. This ridiculous thought of the lady emanates from the accepted patriarchal norm or ideology which pictures marriage as the best reward a woman could ever have.

In addition to this, Biruktawit's interest to be recognized as 'a married woman' is, as researches confirmed in Amhara region (SIDA,) to avoid

the patriarchal disgraceful attachment of the derogatory term 'Kumo Ker'- a spinster.

Among the three female characters, Fire is a strong feminist figure. She was the only woman who didn't submit herself to males' interest. Fire like her two friends is economically weak which can be understood as the impact of the dominating patriarchal ideology. However, she is striving to pursue education and thereby upgrade her occupational status which the patriarchy has denied her.

Fire is not only worrying about her individual self but she is worrying about her friends' fates who are victims of patriarchal ideology. She was tirelessly trying to change the patriarchally founded mentality of her friends. Here is what Fire said when Biruktawit came to her after she was bitterly beaten by her 'husband'. Puzzled by what a marriage is all about she said:

ግን ትዳርን እንደ አማራጭ የምንይዘው ለምንድን ነው?

"But --- why do we take marriage as an alternative?"

In another instance, Fire who couldn't bear to see the beatings of Biruktawit said the following:

እኔ ግን እንደዚህ ሆና ማየት ስለማልፈልግ አንች ይዘሻት ወደ ሐኪም ቤት ሂጃ እኔ ሄጃ ክስ እመሠርታለሁኝ።

"But me I don't want to see her like this so you take her to hospital and I will go and charge him."

From the above extract and from Fire's concern for her female friends, it is fair to say that she is the basis of female solidarity. She doesn't want females to surrender to the roles they are deemed to play in a patriarchal programming. With the very existence of this strong female character, it becomes possible to read sisterhood in the play where all of the three

female characters unite to fight against the cultural role they are meant to play. In this regard, it can be mentioned what Martha has said to the friend of Biruktawit's boy friend.

እኔ ግን ከጓደኛዬ ብዙ ነገር ተማርኩ። ለካ ህልማችን እውን የሚሆነው እራሳችን ሠርተን በምናገኘው ብቻ ነው።

But me, I learn a lot from my friend. It is only from what we earn that we can make our dreams come true.

The utterance which Martha has said near the end of the play reflects Fire's influence on Martha in a way Martha's future would be aspired as free from the chain of patriarchy.

In trying to see the role the two male characters are playing, it can be inferred from their dialogue at the beginning of the play

አበራ እኛ ወንዶች እኮ ዘና ያለ ኑሮ ነው የምንኖረው።

We males are living a comfortable life

ወንድሙ ከሴት ልጅ አትበልጥም። ይገርምሀል ሴት ልጅ እኮ ብታጣ ብታጣ ትዳር አታጣም።

Not better than females. For your wonder, a female has at least marriage at hand.

The above extract shows that males in the patriarchal society are earning well and are using unpaid labor of women. Abera's brother who is also in the same orbit of patriarchal influence tries to reflect marriage as a reward for females. From their utterance it can be argued that both of them are patriarchally depicted.

4.2.3. Play's Reaction to Patriarchal Ideology

When we see the play's reaction to patriarchal ideology, it is pretty much fascinating to see that the two female characters have changed their

patriarchally influenced femalehood. It is great to see Martha regretting about her past outlook regarding marriage as the only means to financial independence. It is also good to see her future which is presumed to be devoid of patriarchal programming. Thus it is fair to say that this part of the story reflects the feminist tendency of the play.

In general, the embarked sisterhood life of the three female characters in helping each other to bear their economic problem, which lets females to reside under the authority of males, the outlook change of the two female characters, Biruktawit and Martha, regarding marriage and a bad fate on Abera could allow one to say that the play is anti patriarchal for all of the above incidents in the play does not applaud patriarchal actions and females submission to patriarchy. However, the male characters are not aware of the patriarchal programs they are immersed. Leaving these masculine figures without letting them realize the patriarchal ideology they advocate would be a gap in the play from feminist perspective.

4.3. Analysis of “ደም አድርቅ” “Stop Blood Shed”

4.3.1. Synopsis of “ደም አድርቅ” “Stop Blood Shed”

In this play, there are eight characters, out of which six are males and the rest are females. Wondifraw is the one who murdered the son of Adefris. Adefris has another son who makes his living in an urban area. Kibew is the character who was a spy for Wondifraw. The other two male characters are the priest and an old person who made the negotiation between the two rivals (Wondifraw and Adefris). The only two female characters are Yayne Abeba and her mother.

This play entitled “ደም አድርቅ” ‘stop blood shed’ is set in a rural area. It was transmitted on 7-12-98 EC for 11:12 minutes. It is created by Andualem Abate and produced by Beminabu promotion and Advertising

PLC. The central idea of the play is to convey the fact that the means used to cease blood shed between two rival clans is not right.

The play begins when a killer (Wondifraw) who killed a brother of a guy who come to the village for an official duty, starts to arm himself fearing that the guy's arrival is for revenge. Meanwhile the father of the urban guy, Adefiris, who was living with the agony of his son's murder, wanted to revenge because his son was coming from urban area.

At the end of the story, a priest and a respected old person decided to make peace between these two groups. The term of agreement lay on giving Yayine Abeba, a young daughter of the killer, to the son of Adefiris in marriage.

Eventhally, though Adefiris and Wondifraw were positive to the proposed negotiation document, the urban guy who was supposed to marry Yayine Abeba discussed the inappropriacy of the marriage and convinced the two parties about the backwardness of killing one another. Finally, with the consent of all the members of the community (the priest and the old men), Wondifraw and Adefiris, the two rivals agreed to stop killing one another.

4.3.2. Reflection of Patriarchal Ideology

In trying to show the finger prints of patriarchal programming the prominent one would be what the play conveys and its main objective i.e. presentation of a daughter of the killer's family to a son of the victim's family member as a marriage gift. This cultural way of negotiation is patriarchal in its sense because it is the female who is going to be given as a gift, not the male though the principal logic behind this agreement is to create a blood relation between the two blood shedding clans. In support to the aforesaid opinion here is an extract which is the utterance of Wondifraw when he was telling his wife about the situation.

ደመ የሚደርቀው ልጃችንን ስናጋባት ነው።

The blood shed will cease when we give our daughter's hand to marriage.

Here he didn't say the bloodshed will stop when they (the two rivals) tie up with marital relation. He simply said when he gave his only daughter for marriage. This is patriarchal, for a female is given in exchange for something else. Hence, the female is being used as a commodity.

In addition to the aforementioned idea Wondifraw had also promised to give that same daughter as a wife to Kibew in exchange for the information Kibew would bring him about the situation of his rivals. This happened before the peace treaty's case. This is how their dialogue goes:

ወንዲፍራው	መከት ለእኔ፣ አጥና። Defend for me; investigate
ቅሌው	እኔ እመክታለሁ። አጠናለሁ። ምንም ችግር የለም አታስብ። ታዲያ እንዴት ነው ውለታው? I will defend. I will investigate. No problem and don't worry. So what about the favour?
ወንዲፍራው	ምንድን ነው ውለታ? What do you mean by favour!
ቅሌው	ልጅህ? Your daughter?
ወንዲፍራው	ምንም ችግር የለም ሽምግልናም ሳያስፈልግ ታገባታለሁ። No problem. The marriage proposal will take effect without sending go between.

From the above extract, it can be inferred that the young lady was considered as an object to be presented or denied depending on the mere interest of her patriarchal father. This shows how dominating the patriarchal culture is to suppress the will or interest of a female and

even a daughter. The irresponsibility of Wondifraw can be attributed to the long-held cultural practice.

In this play, it can be seen that patriarchal programming is deeply found. This can be evidenced from the priest and the old person, who are expected to be well recognized and respected representatives of the society, propose the marriage of the young girl as a means of making peace between the rivals. The marriage case in this regard is accepted by the parents of the bride and the bridegroom and those two representatives. All of them are males who are influenced by their cultural role to be able to determine the female's fate.

In relation to the aforementioned idea, the crucial participation of the priest in the peace treaty is an indicator of a religious institution's influence by patriarchal ideology. In this respect, since religion is a powerful institution to shape people's ideological stand, its support to a patriarchal programming is an evidence for the negative effect of patriarchy in the community.

Contrary to those peace mediators and the two male rivals the wife of Wondifraw and an educated son of Adefiris were resistant to the idea of the use of marriage to stop bloodshed. Here is an extract taken from the play. It is a dialogue between Wondifraw and his wife.

ወንዲፍራው

ደሙ የሚደርቀው ልጃችንን ስናጋባት ነው።

The bloodshed will stop when we give our daughter in marriage

ሚስት

እኔ እንግዲህ በዚህ መሀል አልገባም። እርሷም አማራሰሁ አያለች ነው። ይኸን ነገር ይተው።

I don't want to be part of this and she is saying that she wants to learn. You have to stop this deal.

ወንዲፍራው

እኔ ሞልሽ ጆሮ ግንዱን ብዬ መልሽ አስር ቤት እንድገባልሽ

ነው የምትፈልገው?

I mean, do you want me to kill him and go to jail again

ሚስት

እኔ ተናግራለሁ።

I don't agree on this

ወንዲፍራው

ልበለው? ... ልበለው?... ልግባ?

Shall I kill him? --- shall I kill him and go to prison?

4.3.3. Females' Resistance to Patriarchy

The following dialogue is taken to see the degree of resistance of females in the play.

ሚስት

እኔ ተናግራለሁ።

I have already told you

ወንዲፍራው

ታዲያ ከሁለቱ ምርጫ?

So, choose from the two?

ሚስት

እርሷ እሽ ትላለች? እንዴት ነው የሚሉት እርስዎ?

Will she be willing? What do you want to say?

ወንዲፍራው

እሱን ተይውና ወደ ቤት ግቢና አዘገጃጂ። እኔም መከራዬን ሳይ አልኛርም።

Leave it. Go and prepare things at home. I don't want to Suffer anymore.

The above dialogue ascertains that the woman was resisting the cultural dispute management strategy which only aims to keep the interest of the male. The woman was trying to challenge her husband about the proposal he has already accepted. She refused to accept the arrangement even when he assured her that the other alternative is for him to kill again and go to jail. Unthreatened by what her husband said the woman was puzzling her husband by urging him to consider the interest of their daughter and the future of her education.

Despite all the wife's efforts to resist the repression, Wondifraw was ordering her to forget everything and to prepare the house by making the necessary arrangement for the marriage. This clearly shows the limitation of women's resistance and the well established patriarchal dominance which suppressed women.

In addition to her subtle and heroic resistance, the mother of Yayine Ababa is portrayed as a systematic, peaceful and wise person. When Wondifraw was passing the whole day in an ambush to protect himself from the attack of his rivals, she was helping him by providing food. She was also trying to persuade him not to go to ambush. Here is how their dialogue goes.

ሚስት እኔ በስተርጅና እንዲህ መሰቃየት አለብኝ።

Wife should I have to suffer like this at my old age time?

ወንዲፍራው አትምጭ እኮ አልኩኝ።

Wondifraw I told you not to come.

ሚስት እንዴት ነው አትምጭ ማለት እርስዎ እዚህ ደፋ ብለው ሰቀሩ ዝም ማለት አለብኝ።

What does 'don't come!' mean? Should I have to stay silent knowing you being here in loneliness?

So she is still loyal to him even at this harsh time of their life and she is at the same time systematic to let him drop the situation he is through by explaining her troubles. She talked about her troubles just to use it as a tool to let him stop fighting.

4.3.4. Roles of Female and Male Characters

In the play, the female and male have their own distinct patriarchally programmed roles. In relation to this, the female for example, is not expected to involve in high level decision-making roles however important the degree of her concern to the issue is. It is also not her



duty to deal with issues about social gatherings. The dispute settlement meeting which was made without a female participation is a good example for the above assertion.

Females' role is only restricted to the uncounted domestic works like cooking, taking care of children and the like. This according to many feminists like Tyson contributes a lot to males' economic dominance over females'. An extract of what Wondifraw said to his wife can tell the naturally accepted role of females. It reads:

“እርሱን ተይውና ወደ ቤት ግቢና አዘገጃጂ።”

Leave this issue. Go and prepare things at home”

It is to mean that it is not feminine after all to decide upon some higher level decisions in a family. Females' role rather is to handle household problems.

Males in the play are depicted as representatives of family, potential decision makers, those who exercise full dominance over their female counterparts. They are representatives in religious institutions, and sole participants of some higher level societal gatherings (like negotiations between two opposing groups). Generally, the males in the play except for the urban educated boy are replicas of a patriarchal man.

4.3.5. The Play's Reaction to Patriarchy

When we see the play's reaction to patriarchy, it can be said that it has an anti-patriarchal stand. It is feminist in approach because there are resistant female characters, as the wife of Wondifraw despite the existing patriarchal ideology in the region.

The message of the play which aims at condemning the uncivilized culture oriented form of dispute management also paves the way for the

eradication of women's oppression. This being the purpose of feminism makes the play to be judged as a feminist play.

However, the penalty passed on Ashagrie and Kebew or the lesson they should get is not sufficiently expressed in the play. This could decrease the extent of attitudinal change which could have been attained in the targeted patriarchal society.

The other important gender element that this play should have incorporated for an excellent effect of a feminist end is participation of females in societal activities and their decision-making role in a family. In this play, the wife of Wondifraw had in no place a decision making role. She only resisted to patriarchally endorsed activities.

The group which was meant to create negotiation between the two rival families had no representation of women. This is the role of patriarchal programming that limits women's activities only to house chores. This play, in this regard, lacks because it doesn't attempt to subvert the patriarchally established role of both sexes.

4.4. Analysis of 'ሰራሴ ስራ' / 'For My Own Sake'

In an attempt to explore the gender related issues in this play, I will, the same to most of other plays, consider the role and representation of the sexes, the plays reaction to patriarchy and the play's potential to address the actual problem of females due to patriarchal programming.

In this play there are five characters. Three of them are males and the rest two are females. Dasash is a maiden of a rich male character and Addisu is a gardener. There are husband and wife who are neighbors of the rich person.

4.4.1. Synopsis of 'ለራሴ ብዬ' / 'For My Own Sake'

The play is entitled 'ለራሴ ብዬ' for my own sake' It was transmitted on 12-1-98 E.C and has a twelve minutes stay in the air. It is created by Beminabu Kebede and produced by Beminabu promotion and Advertising PLC. The main idea of the play is to reveal the responsibility of every citizen to keep the environment clean, peaceful and a comfortable place to live.

In the play, there are a husband and wife on the one hand, and a rich person and his two servants on the other. The play is about an offensive smell around the two households. The play begins as the rich person asks his servants about the presence of smell. Addisu asked Dasash in an arrogant manner whether she cleaned the toilet properly.

Meanwhile, their neighbors were also talking about the smell. However, in this case, the husband who was just coming from outside was asking his wife if what he is smelling is a spiced butter. The wife annoyed by his expectation mocked him that the smell is the smell of the butter he bought.

By the time the husband and wife were talking about the butter, the husband heard his neighbors (the two servants) talking and laughing. Hearing this, he became angry thinking that they were laughing at him. He then decided to see what exactly was happening beyond the fence and he let his wife stand over his back so that she could manage to observe what is going on in their neighbor's house.

The wife then started to tell him that there is a person who is good-looking because of the butter he eats or the comfortable life he is leading. She also told him that there is a fat sheep tied in the compound. She told him all this to let him feel the difference in standard of living.

Unhappy about her life she regrettably told her husband that it is preferable to be a servant of their neighbor than being a husband to him. Annoyed by what she said, her husband started to beat her and she screamed aloud. This collected her disturbed neighbors. When they talked about the reason of the incident, her husband realized that the bad smell is due to his dirty toilet. From then on, the conflict between the couple was resolved.

4.4.2. The Role of Characters

To start with, the relationship between the husband and his wife in the play is worth discussing. This woman who seems to live in a destitute economic situation is portrayed as one expecting every economic support from her husband. This is how she reacted to her husband when he said that what he is smelling is a smell of spiced butter:

ቅቤው (አየሳቀኝ) ቅሌ ሞልቶ የለ እድሜ ላንተ አምጥተህ
አምጥተህ አስገብተህልኛል። እኔ ደግሞ አንጥራ አንጥራ ...

The butter?! (laughing...) I have plenty of butter. Long live to you, you brought me a great deal of it. And I spiced it.

From this utterance, it can be understood that the role of a husband is to supply his wife or the family with every material necessity. The females' role, on the contrary, is to engage in a non-remunerative domestic (house) work like cooking for the family. This patriarchal programming that lends the women to be economically dependent also puts the man to suffer from the responsibility of being a sole economic source. This is related to what Tyson (1999) said. She suggested that patriarchal programming is not only hurting the woman in its multifaceted ways, but it is also putting a burden on the male because he is expected to be economically strong.

Such programming which made the woman to expect finance from the man will deny her any possibility or attempt of making money. "The fittest will survive" will no more be a theory in females' case. This is because she is programmed to think that she is not entitled to play this role. It rather is her male counterpart's role. This belief or patriarchal ideological thinking will keep the female (wife) to be financially unsecure, which in turn will ascertain his all time control over the economic production of the household, as Michele Barrett suggested.

The following speech which is uttered by the husband shows how a male is suffering from the burden of being an only economic source for the family. It is a response to the above extract which his wife has said. It reads:

እንግዲህ አንች ሴትዬ ይህን ነገር ጠቅ ማድረግሽን ተይ። አመጣሁ
አላልኩ እንዴው ዘመድ ወይም አንች ብድር አምጥተሽ እንዲሁ
አልኩ እንጂ።

Please stop uttering touchy words. I didn't say I brought butter.
But I was thinking if a relative does or if you have borrowed it.

His speech reflects that the wife will in no way have an economic capacity to cover such expenses unless it is borrowed or otherwise. Lack of expectation in the husband regarding his wife's being an economic source reveals the strong patriarchal programming that influences the behavior of the characters.

In the play, the wife has never tried or even thinks of generating money. She is acting according to the interest of patriarchy which expects her to be dependent on males' economic domination.

In the play, females' role in a family is portrayed as being a house wife to her husband, to take care of domestic works. This is a healthily accepted truth even for the female unless there is a disastrous economic problem. The following is what the wife said:

ተወኝ እስኪ አቦ! ኑሮ ብየው አሉ:: አሁንስ ከአንተ የቤት
ባለቤትነት የእነርሱን ሠራተኛነት ተመኝሁ::

Leave me alone! What a life! But now, I wished to be their
maiden that being your wife.

This saying of the wife by implication tells us that being a wife is believed to be an unarguably accepted reward for a female even by herself or by the patriarchal community in which she lives.

A male, on the other hand, is conventionally in charge of dealing with external issues such as dispute management on top of his big responsibility as a sole source of economy for a family. The following is what Dasash said to Addisu when the boss of the house went out to settle the problem in their neighborhood.

እኔን ተወኝና ሂድ ተከተላቸው::

Leave me alone and follow the boss.

The female accepts that it is males' role to maintain the peace and security of a household which is entirely a patriarchal construct. By the same taken, when these neighborhoods were to talk to the husband and his wife, it was only the husband who was arguing not the wife. This again reflects male dominance.

Another important part of the play which reflects women's patriarchal suppression is the common practice of beating a woman. The beating which the female characters in the play experience is the direct reflection of the actual society in Amhara region.

A study by NCTPE (2003) reveals that 81% of Ethiopian women believe that beating is acceptable if the wife: argues with her husband, neglects her children, went out of home without telling her spouse, refused sex or burn food. This figure actually decreased to 66.3% in Amhara region according to SIDA's findings.

As a reflection of the real society, the females in this play are beaten by their husbands (as in the wife's case by her husband) or an attempted beating (as in the case of Dasash). Beating a wife by a husband is understood as a right. This is so, for an extended practice of an evil action will eventually be internalized to the extent it will be considered natural. The following speech which the husband said to Addisu reflects the above notion. It reads:

በዝ ሚስቴ ምን አገባህ እንደረሰገኝ ባነገላት።

It is none of your business, I can beat her. She is my wife.

This saying reflects not only a husband's complete dominance over his wife but also an extreme form of patriarchal programming which legalizes ownership over his wife.

4.4.3. Females' Reaction to Patriarchy

In assessing the female's stand to the patriarchal programming it can be deduced that they are not aware of its existence. This is understood from both of the female characters_the wife and Dasash. Both of them are comfortable with being engaged in house chores.

The wife is willing to serve only as a house wife without complain if the husband is to play his role as a provider for the family. The maiden also accepts that it is not womanly to participate in outside home matters like dealing with their neighbor's problems. This is why she sends Addisu with the boss to their neighbors. She didn't feel that her presence in their neighbors could be of any use.

Besides, both of them are not resisting the beating of a woman by a man. This asserts the fact that women in a patriarchal culture do not rebel against beating.

4.4.4. The Play's Reaction to Patriarchy

When we see the play, in a general sense, for its reaction to patriarchy, it is possible to say that the play's contribution to bringing about a zero patriarchal society is just a day dream. This is to say that the play is merely representing the ideologically affected society as it is without the intention of making a change on its programming. Therefore, spectators could not understand that their way of living is the result of patriarchal ideology. Hence the women will continue to be dependent, submissive, and docile while the man will be active, dominant and a financial source of the family.

4.5 Analysis of 'አንቅፋት' / 'Hurdle'

In this play there are four characters. Two of them are high school students who are boy and girl friends. The name of the boy is Zed. The girl's father and their house renter are the other two male characters.

4.5.1. Synopsis of 'አንቅፋት' / 'Hurdle'

The play entitled 'አንቅፋት' which means 'Hurdle' was transmitted on 10-03-96 E.C. It was produced by Africa and Zewge Theatre and promotion Agency. The author of the play is Beminabu Kebede.

The play is about a female high school student and her high school boy friend. The girl was an intelligent student who used to promise to her poor father that she will settle all the problems when she gets a job after finishing her education. Her dream could not be fulfilled because she got pregnant. Her boy friend was not concerned about what her condition. The play ends with this desperate girl crying helplessly not knowing about what to do next.

4.5.2. Roles of Characters

Since the play is about two teenaged high school students it is not expected to show much of the social roles they otherwise would have been involved in. This is because of their limited activities at societal level and their economic dependence on their parents. However, the following is attempted to explore elements within the play which could show patriarchal influence.

In critically observing this play, I found it important to talk about the voice (high and low) of both characters i.e. the high school students. From their conversation, it can be said that the two characters manner of speech is reflective of patriarchal programming. As Poop (2002) discussed it, men have been attached with a noisy behavior and women with quiet in a patriarchal society. This is what is being reflected in the present play, when the two high school guys are considered, similar to most of the plays under discussion in this thesis.

Zed was all the time shouting at his girl friend in their conversation discourse. His tone, the anger and the insults he uttered were all showing the male dominance. His girl friend as a patriarchally influenced female, was quiet, calm and expecting rescue from males (her boy friend)

The following dialogue from the play can show gender roles under patriarchy.

(ዜድ) ወንድ ጓደኛ ሴትዬ እኔ ትምህርቱን ልማርበት። እኔ አባት መሆን አልችልም።

You lady, let me be learning my education

I couldn't be a father.

የሴት ጓደኛው ችግሩ ግን የሁለታችንም ነው

But the problem is ours
 ዜድ ግን እኔ የለሁብትም።
 But me, I am out
 የሴት ጓደኛ ግን ዘውዱ አላውቅሽም እያልኩኝ ነው?
 What do you mean? Are you saying that you
 don't know me?
 ዜድ አዎ አላውቅሽም።
 Yes, I don't know you
 የሴት ጓደኛ ዜድ አላሳዘንህም?
 Please Zed, don't you have a pity for me?
 ዜድ አዎ ጉዳይሽ ነው። ለምን አረገዘሽ (እየጮኸሽ)?
 That is your problem. Why do you get pregnant
 (shouting?)
 የሴት ጓደኛ እሺ ምን ሁኒ ነው የምትለኝ?
 Ok! Tell me what do you want me to be?

The female in the play is not a strong figure. She is a helpless teenager who tried to induce her boy friend in order to get help from him. In the above extract she said “ Please Zed, don't you have a pity for me?” and again she said “Ok! Tell me what do you want me to be? So from her words it looks right to say that she is a girl who thinks that she is useless without assistance from her male counterpart. In General, she is portrayed as a simply hopeless girl who expects rescue from her boy friend.

In the play, as it is said before, it could be difficult to talk about the two teenage students' economic representation for they are only students. However, the patriarchy's impact which makes females (wives) to expect their male counterparts as an economic source is reflected in this play. The girl, who can figure out the fact that her boy friend could not have any chance to get money, was expecting money from him. Again, the boy friend who knows his role, as a patriarchal boy, found the money by stealing. The following extract from the play can reflect this point.

Zed አስወርደዋለሁ አላልሽኝም
 Didn't you say you will abort it?

Girl fiend ብሩ አይበቃኝ
 The money is not enough.

Zed ይህንን ሣንቲም ሰርጅ ሳይሆን ሰርቄ ነው ያገኘሁት።
 I got this money not by job but by stealing.

Thus, this expectation of the two teenagers, which patriarchy achieves over a period of time, may infer the ever lasting economic dependency of the female on the male for, he not she, will ever worry about making money. So, how can she be economically strong when she is not making any attempt to make money?

4.5.3. The Play's Reaction to Patriarchy

In trying to judge the stand this play has about patriarchy, it seems possible to say that the play is not feminist. This can be justified from two angles. The first is the relationship between the boy and the girl which as it is discussed above reflects a patriarchally programmed behavior. This situation, though a reflection of reality, could have been shaped in a way it could imply the wrong of the tradition that sets woman and man to act in accordance with their patriarchal roles.

The second is the play's treatment of both characters. It seems that the play is biased against the female character. Because Zed was not much worried about the problem his girl friend is bothering about despite the fact that he had his own part for it to happen. Moreover, he was not penalized for this irresponsible and unjust act.

On the other hand, the lady was suffering as the story progresses and even up to the end of it. She was unfairly treated by her boy friend for

she is a female who by law of nature becomes pregnant. So, this unwanted pregnancy makes her suffer up to the end of the story:

This is what she said at the end of the story:

ትምህርቴን አቋርጬ ብወልደውስ? ቢያመኝስ? ብጥቅስ?

What if I give birth by stopping my education? What if I become sick or die?

This stream of consciousness technique best expresses the confusion and anxiety she is suffering from.

In envisaging the future of the female character it would not be wrong to say that she will have a higher probability to stop her education for it doesn't have a clue as to how she would safely interrupt the pregnancy. If it is thought that she will give birth, she will quit her education and consider every possible way (even prostitution) to support her new family.

Therefore, in any way her education will be at stake. This will in turn limit her chance of being a powerful and economically independent anti patriarchal women. Thus, this play which merely maximizes the agony of the girl (though a reflection of reality) didn't show her way out. So its contribution in ending women's oppression by patriarchy would presume to be insignificant because it couldn't go far from showing her problems.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

So far, an attempt has been made to analyze five plays broadcasted on the television programme of Amhara mass Media Agency. The framework for analysis is feminism. In the following paragraphs I will try to summarize the highlights of the analysis.

From the plays under discussion, 'Mesert' and 'Dem Adrik'/'Stop Blood Shed', the two plays are set in a rural area. In addition to the similarity of the setting, both of them are concerned about early marriage. The fact that these plays are addressing a highly traditional and uneducated society the extent of females' domination by males' is reflected.

'Meseret' which focuses on teaching about the adverse effect of early marriage for females depicts females and males in the following manner. Females are portrayed as calm, submissive to patriarchal order, or unable to make top level decisions such as marriage of her children, and confined to household activities.

'Dem Adrik'/'Stop Blood Shed' is another play that aims to teach the inappropriacy of marriage for the sake of settling dispute. In this play again, contrary to their half share of the population females are not represented in some social gatherings. This indicates that females are not involved in decision making roles. The female is not meant to talk but to listen to her male counterpart. Even though the strong female character left the final decision to her husband, it can be observed that she was challenging the patriarchal mentality.

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Males in both plays are powerful, hot tempered, sole decision-makers in the family and those who expect no argument or resistance from their female counterparts. In short, they are typical patriarchal figures who do not feel about the very existence of females', patriarchal oppression.

The other three plays are produced in an urban setting. These are 'Sidist Wor'/ 'Six Month', 'Lene Biye'/ 'For My Own Sake' and 'Enkifat'/ 'Obstacle'. What is different about the first play is that it is authored by a female writer. This can be one way to indicate the importance of having female authored plays in an attempt to combat patriarchy.

'Sidist Wor'/ 'Six Month' as a female authored play, brings in to view two conflicting female figures. The first group is composed of two characters (Martha and Biruktawit). This group is the result of patriarchal programming which considers marriage as a noble gift for the female. Fire, the only member of the second group, is an anti patriarchal figure who strives to boost females' self-confidence and self reliance. The play ends when the patriarchal figures realize their wrong patriarchal mentality. From this play it is clear that the female who creates this play is putting her share in the fight against patriarchal programming.

The second play, 'Lene Biye'/ 'For My Own Sake', is the opposite of the first with respect to their reaction to patriarchy. In this play females are represented as house workers, economically dependent figures and those who consider marriage as the best reward. Males, on the other hand, are portrayed as potent, dominating and an economic source of the family. Therefore, this play advocates patriarchy for it overlooks the endowment of patriarchal oppression.

The last play, 'Enkifat'/ 'Obstacle', is a patriarchal play which simply reflects the reality with out the aim of suggesting a change on the trend. So, it is not likely for the play to bring about effect in the patriarchal society.

5.2. Conclusions

In the review of related literature an attempt has been made to show the lively nature of television dramas in presenting the actual contemporary society in its blood and flesh. The freshness being the most valuable part of the nature of the medium, it also has its own weaknesses.

The problem arises as the plays forward the prevailed cultural practice as it is. As Thornham in Jackson and Jones (1992) says, when such cultural practices which need a fundamental change (for example the case of gender stereotyping) are presented with out a thorough investigation, then the plays socialization role will affect the new generation in a way by introducing them with the naturalized patriarchal practice. Therefore, the children who see the patriarchal practice as natural with in the plays in the television will easily be part of its norms.

Therefore, plays in addition to their most important nature (i.e. liveliness) should aim at modifying inappropriate cultural practices. Then only will the socialization role of the plays bring a satisfactory result and ensure a better world.

In this respect, the Amhara Region, in which the focus of the plays under discussion relies, is a place where traditional societies live. It is also a place where many harmful traditional practices are practiced. For example, female's genital mutilation, early marriage and sexual violence are the commonest ones (NCTPE, 2003). These practices are done either by the patriarchal men or for the sake of his interest. Thus, it is possible to say that those practices are the result of patriarchal ruling spread through the region.

Therefore, the plays apart from transmitting the stereotyped patriarchal practices have to reveal their inappropriacy to the targeted spectator. They should show the ways of eradicating the practices. In this respect, it can be said that the plays under discussion in this thesis have certain flaws.

For example in 'Meseret', though the play can be judged as an anti patriarchal as it discourages early marriage, it does not reflect the wrong of a husbands' dominance over his wife. It also does not encourage females to have confidence and protect their civil right.

'Dem Adrik'/'Stop Blood Shed', like the above play, is anti patriarchal because it condemns the traditional dispute management strategy which puts the female into crisis. The play, however, does not contribute much in producing female heroines or decision-makers or confident and rational strong female characters. The play also does not give a female character the chance to participate in a social gathering such as the negotiation assembly. In short, both the female and male characters are portrayed in fundamentally similar ways as the stereotyped patriarchal assignments.

In 'Six Month' an important message has been transmitted. In this play, female characters who were patriarchally programmed appeared to understand the most important point which can help female spectators to decree economic independency and thereby self confidence. The problem with this play from the point of view of this thesis interest is its gap in deconstructing the patriarchally constructed masculine behavior of male characters. The other one is the portrayal of all of the female characters as low economic status persons. This status of women which is not seen to change in the plays will be a common experience for the female spectators. This fact may not help them to feel or wonder why they are economically dependent. However, the researcher believes that

the portrayal of an economically independent woman who is enjoying the financial freedom could positively affect the spectator.

'For My Own Sake' is a patriarchal play. In this play, in short, both males and females are depicted according to the stereotyped patriarchal construction. This kind of play which target to convey a certain societal problem, apart from gender, has to take care of patriarchy's influence.

The last play 'obstacle' is a patriarchal play. It, the same to most of the plays, simply reflects the reality with out the intention of suggesting a change on the trend. So it is not likely for the play to bring a positive impact in the patriarchal society better than what could have been found if an anti patriarchal story set up has been used in the play

In short, from the plays under discussion it can be seen that some of the plays target to abolish harmful traditional practices like early marriage which a feminist reader could applaud; however, most of the plays could not change or at least resist the specific role the two sexes are given in a patriarchal arrangement.

Feminists, in relation to the above idea, believe that television plays/dramas should go against the predetermined role and representation of both sexes. Though this could be contradictory to the actual society to be depicted, they believe, it is helpful to shape the already established patriarchal construction in the contemporary society. In this regard, the plays of Amhara regional State should be improved.

5.3. Recommendations

As the plays discussed in this thesis are influenced by the patriarchal ideology which oppresses women, the following points, the researcher believes, will help to improve the plays so that they can be used as tools to bring a zero patriarchal society. In this respect, the agency as well as individuals/organizations who participate in producing plays for the Amhara mass media agency should consider the following.

- The agency should use the issue of gender as one criteria of selection of the plays. Hence, plays with the same subject, but a different way of gender reflection have to be treated differently by the agency. Thus, Plays which, in addition to the prior subject they address, are feminist in their approach will be preferable to those which do not.
- On the other hand, playwrights or producers should sense the reflection of their patriarchal tendency in their play before finalizing their production.
- The production companies should encourage female playwrights for there is a tendency to bring an encouraging result in fighting patriarchy in addition to increasing their representation in the area.
- Playwrights should have the appropriate knowledge of feminism in order to fight against female oppression in patriarchal society.

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DECLARATION

I, the Undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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11-07-08